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### United Nations

The United Nations headquarters is in Manhattan, New York. New York was selected as the headquarters over other places such as Boston and Philadelphia due to a donation of 8.5 million dollars by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to build it in New York. It was completed in 1952, with a loan from the United States of 65 million dollars. The loan issued to the United Nations has been completely paid off as of 1982 (“Fact Sheet”). The architects had initially estimated the cost to be 85 million dollars; however, 20 million dollars was saved by making the conference room smaller and reducing the height of the Secretariat building from 45 stories to 39 stories. The United Nations building is technically international property; however, upon accepting the loan from the United States, the UN building acts in accordance with US laws. Still, no officer or official of the United States may enter the United Nations without the consent of the secretary-general of the organization. However, no person seeking refuge from New York officials or Federal officials can enter the United Nations. As it is independent from the United States, the United Nations has its own postal office.

To create such a globally significant building in the United States, a ten-member design team from various countries was assembled, so that no one country would have too much influence (“Fact Sheet”). The design team met at Rockefeller Center. The UN building in New York is home to two of the most important organs of the United Nations: the General Assembly and the Security Council. The building itself is composed of four main parts: the Secretariat building, the General Assembly building, the Conference building, and the Hammarskjold library (“Headquarters”). After many alternate floor plans and blueprints were proposed, chief architect Wallace K. Harrison decided on these four main parts. Since the initial construction, many expansion and renovation projects have taken place. The most recent of these renovation projects occurred in 2008., when 1.9 billion dollars was allocated to overhaul the UN building complex in five years.

The United Nations is saturated with art from all around the world. Furthermore, the complex contains gardens which were originally private and now are open to the public. The complex since then has been well known for its gardens and sculptures, including several donations from other countries, such as the Soviet Union. There are many other significant artworks in addition to the sculptures in the gardens. Another example is *Peace* by Chagall. It is a stained glass window commemorating the life of Dag Hammarskjold, the second Secretary General of the United Nations. Among many other significant works, the Japanese Peace Bell is rung in the opening of every general assembly session. Several other notable artworks include a tapestry of a copy of *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso, two Fernand Léger murals, two murals by Brazilian artist Candido Portinari, and a gift from the Luxembourg government: a sculpture of

a Colt Python revolver with its barrel tied in a knot. As one can see, there are many important artworks donated from all over the world, with an overwhelming message of nonviolence and peace. It is important to note that there are more artworks donated from many other countries. Among the many languages of the many member countries, six are official at the UN: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish as its official languages (“Headquarters of the United Nations”).

## Works Cited

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