

in 1975. Its main objective is to foster economic development and social progress of member countries and Muslim communities individually as well as jointly in accordance with the principles of the Sharia. It is active in the promotion of trade and the flow of investments among member countries, and maintains a Special Assistance Fund for member countries suffering natural calamities. The Fund is also used to finance health and educational projects aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of Muslim communities in non-member countries. A US\$1.5bn. IDB Infrastructure Fund was launched in 1998 to invest in projects such as power, telecommunications, transportation, energy, natural resources, petro-chemical and other infrastructure-related sectors in member countries.

*Members (56 as of Feb. 2010).* Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Brunei, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen.

*Official language:* Arabic. *Working languages:* English, French.  
*Headquarters:* PO Box 5925, Jeddah 21432, Saudi Arabia.  
*Website:* <http://www.isdb.org>  
*President:* Ahmed Mohamed Ali (Saudi Arabia).

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## Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

*Origin.* Médecins sans Frontières was founded in 1971 by a small group of doctors and journalists who believed that all people have a right to emergency relief.

*Functions.* MSF was one of the first non-governmental organizations to provide both urgently needed medical assistance and to publicly bear witness to the plight of the people it helps. Today MSF is an international medical humanitarian movement with branch offices in 19 countries. In 2008 MSF volunteer doctors, nurses, other medical professionals, logistical experts, water and sanitation engineers, and administrators departed on more than 4,600 missions and joined more than 23,900 locally hired staff to provide medical aid in over 65 countries. MSF was awarded the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize.

*Headquarters:* MSF International Office, Rue de Lausanne 78, CH-1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland.  
*Website:* <http://www.msf.org>  
*Secretary-General:* Christopher Stokes (France/UK).  
*International Council President:* Dr Christophe Fournier (France).

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## North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

*Origin.* On 4 April 1949 the foreign ministers of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the UK and the USA signed the North Atlantic Treaty, establishing the *North Atlantic Alliance*. In 1952 Greece and Turkey acceded to the Treaty; in 1955 the Federal Republic of

Germany; in 1982 Spain; in 1999 the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland; in 2004 Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia; and in 2009 Albania and Croatia, bringing the total to 28 member countries.

*Functions.* The Alliance was established as a defensive political and military alliance of independent countries in accordance with the terms of the UN Charter. Its fundamental role is to safeguard the freedom and security of its members by political and military means. It also encourages consultation and co-operation with non-NATO countries in a wide range of security-related areas to help prevent conflicts within and beyond the frontiers of its member countries. NATO promotes democratic values and is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis-management operations alone or in co-operation with other countries and international organizations.

*Reform and Transformation of the Alliance.* Following the demise of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, and the improved relations with Russia, NATO established security dialogue and co-operation with the states of Central and Eastern Europe and those of the former USSR. These changes were reflected in the publication in 1991 of a new Strategic Concept for the Alliance outlining NATO's enduring purpose and nature, and its fundamental security tasks. Further changes in the security environment during the 1990s led to the development of the current Strategic Concept, published in 1999 to address new risks such as terrorism, ethnic conflict, human rights abuses, political instability, economic fragility, and the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their means of delivery. A new Strategic Concept, which will reflect new and emerging security threats, is currently being discussed and is expected to be published at a NATO summit meeting in late 2010.

*The Euro-Atlantic Partnership.* In 1991 the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC) was established as a forum for dialogue with former Warsaw Pact countries. The NACC was replaced in 1997 by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), which brings together all 50 NATO and partner countries in the Euro-Atlantic area for dialogue and consultation on political and security-related issues. It provides the overall political framework for NATO's co-operation with partner countries and the bilateral relationships developed between NATO and individual partner countries under the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme, which was launched in 1994.

Since its launch, the PfP programme has been adapted to expand and intensify political and military co-operation throughout Europe. Core objectives are: the facilitation of transparency in national defence planning and budgeting processes; democratic control of defence forces; members' maintenance of capability and readiness to contribute to operations under the authority of the UN; development of co-operative military relations with NATO (joint planning, training and exercises) in order to strengthen participants' ability to undertake missions in the fields of peacekeeping, search and rescue, and humanitarian operations; development, over the longer term, of forces better able to operate with those of NATO member forces. NATO will consult with any active partner which perceives a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence or security.

One of the most tangible aspects of co-operation between partner countries and NATO has been their individual participation in NATO-led peace-support operations. PfP has done much to facilitate this and has also been a key factor in promoting a spirit of practical co-operation and commitment to the democratic principles that underpin the Alliance. In Feb. 2010 NATO had 22 PfP partners: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia,