Police are of less importance in (traditional) peacekeeping missions in interstate conflicts, when an international military presence supervises, for example, a cease-fire line (→ Peacekeeping Forces). However, in internal conflicts, often involving inter-ethnic tensions, police play an important stabilizing role.

Starting with the 1989-90 Namibia mission (UNTAG), most UN operations after the Cold War included strong police components. Normally, UN police are not to replace local police or to enforce the law themselves, but rather to supervise, assist and train existing or newly established indigenous police forces. This might include joint training programmes and even joint patrols. The aim is to help the new or reformed local police to (re-)gain the confidence of the local population.

Police play an increasingly important role in peacebuilding processes (→ Agenda for Peace).

Usually, CIVPOL personnel (like military → observers) are not armed. They wear their national police uniforms with additional blue berets or caps, and UN insignia.

Certain problems have resurfaced in many operations. These include insufficient personnel selection and pre-mission training, lack of Basic English and driving skills, lack of mission-specific preparation such as cultural awareness training, and often less-than-democratic police traditions in their home countries. Consequently, the UN was often criticized for insufficient CIVPOL activities. Since 1995, however, the UN Secretariat (→ Secretariat) and its Department of Peacekeeping Operations have increasingly been involved in the selection processes in certain countries, resulting in some improvements.

One problem remains: few (Western) countries are able to spare significant numbers of police officers for lengthy periods of time. The maintenance of adequate personnel remains difficult, however, over longer periods.

At the time of writing (autumn 2008), seven peacekeeping operations included more than 1,000 police personnel. These were the missions in Haiti (MINUSTAH) 1,916 police; Darfur (UNAMID) 1,845; Timor Leste (UNMIT) 1,534, Kosovo (UNMIK) 1,499; Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) 1,127; Liberia (UNMIL) 1,094 and Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) 1,051. The total number of UN police personnel was about 9,500.

From 2003, the EU became increasingly engaged in police missions as well, especially by taking over the UN police in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2003.

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peared in three fields, together with the limited ability of so-far existing UN bodies to support them in these problems having become obvious. These were the questions of a) favorable loans and investments, b) (terms of) trade and c) access to technological know-how.

The developing countries maintained that the time had come both to call for action for the foundation of → specialized agencies as well as for commissions within the → UN system: having founded the International Development Association (IDA) on 5 December 1959 with the consent of the industrialized countries, the General Assembly had already established a suitable frame for providing funds to cover the most important development needs of the developing countries. These funds were more elastic and a lesser financial burden on the balance of payments of the receiving countries than loans under customary conditions. However, the fulfillment of the demands in the area of trade had a long time in coming, though the world market share of the developing countries’ exports decreased between 1953 and 1961 from 27% to some 21%. On the one hand, reasons for this were the technological innovations in agriculture, which in turn led to considerable increase in the worldwide supply of agricultural products, and, on the other hand, the substitution of raw materials through synthetic materials. Due to the low price elasticity in the demand of these goods, the slump in prices of primary goods could not be compensated by an increase in demand. With prices for industrial products increasing at the same time, Terms of Trade for the developing countries noticeably deteriorated. The result was an accumulated trade deficit on the part of the Third World, which could not be balanced even by increased transfer payments through economic aid.

Capital needed for the industrialization process was not sufficiently available, and the slogan “trade instead of aid” became the major demand of third-world countries. From the view of the economically weak countries, no international organizations, which might have contributed to their better integration into the world economy, existed at the beginning of the sixties. The passing of a resolution concerning “World trade as a main instrument for economic development” (UN Doc. A/RES/1707 (XVI) on 19 December 1961, at the 16th regular session of the General Assembly, meant a significant step towards improving the conditions of world trade for developing countries, which, in the meantime, had attained a strong position within the UN system. The resolution recommended a conference on world trade, but and determined the topics and the structure.

In 1962, 36 developing countries convened in Cairo to discuss “aspects of economic development”. This conference is seen as another decisive step towards the establishment of a world trade conference. It concluded with the “Cairo Declaration”, in which the developing countries expressed their will to pursue their own concerns in the future. The breakthrough was attained when, on 3 August 1962, the Economic and Social Council (→ ECOSOC) decided to summon a conference on trade and development (UN Doc. E/RES/917 (XXXIV), which had been initiated by the developing countries. On 8 December 1962, this decision was approved explicitly by the 17th session of the General Assembly (UN Doc. A/RES/1785 (XVII).

The convening of the conference was, however, preceded by lengthy disputes: the industrialized countries were only willing to establish the conference as a subsidiary body to the ECOSOC (→ Principal Organs, Subsidiary Organs, Treaty Bodies). Finally, agreement on the foundation as a “special organ” of the GA was reached with a compromise: the developing countries gave up their plan to establish an organization exclusively concerned with aspects of development, and they agreed to limit UNCTAD’s responsibility to the trade between countries on different developmental levels and to the trade between developing countries and countries with different economic and social systems. Additional