Module: Nigeria in the International Community

Topic: International Organizations

International Organizations are associations formed by three or more states through a formal agreement (treaty) to pursue common goals and tackle global challenges that a single nation cannot solve alone.

1. The United Nations (UN)

Established on **October 24, 1945**, after World War II, the UN is the largest and most influential international organization.

- **Aims and Objectives:**
  - To maintain international peace and security.
  - To develop friendly relations among nations.
  - To achieve international cooperation in solving economic, social, and humanitarian problems.
- **Major Organs of the UN:**
  1. **General Assembly:** The main deliberative body where all member states have one vote.
  2. **Security Council:** Responsible for maintaining peace. It has 15 members: 5 Permanent (USA, UK, France, China, Russia) with **Veto Power**, and 10 non-permanent members.
  3. **Secretariat:** The administrative arm headed by the **Secretary-General** (the chief administrative officer).
  4. **International Court of Justice (ICJ):** The "World Court" located in The Hague, Netherlands.
  5. **Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC):** Coordinates the work of specialized agencies like **WHO, UNESCO, and UNICEF**.

2. The African Union (AU)

The AU replaced the **Organization of African Unity (OAU)** in **2002**. It is the premier continental body for Africa.

- **Aims and Objectives:**
  - To achieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples.
  - To defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its members.
  - To promote democratic principles, human rights, and good governance.

- **Organs:** The Assembly (Heads of State), The Executive Council, and the **African Union Commission** (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia).

3. ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)

Established on **May 28, 1975**, via the **Treaty of Lagos**, it is a regional group of 15 West African countries.

- **Aims and Objectives:**
  - To promote economic integration and cooperation in West Africa.
  - To create a single large trading bloc.
  - To establish a common currency (The "Eco").
  - To maintain regional peace through the **ECOMOG** (ECOWAS Monitoring Group) military force.
- **Nigeria's Role:** Nigeria provides about **60% of the funding** for ECOWAS and hosts its headquarters in Abuja.

4. The Commonwealth of Nations

This is a voluntary association of 56 independent countries, most of which were formerly part of the British Empire.

- **Characteristics:**
  - The **King/Queen of the UK** is the symbolic Head of the Commonwealth.
  - Members share common values like democracy, human rights, and the English language.
  - **The Commonwealth Games** are held every four years to foster unity through sports.

5. OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries)

Nigeria joined OPEC in **1971**. This is an intergovernmental organization of 12 oil-exporting nations.

- **Primary Objective:** To coordinate and unify petroleum policies among member countries to ensure stable oil prices in the international market.
- **Importance to Nigeria:** Since Nigeria's economy relies heavily on crude oil exports, OPEC membership helps protect our national revenue.

6. Problems Facing International Organizations

1. **Lack of Enforcement Power:** They often rely on the "goodwill" of members; they cannot force a powerful country to obey.
2. **Funding Issues:** Many member states (including African nations) often fail to pay their annual dues on time.
3. **Conflict of Interest:** National interests of powerful countries often clash with the collective goals of the organization.
4. **Veto Power:** In the UN Security Council, a single "No" vote from a permanent member can stop a global action.

Summary Table for Exam Revision

Organization	Headquarters	Key Leader Title	Main Focus
UN	New York, USA	Secretary-General	Global Peace
AU	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Chairperson	African Unity
ECOWAS	Abuja, Nigeria	President of the Commission	West African Trade
OPEC	Vienna, Austria	Secretary-General	Oil Price Stability