

Module: Nigeria in the International Community

Topic: International Organizations

To round out your study of **International Organizations**, it is important to look at the specialized agencies, the challenges of regional integration, and the specific role of "Veto Power" which often appears in advanced Government papers.

1. Specialized Agencies of the UN

While the General Assembly sets policy, the "work" of the UN is carried out by specialized agencies. Each has a specific mandate:

- **WHO (World Health Organization):** Coordinates international health responses (e.g., during the COVID-19 pandemic or Ebola outbreaks).
- **UNESCO:** Focuses on Education, Science, and Culture. They designate "World Heritage Sites" to protect history.
- **UNICEF:** Dedicated to the rights and well-being of every child.
- **IMF (International Monetary Fund):** Focuses on global financial stability and provides loans to countries facing economic crises.
- **World Bank:** Provides long-term loans for development projects (like building roads or schools) in developing nations.

2. The Power of the "Big Five" (Veto Power)

The **UN Security Council** is the only body that can authorize military action. However, it is dominated by the **Permanent Five (P5)**: USA, UK, France, China, and Russia.

- **What is the Veto?** If any one of these five countries says "No" to a resolution, it is immediately defeated, even if all other 14 members of the council say "Yes."
- **The Criticism:** Many countries, including Nigeria, argue that the Veto is undemocratic and that Africa deserves a permanent seat on the Security Council to reflect the modern world.

3. Regionalism vs. Globalism

- **Globalism:** Organizations like the **UN** that include almost every country in the world to solve global problems.
- **Regionalism:** Organizations like **ECOWAS** or the **AU** that focus on a specific geographic area.

    - *Benefit:* Neighbors often understand each other's problems better (e.g., ECOWAS understands West African security better than the UN might).
    - *Disadvantage:* Small regional groups may lack the money or military power of a global body.

4. ECOMOG: Nigeria's Military Leadership

A specific sub-topic for Nigerian students is **ECOMOG** (ECOWAS Monitoring Group).

- **Function:** It is the non-standing military arm of ECOWAS.
- **History:** It was established in 1990 to intervene in the Liberian Civil War.
- **Nigeria's Role:** Nigeria provided the majority of the soldiers, funding, and equipment. This cemented Nigeria's reputation as the "Giant of Africa" and a leader in regional security.

5. Challenges to Regional Integration

Why is it hard for organizations like the AU or ECOWAS to be 100% successful?

1. **Political Instability:** Coups and civil wars in member states distract the organization from economic goals.
2. **Anglophone vs. Francophone Divide:** In West Africa, there is sometimes a "tug-of-war" between English-speaking countries (led by Nigeria) and French-speaking countries (supported by France).
3. **Poor Infrastructure:** You cannot have a successful "Economic Community" if there are no good roads or rails connecting the countries.
4. **Colonial Ties:** Some African countries still prioritize their relationship with their former colonial masters over their relationship with their African neighbors.

6. Key Terminology for Advanced Exams

- **Supranationalism:** When an organization has the power to make rules that member states *must* follow (like the European Union). Most African organizations are still **Intergovernmental** (they rely on cooperation rather than force).
- **Protocols:** Formal documents that add new rules or duties to an existing treaty.
- **Secretary-General / Chairperson:** The chief administrative officer who runs the daily affairs of the organization but usually has no voting power.

This concludes the deep dive into International Organizations.