RENEWING THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

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UPPSALA, SWEDEN
Contents

PREFACE 7

I. INTRODUCTION 11

II. THE SYSTEM AS IT IS 23
   Image and Reality: A 'Vast, Sprawling Bureaucracy' 26
   Relationships in the System 30
   Overhauling the UN System without constitutional change 33
   Purposes and Pitfalls in UN Reform 34

III. THE FORGOTTEN DESIGN FOR THE SYSTEM 39
   Lost architecture 39
   The Charter's authority 41
   The UN's budgetary role 43
   A common headquarters location 45

IV. THE MACHINERY FOR EQUITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 53
   The Primordial Obligation 53
   Where to formulate macro-economic policy? 59
   A Consultative Board of the System 62
   Reciprocal Representation 64
   Inter-secretariat improvements 66
   Strengthening the Secretariat's economic and social capacities 67
   The Ill-fated Director-General's Post 68
   The 1992 Secretariat Reorganization 72
   An Inter-Agency Advisory Board 77
   The Bretton Woods 'Specialized Agencies' 77

V. OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 87
   The country labyrinth 89
   The regional key 95
   The global level 99
   Voluntary funding of development activities 99
   Constitutional reform? 103

VI. HUMAN RIGHTS 105
   The High Commissioner 109
   Ombudsman for the UN System itself 111

VII. HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY CAPACITIES 112
   Effective response machinery 112
   A new coordination problem 116
   UN Humanitarian Security Police? 118
VIII. THE DECISION-MAKING MACHINERY 119

Introduction 119
Entering the maze 121
'One Nation, One Vote' 123
The systemic North-South factor 126
Delegation capacities 126
Lobbying by international civil servants 128
The General Assembly 129
Work Calendars 133
Coordination at home 140

IX. FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT 142

Finance and Financial Management 142
The perennial financing crisis 148
Managing the United Nations for leadership 156

X. THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE 159

Governmental pressure 159
Civil service salaries 163
The issue of 'deadwood and mediocrity' 165
The gender imbalance 168
Administrative justice 169

XI. 'WE, THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ...' 171

NGO consultative status 171
Towards a more democratic United Nations 176

XII. IN A TIME BEYOND WARNINGS 182

XIII. RECOMMENDATIONS 185

General observations 185
Recommendations for the process of reform 188
A Common Seat of the United Nations System 189
An Intergovernmental Board of the UN System 190
Making the Special Agreements work 191
Strengthening inter-secretariat bonds 193
Ensuring United Nations leadership in international economic cooperation 194
The Bretton Woods system 197
Operational Development Activities 198
Human Rights 201
Humanitarian emergency machinery 203
The deliberative machinery 205
Finance and Management 208
The International Civil Service 210
'We, the Peoples ...' 211

Authors and Sponsors 215
Diagrams, Graphs and Tables

Diagrams and Graphs

Estimated growth of world population 14
The United Nations System 24
Architects' sketch of common headquarters 47
Global economic disparities 54
1975 Experts' proposals for Secretariat structure for global economic cooperation 70
Actual outcome of proposals by 1980 71
Location of the regional offices of the UN System 96
The UN Human Rights system 106
Votes in the General Assembly in relation to world population 125
The UN System as originally envisaged 140
The UN System as of 1994 141
Unpaid assessed contributions 149
Proposed reorganization of the Secretariat 157
Strengthening the UN System: Key Recommendations 186

Tables

1. Staff of the UN System 27
2. Headquarters geography of the UN System 48
3. Comparison of UN and World Bank/IMF characteristics 78
4. Expenditures of UN System on development activities 88
5. Activities of system components in the same fields 91
6. Voluntary vs. Assessed Budgeting 102
7. Flows of business to ECOSOC, 1983 121
8. Member-states' representational strengths 126
9. Percentage of Women in Missions and Delegations 128
10. Agenda of 48th General Assembly, 1993 130
11. Duration of General Assembly agenda items 131
12. Sources of repeat General Assembly agenda items 132
13. Comparison of UN, EC, and national working calendars 135
14. Overall expenditures of the UN System, 1992 144
15. Distribution of staff by regional source, 1992 167
16. Development of a UN Parliamentary Assembly 178
17. Functions of a UN Parliamentary Assembly 179
## Glossary of Key Terms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Nations System</td>
<td>The ensemble of the UN and the Specialized Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>See definition on page 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-Budgetary</td>
<td>Voluntary (not assessed) funds of the UN or an Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operational Activities</td>
<td>See definition in page 87, footnote 170</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent Mission</td>
<td>The 'embassy' of a Government to the UN or an Agency</td>
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<td>Permanent Representative</td>
<td>Head of the Permanent Mission to the UN or an Agency</td>
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<td>Preparatory Commission</td>
<td>1945: recommended detailed design of the UN System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Commission</td>
<td>1945: recommended detailed design of the UN System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Commission</td>
<td>Of ECOSOC, see page 23, and for their acronyms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reform</td>
<td>See description on page 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reorganization</td>
<td>(Also 'restructuring'): see description on page 38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>Civil-service organization of the UN or an Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Agreement</td>
<td>Formal agreement between UN and a Specialized Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialized Agencies</td>
<td>Common grading, remuneration and other staff standards</td>
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<td>UN Common System</td>
<td>Administrative Committee on Coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>UN Centre on Transnational Corporations (abolished)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>UN Economic and Social Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO of the UN</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN</td>
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<td>(GATT)</td>
<td>(General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAEA</td>
<td>International Atomic Energy Agency</td>
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<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction &amp; Development (World Bank)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICAO</td>
<td>International Civil Aviation Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICJ</td>
<td>International Court of Justice (World Court)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICSC</td>
<td>International Civil Service Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Association (World Bank)</td>
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<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>IMO</td>
<td>International Maritime Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ITO)</td>
<td>(International Trade Organization: never established)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITU</td>
<td>International Telecommunications Union</td>
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<td>JIU</td>
<td>Joint Inspection Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCIO</td>
<td>1945 UN Conference on International Organization</td>
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<td>UNCED</td>
<td>1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development</td>
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<td>UNCTAD</td>
<td>UN Conference on Trade and Development (recurring)</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>UN Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>UN Environment Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>UN Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>UN High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>UN Children's Fund</td>
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<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>UN Industrial Development Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNITAR</td>
<td>UN Institute for Training and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPU</td>
<td>Universal Postal Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>WIPO</td>
<td>World Intellectual Property Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMO</td>
<td>World Meteorological Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>(WTO)</td>
<td>(World Trade Organization: proposed successor to GATT)</td>
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</table>
Our object in this study is to analyse the present state of the UN ‘system’ and to suggest changes and reforms which might allow it to function in a more systematic and effective manner.

This study is the fourth in a sequence analysing salient problems in the working of the United Nations system and recommending how to equip it better to meet the enormous challenges of a new era. Each study has benefited from the sponsorship and consistent encouragement of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (Uppsala, Sweden) and the Ford Foundation (New York, USA).

The work began in 1989–1990 with issues of leadership: how governments discharge their responsibilities in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads in the system, and how these procedures could be improved. A representative group of Ambassadors to the United Nations met at the Ford Foundation to discuss that paper, leading to a number of further informal meetings in 1990–1991.

We had already outlined some problems of organization in the original leadership paper. In 1991, as interest grew in reorganizing the Secretariat of the United Nations, the group of ambassadors asked for what became the second paper, containing recommendations for such reorganization.

Increasing concern over the system’s humanitarian emergency machinery led to a further request that we amplify our recommendations for reforms in that area. This third study was also completed in 1991 as a contribution to the debate in the General Assembly on the subject that resulted in a reform resolution.

Reform of the overall United Nations system was already seen as an issue which would have to be discussed during the fiftieth anniversary of the UN in 1995. During the informal meetings with the group of ambassadors we were urged to make suggestions on this larger problem. The present study has been written in response to that request.

While the UN system is neither so vast nor so costly as is now almost routinely suggested in some quarters, governments have, since 1945, greatly expanded the number of entities in the system, and many have become far more autonomous from parent bodies than was originally intended. We shall not attempt to examine the internal problems of all these components. Our purpose is to identify the most important improvements needed to make what is supposed to be a system actually function as a system.

Our objective in this study is to examine the system as it now is, and to suggest adjustments

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3 Also published in the issue of *Development Dialogue* cited in footnote 2.
and modifications which might gradually transform it into the effective mechanism of a future world community.

We have not, however, included in the study an analysis or recommendations on the strictly peace and security activities of the UN, except to recognize their interconnection with the other work of the UN system and to stress the necessity of dealing with the root causes of instability, violence and insecurity. This very important aspect of the UN's work is at present the subject of innumerable studies and projects all over the world, and we wished to focus on the far less worked-over ground of economic and social cooperation. We also felt that any serious treatment of peace and security matters would have made this study impossibly long.

In the present political context, anyone proposing reforms of the UN system faces the constant risk of being labeled ‘utopian’ or ‘unrealistic’, even if the proposals are eminently sensible. This study attempts to identify a graduated sequence of major options for reform and reorganization which are both feasible and likely to improve the situation.

We have proceeded from the premise that what will ultimately be needed—major constitutional transformation of the disparate elements into an integrated United Nations—is not attainable now. The study therefore addresses less radical alternatives. Some of these proposals may seem daunting, but they should not be beyond the wit and will of member-governments if they genuinely wish to improve the system’s capacity and performance. Most are the irreducible minimum needed to enable the system to face the enormous challenges which now confront it.

Over the decades highly qualified commentators from many different cultures have made proposals for improvement and restructuring. We have carefully studied these proposals. We have consulted many veterans of the system’s civil services and its diplomatic and non-governmental communities, both individually and in a special meeting at Uppsala arranged by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. The participants in the Uppsala meeting (listed below) then gave us their comments on the first draft, for which we are grateful.

Shepard Forman of The Ford Foundation has participated in all phases of the project. Sven Hamrell and Olle Nordberg of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation have equally been involved in the entire project and, with their staff colleagues, organized the Uppsala meeting. They have once again been responsible for the publication. Maya Matthews provided valuable research assistance.

As with our previous studies Marcia Bikales has seen the production of the entire work through, taking care of typing and collation, as well as the considerable correspondence. She has made a vital contribution to the project.

All the various sources of ideas and suggestions are gratefully acknowledged, but we take sole responsibility for the final contents, which reflect our working experience in a United Nations that we are proud to have served.

This study has been prepared during the latest of several periods of intensive effort to reorganize the UN. We have endeavoured to take account of such efforts, urging their completion where they match our conclusions but feeling free to indicate where we believe the current changes will not be adequate.
Throughout, we shall be addressing the deficiencies, not the achievements, of the UN system. Obviously the member-governments have the major responsibility for such deficiencies. By the same token they have a remarkable record of historic accomplishment—all too seldom acknowledged—during the UN's first fifty years.

The main text of the study is intended for a wide readership of those who are interested in international organization and in the strengthening of the international system. The 'Recommendations' in Chapter XIII are intended to articulate the study's recommendations in the more detailed context of the system's procedures and organization.

The participants at our Uppsala meeting were hard-headed practical people. Nonetheless, one veteran in the workings of the system urged us, 'Do not be too "realistic", please'. Another urged that we predicate our recommendations on the UN 'as vision'. We have proceeded on the assumption that ideal reform may only come slowly, if at all, but that governments can sometimes be moved to surprise themselves and the wider international community. The UN, for all its shortcomings, tends in the long-run to inspire serious people to work hard to develop and improve it.

New York, May 1994

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Participants in the Uppsala Consultation at the Dag Hammarskjöld Centre:

Adebayo Adedeji  Peter Hansen  Ernst Michanek  Robert van Schaik
Erskine Childers  Chandra Hardy  Pat Mooney  Frances Stewart
Hans Dahlgren  Stephane Hessel  Olle Nordberg  Brian Urquhart
Muchkund Dubey  Amir H. Jamal  Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo  Charles Weitz
Sven Hamrell  Rounaq Jahan  Mohamed Sahnoun

The Dag Hammarskjöld Centre
I. INTRODUCTION

I would not want to live in a world that was not one world.

Mahatma Gandhi

The world needs a centre, and some confidence that the centre is holding; the United Nations is the only credible candidate.

External Affairs Committee, House of Commons of Canada

Fifty years ago ‘post-war planning’ provided an oasis of reason, intellectual analysis and idealism in the tragedy and turmoil of the Second World War. The result, even before the war ended, was a blueprint for the post-war world and the institutions which were to ‘save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’. The central mechanism of this post-war vision was what came to be called the United Nations system—the United Nations itself, the International Court of Justice, and the specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions. These institutions would, it was hoped, work in harmony and cooperation with regional organizations.

The UN system has weathered nearly fifty years of tumultuous change, and it remains the world’s principal mechanism for international peace and security and for mobilizing international efforts to deal with global problems. For various reasons it has not, so far, come close to fulfilling the hopes and dreams of its founders. It has, however, struggled to function as best it could throughout the Cold War period and the gradual emergence of a world without empires, and it has some major achievements to its credit.

When the Cold War came to an end it was assumed—for a short time at least—that the UN system, freed of the ideological and other constraints of the East-West struggle, would at last come into its own. The word ‘renaissance’ was freely used in this connection, and indeed over many issues the UN Security Council developed an unprecedented consensus and momentum. It soon became clear, however, that the thawing of the Cold War had exposed long ignored tensions, quickly unleashing many political, ethnic, economic and social upheavals. It also became clear that the great global economic and social problems which had emerged in the 1960s were more formidable than ever.

The world of the 1990s turns out, indeed, to be a far more dangerous place than many had hoped when the East-West nuclear and ideological confrontation unexpectedly ended. Serious global problems that were neglected during that confrontation are now merging with its own grim legacies. Thus the post-Cold War world has not less but more tension, simultaneously, and in more places; not less but increasing degradation of the quality of human life; not simpler but ever more complex issues of international law and ethics, management and practical cooperation. The United

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Nations system is in greater and more comprehensive demand than ever before. In some areas it is stretched to the limits of its capacity.

There is unprecedented restiveness among the world's huge population. Traditional nation-state structures are weakening, and long-suppressed cultural and ethnic groups are resurgent. There are severe, potentially catastrophic economic inequities between the North and South, and growing income disparities and poverty throughout the world. The international community also faces massive ecological degradation as a result of industry and population increase. Despite the benefits of modern science and technology, mass famine and disease have increased. Wars about vital resources are all too easy to imagine.

Armed conflict is spreading across a planet strewn with readily usable weapons and stalked by eager arms merchants. In the last four years the UN has had to mount as many peace-keeping operations as in the whole of its previous history. By early 1993 the UN was deploying 4 times the number of troops, 70 times more police and over 100 times the number of civilian personnel as in 1987, at nearly 10 times the annual cost. As of 30 April 1994 the UN had contributions from 66 countries of 65,838 troops, 2,400 military observers, and 1,307 civilian and police personnel, with possible further deployments (and costs) evolving almost weekly relative to situations like those in Haiti, Rwanda, and former Yugoslavia. The projected costs of peace-keeping rose from some $600 million in 1991 to an estimated $2.3 billion for 1993.

The causes and the effects of these phenomena often spill across frontiers, and indeed regions, or draw outside forces into areas of crisis. The truism, 'interdependence', is by no means always as benign as use of the term sometimes implies. Moreover, actions and reactions in the North can have draconian consequences for the South.

Transnational communication

Even the most ostensibly benign of humanity's technological advances can have perverse effects. Since 1945 modern communications have released a massive daily flow of information and ideas across sovereign state borders. Apart from the ubiquitous radio, the world now has over 1 billion TV sets, over 300 satellite-delivered services with news reaching 137 countries. Unstoppable by governments, this new communication has spread the inspiring concepts of the United Nations Bill of Human Rights throughout the world—not only civil and political but economic and social human rights; not only individual rights but collective rights. The International Bill of Rights comprises the Universal Declaration, the two Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Optional Protocol to the first. It is increasingly regarded as legitimate also to include in the Bill of Rights the whole body of UN international human rights law adopted since 1948, c.f. Human Rights: A compilation of International Instruments, United Nations.
of humankind. This undoubtedly brings benefits, but, with $65 billion per year in television advertising alone, it also generates rising frustration as the affluence and consumerist life-styles of the minority in the industrialized North and of some South elites are compared with the desperate poverty of the vast majority.

Communication on this scale inevitably produces political upheavals, migrations, and sometimes violence as well, before it can be channeled into peaceful social advancement. Burgeoning communication is steadily reducing the time left to address peacefully and systematically the socio-economic inequities that divide and pervade the international community.

**Economic imbalance**

Poor countries will go on being poor and their populations malnourished until such time as a more equitable trade regime is established and they can expect a better return for their exports.

*FAO, 1992*

The endemic poverty that the decolonization process revealed would have been very difficult to overcome even with the best of policies and the most favourably managed international economic conditions. Neither has been evolved. The Cold War not only diverted attention and resources from the challenge of world poverty but aggravated deep flaws in the operation of the world's economy. In this process the poor of the South have had little voice, and common sense and enlightened self-interest among the affluent has been equally muted.

There is an imperative and urgent need for 'all-win', genuinely global strategies. Without these, the industrialized countries will find their advantage inexorably eroding. They will have to search more and more frenetically for adequate earnings from trade among themselves. When they fully perceive their need for larger markets in the South they will find most of the South still without sufficient purchasing power for Northern products, income growth having been blocked by their own protectionist barriers.

**Absolute poverty**

This widening gap in economic progress... between the wealthy and the poor nations (is) ultimately more explosive than political or ideological differences.

*Secretary-General U Thant, 1963*

Some 1.4 billion people now live in absolute poverty, 40 per cent more than fifteen years ago. Nearly 1 in every 4 human beings alive today is only existing on the margins of survival, too poor

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to obtain the food they need to work, or adequate shelter, or minimal health care, let alone education for their children.

Overall, for the poorest among humankind the past thirty years have been like trying to go up the down escalator. In 1960 the richest one-fifth of the world’s population enjoyed 30 times the income of the poorest; by 1989 the richest fifth was receiving 60 times the income of the poorest.\textsuperscript{10} Within a single country, this situation would be recognized as the classic condition for a massive and probably violent revolution. The disequilibrium in itself reflects a world without long-term strategic policies, a world in a ‘no-win’ condition.

\textbf{Population increase}

The world’s population has more than doubled since the UN was founded, and is now increasing by some 250,000 every day; over 90 million every year. The number of those formally unemployed, alone, is already some 400 million in the South, equivalent to the entire population of Western and Northern Europe. Merely to hold it at these levels requires the creation of some 40 million new jobs every year.\textsuperscript{11} Under present North-South imbalances there is not the remotest chance of even this holding action.


\textsuperscript{11} ILO data.
The population calculus is highly sensitive. The disadvantages experienced by the South in present international economic relationships will have staggering incremental effects. Delay in enabling developing countries to reduce family size in the next ten years alone will result in an inexorable extra rate of increase that will put an additional 4 billion human beings on earth by 2050—an increase equal to the entire world population in 1975.12

**Food security**

Future food security is increasingly problematic, even if it were believed that countries unable to feed themselves should remain dependent on imported food. For food-deficit regions like Africa the present terms of trade, making subsidized agricultural products from the North more attractive than locally grown food, constantly confound efforts to provide incentives for African farmers to grow more for their own people.13

World grain area per capita has shrunk by almost half since 1950. In the last ten years the area of cropland available per capita has not expanded, because of population increase combined with soil erosion and urbanization.14

**Environmental degradation**

Science and technology have manufactured and let loose on the planet over 70,000 synthetic chemicals. Earth's remaining forest cover continues to decline from consumerism, urban-industrial encroachment and pollution, unsustainable development models in developing countries, and the demands of swelling populations for fuelwood.

Here again, in a tight vicious circle, external factors drive internal degradation, in turn affecting the international environment. Forest cover provides a vivid illustration of this process. Under pressure of debt repayments to Northern creditors, and protectionism that denies them other export earnings, developing countries respond to high consumer demand for tropical hardwood in the North (where 20 per cent of humankind consumes 85 per cent of all wood in the world). The felling of so many tropical trees is destroying entire segments of the planet's bio-genetic heritage, and very possibly contributing to global climate change as well.15

The final agreements at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Rio de Janeiro involved many disappointments and were only achieved under sustained pressure on governments by non-governmental organizations. But the enormous work-plan of 'Agenda 21' does indicate the magnitude of intergovernmental cooperation needed to avert a catastrophic breakdown of the planet's eco-systems.

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12 State of World Population 1992, UNFPA.
14 *i.a.* reports by FAO, World Resources Institute, US Department of Agriculture.
15 Multiple national and expert reports to the UN Conference on Environment and Development, 1992.
The weakening nation state

The Western nation-state concept is beginning to erode under the complexities of managing and financing urbanized consumer societies, with mounting citizen demand for local and provincial autonomy and declining citizen confidence in national-level democratic processes.

In other parts of the world where this state structure was grafted onto wholly different cultures, the increasing demand for human rights is prompting sharp new questions about it, and a search for more culturally appropriate forms of popular governance. Democracy is invoked everywhere, but with an increasingly large array of definitions.

This may be entirely healthy in the long term: in the short term it may give rise to widespread confusion and violence. The tragedy of Somalia is a disturbing example of convergences: an inappropriate Western nation-state structure, sustained at first by one and then the other side in the Cold War; grotesque quantities of arms introduced for a central dictatorship supported by outside powers; the post-Cold War collapse of the dictatorship, as the former superpowers lost interest but left the weapons behind; and a consequential descent into anarchy.

At the same time the external structures of the nation-state have also come under challenge in various ways. For example, modern, unregulated transnational communication systems have potentially devastating effects on national and international financial stability. Nearly a trillion dollars are now moved every day through international money markets, some two-thirds of this volume passing through London, New York and Tokyo. Only a small fraction of this money has anything to do with productive investments. Unregulated electronic speculation now trades large parts of the currency reserves of nation-states that only yesterday had sovereign control over them. The result is chaos, including currency devaluations, that have ripple effects throughout the rest of the world.

The external structure of the nation-state system is also eroding at its frontiers. The frontiers of many of the members of the UN, assumed to be politically valid and sacrosanct in their sovereignty under the UN Charter, were in fact established during the age of European empires. The assumption that these state frontiers correspond reasonably well to the cultural and other aspirations of the peoples inside them is now being challenged in several parts of the world.

Cultural and ethnic aspirations

The Communist premise that cultural and ethnic particularities would lose their political strength in a common proletariat evaporated for good with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of its influence in Eastern Europe. In only one year the membership of the UN expanded by another 15 states from that region, and more are likely.

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16 In 1992 the Bank of England spent one-sixth of its currency reserves in 48 hours in attempting to defend the value of the Pound. Sweden had to raise core interest rates to the unprecedented level of 500 per cent.
Even in the West, where it was assumed that democratic pluralism would satisfy ethnic aspirations, hitherto quiescent groups now invoke the self-determination they have seen so rapidly recognized for communities in the former Soviet Union.

In the South new generations are rediscovering their own older cultures and kinships, many of these sliced apart by imposed colonial boundaries. 'Minorities' whose welfare was to be looked after by UN human rights machinery as minorities are now expressing larger aspirations with increasing fervour. Where these issues were held in limbo during the Cold War, conflict is now erupting, often fuelled by the stockpiles of weapons the Cold War left behind.

The scale of this phenomenon calls for highly sensitive international machinery. Such machinery is needed in the first place to foster creative dialogue about increasingly common problems; to make it respectable to search for solutions. International machinery is also needed to ease transitions to some new arrangement. Since solutions will not always be found in time, more effective United Nations preventive diplomacy, protective operations, and peace-keeping will also be urgently needed.

**Multilateral management**

The state has become too big for the small things, and too small for the big things. The small things call for delegation downwards to the local level; The big things call for delegation upwards, for coordination between national policies, or for transnational institutions.

*Paul Streeten, 1992*\(^\text{17}\)

It has long been obvious that key socio-economic processes which operate beyond any one state's control should be managed by international bodies representing the interests of all states. Even before the birth of the UN system, John Maynard Keynes urged that the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (including an equitably functioning International Clearing Union), and the ill-fated International Trade Organization should, in the future, manage the international economic environment on behalf of the community of nation states under policies established by the General Assembly. As with other important features of the new international system, governments failed to follow through on these ideas.\(^\text{18}\) Eventually, as with some ecological problems, vital economic and social factors which no single state can control will have to come under multilateral management.

In the meantime the leadership of the UN Secretary-General is essential in monitoring major transnational developments, providing early warning of their implications, and presenting far-sighted proposals for their multilateral management to UN intergovernmental bodies. So far

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\(^{17}\) In monographs on International Governance, IDS, University of Sussex, Silver Jubilee Papers, p. 2, 1992.

\(^{18}\) See Hans Singer, *ibid.*
such monitoring has been limited to transnational corporations, and that only until 1992.\textsuperscript{19}

It is widely believed that the UN is ideologically unsuited for a role in the ‘private’ sector. However, it is worth noting that major figures in the world of transnational corporations increasingly express their anxiety at the lack of regulation and the need for a modicum of order in the world’s economic and financial arrangements.

\section*{Sovereignty}

It is difficult to see how a leap from today’s chaotic and disjointed world to something approaching a world federation is to come about... We must serve our apprenticeship and at every stage try to develop forms of international coexistence as far as is possible at the moment...

\textit{Dag Hammarskjöld, 1958}\textsuperscript{20}

The United Nations is an association of independent sovereign states. Sovereignty adds to the stature of the strongest states and provides, to some extent at least, protection for the weaker. Nonetheless the UN system has also brought about gradual limitations of sovereignty.

New treaty law is one of the main catalysts for sovereignty. The Law of the Sea Treaty covers virtually every aspect of state behaviour on and beneath the seas. The Seabed Authority is a new model for the regulation of so-called ‘Global Commons’—resources which need to be equitably managed and shared for the common good. Climate control and biodiversity treaties are later examples of limitations of sovereignty.

United Nations emergency interventions of various kinds have also provided the occasion for notable abridgments of national sovereignty. Especially in the last four years it has become clear that respect for state sovereignty may sometimes have to yield to the need to protect and sustain the lives of large numbers of innocent people caught between warring states or internal factions.

Developing countries have shown readiness to find ways for genuinely disinterested and UN-directed humanitarian intervention without formal government request or sanction.\textsuperscript{21} One of the first formal recognitions of such emergency-driven temporary cession of sovereignty came in the 1991 General Assembly resolution on humanitarian emergency assistance. For the first time, ‘consent’ appeared instead of ‘request’, and ‘country’ instead of ‘government’:

\begin{quote}
... humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle on the basis of an appeal by the affected country.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19} The work of the UN Centre for Transnational Corporations was an outstanding example of what is needed and, if controversial within one or two governments, was increasingly appreciated by corporations themselves. Regrettably the Centre was abruptly abolished in 1992.


\textsuperscript{21} e.g., General Assembly resolution 45/100 approving the use of ‘corridors of peace or tranquillity’. Also statements in the January 1992 Security Council ‘summit’ by India and Zimbabwe intimating readiness to develop ‘general principles and guidelines’ for such intervention (UN S/PV.3046 31 January 1992) and the unanimous adoption of Security Council decision S/24880 of 3 December 1991 for the joint UN relief intervention in Somalia.

\textsuperscript{22} General Assembly resolution 46/182, Annex I, para. 3, 19 December 1991; emphasis added.
Recent UN operations also reflect this trend. The largest, the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) involved 21,000 troops, police, civilian administrators, election organizers and monitors, economic and development specialists, refugee repatriators, and human rights monitors. The UN also assumed transitional authority in Somalia, where the Security Council authorized the use of force to maintain public order and to deal with bandits. In former Yugoslavia the Council declared (though not fully ensured) a number of ‘safe havens’ inside the frontiers of the new successor sovereign states. These are, for the moment, relatively isolated and temporary abridgments of sovereignty.

Practical cooperation of governments through the United Nations also leads to inconspicuous but nonetheless important cessions of sovereignty—what Dag Hammarskjöld called ‘processes of organic growth in the system of custom and law prevailing in the society of nations’. A wide range of relatively unsensational international activities have been chipping away at the edges of traditional sovereignty. Agreements on standard place-names in a UN Cartographic Conference, or the negotiation of global nutritional standards, are typical of such small steps towards an eventually trans-sovereign society. While the UN’s work in Human Rights is still constrained by the state-sovereignty emphasis of the Charter, there is a trend towards far more active intervention through investigation and monitoring, and the Office of the Secretary-General is now engaged in various human rights activities within states, especially during UN operations.

While there is no question, at present, of the transformation of the UN system into a supranational authority, the organization is in a transitional phase, basically shaped and constrained by national sovereignty, but sometimes acting outside and beyond it. Meanwhile, in the world at large, transnational economic forces and technology constantly override national sovereignty, sometimes with harsh, and even irremediable, consequences.

The future of state sovereignty

Respect for [the State’s] fundamental sovereignty and integrity are crucial to any common international progress. The time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty, however, has passed; its theory was never matched by reality. It is the task of leaders of States today to understand this and to find a balance between the needs of good internal governance and the requirements of an ever more interdependent world.

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali’s relatively cautious statement reflects the balance of views in a world still hesitantly contemplating the future beyond state sovereignty. The UN, representing

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both the inviolability of the sovereign state and the instrument for the development of trans-sovereign thinking and cooperation, thus approaches its fiftieth anniversary in an ambivalent posture.

**Resource tensions**

Issues of territory and divided cultural identity have often coincided in the past with competition for natural resources, but the pressures of development, consumerist expectations, and population are relatively new. Resource tensions now emerging have North-South dimensions as well as local and intra-regional ones.

Issues of petroleum pricing, distribution and profit-disposal have already contributed to major crises and wars. The Iraq-Kuwait crisis contained profound warnings about such converging factors that have not yet been assimilated.

The potential for actual conflict over water resources is also very real. No less than 40 per cent of the world’s population inhabit river and lake basins that are shared by two or more countries. Giant hydro-energy dams and irrigation schemes are already the cause of serious tensions between two (or more) states in several regions. Securing additional water resources has already been an objective of war in the Middle East.

**International migration**

The exhaustion of vital resources is already prompting significant migrations across frontiers in Africa and Asia. The urbanization development model urged on the South is producing vast cities, for the management of which there is no experience in human history, even in affluent countries.

Human migration and displacement are increasing throughout the post-Cold War world.

In the early 1970s applicants for asylum in Western European countries numbered some 16,000 per year; by 1991 there were 545,000 asylum seekers, and by 1993 country after country was beginning to close its gates.

In 1951 when UNHCR was established there were some 1.5 million legally classified Refugees world-wide; there are now nearly 20 million. Another estimated 24 million people are

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26 The longevity at current consumption rates of petroleum reserves beneath Southern, and particularly Islamic states, is some five times that of reserves in the North; i.a., Ed. Lester R. Brown, *State of the World 1991* (Washington, World Resources Institute, 1991), pp. 23–24.
28 Projected ‘mega-cities’ include Mexico City with a population equal to Canada’s; Calcutta with some 16 million. Cities in the South are growing by 3.6 per cent per year compared with 0.8 per cent in the North. *Population and Environment: The Challenges Ahead*, UNFPA, 1992.
30 Estimate of additional Balkan displacements over current global 18 million.
displaced within their own countries by ecological, economic and political causes. A significant proportion of these are on the edge of being pressed across one or more national frontiers.

One in about every 125 human beings alive is currently uprooted from homes, fields, or normal employment. In the world of the 1990s and beyond, these already unprecedented numbers can expand almost overnight in new political upheavals, as in the Gulf and Yugoslav crises.

If the total resource-deprivation that is abject poverty continues, it will prompt progressive waves of millions of despairing people trying to migrate from South to North.31 Yesterday's 'apocryphal' novel about such mass surges will become a sober forecast unless there is an entirely more serious collective international effort to address the root causes of these phenomena as matters demanding a genuinely effective global policy.

Unprecedented demand on the system

Thus, the UN system is now functioning in a world in which the volume and interaction of issues and dangers is vastly more complex than when the organization was created. The demands on the system and the conditions in which it functions are very far from anything that its founders could envisage. The political structure of the world they foresaw for this century was a total of perhaps 70 to 80 nation states;32 today the UN has 184 members, and still rising. The structure of the UN system itself is also overgrown by many years of proliferation and experiment.

Even as it stands the UN system is considerably more effective than the impression given by many stringent criticisms, especially those emanating from its most powerful members. It is, if anything, astonishing that this group of public-service international institutions, staffed from and governed by nearly every country in the world, have achieved so much of enduring value in the last forty-nine years. It would, however, be surprising if, after such a period of time, they were not in need of radical overhaul, the more so as their mandates and critical responsibilities are rapidly increasing in volume and complexity.

Phrases like 'world community' or 'global village' are by now cliches, and yet they represent an inexorable, and not wholly benign, truth. The peoples of the world, like it or not, are becoming increasingly interdependent. The only hope of effectively dealing with the world's major problems in the interest of all humankind is through the progressive development of a working world community.

To make any sort of positive working reality out of such a concept will require the political will of governments, the rule of law in vital areas, and an effective institutional and normative framework. At the present time, the first prerequisite, political will, is at best wavering and uncertain. The basis of an institutional framework does, however, exist in the United Nations

32 The original designers of the UN Headquarters were told to anticipate perhaps seventy member states.
system, which has itself often served as a vital catalyst of political will. To tackle the vast range of urgent global problems now demanding coherent attention, its machinery and capacity must be streamlined and strengthened.

The end of the Cold War has brought into sharper relief the immense gulf dividing humankind along North-South lines, as well as the changing lines of that divide. The essence of the UN’s dilemma is that while the international system needs to be urgently reformed if it is to help bridge that gulf and other great divisions, the existence of the gulf makes those very reforms difficult. Overcoming this impasse is a vital key to the future of the world organization, as well as to a peaceful and desirable future for humanity.
II. THE SYSTEM AS IT IS

The system in its current form is depicted in the official UN diagram on page 24. It consists of three kinds of intergovernmental organization in varying relationships to each other.

The United Nations

The first is the United Nations itself. It has six 'principal organs': the General Assembly which governs it; the Security Council; the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); the Trusteeship Council; the International Court of Justice (World Court); and the Secretariat headed by the Secretary-General. This central UN has its seat and all but one of its principal organs in New York, the World Court being sited at The Hague. The UN also has major offices at Geneva (UNOG) and Vienna (UNOV). There are five economic and social Regional Commissions and secretariats: for Africa at Addis Ababa (ECA); for West Asia at Baghdad (ESCWA); for Asia and the Pacific at Bangkok (ESCAP); for Europe at Geneva (ECE); and for Latin America and the Caribbean at Santiago (ECLAC). All of this apparatus is financed by proportionate assessment on each member state, in what is called the Regular Budget.

The central UN also contains a variety of funds, programmes, and other units that are wholly or in large part financed by voluntary contributions from member states to what are called Extra-Budgetary resources. These include the Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Development Programme (UNDP), the Environment Programme (UNEP), the Joint UN/FAO World Food Programme (WFP), the Population Fund (UNFPA), and the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Each has its own immediate governing body of member states elected by rotation. These funds may sometimes seem to be autonomous but they are fully responsible to the Secretary-General and under the ultimate authority of the General Assembly.
THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

PRINCIPAL ORGANS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

- INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE
- GENERAL ASSEMBLY
- ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL Council
- SECURITY Council
- SECRETARIAT
- TRUSTEESHIP Council

- REGIONAL COMMISSIONS
  - ECA: Economic Commission for Africa
  - ECA: Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
  - ECA: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
  - ESCAP: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
  - ESCAP: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

- FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS
  - ECA: Economic Commission for Africa
  - ECA: Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
  - ECA: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
  - ESCAP: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

- SESSIONAL AND STANDING COMMITTEES
  - EXPERT, AD HOC AND RELATED BODIES

- UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES AND ORGANIZATIONS (LIST ONLY)
- SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE SYSTEM
- OTHER COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND AD HOC AND RELATED BODIES

- UNITED NATIONS programmes and organizations (list only)
- Specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations within the system
- Other commissions, committees and ad hoc and related bodies

- Military Staff Committee
- Standing committees
- Other specialized committees

- Peacekeeping operations
  - UNMIL
  - UNAMIR
  - MINURSO
  - MINUSTAH
  - UNPROFOR
  - UNMIL
  - UNOSOM

- United Nations programmes and organizations (list only)
- Specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations within the system
- Other commissions, committees and ad hoc and related bodies

- UNITED NATIONS programmes and organizations (list only)
- Specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations within the system
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- Military Staff Committee
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  - MINUSTAH
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- United Nations programmes and organizations (list only)
- Specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations within the system
- Other commissions, committees and ad hoc and related bodies

- Military Staff Committee
- Standing committees
- Other specialized committees

- Peacekeeping operations
  - UNMIL
  - UNAMIR
  - MINURSO
  - MINUSTAH
  - UNPROFOR
  - UNMIL
  - UNOSOM
THE SYSTEM AS IT IS

The major agencies

A second component comprises seven major specialized agencies. Each of these was separately established by governments with its own constitution. Each has its own membership of states, its own governing bodies, its own secretariat with an executive head, and its own policies and programmes adopted by its governing bodies. The regular budgets of the first five of these specialized agencies cited below are also raised by assessment from their member states, but altogether separately from the UN budget. Each is, however, formally recognized under the UN Charter as a specialized agency 'brought into agreement with' the United Nations.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was first established in 1919 as an autonomous institution associated with the League of Nations. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Health Organization (WHO) had predecessors of various kinds under the League but were established de novo between 1944-1946. The Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) became a full specialized agency in 1985. Voting in the main governing bodies of these agencies is on the same, one-nation-one-vote principle as in the UN.38

The other large specialized agencies of the system—at least under the terms of the Charter—are the institutions established at a conference at Bretton Woods in 1944. Often therefore referred to as ‘the Bretton Woods institutions’, these are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank Group which includes the main commercial-rate lending Bank (IBRD), the soft-loan International Development Association (IDA), and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The budgets of the IMF and the World Bank Group are raised by wholly different procedures of underwriting and capital market issues. These institutions are governed according to voting weighted by shares held by member states.

A more recent addition as a specialized agency with capital funding operations is the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Created from resolutions of the 1974 World Food Conference, IFAD has the same separate legal status within the system. It raises its capital through replenishments, and has a governing council where three groups of countries—industrialized, oil-producing, and other developing—have equal voting rights.

(The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, GATT, has not been officially part of the UN system but has been described as having a de facto specialized-agency relationship. The relation of GATT’s successor, the ‘World Trade Organization’, has yet to be defined.)

Technical agencies

Although they have essentially the same relationship with the UN as those cited above, the world’s most important technical agencies are often perceived as a third category because of their greater

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38 Straight majority voting has been somewhat modified over budgetary matters by a form of consensus-seeking in the UN, and by the possibility of blocking veto by group alliances in UNIDO.
age and even more specific focus. Some of these, like the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU), were established more than a century ago. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) also had its origins in 19th century bureaus, but was established in its present form in 1974. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) had predecessor entities of various kinds but came into being after World War II. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established in 1956 by the United Nations.

How many entities?

As with national public-service institutions, and as the diagram illustrates, over the years numerous subsidiary bodies have been created within this system, providing an easy target for critics. The UN system is, however, if anything, less organizationally complex than the public-service machinery of any modestly sized country. Subsuming all subsidiary entities under parent bodies, the system only consists of the United Nations and fifteen organizations.

The term ‘system’ is used in this study to refer to the combination of the UN and these agencies. Terms like ‘the UN-proper’ or ‘the central UN’ refer only to organs, departments or funds established by the United Nations General Assembly.

Image and reality: a ‘Vast, sprawling bureaucracy’?

A commentary in some journal long ago must have declared that the UN is ‘a vast, sprawling bureaucracy’. This phrase entered the language and is routinely repeated in most Western media descriptions and politicians’ speeches, often picking up additional adjectives like ‘swollen’, ‘bloated’, and/or ‘Parkinsonian’. In the mid-1980s the phrase fuelled a drive by major contributing countries that cut the staff of the central UN Secretariat by 13 per cent, and it still inspires attempts further to reduce the capacities of the system. While there is no dispute that the UN and its associated agencies urgently need reorganization and better management, clear understanding of the actual size of the system’s staffing is essential in any review of needed reforms.

Size of system staff

The figures for the staff of the UN, its funds and programmes, and of the agencies, are provided in the table that follows. The total does not include the staff of the World Bank Group and IMF, because they are financed and paid on totally different bases or, of course, temporary peace-keeping and other emergency personnel.

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39 The mid-1980s campaign became commonly known as ‘the G-18’ process, after the group of 18 intergovernmental specialists appointed in 1986 by the General Assembly to recommend and oversee the reforms.
The staff numbers are divided into Professional (‘Prof.’) and General Service (‘G.S.’). The table also distinguishes between those employed from Regular Budgets, who constitute the long-term worldwide civil service, and those employed from Extra-Budgetary funds contributed voluntarily for development and humanitarian operations.

- **Table 1. Staff of the United Nations System**[^10]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Financed from Regular Budgets</th>
<th>Extra-budgetary (Voluntary Funds)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prof.</td>
<td>G.S.</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations</td>
<td>3,265</td>
<td>5,829</td>
<td>9,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITAR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRWA</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICSC</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICJ</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNU</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
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<td>ICAO</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPU</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITU</td>
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<td>WMO</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIPO</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IAEA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>9,161</td>
<td>15,850</td>
<td>25,011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several important points emerge from these figures. The first is the very small size of the central professional-level civil service of the United Nations itself. Governments have authorized only 3,265 professional posts for the central UN Secretariat at New York, Geneva, Vienna, the five Regional Commissions, and its many other units around the world. These professionals are

[^10]: As of the end of 1990. There have been no major changes since then. Data derived from ACC document on ‘the Budgetary and Financial situation of organizations of the UN system’, UN doc. A/47/593, 3 November 1992, and ACC/1991/Per/R.28, 5 July 1991. Staff of the IMF and World Bank Group not included because not part of the UN common system.
supposed to do all the substantive work of analysing (and providing public information on) global and regional trends in political, security, disarmament, economic and social and environmental, and human rights fields; as well as organizing and directing peace-keeping and other emergency operations; preparing the Secretary-General's reports on these issues for the General Assembly, Security Council, ECOSOC and all the subsidiary bodies, and implementing the work-programmes that these bodies mandate. Together with supporting (general service) staff, the core UN Secretariat has a smaller civil service for all these worldwide responsibilities than the City of Winnipeg (9,917 staff) in Canada, or than the staff of the international advertising firm, Saatchi & Saatchi.41

There are some distinct anomalies. The World Court (ICJ)—the principal judicial organ of the United Nations—is provided only 19 professional posts (15 Judges plus 4 professionals to assist them). On the other hand, the nuclear powers have agreed to no less than 684 professional posts for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as many as the International Labour Organization (ILO) is provided for all its responsibilities in world labour and employment issues, standard-setting, and legal conventions.

The total number of professional-level posts in the whole UN system, worldwide, for all the work noted above by all the agencies listed, numbers some 18,000. Almost half of these are extra-budgetarily funded specialists engaged in development and humanitarian activities; not part of the 'line strength' of the system. More or less the same proportions apply within the total number of general service supporting staff. The total staffing of 51,484 has, nonetheless, been shown because it is the frame of reference for examining the constantly raised issue of size.

The 51,484 includes all civil service staff, whether drivers or directors, employed at all points in the world for everything—political, economic and social affairs, industry, education, labour and employment, development, refugees, human rights, civil aviation, agriculture, health, children, population, world weather services, telecommunications, postal services, international maritime cooperation, intellectual property, atomic energy, et cetera.

There is little realistic justification for describing this civil service as 'a vast, sprawling bureaucracy.' While not precisely comparable with governmental institutions, the entire UN system world-wide, serving the interests of some 5,500,000,000 people in 184 countries, employs no more workers than the civil service in the American state of Wyoming, population 545,000.42 Its staff is actually smaller than the number of public-service employees of the city of Stockholm in Sweden, with a population of 672,000.43 It is less than the staff of the District Health Services of

the Principality of Wales in Britain,\textsuperscript{44} and less than the combined civil services of the Canadian Province of Manitoba and its capital city of Winnipeg.\textsuperscript{45}

The reality is that, even though the administrative structure and personnel and management practices can be legitimately criticized, the international community employs astonishingly few people to handle the enormous workload that its governments perennially demand of the UN system. This, of course, places an even higher premium on the quality and productivity of the staff so far made available. But the aging canard so routinely and so damagingly repeated—often by many intelligent people claiming to be well-informed—should be put to rest.

\subsubsection*{Size of system budget}

A companion set of popular epithets implies that the UN system has large and extravagant budgets. The politicians and editorialists of some major contributing countries repeatedly argue that the budgets have grown too large (often citing Parkinsonian ‘laws’), and that they are a serious drain on their countries’ resources. Here again it is vital to consider the facts.

The worldwide expenditure of the organizations in the UN system is provided in the table at page 144. It will be seen that these expenditures, against both its regularly assessed and voluntarily contributed budgets, and including the phenomenal recent increase for peace-keeping and humanitarian relief, are running at about $10.5 billion a year.

That is less than the annual expenditure of the British Government on Public Administration and Police. The UN-proper’s portion of the total (including the vastly expanded current peace-keeping) is, for 1993, about $4.1 billion, scarcely more than the budgets of the fire and police departments of New York City.

Budgets for the whole system’s regular activities—excluding peace-keeping and other emergency costs but including the running costs of the UN and all the agencies, plus their development assistance activities—currently total about $6.5 billion a year.

The citizens of the United States spend approximately the same amount on cut flowers and potted plants each year.\textsuperscript{36}

\subsubsection*{‘Gigantic paper factory’}

Another popular target of derision is set up in the phrase, ‘a gigantic paper factory’. The UN does indeed produce a great quantity of documents at the request of member-governments, dealing with virtually every facet, large and small, of the human and environmental condition. It is

\textsuperscript{44} Public Bodies 1991, Office of the Minister for the Civil Service (London, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1991), p. 99, citing the staff of the District Health Authorities of Wales at 54,200.

\textsuperscript{45} Data provided by the Government of Manitoba Civil Service Commission and the City of Winnipeg Personnel Office, May 1993. The City of Winnipeg employs more civil servants (9,917) than the regular staff of the UN-proper at New York, Geneva, Vienna, and the regional commissions.

\textsuperscript{36} Surveys of Current Business, US Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.
required, moreover, to produce each official document in the six official languages. It is worth considering, however, that the *New York Times* consumes more paper in one single Sunday edition than the United Nations consumes in all its documents in a whole year.47

**RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SYSTEM**

In many instances governments continue to speak with different voices in the different organizations and thus demonstrate a lack of national co-ordination. Their representatives may ... support a host of new and unrelated programmes (in) some of the specialized agencies, while complaining in the Council about the proliferation of programmes ...

*ECOSOC Committee on Programme Appraisals, 1960*48

This UN 'system' has many curious characteristics not conforming with the definition of a system quoted at the beginning of this chapter. For example, the founder governments inscribed 'UN' in the names of some agencies (i.e. the FAO 'of the United Nations', UNESCO, UNIDO), but not in the names of many others (i.e. ILO, WHO, IBRD, IMF etc.). Yet there is no perceptible working difference. Those agencies whose very names suggest that they, at least, must be truly 'of' the United Nations can, and often do, behave as independently of it as those whose names do not.

The 'system' is supposed to comprise all organizations that have been brought into relationship with the United Nations as specialized agencies, by signed legal agreements with it under Articles 57 and 63 of the Charter. A key purpose of these special agreements, as stated in Article 58, was to have been coordination in the promotion of economic, social and cultural objectives set out in the Charter. The Agreements also contained commitments in varying degree to administrative coordination and coherence. Whole portions of these agreements have, however, never been implemented.

Governments usually send officials of their ministries of foreign affairs to the General Assembly and other UN governing organs, and officials from other ministries to the governing bodies of the agencies. Their decisions in the agencies' governing bodies are duly transmitted to the United Nations, but they cannot be altered by any UN body, even though the UN was explicitly instructed in the Charter (Article 58) to make recommendations for the coordination of the policies and activities of those agencies.

In the General Assembly governments perennially exhort 'the organizations of the system and their governing bodies' to take account of certain global problems or to coordinate better. In


49 Various called 'relationship' or 'basic' agreements; in this study, called 'special agreements'.
doing this governments can only be addressing themselves, as represented in the agencies’
governing bodies. Yet despite the authority given to them in the UN in Article 58, governments in
their capacity as members of the UN apparently cannot bring their authority to bear in those agency
bodies.

Although the rather pessimistic description of the ‘system’ quoted above is thirty-four years
old it remains all too accurate. It is, indeed, as though when dealing with the UN system,
governments of member-states are not single governments at all. This both reduces the impact of
intergovernmental cooperation and undermines cooperation among the separate secretariats of the
UN system.

**Inter-secretariat relations**

How can we transform the ACC into a real Cabinet wherein I do not pretend
to be the Prime Minister but at least play a role of chief of orchestra in order
to have a minimum of co-ordination among the different agencies?

*Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, April 1993* 50

There is no intergovernmental assembly or council of the UN system as a whole. Its main linkage,
therefore, is through its senior civil servants in the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
(ACC), chaired by the Secretary-General. 51 This is a very weak link.

The ACC was created to provide the civil-service machinery to assist governments in
discharging their Charter responsibilities for coordination of the UN system in the General
Assembly and ECOSOC. It meets only twice a year for a few days, subsidiary committees meeting
in between to formulate papers for it. By an unwritten but longstanding tradition there should not
be serious disagreement among the members in ACC meetings. Thus, these preparatory groups
usually trim draft proposals for the ACC to the lowest common denominator.

No agency head is bound to attend an ACC meeting, to implement any agreement reached in
the ACC, or to heed any exhortation there by the Secretary-General. All agency heads, having been
elected in a different governing body, have the legal right to claim that their agencies’ policies are
‘sovereign’. Such characteristics bear little relation to any normal definition of a ‘system’.

Comparison with national public-service machinery cannot be exact, but nonetheless affords
a telling contrast to the way in which governments have so far evolved the world’s public-service
machinery.

As Mr. Boutros-Ghali recently observed, the Secretary-General is not the Prime Minister of
the United Nations system or its executive head by any other name. The system does not have such

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50 Informal remarks before UN system officials at Bangkok, 10 April 1993, reported in *International Documents Review*

51 By a gradual process over the years heads of UN funds and programmes were also invited to attend the ACC, over the
objections of some agency heads. Mr. Boutros-Ghali has reverted, for formal sessions, to the original format, which includes
only the heads of specialized agencies.
a head, either constitutionally or even functionally. The orchestra pays minimum heed to its conductor.

The Secretary-General is appointed by one body (the General Assembly), and the heads of the specialized agencies are elected by totally different bodies. Governments do not synchronize these appointments or even cross-consult on them beyond a judicious balancing of regions and nationalities.

The Secretary-General has no Cabinet comparable to a nation's central machinery of executive governance. It is easy to imagine the problems of coherent national leadership and programming that would arise if a prime minister only called cabinet meetings twice a year for a day or two, and even then could not require ministers to attend, to remain at the meeting, or to implement the decisions taken.

A national government imposes a hopefully coherent strategy of national policies upon all its ministries, and its single parliament adopts a single consolidated budget covering all sectors. Governments have never adopted a mandatory overall strategy or a consolidated budget for the UN system. Instead, each entity separately adopts its own policies and budget. In a nation state, such a practice would mean that there would be one parliament of farmers and agronomists who adopt an agricultural policy and budget; another assembly of doctors and public health officials doing the same; another of educationists; and so on through all the main sectors of national life—with the prime minister getting a budget for foreign affairs and for 'aid' from yet another parliament. None of the parliaments would ever meet together to coordinate their budgets or policies.

A replication of the UN system in a nation would also mean that all its sectoral ministries and their separate governing bodies were located expensive air journeys distant from the prime minister and ministry of external affairs, and their governing body.

It is an understatement to observe that the system that governments have created for promoting world peace and economic and social advancement would make any nation's direction and development rather difficult.

It should not, however, be concluded from the foregoing that the present UN system is hopeless and will remain so until the world is ready for world government. Between what now exists and a more supranational arrangement there are at least two models of multilateral organization that would constitute signal advances on the present system.

**An integrated UN?**

The first of these models would require major constitutional changes, converting the legally separate status of the agencies into a more integrated United Nations under the direct authority of the Secretary-General. This more unified United Nations would in no sense be a world government, but rather a far more efficient association of states with a single multi-sectoral secretariat. Theoretically at least, governments and such a single secretariat would be far better situated to deal effectively with today's complex global problems.
It is only realistic to assume, however, that such a change would encounter very heavy opposition, although its day may well arrive long before the nations are ready for full world government. It is noteworthy that during recent debates on UN reform there have been no significant references by member-governments to such constitutional change in the system.

The fact that the theoretically best solution is not at present politically feasible does not mean that the system must simply muddle on indefinitely in its present condition. A great deal can be achieved without constitutional change, by changes in such salient features as geography, legal mandates and behaviour.

**OVERHAULING THE UN SYSTEM WITHOUT CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE**

After over forty years of neglect by governments of many provisions in the Charter and the Special Agreements, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is now reduced to the timid hope of 'at least playing a role of chief of orchestra in order to have a minimum of co-ordination among the different agencies'.

Yet governments themselves, at the United Nations at any rate, continuously demand greatly improved coordination of the UN system. An extraordinary amount of time is spent in a perennial search for better 'coordination machinery'. This is, for the most part, a vain attempt to compensate for the inability of governments themselves to coordinate their own international policies. This exercise can be compared to running a powerful motor on half of its cylinders and, instead of restoring the full power built into it, adding wind-sails on top of the vehicle in hope of catching a few clement breezes to move it along.

If governments are not yet ready to dismantle this only partly-energized system and create an integrated United Nations, it can still be very considerably improved by non-constitutional changes. These consist mainly in the completion of the original architecture of the UN Charter and the Special Agreements, together with some new measures to add strength to those provisions.

To be effective, however, such reforms will be dependent on that 'harmonization' of governments' own policies throughout the system which the founders warned would be the make-or-break of their design. Unless member-governments can achieve this fundamental prerequisite in their home capitals there will be another decade of whistling in the coordination winds while global problems accumulate and intensify.

Pursuit of non-constitutional improvements in the system could usefully be guided by a number of basic propositions.
1. Member-governments, parliaments, and non-governmental organizations should be prepared to overcome its major weaknesses with courage. If constitutional change is judged to be unfeasible at least for the present, this puts a high premium on addressing every other major means of improvement.

2. The image of the UN system as an intractably large and reform-defying bureaucracy is to some extent a myth of distance and media distortion. Moreover, executive heads are only civil servants who should be instructed by their governors. The system can be greatly improved, and without great difficulty, if its myths and pretensions are set aside, and its member-governments are determined to make it work.

3. There are no unqualified saints, and no irredeemable sinners in the system. There are dedicated, highly competent staff who are genuinely system-minded in the agencies as well as in the UN. Dynamic reform now can still mobilize these assets for the system as a whole.

4. Clear, uniform and system-wide policy instructions from their capitals for all governmental delegations will be indispensable for any useful overhaul of the system.

5. Even without constitutional change, governments must establish a means of making the United Nations system accountable as a system, through a new intergovernmental body.

PURPOSES AND PITFALLS IN UN REFORM

As new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times.

_Thomas Jefferson_

Public institutions that need significant reform have usually been left to their own devices for many years. This is not, however, the case with the United Nations system. On the contrary, since the 1950s it has undergone frequent management studies, policy and structural reviews, proposed, and sometimes even adopted, reforms. UN civil servants have scarcely put some newly decreed reform into operation before having to cope with a new wave of outside management consultants bent on another round of reform. In the last forty years there have been major reforms in the main UN Secretariat alone at roughly eight-year intervals (1953–1956; 1964–1966; 1974–1977; 1985–1986; 1992–).

Why once again? Did the previous reforms not work? Some consideration of the questions may provide clues about the factors and pitfalls in UN reform, as well as ideas on how to improve the process itself.

► Neglected implementation

It is seldom possible to use the word ‘new’ about proposals for reorganization or better coordination in the UN system. They are almost always repetitions from an earlier round.
Poor institutional memory at the UN sometimes accounts for this, and often gives veteran staff a depressing sense of *déjà vu*. For example, in recent debates on development operations the same criticisms were made as in 1966—and some of the remedies proposed had actually been adopted by the General Assembly that year.\textsuperscript{52} In the late 1950s Dag Hammarskjöld was urging a high-level segment of ECOSOC very like that which finally saw the light of day in 1992.\textsuperscript{53}

\textbf{Piecemeal reform, hard to correct}

Mountains will go into labour, and a silly little mouse will be born.

*Horace*\textsuperscript{54}

Few UN reforms have been complete enough to work. The negotiation process has often left only slivers of what were originally integrated recommendations. A reform resolution may read resoundingly; but in reality it usually provides for changes that are unsustainable, or for new units that are largely impotent, because the original supporting structure could not be agreed.\textsuperscript{55}

Negotiated compromise may be the stuff of diplomacy and provide a cathartic moment for exhausted delegates. But if compromises on structure turn out to be unwise or unworkable, correcting them will be extremely difficult and may take years. Vested interests quickly emerge among senior officials. Nationalities of incumbents in posts that a reform might abolish or downgrade are suddenly diplomatically sensitive. A 'compromise' reform may fail to remedy weaknesses, and it virtually guarantees that sooner or later the reform process will start again, in conditions of even greater difficulty.

\textbf{Moving boxes}

There has been too much restructuring and not enough reform; more \textit{ad hoc} than long-term vision.

*Bangladesh, 1993*\textsuperscript{56}

Equally disastrous are the temptations of mechanistic change, moving boxes on an organizational diagram without ensuring vital lines of communication and coordination. Reorganization proposals need a comprehensive scrutiny in the same way that a heart specialist must look at the entire blood-circulation system. A quadruple by-pass operation on the UN system will achieve

\textsuperscript{52} General Assembly resolution 2188 XXI of 1966 had, among other things, called for sharply reducing the burden of programme request procedures on developing countries; by 1990 governments themselves had so further complicated these procedures that an entire new study had to be carried out, and a new resolution (44/211) adopted.

\textsuperscript{53} Correspondence cited in Brian Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld*, (New York, Knopf, 1972), p. 375, for July 1959, thirty years before exactly the same propositions were to be debated over the 'revitalization' of the Council.

\textsuperscript{54} 'Horace' was Quintus Horatius Flaccus; in *Ars Poetica*, I.139.

\textsuperscript{55} One particularly lamentable case of piecemeal reform, over the office of Director-General, will be discussed in a later chapter.

\textsuperscript{56} The representative of Bangladesh in the Fifth Committee, 10 November 1993.
little if the flows of high-quality forecasting and action-proposals to the Secretary-General and to
governments remain constricted.

▶ The human factor

I am not a country of 50 million people. I have no army. I have no land, no
police. The importance of the United Nations comes from its moral value, its
credibility.

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali

The UN system's only real resources are its goals, principles and standards, and its leaders and
staff. Its effective leadership and coordination derive far more from intellectual than legal
authority. An executive head may possess the most comprehensive legal powers to direct and even
to coordinate; even so, he or she will not lead, and will not generate dynamic policy, teamwork and
programming among colleagues except by gaining their intellectual respect.

If governments make indifferent choices of executive heads, no amount of reform will
compensate for the lack of leadership. Governments may then try to compensate by micro­
managing the organization, usually producing awkward distortions, and soon thereafter call for
new reforms for the wrong reasons and in the wrong places.

▶ Organization by avoidance

Poor executive appointments have also led governments (and sometimes Secretaries-General) to
avoid locating a new responsibility or entity at its rightful place in the system, because they do not
want it under a head whom they have—too late—recognized as inadequate. Bad leadership choices
by governments have quite often spawned irrational structuring and proliferation, poorer
coordination, and more inefficiency. This in turn can lead to calls for reform but, again, not those
really needed. 57

▶ Staff needs in reform

Good organizational decisions can be, and have been, wrecked by overlooking the staff
requirements to make them effective.

It is the accepted wisdom in the private sector that a significant organizational change
requires clear new senior job descriptions as well as resources for the special retraining of staff that
alone will make the reform work. Both have invariably been neglected by governments and most
executive heads in UN system reforms, with the result that five years later delegates usually wonder
why the reforms are not producing significant improvement.

57 The dislike of one powerful government for an executive head's policy stances, and the deference of others to such dislike,
has also caused proliferation rather than coherence: this was a key reason why the World Food Programme was not fully
integrated in FAO.
Reform by 'comparative advantage'

Serious UN system reformers should also be extremely wary of arguments about 'comparative advantages'. Much attention is often given to the alleged superior qualities of one institution over another that is, in all other respects, the right repository for the responsibilities under review. This has usually happened because some governments have deliberately moved larger resources to the agency they favour, automatically weakening the correct repository. Yet, whenever such 'comparative advantage' has won the day its flaws soon emerge, and governments begin saying that the system is not working as it should. 58

Confusion about 'coordination'

Reform in the system has also been bedeviled because of perennial confusion over the single word, 'coordination'.

Some capacities and functions simply need to be made one, because the needed product cannot be obtained from separate sources acting separately, and/or because they are inefficiently duplicating each other. That is consolidation, not 'coordination'.

Other activities positively require separately nourished sets of expertise, but for some purposes it must be possible to bring these together in efficiently developed holistic analyses and proposals. That is synthesis, not 'coordination'.

Some functions (not as many as various executive heads would argue) can operate separately, but sometimes must be orchestrated to be mutually reinforcing; that is coordination. At best, such coordination requires a leader who knows when, how, and to whom to delegate, with very clear terms of reference.

Detailed recommendations to guard against these and other errors and weaknesses in reform processes are included in the consolidated recommendations from this study in Chapter XIII. It may, however, be useful to summarize purposes and goals here.

Overall Purposes

1. To enable the UN system better to provide responsive and incisive world leadership on questions of peace, security and stability, socio-economic well-being and environmental protection, human rights, and cultural cooperation.

2. To harness and enhance the human and financial capacities of the system and, through it, the collective wisdom of the international community, for optimum impact on these issues through coherent multi-disciplinary policies.

3. To ensure that governance of the system is coherent, democratic and efficient; that its work is transparent and accountable; and that it can thus attract the resources needed to fulfill its assigned tasks.

58 See, as but one example, the discussion on 'multi-bi' financing in development assistance in pp. 91-92 hereunder.
Specific goals for Reform

- To improve the system’s use of its and other institutions’ information and analytical resources in order to provide high-quality and timely solutions to major world problems;
- To improve the system’s attention to the causes of such problems, including its roles of providing for policy and programme negotiation between governments, and for implementation of such policies and programmes by secretariats;
- To improve the system’s capacities to respond promptly, coherently, and effectively to problems that have deteriorated into incipient or actual crises—inter-state or internal hostilities, or large-scale human distress including violation of human rights;
- To improve the attractiveness of UN service to men and women of integrity, dedication and intelligence, and the ability of the system to make best use of them;
- To ensure that, with such human resources, the best possible use is made of funds entrusted to the system, thereby encouraging Members to increase their support.

Specific goals for Reorganization

- To ensure that capacities now separated but in reality dependent upon each other are more efficiently harnessed, and that both strategic attention to causes, and rapid response to consequences, are not impeded by structural flaws;
- To ensure that needed specializations can make their best contributions to the whole of a problem, rather than being limited by structural separation to nibbling at its edges;
- To eliminate the overlapping and reduce the duplication of effort that often develop in structures created separately for what were perceived as good reasons at the time;
- To locate capacities, both geographically and organizationally, in such ways as to enable their optimal bearing on the problems they are supposed to address;
- To improve that delegation of responsibilities under coherent leadership and strategy that is the hallmark of real coordination.
III. THE FORGOTTEN DESIGN FOR THE SYSTEM

... a new system of a planetary type; a central organization, the United Nations, around which gravitated independent agencies linked with the former by special agreements.

Belgium, 1947

In setting about the improvement of an institution, it is always necessary to have a clear picture not only of its current state and nature, but of how it developed and why. Going back to the intentions of its founders may only be useful for historians, or pleasurable for the nostalgic. In the case of the UN system, however, such an exercise is neither academic nor sentimental. It explains, and in wholly contemporary terms, why the system has not operated as well as it could.

LOST ARCHITECTURE

The founders designed linkages that could make a loose collection of organizations work effectively together. This architecture was adopted as policy by the first General Assembly session in 1946. Many of its features are still legally valid, and could correct major weaknesses in the system today. They were not abandoned because changing world circumstances had rendered them obsolete, but because they were never activated in the first place.

There is a widespread assumption that world conditions have so radically changed in their nature since 1945 that the founders could not possibly have designed a UN system which would still be adequate for the late twentieth century. Deeper examination discloses that most of the fundamental problems the international community confronts today were already present, and perceived, in 1945. The founders made provision for many challenges which are generally assumed to have arisen more recently. The difference between 1945 and now is not so much in the problems themselves as in their neglect over a period of nearly fifty years, and in the resulting massive intensification of their gravity and impact.

Functionalism

By the time the United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) opened in San Francisco on April 25, 1945 it was certainly accepted that the specialized agencies would have their

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60 For example, the UN Preparatory Commission formally recommended in 1945 that ECOSOC create a Commission on Narcotic Drugs.
own separate legal existence and secretariats.\textsuperscript{61} Apart from other arguments for sectoralism, it was held that if diplomats and politicians failed in the UN as they had in the League of Nations, at least international collaboration on specialized and technical matters might be saved if its machinery were separate. This 'functionalism' also involved the interesting assumption that agriculture, health, education, trade and other 'technical' matters were not in any sense political issues.\textsuperscript{62}

It was fully recognized, however, that international economic instability could cause, and indeed had caused, political instability within countries, as well as war between countries. This was the rationale at San Francisco for building a 'system' to overcome socio-economic instability, with the UN as the central organization also charged with responsibility for international peace and security.

This concept of the UN as the authoritative centrepiece of an international system was reflected in the Charter Preamble, three of the UN's four Purposes in Article 1, Articles 13 and 55, and in the status the Charter gives to ECOSOC.\textsuperscript{63} These, and other provisions reflect the belief at San Francisco that the new United Nations must itself be able to forge coordinated strategies and programmes to tackle the volatile relationships between socio-economic and political-military forces. UN policy formulators were to harness and synthesize the aggregate knowledge of the system into such strategies, and then coherently lead the system in implementing them. Such a UN system was to be highly innovative yet efficient, with minimal duplication of its research and operations and with the lowest possible overhead and expenses.

The records of 1945 disclose many comprehensive prescriptions for such a 'planetary system'. The founders certainly did not envisage anything like the degree of separateness for the specialized agencies that has, over the years, become the system's most serious weakness. Here again it should be noted that failure by Secretaries-General to exert strong leadership (even over UN funds) has allowed separatism to flourish.

The Charter does not contain any overall statement or separate chapter describing the UN system because the relationships between the UN and the agencies were inserted piecemeal in the Charter's structure for the UN itself. Separatists have been greatly helped by this, not least because existing Charter provisions for coordinating the system have been ignored by governments.

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\textsuperscript{61} The ILO already existed in its own right; the charters of FAO, the World Bank and the IMF were already drafted; Ministers of Education had begun meeting in 1942 to establish what was to become UNESCO.


\textsuperscript{63} In the original Dumbarton Oaks proposals ECOSOC was not to be named a principal organ; this was secured at San Francisco, \textit{i.a.} Goodrich and Hambro \textit{Charter of the United Nations} (Boston, World Peace Foundation, 1946), p. 90.
Our United Nations system was conceived deliberately as a polycentric system, an expression of unity in diversity ... instead of overloading the centre (our) purpose would be better served by placing greater confidence in the principal agencies ....

Edouard Saouma

In the resultant perennial tug of war between the UN and the specialized agencies, their heads have adroitly refined arguments against 'the centre', principally by invoking the concept of 'polycentrism'. In the 1991 statement quoted above M. Saouma, one of the most zealous defenders of agency turf, even suggested a comparison between discredited Soviet command statism and the renewed call for a more coherent UN system.

In the confusion generated by such debating devices it has been possible for the diplomats of member-governments at the UN itself to call for greater coherence (and reduced costs), while their own sectoral delegates to the specialized agencies have taken the diametrically opposite line championed by the agency heads.

The founders certainly did not anticipate how much latitude poor coordination within governments would give separatist agency heads and the delegates that supported them. They did, however, put into the Charter significant UN authority to counter such centrifugal tendencies.

THE CHARTER'S AUTHORITY

Article 13 of the Charter provides that the General Assembly 'shall initiate studies and make recommendations for the purpose of ... promoting international co-operation in the economic, social, cultural, educational and health fields'.

This strongly implies that the UN should lead on strategy and policy, including the fields in which the agencies would have technical competence. The verb 'promoting' to describe the central UN role was carefully chosen at San Francisco; the earlier Dumbarton Oaks draft used the much weaker verb 'facilitating'.

Almost half of Chapter IX on International Economic and Social Co-operation deals with the specialized agencies, reflecting the importance attached to the future system.

Statement to ECOSOC by the then Director-General of FAO, Geneva, July 1991.  
65 'At the very moment when we are witnessing the failure of over-centralized systems, are we to set one up within the United Nations?'; ibid.  
66 An example was the policy-approach adopted in the UNDP Governing Council and ratified by the General Assembly in 1971 for the agencies' country-level expertise to be integrated in UNDP Offices in the form of (e.g.) 'Senior Agricultural Advisors' (SAA's). By the end of the 1970s, governments in Rome had authorized the opening of 60 new, totally separate, FAO 'Country Representative' offices and the SAA formula had totally disappeared.  
67 To an altogether greater degree than has ever obtained for a Secretary-General, agency executive heads have exercised commanding influence among the delegates of their member-governments; c.f., i.a., for UNESCO but more widely applicable, art. Lawrence S. Finkelstein, 'The Political Role of the Director-General of UNESCO' in ed. Finkelstein, Politics in the United Nations System (Durham-London, Duke University Press, 1988), passim.  
68 Excerpted quotation of Charter article 13.1.b.  
69 Goodrich and Hambro, op. cit., p. 190. The Dumbarton Oaks draft only used 'promote' in respect of human rights.
Article 57

1. The various specialized agencies, established by intergovernmental agreement and having wide international responsibilities, as defined in their basic instruments, in economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields, shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of Article 63.

2. Such agencies thus brought into relationship with the United Nations are hereinafter referred to as specialized agencies.

Article 58

The Organization shall make recommendations for the co-ordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies.

Article 59

The Organization shall, where appropriate, initiate negotiations among the states concerned for the creation of any new specialized agencies required for the accomplishment of the purposes set forth in Article 55.

If the Charter had stated no more about the UN and the agencies than these three articles, it would be clear what the relationship was intended to be. The imperative phrase in Article 57, 'shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations', is the founders' picture of the UN as the senior and active leader of a cooperative system.

The delicate language of Article 58—the Organization (meaning the General Assembly70)—'shall make recommendations for co-ordination'—expressed the reality in international law. The ILO was already a 'sovereign' international organization. Unless governments were to amend its constitution the UN could not legally order it to adjust policy or activities. The same constitutional separateness would obtain for the nascent World Bank, IMF, and FAO. Even so, the clear assumption of the founders was that the General Assembly would recommend coordination of policies and activities to essentially the same membership of governments in the agencies' governing

70 Article 60 makes clear that all functions in this Chapter 'shall be vested in the General Assembly and, under the authority of the General Assembly, in the Economic and Social Council'.
bodies, and that these would transform the recommendations into binding, operating realities.\textsuperscript{71}

Article 59 underscores that the UN would decide what further international agencies were needed to accomplish the economic and social purposes under the Charter. This does not indicate a relationship of sovereign equality, or even of ‘first among equals’, the highest status many agency heads are willing to accord the UN in the polemics of ‘polycentrism’.

More than a quarter of the text of the following Chapter X on ECOSOC deals with the specialized agencies. Article 63 provides for the Special Agreements that ‘define the terms’ on which an agency would be brought into relationship with the UN. The high status of the Agreements was supposed to be clear in the specific stipulation that the General Assembly must approve each of them. In other words, they were not to be mere working agreements between executive heads.

Article 63 also makes it clear that, whereas coordination of policy in the system emanates from the General Assembly (under Article 58), ECOSOC is the working body for coordination of agencies’ activities.\textsuperscript{72} If necessary, ECOSOC should ask the General Assembly to request member-governments to ensure such coordination.

A further Article (64) provided for the UN to receive agency reports on how they were implementing its recommendations. In short, the UN could monitor their implementation—again, the intended function of an authoritative centrepiece.

### THE UN’S BUDGETARY ROLE

The Charter contains one more demonstration of the originally intended degree of authority of the UN vis-à-vis the specialized agencies. It is a provision so significant for the relationship that an intelligent outsider would be astounded to learn that it has never been implemented.

In Article 17, providing for the General Assembly’s budgetary authority over the UN itself, the founders prescribed, in paragraph 3, the following:

*The General Assembly shall consider and approve any financial and budgetary arrangements with specialized agencies referred to in Article 57 and shall examine the administrative budgets of such specialized agencies with a view to making recommendations to the agencies concerned.*\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{71} The authoritative early commentary on the Charter, written by an American and a Norwegian who were officials in the drafting of it, makes this very point; Goodrich and Hambro, \textit{ibid.}, p. 206. The only impediment they could foresee in late 1945 was ‘differences in the voting rules’.

\textsuperscript{72} There was insufficient time at San Francisco to resolve some disagreements about the agencies’ respective relationships with the two UN organs. In the end the inclusion of ‘activities’ of the agencies to be coordinated by the ‘Organization’ (the General Assembly) in Article 58, but also by ECOSOC in Article 63, was simply left there from early drafting. \textit{cf. inter alia}, Ruth Russell, \textit{History of the United Nations Charter} (Washington, Brookings Institution, 1958), pp. 802–805.

\textsuperscript{73} Article 17.3, quoted in full. Note the use of the imperative, mandatory verb ‘shall’ throughout.
Thus, the United Nations was supposed to have a commanding role even in the financial affairs of the agencies. The founders envisaged that with at least some agencies there should be 'a consolidated budget (that) would enable the Members of the United Nations to consider and vote, at one time and in one place, the budget of the Organization and of the agencies within the consolidated system.' This was not a mere passing thought. It was written into several of the Special Agreements later signed between the UN and agencies and still legally binding today.

The idea of a consolidated budget seems eminently sensible, especially in view of the rather modest size of the system's budgets. That idea, too, has never been fulfilled. According to a closely involved senior UN official, 'After extensive consultations the idea of a consolidated budget, or even of approval of agency budgets by the General Assembly, was found to raise such difficulties of a policy, constitutional and procedural order that it was quietly dropped'.

These 'difficulties' were not over financial clauses in some Treaty between powerful sovereign states. They were over the refusal of officials in quite small organizations, then with even smaller budgets, governed by virtually the same governments as the UN, to accept UN budgetary functions that those same governments had approved not once but three times.

Those who recommended the linkages outlined above to bind a loose system together were under no illusions about the resulting obligations of governments. They were so aware of this that they made it the final paragraph of their Report to the first session of the General Assembly:

While the United Nations, and particularly its Economic and Social Council, has the task of co-ordinating the policies and activities of specialized agencies, this task can be performed only if Members individually will assist in making co-ordination possible. The acceptance by each Member of this responsibility for harmonizing its policies and activities in the different fields covered by the specialized agencies and the United Nations will prevent confusion and conflict and enable the United Nations to achieve the purposes of Chapter IX of the Charter.

Governments did not, in practice, accept this responsibility, and confusion and conflict have bedeviled the UN system ever since.

71 Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, Chapter III, Section 5, paragraph 30; UN Doc. PC/20, 23 December 1945. References to a 'consolidated system' recur in the records, again indicating intended cohesion rather than loose polycentrism.

72 Viz. Article XIV.2 and Article XV.2 respectively of the Special Agreements between the UN and ILO and WHO: '... and, in particular, shall consult together concerning the desirability of the inclusion of the budget of the Organization within a general budget of the United Nations'.


74 First in Article 17.3 of the Charter, then in approving the Special Agreements in the UN General Assembly and again in each agency governing body.

75 Report of the Preparatory Commission, op. cit., Chapter III, Section 5, paragraph 43. This appeal and warning was even given a special bold heading in the Report document: 'Responsibility of Individual Members for Co-ordination'.

76 Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, loc. cit., Chapter III, Section 5, paragraph 30; UN Doc. PC/20, 23 December 1945. References to a 'consolidated system' recur in the records, again indicating intended cohesion rather than loose polycentrism.
A COMMON HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

The failure to fulfill another intention of the founders has had great practical consequences on the coherence of the UN system. The following principle adopted by member-governments of the United Nations may come as a surprise to many readers, including some of today's government officials involved in the system.

The principle of centralisation should be adopted according to which the permanent seat of the United Nations ... as well as of the specialised agencies should be concentrated in one place, with the exception of the International Court of Justice ....

The founders thus intended the gravity pull of the central organization in the nascent UN system to be reinforced. This makes it easier to understand why they thought that so legally loose a system could be made to work coherently. It also makes it much easier to understand why it has not.

An immediate reaction will be that a common Headquarters for the UN system is now completely out of the question. If, however, we are to be serious about strengthening the system it is worth at least examining this original principle at some length.

The Preparatory Commission did not merely propose as a general principle a common headquarters location; it noted its managerial and technical benefits. The Commission recognized that there would probably be some exceptions, but these would require 'very strong reasons'. This basic feature in the intended architecture of the system was approved by the first General Assembly and even inscribed in the Special Agreements with agencies. The 1947 plan for the Permanent Seat of the United Nations envisaged a fourth major building on the Turtle Bay site for the specialized agencies (see page 47). The idea of a common headquarters was then allowed to evaporate in host-trading among a few member states.

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79 Executive Committee, United Nations Preparatory Commission, UN Doc. PL/EX/113/Rev.1, Part III, Chapter X, Section 2, Paragraph 10, 12 November 1945.
80 US Secretary of State Cordell Hull 'thought it was illogical to scatter the international organization throughout the world. The Department of State consequently studied the problem in terms of a central headquarters for the whole organization, but with flexible provision of meetings elsewhere whenever desired'. Ruth Russell, op. cit., p. 618.
81 ibid., Chapter III, Section 5, paragraph 42. The Commission recognized there might be some 'exceptions' to this principle, but only exceptions. Locations of the agencies' headquarters was to be made 'a point of major importance' in the negotiation of the special agreements with them, ibid.; also paras. 11 and 40.
83 viz. Article X.11 of the UN-ILO Special Agreement: 'The International Labour Organization, having regard to the desirability of the headquarters of specialized agencies being situated at the permanent seat of the United Nations, and to the advantages that flow from such centralization, agrees to consult the United Nations before making any decision concerning the location of its permanent headquarters.' The reference to 'permanent headquarters' was because ILO had removed to Montreal during World War II. The UN-WHO Special Agreement clause was shorter, consisting of the wording in the foregoing final sub-clause beginning 'agrees'.
One cannot but be struck by the relative lack of importance attached (to) the effects in terms of efficiency, costs and difficulties of coordination inherent in the geographical separation of the different organizations.

Martin Hill

The daily drawbacks of dispersal have been vividly apparent to every system-minded international civil servant for some four decades. No national government would tolerate having all its sectoral expertise (leave alone separate governing bodies) situated in far-flung cities accessible only by costly air travel. A younger multilateral organization, the European Community, has distributed its research and other technical centres but has not scattered its directorates-general to cities far from Brussels. This particular failure of member-governments to adhere to their own design for the UN system has contributed massively to its problems.

Curiously enough, repairing this disastrous mistake is never discussed in the context of UN-system reform, as if the possible relocation of headquarters is an unmentionable subject. Yet the possibility can not be dismissed merely because the headquarters have been where they are for many years. Within the life of the UN to date several important governments have relocated their entire national staff and infrastructure—larger than the whole UN system—and another will shortly do so. Transnational corporations of greater size (and certainly no less budget-conscious) than the UN system have moved their headquarters after many years in a given city.

Here again, the actually quite small size of the total system should be borne in mind. As the table on page 48 indicates, relocation of the headquarters offices would entail the movement of staff equivalent to only a fraction of the municipal civil service of one capital city in a small European country.

Since, however, not one agency headquarters has ever been located at the Seat of the UN it requires some thought to appreciate what benefits in coherence and efficiency would accrue from at last implementing this original intention.

**Effect on intergovernmental machinery**

The impact of a common location on the main deliberative and governing bodies of the system would be dramatic. Sessions of the governing bodies of the main agencies would be routinely held right beside those of the United Nations. The sectoral and diplomatic delegates of each government would actually meet each other.

Excuses, both genuine and convenient for the inordinate delays in the passage of resolutions through the system, would become far less tolerable. The snails-pace movement of business through a labyrinth of communication from one governing body, through two secretariats, to

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85 *op. cit.*, footnote 76, pp. 17–18.
86 e.g., Brazil, Nigeria and Pakistan; Germany in 1996.
Where the Agencies were supposed to be ...

This sketch by the architects of the new UN Seat shows one of two planned high-rise buildings at the end of the garden for the headquarters of specialized agencies and delegations. Report by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, UN Doc. A/311, July 1947.

another governing body and then all over again in the reverse direction would be absurd when each body was a block apart. Delegates in a UN committee could quickly have benefit of the views of any agency’s substantive staff, and vice versa.

Proximity would undoubtedly generate seemingly obvious joint initiatives, to date as difficult as getting water out of stone. The simple fact that sectoral authorities were around the corner would end all excuses for the failure to organize meetings of ECOSOC that would both draw upon the right capacities in the system and foster greater mutual respect within it. It would, for example, become much easier to envisage an ECOSOC session on World Food Security with world food specialists in each delegation and the head of FAO presiding.

**Permanent Missions to the UN System?**

It would, of course, be for each government to decide how to organize its representation at such a common headquarters site. It might, however, be predicted that many would forgo the costs of maintaining separate permanent representatives at each headquarters. If not at once, then soon...
after relocation most would probably consolidate their resident delegates in an entirely new feature in the world institution—'Permanent Missions to the United Nations System'.

Cost-effectively staffed, such missions could advance far more coherent, multi-disciplinary policies in the bodies of the system. The ‘Permanent Representatives to the United Nations System’ would have to be competent to deal with the broad range of the system's agenda. They would direct the work of delegates both in the General Assembly and ECOSOC, and in agency governing bodies. Delegates to UN bodies, if not themselves participating in agency meetings, would certainly know far better when their exhortations to the agencies to 'coordinate' were not working. Equally, UN impediments to specialized work by agencies would become known to Permanent Representatives at their combined-staff meetings.

#### Table 2. Headquarters geography of the UN system, 1993^97^  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Headquarters site</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Headquarters staff^98^</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Nations</td>
<td>New York^99^</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2,797^90^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>N/A^91^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank Group</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>Geneva^92^</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITU</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPU</td>
<td>Berne</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIPO</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMO</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Rome^93^</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMO</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICAO</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAEA</td>
<td>Vienna^94^</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>Vienna</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Professional staff 7,101

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^97^ Organizations listed are the UN and the specialized agencies. All other entities with headquarters at or away from New York are subsidiaries of the United Nations; see footnotes against various host cities; in addition UNEP is headquartered at Nairobi and UNU at Tokyo.

^98^ N.B. Only international professional staff are listed, as only these would have to be relocated. Many locally recruited staff would, of course, have to be compensated. Data from UN Doc. ACC/1991/PER/R.28 as of 31 December 1990.

^99^ Presently also has headquarters of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF.

^90^ Including headquarters professional staff of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF.

^91^ Presently also has headquarters of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF.

^92^ Presently also has headquarters of UNECE, UNHCR; various portions of the UN Secretariat including UNCTAD, UN Human Rights Centre.

^93^ Presently also has headquarters of WFC and WFP.

^94^ Presently also has headquarters of UNRWA and various portions of the UN Secretariat.
Intra-government coordination

The fracturing of governments' own policies that has so plagued the system would, at the least, be greatly reduced by a common location.

The advent of a single Permanent Representative to the system could engender new relationships between the ministries of external affairs and the external divisions of the sectoral ministries in home capitals. There would doubtless be much tearing of bureaucratic hair, as has happened in Europe where the traditional divide between Foreign Offices and sectoral departments is already breaking down in the European Community. But the outcome could be expected to improve intra-governmental coordination of policies in all branches of the system. The 1945 Preparatory Commission warned—rightly—that this coordination would be the make-or-break factor in building an effective international system.

Benefits for regional groups

Regional groups of governments could better coordinate their policies in the system's governing bodies at a common headquarters. The members of the Group of 77 would find a common headquarters Seat of particular benefit and cost-effectiveness. It would be important for all such groups particularly if, as this study will recommend, there is greater decentralization to the regional level.

Effect on choosing heads

With their new Permanent Representatives monitoring the ongoing work and relationships of the system as a whole, governments could become far more adept in choosing executive heads. They would be able more readily to perceive the importance of selection for ability to work as a team, and under the leadership of a Secretary-General also chosen to be a good team leader. They could take account of the importance of realigning the calendar of these appointments so that something more approaching a cabinet of the entire system for a common term could be built up.

Knocking executive heads together

The daily proximity of the Secretary-General and the executive heads of major agencies would forge—or force—an altogether different relationship between them. At the very least they could meet rather more often in appropriate groupings. The Administrative Committee on Coordination could at least be transformed by the year-round physical proximity of most of its members, removing at least one of the major obstacles to its functioning as a genuine Cabinet of the UN system. With no excuse for it to meet only twice a year for a largely ritualistic few days, present 'summit' style

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behaviour would soon end. The ACC might even have significant working sessions, at which the content of the matters laid before its members might begin to reflect the best work of their substantive staff, instead of the non-controversial lowest denominator.

▸ **Staff work at a common location**

Physical proximity of their headquarters does not by itself generate sweetness and light between separate organizations. Common location would, however, remove all excuses for the repeated failures of the last forty years to arrange for genuine teamwork among substantive staff. It could dramatically improve and accelerate joint staff preparation of papers for UN meetings. There could be a substantial further rationalization of the flow of documents in the system, where today each entity's separate output of papers in distant cities simply crashes on to the desks of every other entity—and of all delegations. Disinterest in the upper echelons of the UN, or efforts by any agency head to isolate it from the UN, would be glaringly obvious.

Common location is the obvious prerequisite to overcome another key disability in the system—the difficulty, even for the most dedicated, of acquiring a sound multidisciplinary understanding of global problems.

▸ **A progressive effect towards integration**

Through a common location of the system's intergovernmental machinery, the disintegrating tendency of the present separation of organizations would progressively weaken. At the same time governments would gain far better understanding of how to redesign an ultimately more integrated United Nations than would ever be possible with the present separations both between the international headquarters and within the capitals of member states.

▸ **Impact on overall costs of the system**

In so far as the headquarters of the United Nations and those of the specialized agencies are located in a single centre, a large number of technical secretariat services could be unified (including) editorial, printing, translation and interpretation, information (and) staffs for the organization of conferences. It is clear that the centralization of these services would result in a reduction of overhead costs and increase the efficiency in operation of the various agencies.

*UN Preparatory Commission, 1945* \(^6\)

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\(^6\) *ibid.*, footnote 74, Chapter III, Section 5, paragraph 40.
The savings in a common location would be real, although they should not be exaggerated. The economies of a common headquarters location in the overall administrative costs of the UN system that were explicitly noted in 1945 still apply today. There would be corresponding savings in government representation costs and in the costs of meetings. Such savings would be of particular benefit to the numerous smaller and less affluent member states, for which 'polycentrism' is a staffing and budgetary nightmare.

Some counter-arguments

When institutions, their staff, their governors and their hosts have become set in a particular location, the status quo itself constitutes a powerful argument against change. Other arguments could be expected against any substantial relocation to a common headquarters. Political considerations played a significant role in the present locations of agencies and would also do so in future moves. If, however, a reconsideration covered all headquarters, without exception, it would be impossible for any host country to complain of being singled out for change and resulting loss in prestige or income.

It was argued that some present locations would be especially propitious for the respective professional-technical specializations of the agencies concerned. This does not seem to have materialized. A common location, on the other hand, would make it easier for UN-system specialists to maintain world-wide professional contact with their peers and research sources.

The idea that the scattering of organizations of the UN system has helped to ‘spread its message’ can also be advanced. There is little significant evidence for this. The truth would seem to be that there has been little or no such ‘spread’ within most key host countries, and sometimes even indifference or hostility. Meanwhile what has been lost in the scattering has been the greater coherence and intellectual dynamism of the message that the UN system should have been conveying to the world community as a whole.

It may be argued that it is important for the system's international civil servants to absorb and have ongoing links with a variety of national cultures. As anyone who has worked in the system knows, this does not in reality happen at any of the present locations. Most civil servants seek company in their respective national or regional groups. In any case, the entire world's cultures and perspectives should be their universe. The real challenge is to maintain that much larger, global contact. This would be easier to achieve at and from a common location.

Here, a paradox should be noted. Modern communications could indeed be far better used to foster inter-cultural understanding and to convey the work of the UN System to its member-peoples. But modern communications show little sign of improving relations between the headquarters of the UN and of the agencies, or the substance and coherence of UN-system work.

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67 The record of collaboration between the Public Information arms of the scattered system is abysmal. As the founders envisaged, a common Seat would integrate these services, with far greater effect.
It will also be argued that the trend of the age is towards decentralization. The decentralization that is needed in the UN system is not between its various headquarters but from them to regional and country levels. The headquarters structure has been decentralized for nearly fifty years without significant advantage, and with considerable disadvantage. A common location would in fact facilitate the needed decentralization to regional, subregional and country levels, as will be recommended later in this study.

While recognizing the enormous obstacles, and the powerful arguments that will be deployed against any effort at relocating existing headquarters, we believe that any serious study of reform cannot ignore this problem. We recommend that it should be studied by an appropriate intergovernmental and non-governmental panel as a priority during the 50th Anniversary.
IV. THE MACHINERY FOR EQUITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Were all humanity a single nation-state, the present North-South divide would make it an unviable, semi-feudal entity, split by internal conflicts. Its small part is advanced, prosperous, powerful; its much bigger part is underdeveloped, poor, powerless. A nation so divided within itself would be recognized as unstable. A world so divided should likewise be recognized as inherently unstable.

Report of the South Commission, 1990 98

No area of UN-system reform and reorganization is as critically important in the 1990s as the economic and social programmes which still account for the bulk of its resources and outlays. To state this is in no way to downgrade the critical importance of the UN’s peace and security efforts. But even if now enhanced, those efforts will eventually be overwhelmed by expanding violence unless global equity and sustainable development are urgently addressed. Greater coherence and dynamism in the world’s only universal economic and social machinery is indispensable if the potentially catastrophic North-South divide is to be bridged.

In 1945 there was already sufficient awareness of deep poverty among most of humankind to make its redress one of the prime objectives of the UN Charter.

THE PRIMORDIAL OBLIGATION

In the Charter Preamble the founding governments pledged ‘to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples’. International cooperation ‘in solving international problems of an economic, cultural, or humanitarian character’ (Article 1.3) is the third principal purpose of the UN. Its fourth purpose (Article 1.4) is to be ‘a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations’ in the attainment of such common ends.

Forty-nine years later, ‘the economic and social advancement of all peoples’ is mired in a grim and dangerous impasse. The 20 per cent Northern minority of humankind has:

- 82.7 per cent of world gross national product;
- 81.2 per cent of world trade;
- 94.6 per cent of all commercial lending;
- 80.6 per cent of all domestic savings;
- 80.5 per cent of all domestic investment; and
- 94.0 per cent of all research and development.

Global economic disparities. Distribution of economic activity, 1989

(percentage of world total; quintiles of population ranked by income)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Richest fifth</th>
<th>Poorest fifth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GNP – 82.7</td>
<td>GNP – 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World trade – 81.2</td>
<td>World trade – 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial lending – 94.6</td>
<td>Commercial lending – 0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic savings – 80.6</td>
<td>Domestic savings – 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic investment – 80.5</td>
<td>Domestic investment – 1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each horizontal band represents an equal fifth of the world's people.

These enormous inequities among ‘all peoples’ amount to a comprehensive failure to achieve the Charter's objectives. They are also an escalating threat to world stability and peace. Even with the most effective international machinery such disparities could not have been fully overcome in only fifty years. But the United Nations has not been able to play its Charter role as 'a centre for harmonising the actions of nations' in this most fundamental and dangerous of problems. It may well be that history will judge this to have been the greatest failure of the world organization in its first fifty years.

The four key problems

At the very time when the long distraction of the East-West conflict seems to be over, the world's only universal machinery has been rendered unable to tackle the root causes of potentially the largest disaster in human history. The basic causes of this failure can be summarized as follows.

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1. At a time of ever more urgent need for coherent macro-economic strategy and policy for the whole world, no such strategy or policy exists or is even under discussion, either in the United Nations or outside it. There is much talk in meetings of the industrial countries about 'the global economy', but on close examination this turns out to be overwhelmingly concerned with their North-North economy.

2. The UN system is not in a position to provide coherent analysis, strategic options, and negotiating fora for such macro-economic policy. There is a virtually total disjuncture between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions that are supposed to be members of the UN system.

3. Existing economic and social capacities in the UN system are fractured, severely weakening its leadership in these fields. This fracturing is exacerbated by inefficient scattering of effort both at the global level and at regional and country levels.

4. The array of separate development funds and programmes lacks logic and coherence relative to the needs they are supposed to address among the impoverished majority of humankind. Enormous amounts of energy and staff time are consumed every year by governments in separately governing and reviewing these funds and programmes, without addressing this fundamental problem.

It is a common characteristic of public institutions that when they are not used, they gradually lose the capacity to be used, thus justifying their non-use. This syndrome is one major cause of the current impotence of the UN in relation to global economic problems. In particular, the UN has been steadily losing its ability to exercise intellectual leadership in the great economic and social issues of the world.

Once again it is important to note that this is not because these issues are fundamentally different from those for which the UN was designed. It is because its original design was never carried through. As with some of the originally intended architecture of the system, so with the UN's role in world economic and social policy, the original design was a good enough basis for action, but governments shelved the blueprints.

**The scope of 'economic' in the Charter**

In trying to prevent the Charter from becoming cluttered with verbiage its drafters did not include in the text their agreed interpretation of the word 'economic'. Apparently it was assumed that the same governments who wrote and adopted the Charter at San Francisco and had agreed what 'economic' meant, would be governing the UN and its system of agencies. This noble but naive assumption has had damaging consequences.
... we are concerned that debate [on debt] in this forum should not impede or undercut the substantial progress being made elsewhere. The United Nations has created two specialized agencies which are uniquely equipped to handle debt issues: the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

*US* representative in the Second Committee of the General Assembly

Major industrial powers have persistently asserted that the negotiation of macro-economic policy belongs with the IMF, the World Bank, and, for trade, the GATT (all of which those powers effectively control). It is insisted, for example, that 'the operational responsibility for formulating approaches to the debt problem lies elsewhere' than the UN, and that 'progress' being made through the Bretton Woods institutions should not be 'undermined (by) imposing generalized formulae' at the UN.

The 'progress elsewhere' is not immediately evident. The total external debt of the developing countries has multiplied fourteen times since 1970, from $100 billion to some $1,400 billion today. It is important therefore to recall the economic mandates that are still legally vested in the United Nations. It should also be recalled that all Charter references to the 'specialized agencies' in the UN system included the Bretton Woods institutions.

**The UN's original economic agenda**

In Article 55 of the Charter the founders spelled out a socio-economic agenda for the United Nations that is still remarkably appropriate for the 1990s. Apart from the fact that it does not include the word 'environment', Article 55 might have been drafted today. It provides that the United Nations shall promote

- higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and
- universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

The specialized agencies were not mentioned in Article 55. It was to be the United Nations that would promote these socio-economic goals.
The San Francisco conference adopted understandings of what the word ‘economic’ in the Charter should encompass. In Committee II/3 it was agreed that ‘economic’ was to be interpreted to include international trade, finance, communications and transport, economic reconstruction and, under ‘economic problems’, international access to raw materials, and capital goods.\(^{103}\)

Refinement of the details after San Francisco was delegated to the Preparatory Commission. Its Executive Committee formulated specific recommendations for the Commission to report to the first session of the General Assembly.\(^{104}\) These reports confirm the central mandate that the United Nations was supposed to have in global macro-economic policy formulation and coordination, and spell out the role that the UN should have been playing ever since.

The Preparatory Commission reported that fields which might be the operational responsibility of specialized agencies but which ‘are closely inter-related’ would require the special and continuous attention of the UN through, in first instance, ECOSOC.\(^{105}\) It was accordingly recommended that ECOSOC establish, at its first session, a number of commissions, including an *Economic and Employment Commission*.\(^{106}\)

This commission would assist ECOSOC ‘in fulfilling its responsibilities in the economic field under Article 55 of the Charter’, another clear evidence of the intended central UN role. It would advise the Council on:

- the promotion of world-wide full employment and the coordination of national full employment policies;
- the prevention of economic instability;
- urgent problems of economic reconstruction;
- economic development of under-developed areas.\(^{107}\)

This description of functions indicates that the founding governments intended ECOSOC to be the ‘economic security council’ that is now mooted, fifty years later, as some sort of additional body. The Commission was in fact established by ECOSOC in 1946, and two expert groups submitted detailed reports with recommendations in 1949 and 1951.\(^{108}\) Governments, however, failed to agree on these recommendations, and within a few years full employment ceased to be a regular Council

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\(^{104}\) The Executive Committee comprised 14 countries (their chief delegate’s name is cited to indicate the calibre of these, among the ‘founders’): Australia (Evatt), Brazil (Freitas-Valle), Canada (Turgeon), Chile (Bianchi), China (Wellington Koo), Czechoslovakia (Masaryk), France (Massigli), Iran (Entezam), Mexico (Padillo Nervo), Netherlands (van Roijen), United Kingdom (Noel-Baker), United States (Stettinius), USSR (Gromyko), Yugoslavia (Leontic). On the full Preparatory Commission Ramaswami Mudaliar represented India and Manuel Perez Guerrero Venezuela.

\(^{105}\) Report of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations, Chapter III, Section 4, para. 11, Doc. PC/20, 23 December 1945.

\(^{106}\) The other recommended commissions were on Human Rights, a ‘Temporary’ Social Commission (pending investigation where some specialized entity might exist or be created for equivalent work), a Statistical Commission, and a Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

\(^{107}\) All quotations and descriptions are directly drawn from *op. cit.*, paras. 18–25.

\(^{108}\) UN documents E/1584, 1949, and E/5126, 1951.
agenda item. In the same years the separatism of the Bretton Woods institutions was consolidated. The long process of diverting the United Nations away from macro-economic policy formulation and into development assistance had begun.

The initial spelling out of the macro-policy responsibilities of the United Nations was, however, even more detailed.

The Preparatory Commission urged that the main Economic and Employment Commission ‘will require several specialized committees to assist it in its comprehensive work’. One was an Employment Committee for ‘study of national and international methods of promoting full employment, and related economic and administrative problems; and analysis of information relating (thereto)’. The other two recommended committees show even more clearly the original intentions as to the central responsibility of the United Nations for analysis, proposal and negotiation in all of the main sectors of global economy, finance and trade.

A ‘Balance of Payments Committee’ was also needed:

Since trade, exchange and employment policies of states will be largely affected by their balance of payments, it will be desirable for an expert group to study and advise the Commission on balance of payments problems, especially in so far as they require for their solution concerted action by governments and specialized agencies.

The intent could scarcely be more clear. The United Nations and its principal organs should formulate global policies on trade, exchange, and employment in the international community, to be implemented by the relevant specialized agencies.¹⁰⁹

The Preparatory Commission also recommended a third body, an ‘Economic Development Committee’. Here again, forty-nine years ago the UN was supposed to lead on international policy formulation for problems that are extremely important today:

a. the methods of increasing production, productivity and levels of consumption in the less-developed regions of the world;

b. the effects of industrialization and technological change on world economic conditions, and the adjustments required; and

c. the coordination of the activities of the commissions or specialized agencies concerned.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ These agencies were, of course, supposed to include an International Trade Organization (ITO). The USA refused to agree to its establishment and the GATT, intended as a purely temporary instrument, remained the only substitute until 1994.

¹¹⁰ op. cit., para. 25. This shows, again, the depth and breadth of the intent in 1945 in relation to the Bretton Woods institutions and other specialized agencies. A Fiscal Commission was also recommended to develop ‘fiscal techniques to assist the prevention of depressions or inflation’ (ibid., para. 34); again, policy issues which industrial powers have since refused to negotiate in the UN.
From all of the foregoing it is clear that the UN was intended by governments as the world's centrepiece for the formulation of global macro-economic policy. The subsequent record shows an abysmal failure by governments to fulfill their own original intentions.

As was noted in the Introduction to this study, the political will of member-governments is the critical factor in international affairs, but the UN system at its best can help to catalyse the will of governments. Moreover, as is already evident in the area of peace and security, if the UN is not ready to respond when governments decide to turn to it, the results can be damaging both to those who need its help and to the credibility of the world organization itself.

If governments do turn back to the UN for global, multilateral action to tackle the world's increasingly ominous socio-economic problems, what needs to be done to make the UN system the effective 'centre for harmonizing the actions of nations' for global equity and sustainable development?

WHERE TO FORMULATE MACRO-ECONOMIC POLICY?

I believe it is among nations as with individuals that the party taking advantage of the distresses of another will lose infinitely more in the opinion of mankind and in subsequent events than he will gain by the stroke of the moment.

George Washington, President, USA

On 11 May 1988 the Chairman of the ECOSOC Special Commission to review UN economic and social machinery recalled how 'residual fear, suspicion, mistrust and resentment spilling over from the forty-first session of the General Assembly tarnished the atmosphere' of the Commission at the outset. The Commission closed in the same bitterness, and without result from 15 months of meetings except perhaps a 'teach-in' value for delegations. The most comprehensive review of UN intergovernmental machinery in decades produced only greater suspicion. The consequences continue to reverberate, now into such new concepts as some sort of 'economic security council'.

The Special Commission was formed in the wake of the 'Group of 18' review, which was prompted by industrial countries and by the United States' withholding of major portions of its dues, under charges of ' politicization' and demands that included weighted voting in budgetary matters. The suspicions that had been engendered by the Group-18 process cut deep into discussion about rationalizing the work of ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

112 In the concluding statement on 11 May 1988 of the Chairman Abdel Halim Badawi (Egypt); in UN Doc. E/1988/75 of 1 June 1988.
113 viz. Canada's concluding statement: 'Many of us started out with only a hazy understanding of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery ... most of us (have) learned a great deal.' ibid.
A core question concerned finding a body of manageable size to discuss and formulate socio-economic policy. Key industrial states suggested reducing the roles of—some said abolishing—the economic and social committees of the General Assembly in favour of the smaller ECOSOC. The Group of 77 countered by proposing universal membership in ECOSOC. Smaller member-states in general felt that they had made quite enough concessions on majority rule in the 1986 acquiescence in consensus for UN budget approval. Suspicion of real motives was the greater because there were also suggestions of eliminating the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board, and having ECOSOC also absorb the functions of key subsidiary bodies like those dealing with natural resources, science and technology, energy, and others judged vital by the UN majority.

The allocation of responsibility for formulating macro-economic policy to a body of manageable size is a perfectly reasonable idea, taken by itself. It could not be taken by itself because it was by then perceived by many indebted developing countries as a device further to reduce their solidarity. The suspicion that a minority group wished to secure the equivalent of majority control of the world organization could not be dispelled and has never gone away.

Here, then, the basic North-South chasm really does affect reform. Can the essential working of the machinery be improved, realizing the Charter's intention that the UN should be the centrepiece for macro-economic policy?

An economic security council?

On the eve of the 50th Anniversary there is increasing acknowledgment that something is seriously missing; that the world—the North no less than the South—does need coherent and equitable stewardship if it is not to plunge into chaos.

Awareness that any forum to develop such macro-economic policy must involve the major industrial powers as well as the South has given rise to the idea of a high-level 'economic security council’. It is variously suggested that it be an entirely new UN body; that the existing Security Council convert itself when necessary into such an economic body; or even that the G-7 establish some such forum more or less outside the UN system.

The underlying irony in these proposals is that, as earlier noted, the purposes and functions of such a body are precisely those that were originally supposed to be carried out by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

'Economic security' was a very real—indeed in 1945 a deadly-real—concept. The opening words of the Charter, and again of Article 55, enunciated it in terms that remain entirely valid today.

114 In Resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, following the report of the ‘Group of 18’ which carried out a ‘Review of the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations’. Agreement on such consensus budgeting was only reached through adopting the language of a Statement by the President of the General Assembly, that the Fifth (budget) Committee should make ‘all possible efforts with a view to establishing the broadest possible agreement’ (Annex II, paragraph 71).

115 The present Security Council is already overloaded and is in any case designed for quite different fields of work.
The Charter even provides (Article 65) that ECOSOC may provide the Security Council with information. ECOSOC was given precisely the mandates that are now mooted for such a council (even including attention to global unemployment, once more a major concern in the 1990s). ECOSOC's original Commissions were to be precisely the kinds of high-calibre bodies that would do the necessary committee work, serviced by a world-class Secretariat that would also draw upon the expertise of the specialized agencies.

There are three basic reasons for recent discussions about an additional 'economic security council'. First is the familiar issue of 'manageable size'. ECOSOC originally had 18 members; it now has 54. It can indeed be argued that this is too large a body to handle macro-economic policy formulation and negotiation. But whenever sufficient trust has existed among groups of nations to nourish a convergence of views on commonly shared problems, the formal size of a body has not been an obstacle, and the detailed negotiation takes place in some smaller format.

Secondly, there is the image of ECOSOC as a body not functioning at a high enough level of representation. Apart from the question of political will and intention among industrial powers, the problem is not in the formal size and shape of ECOSOC but in what it is now asked to do, in how overloaded governments make it by constricting its calendar, and in the quality of the analyses and reports placed before it.

The third reason for thinking of some additional body for economic security is in that realm of superstition that can infuse even highly official attitudes. ECOSOC has for long been in a state of unsuccessful 'revitalization'. Here is the perfect example of 'avoidance reform'—creating a new body rather than improving and using the existing one that was designed for the purpose.

No 'economic security council' capable of formulating macro-economic policy that can be supported by North and South, can come into being, within or outside the UN, without a new sense of trust. Such trust cannot be created without a different perspective about macro-economic North-South problems. If such trust and perspective did emerge, they could readily be channeled into a smaller but adequately representative and high-level body established by and within ECOSOC.

Since tackling these problems must involve ministers of finance and trade, and no one is proposing that such problems be addressed in the IMF and GATT/WTO, these ministers will in any case have to meet in another international habitat almost identical in purpose with the one that has existed since 1945. There seems to be no logical reason why this should not be the ECOSOC.

116 For example, the 1945 superstition against Geneva as the site for the new United Nations because of the failure of the League.
A CONSULTATIVE BOARD OF THE SYSTEM

The founders assumed that governments would make the system work coherently by acting consistently both in UN and in agency bodies. They did not, therefore, establish any council of member-governments to bind together the UN system and to run it. As already noted, governments have not, to say the least, been very successful in aligning their policies in agency governing bodies with the policies that their representatives recommend at the UN. While this inconsistency may be overcome by initiatives in home capitals, it would not be prudent to rely on these measures alone to provide the necessary change.

There is obviously a need for a mechanism that can periodically bring the sectoral representatives of governments to the UN itself. It must be of manageable size yet regionally representative.

Acting under Articles 22 and 58 of the Charter the General Assembly should establish a 'United Nations System Consultative Board'. It should comprise the members of the Bureau of ECOSOC; the Bureaus of the executive governing bodies of the major agencies; and one representative of the comparable bureau of each other agency (it being understood that the latter can attend according to the agenda). The Chairperson of this Board should be elected by the General Assembly. The Board's functions would not be to set policy, but to provide member-governments (and secretariats) with critical appraisals of, and recommendations to improve, the working of the system.

Such a Board should meet every second year to review progress in system-wide implementation of selected policies and programmes. Its meetings should be held immediately after the substantive, pre-Assembly session of ECOSOC and should begin with a one-day consultation with the Council on a carefully chosen theme of system-wide concern.

One of the major contributions of such a Board would be to system-wide reform itself. Neither the Secretary-General nor governments in UN organs can really expect to gain the full support of agencies for reform resolutions merely conveyed (often without enthusiasm) by executive heads to their governing bodies. The Consultative Board would provide an immediate means of ensuring that such reforms are regarded as partnership matters.

The Board should be served by the joint staff of the Deputy Secretary-General for International Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development (which we shall recommend later).

117 Under Article 22 the General Assembly 'may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions'. For discussion of Article 58 see earlier, pp. 42-43.

118 e.g., the Bureaus of the Executive Board of UNESCO, the Executive Council of FAO, etc.
Responsibility for Article 58

Unless the United Nations is re-empowered under Article 58 as the deliberative and negotiating centre for truly global macro-economic policies, the organization will play little effective part in reversing the current trend towards economic and social chaos. The failure to employ Article 58 for coordination of policy in the UN system is also one of the major reasons why ECOSOC has had such perennial problems in coordinating the activities of the system. In fact, governments have ignored Article 58 to such an extent that it is scarcely remembered at all.

The onus for rectifying this situation lies squarely upon the General Assembly and can be met at no lesser level. Clearly, the Assembly needs some mechanism to monitor its responsibilities under Article 58. These encompass all of the Assembly's standing Committees and ECOSOC. The mechanism must therefore be over-arching, and its work will be substantive, not procedural. The Assembly's General Committee should assign a standing responsibility for this to a sub-committee of itself, with a modest budget to enable it to commission independent analyses, reporting annually to Plenary with recommendations.

ECOSOC High-Level Theme Meetings

The lack of engagement of agencies in the work of the United Nations as centrepiece of the system is perennially reinforced by the fact that ministers of agriculture only talk to each other in Rome, ministers of health in Geneva, ministers of industry in Vienna, ministers of finance in Washington, ministers of foreign affairs in New York, and so on.

The General Assembly should recommend to ECOSOC (under Article 66.11) that it include in its agenda each year a High-Level Theme Meeting at which the delegations to the Council should be led by their governments' ministers of the relevant sector. The papers for such theme meetings would be prepared through the joint staff at the UN which we shall propose later herein, so that sectoral ministers feel sufficient engagement to attend. The relevant agency heads should be present, substantially involved, not merely invited to make ritual speeches and disappear. In some years this Theme meeting might absorb the recently instituted 'High-Level Segment' of ECOSOC sessions, if the latter's selected focus provides a suitable theme-topic.

Each of these elements—sectoral ministers participating in ECOSOC; papers prepared on a genuinely joint UN/agency basis; and the agency head being present and accorded proper respect—are all essential to achieving greater coherence. The high-level theme process would not duplicate, but, on the contrary, help prepare for the 'economic security' function earlier discussed.

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114 Article 66.1 states that ECOSOC 'shall perform such functions as fall within its competence in connection with the carrying out of the recommendations of the General Assembly.'
120 It may be noted in this connection that in the later chapter on intergovernmental machinery this study will recommend an end to the attempt to constrict ECOSOC sessions.
The working relations between, and the joint product of constitutionally separate organizations depend heavily on meetings of many kinds. The manner in which each other's representatives are treated at meetings, the choice of respective representatives, and what they give, and take, condition much of the total relationship.

The first functional provision in the Special Agreements provides that the UN and each agency should attend the meetings of each other's key deliberative bodies and their subsidiary committees, participating without vote. In the event, however, entire provisions have not been implemented; others have been abused or down-graded over the years.

A chain of causes and effects

There is, of course, a certain inherent imbalance in the UN/Specialized Agency relationship. A wide range of the largely multi-disciplinary agenda items of UN bodies is of potential concern to each of the major specialized agencies; their own bodies' largely sectoral and subsectoral agenda contain fewer topics of equivalent operational concern to UN organs. This inevitable asymmetry, however, should only increase care over representation. Instead, the level of representation has seriously deteriorated since the early years.

The early pattern of representation was based on the original premise that the UN really was supposed to lead and coordinate the agencies. While the UN would not maintain liaison offices at the agencies' headquarters, the Secretary-General would send a high-level official to present important UN views to their key governing bodies. As the original hopes for UN-agency relations were dashed, Dag Hammarskjöld largely abandoned the latter practice. The effect among the agencies was to reduce even further their acceptance of UN leadership, and to increase the feeling (sometimes genuine but sometimes separatist-motivated) that New York was not seriously interested in coordination in any case.

The agencies were expected to maintain resident liaison offices at New York and send substantive representatives from their headquarters to key UN meetings to report and advise. This places an even higher premium on the reverse process—UN representation at agency meetings. This has been largely ritualistic, the UN statement seldom showing either knowledge or interest in the agenda, the UN representative not bothering to talk with the agency's delegates, and usually catching the earliest possible plane back to New York. The greater an agency's sense of UN indifference about representation at agency meetings, the less will be the agency's interest in sending a representative to New York to attend a UN meeting, especially since the agency Liaison...
Office is already there. It should be noted here that reciprocal representation between the UN and the World Bank and IMF has collapsed altogether.

**Representation at the General Assembly**

The General Assembly was supposed to be the deliberative and decision-making centrepiece of the whole system, not just of the UN itself. Agency representation in the Assembly should, therefore, be given careful attention—for its substance on major global economic and social issues, and for the strengthening of intra-system relations.

The first provision about reciprocal representation in the Special Agreements dealt with this in paragraph 3; thus, ILO and FAO were to be able to speak to the General Assembly in plenary on questions within the scope of (their) activities. The general outcome, however, has been that the UN has not provided for such agency dialogue with the very organ given responsibility for coordination of agencies’ policies in the Charter. The cramped and obscure seating of agency heads in the Assembly hall symbolizes the lack of vitality of the relationship.

Thus the UN itself has contributed to the very lack of cohesion in the UN system of which its Secretaries-General and its Delegates constantly complain. A veteran civil servant who has worked both in agencies and the UN has observed, 'If the UN wants to continue to drive the system apart, let it continue on its present course; if you want to break down barriers and ensnare the agencies in the UN, make paragraph 3 work, periodically.'

**Other UN meetings**

The placement of representatives in any meeting hall is inevitably symbolic. Even in the most relevant Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly the agencies are placed in such a way as to guarantee minimal awareness of them among Delegations, as well as resentment of their staff and heads towards the UN. The seating layout places all of them—including the seven major agencies—at the back of the room on the same footing as the UN’s internal departments, its subsidiary development funds, and the non-governmental organizations. Agency representatives have to speak from these same positions, talking to the backs of delegates’ heads. They are seldom invited to sit on the rostrum even when the Committee is discussing matters directly related to their work.

In the ECOSOC chamber the problem is less one of seating than of a constant agency sense of not being adequately involved by the UN Secretariat in the preparation of reports to the Council. This in turn means that agency representatives are not seated on the rostrum even when reports encompassing their fields of competence are being discussed. The aggregate effect of all this in

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122 However, in its Special Agreement WHO can 'attend' the General Assembly 'for purposes of consultation'.
123 Private correspondence.
agency headquarters is a thorough disenchantment of even the most system-minded and least formalistic executive heads.

**Reciprocal errors**

On both sides, more casual errors, both of omission and commission, and many failures of tact and understanding, have contributed to a negative feeling about mutual representation and have further soured UN-Agency relations. The Secretary-General should carry out an in-depth study of the implementation of all UN-Agency Special Agreements on reciprocal representation. The study should be done by a senior veteran of the UN system who is familiar with these processes. It should be completely frank about problems on both sides of the UN-Agencies relationship. Some terms of reference are included in Chapter XIII. This study should accompany a report by the Secretary-General to member-governments in time for the 1995 reform discussions.

**INTER-SECRETARIAT IMPROVEMENTS**

**Can the ACC be empowered?**

The foregoing measures would go some distance towards drawing the system more closely together at the intergovernmental level. They would not, however, establish a cabinet of its executive heads, and even a common headquarters location would not by itself achieve this.

The Administrative Committee on Coordination has inherent limitations. It cannot be more than a committee of international civil servants, implementing policies ultimately determined by governments. So long as the constitutional separatism of the system endures, and governments have taken no decision at the UN to over-ride such separatism, the ACC can not take a decision instructing a member to do something contrary to his or her governing body's policies. Not surprisingly, the ACC never votes. If it did, the Secretary-General and, implicitly, the United Nations, would be continually subjected to direction by agency majorities. Conversely, if agency heads were given a real sense of partnership with the UN their great influence with their delegations would be very useful.

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali has moved to streamline ACC machinery and procedures, something that has often been attempted before. Until there is an integrated United Nations the system remains dependent for improvement on the twin necessities of coordination—clear system-wide direction by governments and better cooperation among the component organizations. Is it possible for the ACC to become less a dissonant orchestra of mutually antagonistic players, and more a cabinet led by the leading international servant, the Secretary-General of the United Nations?

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124 A special study by the veteran former Director-General of ILO, Francis Blanchard, presented to the Spring 1993 meeting.
The ACC was established at the request of ECOSOC in 1946 and immediately got off on an indifferent footing with the agencies. In effect, a committee of agency executive heads who had been elected by their own equivalents of the General Assembly was created to report to a secondary organ of the UN, ECOSOC. To make matters worse the ACC has for many years had little or no relationship with the General Assembly.

The first requirement for improvement is for the General Assembly to give the ACC a status in relation to itself—as its agency members have alongside their equivalent organs—but a challenging and substantively useful status, not a merely formal one. This need not change the ACC's ongoing working relations with ECOSOC.

At the same time the Assembly should adopt a decision addressed as much to its own member-governments as to the agency executive heads, to make the ACC more responsible to the common membership of the system. The outlines of a resolution providing for this new status and role for ACC members are set out in Chapter XIII.

Strengthening the bonds between its organizations at both the intergovernmental and the intersecretariat levels is essential if the UN system is to be better equipped to tackle the problems that demand coherent system-wide responses. Much, much more is needed, however, for an effective response to the world's most urgent economic and social needs.

**STRENGTHENING THE SECRETARIAT'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CAPACITIES**

► **The need for leadership**

The UN Secretariat is not well organized to support the leadership of the Secretary-General in recommending valid macro-economic policy options to governments. The ability to do this has long been in decline, partly because of the mediocrity of some incumbents nominated by governments, partly because of flawed reform decisions, and especially because of the already noted claim that such policy responsibilities belong to the Bretton Woods institutions.

The decline in the UN's stature in economic and social matters has serious effects on the work of intergovernmental organs and, as a result, on the capability of the UN to act as an effective centre. For example, it is proving difficult to get ministers to attend even 'high-level' segments of ECOSOC. This is in part because the papers offered in the name of the Secretary-General do not invite such attendance. Delegates in the General Assembly's economic and social committees have frequently complained of the 'lack of imaginativeness and innovation' in Secretariat reports, and of insufficient correlation both between them and with agency documents.

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125 'It has not always been understood that the ACC, although established at ECOSOC's behest, is not one of its subordinate organs or that it derives its authority less from ECOSOC than from its members' positions of influence and trust with their own governing organs.' Martin Hill in ed. Evan Luard, The Evolution of International Organizations (New York, Praeger, 1966), p. 123.
Strategic documentation

No reform in the Secretariat has yet succeeded in even modestly reducing the avalanche of documents on economic and social matters that pours upon delegations from various seemingly separate sources, yet all in the name of the one Secretary-General of the United Nations. These documents are, of course, requested by governments. Often, however, papers are requested because of the confusion that a previous avalanche has itself created. Only the Secretary-General can act to rationalize and enhance the responses to these requests. Failing such an effort, delegates, frustrated and irritated rather than inspired, will continue to be unable to distill global policy from the inchoate mass of unimpressive documents.

There is an urgent need in the Secretariat for intellect and clear authority to supervise the preparation of coherent, challenging documents. This is essential, among other things, for providing valid socio-economic policy advice for the Secretary-General. Recommendations are included in Chapter XIII. Essentially the Secretariat needs one office responsible for the creative planning, in collaboration with relevant specialized agencies, of substantive economic and social papers for delegations. This office would manage all documentation in these fields, under an official with overriding authority to make tough decisions both as to substance and coherence and economy of words.

THE ILL-FATED DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S POST

Political and security matters have always dominated the timetable of the Secretary-General. In what has been called an impossible job, not even a Secretary-General trained in economics could personally assemble into policy proposals the many strands of analysis and option that are involved in the world economy. After five years Dag Hammarskjöld described himself as an ‘ex-economist’ who could no longer keep up with the literature.126

It is therefore essential that the Secretary-General should have a top-calibre economic advisor who can coordinate the resources of both the Secretariat and the rest of the UN system to assemble such proposals and ensure coherent consideration of them.

Over nearly fifty years this seemingly obvious requirement has never been fulfilled. Senior officials—in the Secretariat to protect their own standing and, in some agencies, to fend off UN coordination—have tended to be against such an appointment, while the governments of industrial countries have shown far more enthusiasm for keeping top-level economic expertise in the Bretton Woods institutions.

The most carefully elaborated proposal to meet this need came from a fully representative

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THE MACHINERY FOR EQUITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

intergovernmental group of experts appointed by the General Assembly in 1974 to bring forward 'proposals on structural changes within the United Nations system so as to make it fully capable of dealing with problems of international economic cooperation in a comprehensive manner'. The fate of this proposal is replete with lessons for any future attempt at restructuring.

The group recommended the appointment of a Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation. They recommended that the post be at a high enough level to be 'primus inter pares among the heads of (UN) organizations and agencies dealing with economic and social affairs', and that appointment to it be confirmed by the General Assembly at the same time as that of the Secretary-General.

As important as the rank was the recommendation that the Director-General should be in full charge of all economic and social capacities in the United Nations—research, policy formulation, and operational activities for development. He or she should also have strong system-wide coordinating authority, including chairing a recommended new 'Advisory Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development' comprising the heads of the IMF and the World Bank, the five other major agencies, UNCTAD, and the regional commissions. The new office would manifestly need a small staff of its own comprising only the very best professionals in international economics, and it was explicitly recommended that these include top-quality staff seconded from the agencies.

This, then, was to be the most senior UN official next to the Secretary-General, and the leader of economic development in the international community. However, in a classic illustration of the consequences of piecemeal reform, the governmental negotiation on the experts' proposals eliminated the entire structure they had carefully designed to make the new office ('DIEC') work. The diagrams reproduced below show the experts' recommendations, and the forlorn actual outcome in an official Secretariat diagram—an isolated Director-General in charge of no other part of the Secretariat and not even shown in line function under the Secretary-General.

The enabling resolution 32/197 only emerged after two years of wrangling, bedeviled by North-South disputes and deft lobbying by senior UN and agency officials. Its seemingly resounding mandate for the incumbent obscured the pathetic reality.

The Assembly resolution gave the new official the task of coordinating all economic and


131 General Assembly resolution 32/197, 20 December 1977.
Experts proposal for Secretariat structure for global economic cooperation, 1975*

* Reproduced from the official Experts' Report, with slight re-arrangement solely for reasons of space

social work within the UN itself including its development funds. However, it incorporated none of the expert group's recommendations for the internal reorganization of the Secretariat that would make this possible. It left the Secretary-General to determine not only the Director-General's actual rank but also lines of authority over Secretariat economic and social units and the voluntary funds. Aware that industrial powers did not want a strong DIEC, neither Secretary-General Waldheim nor Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar ever delineated the Director-General's responsibilities within the Secretariat. The former did not assign to his supposed No. 2 any

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132 "Ensuring, within the United Nations, the coherence, co-ordination and efficient management of all activities in the economic and social fields financed by the regular budget or by extrabudgetary resources"; paragraph 2/64 b. of Resolution 32/197.

133 DIEC was never delineated in the Organization Manual of the Secretariat. Fully ten years later the Joint Inspection Unit was politely suggesting that 'the functions of the Director-General and the procedures for their implementation should be clarified and formalized'; Recommendation 5 (b) in JIU Report UN Doc. A/44/486, 25 August 1989.
authority over Secretariat economic and social functions outside DIEC itself. It was widely believed that neither Waldheim nor his successor regarded DIEC as of real importance. This belief contributed to the almost entirely indifferent staffing of DIEC.

The Director-General's mandate for coordination of the UN system was also resoundingly worded in resolution 32/197,134 but since neither Secretary-General Waldheim nor his successor sought to have the incumbent Director-General confirmed by the General Assembly, agency heads could (and did) say that they were of higher rank. The new high-level inter-agency Advisory Committee which the experts had recommended was never created.

134ör the provision of effective leadership to the various components of the United Nations system in the field of development and international economic co-operation and in exercising overall co-ordination within the system to ensure a multidisciplinary approach to the problems of development on a system-wide basis'; paragraph 2/64 a. of Resolution 32/197.
DIEC was also supposed to 'coordinate' Environment issues. It was given precisely one professional post for global environment policy guidance and system coordination. Here again, the Director-General had neither the rank, the high-level support, the staff capacity, or the intellectual authority to coordinate UN system work in that field.135

It was not, therefore, surprising that the quality of UN leadership in global economic and social policy showed no manifest improvement. In addition, throughout the 1980s, while the IMF and the World Bank recruited larger analytical and policy staff at much higher rates of pay, the industrial country members of the UN insisted on cutting UN Secretariat staff by 13 per cent and freezing their pay levels. The Bretton Woods institutions were thus enabled to take from the UN some of its best economists and sociologists.136

Seminars and symposia in the industrialized countries increasingly noted the ‘comparative advantages’ of the Bretton Woods institutions, as if these had emerged by immaculate conception. By 1992 the Managing Director of the IMF was suggesting to ECOSOC that the main contribution of the United Nations as a ‘fourth pillar’ (after the IMF, Bank and GATT) could be in sustainable and social development issues.137 And Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali was reduced to discussing ‘complementarities’ between the UN and the World Bank and IMF as though they were of equal status with the UN.138

In 1992 Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali abruptly abolished the post and office of the Director-General. Up to the time of preparing this study he has resisted all suggestions to re-establish it, or some equivalent.

THE 1992 SECRETARIAT REORGANIZATION

During 1992 Mr. Boutros-Ghali further reorganized the economic and social elements of the UN Secretariat. The former DIESA has become DESIPA (Department for Economic and Social Information), doing largely the same statistical and other data analysis, with a brief to collaborate closely with the Bretton Woods institutions. The Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) is essentially the old Department for Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD).

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135 Ironically, before long, industrial powers were expressing disappointment at the lack of leadership on environmental problems.
137 Statement at the High-Level Meeting of ECOSOC, New York, 7 July 1992, IMF Release 92/14, Washington, D.C.
A third, and newer Department for Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) assumes a number of functions previously assigned to the Director-General (DIEO) and other units, as well as the new work in sustainable development arising from the Rio Conference.

The brief for this Department brings under one line of responsibility and coordination the secretariat services in economic and social affairs for:

- the General Assembly (Second and Third Committees);
- the Economic and Social Council (the High-Level segment, Co-ordination, Operational Activities, and ECOSOC's subsidiary Commissions including the new Commission on Sustainable Development);
- the World Food Council;
- the Committee on Development Planning (CDP or as may be renamed);
- substantive machinery of the ACC, including the new Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development.

The DPCSD is also to develop cooperative relations with non-governmental organizations and the academic community and private commercial sector. It is also understood that efforts are being made to incorporate not only the Liaison Offices of the Regional Commissions but also those of specialized agencies that are presently kept quite apart in New York. These are promising initiatives.

The responsibilities of this new department are enormous. It is supposed to synthesize global information from DESIPA and all other parts of the UN system plus outside information networks, and to develop policy analyses and proposals for all of the economic and social organs and subsidiaries of the UN over a vast range of issues. Its brief officially encompasses poverty and food security; women; social development; science and technology; natural resources; energy; financial flows and assistance; and monitoring the implementation of the giant Agenda 21 from the Rio conference on environment and development.

This new department is thus supposed to become the intellectual powerhouse as well as the servicing unit of the United Nations in the entire field of socio-economic equity and sustainable development. If the long-neglected outreach of the UN to the NGO and academic community in these fields is also taken seriously at last, the workload of DPCSD will become even greater. This prompts three observations.

First, it must be doubted whether the staff posts presently allocated to DPCSD (some 120 professionals) will be sufficient for this massive array of tasks.

Secondly, the new arrangements still leave three socio-economic departments in New York, the still important though severely reduced UNCTAD in Geneva, four major funds and programmes (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP), and five Regional Commissions, with no coordinating responsibility above them except the Secretary-General himself.

Thirdly, the DPCSD is assigned the responsibilities of working coordination with the specialized agencies and, at least in terms of preparation of documentation for UN organs, also
with the operational funds. Yet it is headed by an Under Secretary-General, one rank below the heads of all the agencies and of UNDP, and equal in rank to the heads of other funds and of regional commissions. This does not give a very important position adequate weight and stature.

In their 1991 study on reorganization of the UN Secretariat the authors recommended that the critically important functions described above for the ill-fated Director-General should, like two or three other vitally important areas of work, be assigned to an official with a new rank of Deputy Secretary-General. Nothing has since occurred to change their views about this recommendation. Indeed all developments since 1991 only reinforce it. The title of the post and office should give greater prominence to the long-neglected but over-riding global responsibility of the United Nations by designating it Deputy Secretary-General for International Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development.

The need for such a post continues to grow with the growing expectations of the United Nations that it provide intellectual leadership in the entire field of socio-economic equity, including, since the 1992 Rio 'Earth Summit' (UNCED), sustainable development. The Secretary-General needs a commanding intellectual in the complexities of world economy, who can also develop on his behalf continuous leadership of the whole UN system by earning the respect of all its senior officials. This cannot be accomplished directly and personally by the Secretary-General, whose time and attention are urgently engaged elsewhere.

Within the UN itself it is unrealistic to assume that a dozen heads of economic and social departments, funds and commissions will coordinate themselves, rationalize and focus the thrust of their own reports for deliberative bodies, and efficiently shape strategic policy options for the Secretary-General to present to governments. Yet the Secretariat, as it now stands, is reorganized on these assumptions. An authoritative official senior to all others is an absolute necessity in this extremely complex area.

Effective coordination in the UN system as a whole also requires a Deputy Secretary-General. Again, no Secretary-General has the time for this task. It is in the daily ongoing work of the system—not in meetings of the ACC—that coherent policy and programmes are either developed or not. In that ongoing working environment no Under Secretary-General can adequately carry the Secretary-General’s authority vis-à-vis executive heads who are senior in rank and can claim entirely separate intergovernmental authority. Yet again, this is the assumption of the present reorganization of the Secretariat.

Without such top-calibre coordinating assistance to the Secretary-General in the complex area of global equity and sustainable development, further resounding calls in the General Assembly for ‘improved coordination within the system’ will continue to be hollow rhetoric.

**The quality of the staff**

A related cause of the UN’s lack of leadership in global economic policy lies in the overall quality of professional-level staffing for such work.
It is often said that the UN cannot attract high-calibre personnel in macro-economic and related fields because its salaries are so low compared with those offered by the Bretton Woods institutions. The salary discrepancy has indeed grown steadily worse and must be corrected. This by itself will not, however, attract top-quality people to the UN, unless its work in these fields is also of consistently high repute and under authoritative intellectual leadership.

It was not, for example, in the UN Secretariat but in UNICEF—and with the participation of internationally reputed economists—that the only headquarters-level challenge to IMF 'structural adjustment' came. In the same period 'State of the World' annual reports were launched, not by DIEC but by UN operational development funds, which should not have needed to divert energy and staff into such work. Many high-quality, committed professionals in economic and social disciplines would have served in DIEC, even at UN pay scales, if the office had been known as a place where such important and innovative global insights and policy initiatives were being developed.

In any system that vests technical competences in separate agencies, the central coordinating organization must have at least a few senior specialists on its own staff who can cover the whole field in multi-disciplinary analyses. Yet when the UN has sought such staff it has been accused by turf-protective agency heads, as well as cost-conscious governments, of 'duplication'. Governments nonetheless expect the Secretary-General somehow to present them with 'cross-programmed' analyses, and 'a coordinated multi-disciplinary strategy drawing on the work of the system'.

The usual solution to this impasse has been one or another kind of inter-secretariat ad hoc committee or working group. The working of such groups is extremely slow, and its product when it emerges is almost invariably bland. The reasons are not far to seek. Apart from the inherent problems of formulating high-quality policy options by quite large committees, such tasks are almost always assigned to non-substantive 'external relations' staff.

The substantive units that should contribute to multi-disciplinary analysis as the basis of macro-policy options cannot sufficiently brief the external relations staff. Thus, in an arid and thankless round they journey to each other's capitals trying to fashion joint reports on a wide range of highly complex subjects. Every co-drafted sentence is intensively scrutinized by their respective seniors before the next meeting. The ultimate products, sometimes only after a delay of several years, are not the attention-commanding global analyses and proposals that a Secretary-General should be able to present to governments. Throwing an 'inter-agency task force' at a problem is seldom likely to produce anything more than continued incoherence couched in opaque UN jargon.

In an integrated United Nations these laborious and inherently mediocre exercises would not

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139 UNICEF's 'Adjustment with a Human Face', which was shaped with the assistance of such reputed economists as Dr. Frances Stewart of Oxford University. The other significant critique of IMF policies came from ECA in Addis Ababa, not only without DIEC but despite its timid efforts to restrain then ECA Executive Secretary Adebayo Adedeji.

140 UNICEF's on Children; UNEP's on Environment; UNFPA's on Population; more recently UNDP's on Human Development.
be necessary. Its unified professional staff would simply be instructed to work together on a given analysis and to fashion policy options for the Secretary-General. The non-constitutional remedy is that agencies be instructed by their governing bodies to second substantive staff of quality to the UN Secretariat.

Here again, this is not a new idea but an old one. It has, however, seldom been realized except in temporary secretariats preparing world conferences, and (partially) in some emergency secretariats like the highly praised UN Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) led by Bradford Morse. The Office of the Director-General was in fact supposed to have a ‘joint unit’ constituted by such secondments from the agencies. The secondments to DIEC never arrived, and the unit was never created. The intergovernmental Consultative Board earlier proposed would signally help to make such inter-agency collaboration a reality.

A Deputy Secretary-General, responsible on the Secretary-General’s behalf for all macro-economic policy-formulation and programmes in global equity and sustainable development, with high-quality staff drawn from the best among the agencies, is a *sine qua non* for improvement in the UN’s socio-economic work. Much more is, however, also needed.

**Harnessing and nourishing decentralized units**

There have long been serious disjunctures between UN headquarters and UN economic and social units located elsewhere. Thus, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the Executive Directors of the Regional Commissions have in reality no substantive home base in UN headquarters. They maintain their own Liaison Offices in New York. They come on visits to report to the Secretary-General and relevant intergovernmental organs. Once upon a time they hoped that their policy analyses and programme reports might receive attention and have an effect somehow, somewhere. That hope has largely evaporated. No senior official at headquarters other than the Secretary-General is in charge of such important questions as their creative staffing, which means, in fact, that no one is. They have tended to be treated like field offices. To no small extent they have become the Cinderellas of the UN, expected to do hard work uncomplainingly out of sight with minimal tools, and little encouragement or interest.

Correcting such relationships is delicate, lest one of the blessings of decentralization—a reasonable amount of freedom to innovate and heed one’s immediate clientele—be snuffed out. The lack, however, of any organized relationship must be attended to.

Needed reorganization of the Regional Commissions will be examined in a later section dealing with Operational Activities. In the present context it is urged that the Office of the proposed Deputy Secretary-General should also become the home base for the Regional Commissions and for UNCTAD.

Again, detailed recommendations covering the analysis in the foregoing pages are included in Chapter XIII.

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141 Disjunctures among the Secretariat and UN development funds will be discussed separately in a later section.
AN INTER-AGENCY ADVISORY BOARD

A great deal of attention has recently been given to institutional arrangements to implement the conclusions of the 1992 ‘Earth Summit’ at Rio de Janeiro. Along with a similar tendency over development activities, there has been some danger of the Environment dominating reform in UN economic and social machinery.

The principal danger is that while much more attention may now be devoted to ecological issues that are indeed vital, this will be at the expense of attention to macro-economic global problems into which environmental considerations should be integrated. The certain result will be that heavily indebted developing countries will neither have the earning power to invest in environmental protection nor the assistance needed to substitute for such income growth. If this happens, in ten years’ time neither the world economy nor the world ecology will have benefited—perhaps, indeed, the reverse.

Harnessing the best substantive capacities of the UN system is only a small, but nonetheless an important part of this issue. In response to UNCED the ACC has established an Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development. The usefulness of any ACC machinery will remain limited without the reforms already urged herein. Improved machinery must also respond to the world’s top priorities, and to their systemic linkages. The Inter-Agency Committee should be so mandated, along lines recommended in Chapter XIII.

THE BRETTON WOODS ‘SPECIALIZED AGENCIES’

... on November 15, 1947 the Bank and the Fund became specialized agencies of the United Nations. But they became rather ‘special’ specialized agencies.

In the world at large—in the majority of member-countries in the South, and among virtually all NGOs in the North—the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are by far the most controversial multilateral organizations. The continuous controversy over the impact on developing countries of Bank-financed projects and of IMF ‘structural adjustment’ conditionalities has serious implications for the UN, not so much because anyone thinks it is responsible as because everyone knows it is not. The substance of these controversies is not within the parameters of this

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142 Already, responses to the financing needs identified at UNCED have been very discouraging along precisely this pattern, vide report of the Secretary-General to the new Commission on Sustainable Development, UN document E.CN.17-1993-11.

### Table 3. Comparison of basic UN principles with World Bank and IMF characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UN principles and the Special Agreements</th>
<th>Characteristics of the World Bank and the IMF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Membership granted to peace loving states, subject to assent of Permanent Five.</td>
<td>Membership subject to financial subscription, other economic criteria, assent of powers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Governance by one member one vote.</td>
<td>Weighted voting according to members' shares, i.e. wealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Similar treatment of all members regardless of wealth.</td>
<td>Special IMF measures as regards deficit (poorer) members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Penalties against a member only for Charter violations.</td>
<td>Penalties imposed over member's national economic performance (but seldom in the case of richer countries).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Policies adopted for all, or for agreed economic categories of members with prior collective decision.</td>
<td>Policies applied on single-member basis without prior collective policy decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. No lateral economic effects on a member except under Ch. VII sanctions for breaches of peace.</td>
<td>IMF credit rating of a member affects its access to all capital markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Collective decisions, free of special national foreign-policy dictates except 1 above.</td>
<td>Members with most votes can order, or veto loans or credits to a member for national policy goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Coordination of specialized agencies with UN at least accepted in Special Agreements.</td>
<td>Bank and IMF refused to accept coordination clauses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Development assistance at grant or lowest long-term rates under collectively approved policies.</td>
<td>Development assistance at full market rates, or (IDA) soft long-term rates but subject to 2–7 above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Staff recruited and paid at common UN-system rates.</td>
<td>Not part of UN common staff system; staff paid at much higher rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Austere use of funds, e.g. staff travel; limited hospitality, routine meetings of governing bodies.</td>
<td>Corporate-level expenditures, e.g., in staff travel, lavish hospitality and environs for meetings of governing bodies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The salient issues for reform of the system can be outlined by a comparison of the Bank's and the IMF's characteristics with basic UN principles.

Although their relationship—Agreements with the UN are different and very weak, the IMF and the World Bank are supposed to be agencies of the UN system. They have, however, conducted their business so separately for so long that while there are shelves of studies on their own futures...
there are scarcely any studies, however brief, on the issue of their actual relationship to the UN system. Yet the question of the Bretton Woods institutions crops up sooner or later in almost any discussion about UN-system reform.144

... it was contended that a pattern of special position for the great powers was already shaping up in too many agencies (the UNRRA, IBRD and the IMF, as well as the ILO) ... 145

From the first the authorities in the World Bank do not seem to have taken the idea of its being a specialized agency in the system seriously. They were "very fearful that (this) would subject it to undesirable political control or influence and hurt its credit rating in Wall Street".146 The motions of negotiating a Special Agreement were gone through, but the UN had to accept drastic reductions and eliminations in the text compared with those with the ILO (and later FAO, WHO, UNESCO).

A key Bank negotiator has recalled that "We took out a few of our declarations of independence but not very many".147 The Bank stipulated its complete independence of external coordination, refused to pledge provision of regular information to the UN, limited UN attendance at its meetings and insisted on a budgetary clause nullifying UN involvement in its budgets.

Very much the same process attended the negotiation of the Special Agreement with the IMF. The relationships with the UN were thus clouded, at least in the view of smaller countries, from the outset. The final texts of the two Special Agreements were vigorously opposed in ECOSOC in 1947 not only by the USSR but by Norway, which stated that the special exemptions and privileges being accorded to the two institutions could undermine the authority of the United Nations and even jeopardize broader international cooperation.

There are sharp distinctions as between the Bank and the IMF in their connection with the work of the UN system.

▶ The World Bank

The World Bank is supposed to be a lender of commercially raised capital for development projects. Given its essential structuring as a bank borrowing (except for IDA) on commercial markets, there was never any possibility of it complying with the principles, processes and intended coordinating role of the United Nations. Even if it ceased to be subject to the influence of

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144 A group of distinguished economists, parliamentarians, diplomats and scholars issued a call in 1980 for a UN Conference on International Money and Finance following a meeting at Arusha, Tanzania, on the problems created by the IMF and World Bank. For the text of the 'Arusha Initiative' and other basic analyses of these problems see Development Dialogue 1980:2, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala.

145 Ruth R. Russell, op. cit., p. 321, recalling discussions in 1944 on the predicted opposition of smaller states to any weighted voting in what became ECOSOC.

146 Mason and Asher, op. cit., p. 56.

147 ibid., p. 57 referring to Richard H. Demuth's later account of negotiations at UN headquarters in an oral history.
one or two industrial powers, it is difficult to see how it could ever fit into the non-commercial, one country/one vote, financial shoestring UN system.\textsuperscript{148}

Early discontent with the UN/Bank relationship by smaller countries gave rise during the 1950s to a long effort for the United Nations to establish its own bank, a non-commercial, publicly subscribed, soft-loan capital window under the General Assembly. That ‘Special UN Fund for Economic Development’ (SUNFED) was, however, resolutely opposed by some industrial powers. The IDA, also soft-loan but to be governed by the Bank with its weighted voting, was introduced to diffuse all momentum for SUNFED.\textsuperscript{149} Dag Hammarskjold tried to create some special relationship between the UN and IDA but was firmly rebuffed by the President of the Bank.\textsuperscript{150}

Since the demise of SUNFED there have been many attempts to make the relationship between the Bank and the UN work. The two main obstacles to this objective are, first, that the Bank really is not at present of the same species as the UN; and secondly, that ‘donor’ governments do not follow consistent policies in the two institutions. It is pointless to urge ‘improved coordination between the UN and the international financial institutions’ if governments deny the former the resources and funds to exercise coordinating authority, while increasing the endowments of the latter and endorsing their unilateralism.

Only here and there and now and then, usually only by dint of special personal initiative by their local representatives, do the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions manage to consult each other. A senior UN official has, however, recently observed that ‘The lamentable fact is that laudable isolated efforts notwithstanding, which barely scratch the walls separating the compartments, there is no culture of co-ordination’.\textsuperscript{151} Recent IMF and Bank negotiations on one hand, and UN negotiations on the other with the same Salvadorian Government were ‘as if a patient lay on the operating table with the upper and lower parts of his body separated by a curtain, with unrelated surgery being performed on each side’.\textsuperscript{152}

Frank criticisms along these lines have been few and far between. The reality has been effectively obscured by years of inflated annual descriptions of ‘co-operation and co-ordination’ between the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly the World Bank, and UN development funds. A recent study by the Joint Inspection Unit reviewing some 300 policy, programme and project papers found that, ‘there is still not much operational co-operation between United Nations system organizations and the multilateral financial institutions.’\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{148} Neither US Administrations nor the US Congress have made any secret of their use of the World Bank as an instrument of US foreign policy. c.f., i.a., Douglas Williams, The Specialized Agencies and the United Nations (New York, St. Martins, 1987), pp. 67–88 citing a US Treasury study claiming successful or partially successful ‘financial leverage’ in 85 per cent of instances.

\textsuperscript{149} IDA ‘was really an idea to offset the surge for SUNFED’, interview with Eugene Black, President of the Bank, quoted in Mason and Asher, op. cit., p. 386.


\textsuperscript{151} Alvaro de Soto (Senior Political Adviser to the Secretary-General and UN mediator in the Salvadoran peace process) and Professor Graciana del Castillo, ‘An Integrated International Approach to Human Security: El Salvador; A Case Study’, a paper prepared in April 1993.

\textsuperscript{152} ibid.

\textsuperscript{153} UN Doc. E/1993/18, 23 February 1993, transmitting to ECOSOC JHI/REP/92/1 (Part I), paragraph 4.
The ‘collaboration’ that has taken place often reflected the bizarre disjunctures between ‘donor’ government policies at the UN and in the Bank. Over many years governments declared their support for the special principle of UN technical assistance or technical cooperation being provided as grants. In the late 1960s the UNDP was requested to propose measures to enable it to handle at least double its volume of funding (the origins of the famous Jackson Capacity Study of 1969 and the subsequent UNDP reorganization). However, from the mid-1970s, ‘donor’ governments tapered off their contributions to UNDP and began authorizing a huge expansion of World Bank technical assistance—for much of which developing countries have to borrow and pay commercial interest rates. There have even been instances, for example Jamaica, where UNDP did not have the funds to provide the needed grant for technical cooperation; the government had to resort to the World Bank; and it was then informed that UNDP would carry out the project for the Bank, but Jamaica must pay the Bank commercial lending rates for this UNDP-implemented assistance.

When the Bank goes its own way the UN is often implicitly criticized for allowing it to do so. The demands of ‘donor’ governments for ‘further cooperation’ between the Bank and UN-system entities have produced initiatives like the joint World Bank-UNDP sponsorship of the General Environmental Facility (GEF), creating the illusion of genuine coordination but the reality of Bank predominance.¹⁵⁴

Such efforts at cooperation have tended to identify UN-system entities with the Bank’s market-promotional policies. The Bank’s expansion into programme lending has also involved it in IMF-type political conditionalities on a country’s national economic policies and programmes and loans to support the IMF’s ‘structural adjustments’. Even though these policies frequently run counter to UN-system development programmes, the United Nations cannot have any substantial influence on them while inconsistent donor-government policies prevail in Washington.¹⁵⁵

The genuine need for project-collaboration does not require bringing the World Bank compatibly into the UN system. The system has such collaboration with the regional development banks, and they are not UN specialized agencies in any sense of the term.

Discussion of the role of the World Bank in the UN system is continually affected by its aura of financial magnitude and power. To come to grips with the question of its future place in the system, UN delegations need to subject the Bank to as searching an evaluation as its controlling governments make of the system’s development activities.

The Bank has, of course, done useful work, but the realities do not really match the mystique. The Bank’s major members themselves have never treated it as the prime instrument for

¹⁵⁴ For discussion of this environment issue, within a very useful chapter on overall UN-System reform issues, see Branislav Gosovic, The Quest for World Environmental Co-operation (London, Routledge, 1992), pp. 249–272.

¹⁵⁵ Whether UNICEF’s courageous ‘adjustment with a human face’ initiative will in concrete reality rescue countries from the damage is still an open question. Among numerous critiques see Frances Stewart, ‘How well did the World Bank meet the needs of the 1980s?’ in ed. M. Nissank and A. Hewitt, Economic Crisis in Developing Countries (London, Pinter, 1993).
multilateral investment.\textsuperscript{156} The claim that indebtedness is dealt with by the Bretton Woods institutions separately or together (in ways actually never clearly stated) has been belied again and again by actual developments. In 1990 there was a global surplus of $180 billion amid developing country indebtedness eight times that amount. There was no significant remedial effort by the IMF; most of the surplus went to private capital markets in affluent countries. Meanwhile the World Bank was taking in $1.7 billion in interest and principal payments from developing countries.\textsuperscript{157}

The Bank openly claims ‘intellectual leadership in development’ through its research and publications.\textsuperscript{158} An increasing number of respected development specialists and economists, as well as substantial NGOs, harbour doubts about this. It has been pointed out that more often than not the Bank has actually followed rather than led—or, as would often have been very helpful, moderated—the succeeding waves of new development panaceas that arrive in developing countries in Northern briefcases. The Bank is noted for being highly orthodox in its advocacy of market economics. And ‘a central omission has been the almost total neglect of major international dimensions, while research has focused almost exclusively on country policies.’\textsuperscript{159}

The Bank’s operational track record should also form part of review about its future place in the UN system. In an internal assessment of 1800 current Bank projects in 131 countries involving loans totaling $138 billion it was reported that 37.5 per cent of projects completed in 1991 were deemed failures.\textsuperscript{160}

The World Bank is not without redeeming features. The problem in all this is that neither executive heads in the UN system nor government representatives in the system’s policy bodies have any influence over an agency that is still supposed to be a part of the system. The UN is still supposed to accord it special status but the Secretary-General is no longer even invited to Bank meetings, yet is expected to invite the Bank President to address ECOSOC every year.

As this study is completed, the present Bank management has announced a number of reforms, from greater attention to ‘beneficiary participation’ to restrictions on first-class staff travel. A return to full implementation of at least the existing Special Agreement with the United Nations would be helpful. It would also be somewhat easier to envisage a continued relationship if the Bank were to implement its own Articles of Agreement and create in each region a ‘regional

\textsuperscript{156} The World Bank was not chosen to implement the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe. Governments in several regions, with the support of the same major shareholders in the World Bank, thereafter created regional development banks that do very much the same work (IADB, AfDB, ADB). Another regional multilateral bank (EBRD) was created for the reconstruction of Eastern Europe, whereupon the World Bank hastened to recover and get involved as well.


\textsuperscript{158} i.e., in its 1990 Annual Report.


\textsuperscript{160} The Assessment was led by Mr. Willi Wapenhans as chairman of a Portfolio Management Task Force appointed by Bank President Lewis Preston in February 1992.
council representative of the entire area' which could periodically meet with the single regional
governing body for UN-system operational activities recommended later in the study.\[^{161}\]

It remains, however, extremely difficult to envisage the scope of reforms in the World Bank
that would make it a compatible and appropriate specialized agency of the UN system. Beyond
austerity air travel, not only the Bank's present lavish meeting-style, but staff remuneration would
have to be brought into line with the UN 'common system'. The heavy-handedness of Bank loan
approaches, with staff arriving in developing country capitals with projects already designed in
Washington D.C., is equally incompatible with the principles of respect, cooperation and
partnership on which all United Nations system development activities are based. And despite
many years of urging by the most competent international as well as developing-country
authorities for far more small-scale lending, the World Bank has remained wedded to gigantism.\[^{162}\]

The need for the United Nations to be equipped with its own non-commercial bank is, if
anything more urgent today than when it was blocked in the 1950s. Such an institution would be
equitably governed and staffed in such a manner that it would respond to the real needs of
developing countries.

\[\textbf{The International Monetary Fund}\]

We need a system possessed of an internal stabilizing mechanism, by which
pressure is exercised on any country whose balance of payments with the rest
of the world is departing from equilibrium \textit{in either direction}, so as to prevent
movements which must create for its neighbours an equal but opposite want
of balance.

\textit{J.M. Keynes, 1942}\[^{163}\]

The relationship with IMF is a far more serious and urgent matter for the UN system. The World
Bank was not supposed to intervene in the economic policies of countries, whereas the IMF was
supposed to, but \textit{equitably}. World Bank projects occasionally run counter to UN-system
development strategies; but IMF 'structural adjustment' has undone painstaking work by the UN
system in helping to build public health, educational, and other infrastructure. Moreover, the IMF,
far more than the Bank, was supposed to be the multilateral instrument of coherent macro-
economic policies designed to achieve the Charter's economic and social goals.

The Fund was intended, indeed, to function as the fledgling central bank of the international

\[^{161}\] Article V Section 10(b) of the Bank's Articles of Agreement calls for such councils. For valuable further discussion of this and
other issues see Adebayo Adedeji, paper 'African Regional Perspectives on the Bretton Woods Institutions', September 1993,
also for the North-South Roundtable earlier cited.

\[^{162}\] A recent grant of $2 million to the pioneering Grameen small-loan rural bank in Bangladesh may reflect pressures on the
World Bank; but if it had been the UN system's principal lending agency, as so long claimed, an entire generation of small
farmers would not have been so totally neglected.

\[^{163}\] In his 'Proposals for an International Clearing Union', quoted in a paper by Professor Hans Singer, 'The Bretton Woods
System—Historical Perspective', for the North-South Roundtable, Society for International Development, 1993. The
emphasis is Keynes's.
community: to promote monetary cooperation, expansion of international trade, exchange stability and avoidance of competing depreciations, a multilateral payments system, and assistance to member-countries to correct balance of payments maladjustments with minimal impact either on national economy or international growth. All semblance of such functions—indeed the whole original ‘Bretton Woods System’ as it was called—has long since disappeared. The decisive event in diminishing and distorting the original purpose of the IMF may have come in the early 1970s after the dollar was taken off the gold standard, but governments were already allowing it to become prey to ‘politically motivated and oriented direct relationships between the United States and the major European countries’. In the 1990s, when the need for Keynes’s ‘internal stabilizing mechanism’ is if anything greater, the IMF has little role in relation either to the wealthier countries or to the daily electronic movement of money, and its role with the majority of countries and of the world’s peoples is to a considerable extent essentially punitive. The developing countries, on which the IMF is now so heavily concentrated, account for less than 10 per cent of global liquidity.

In terms of its future relationship within the UN system, the same essential problems arise over the IMF as over the World Bank. ‘Complementarity’ has become the usual descriptor for relationship with an IMF that was supposed to be an instrument of the United Nations, but there is no mutuality, either in participation in key meetings or at the country level. As noted earlier, where the ‘donor’ governments insist that macro-policy on world money be discussed at the IMF and not at the UN, it is in fact not discussed at the IMF. Notwithstanding Article 58 of the Charter, the policies of a Fund that is now concentrated on applying conditionalities to a majority of the UN’s member states cannot be usefully discussed in either ECOSOC or the General Assembly. And the Fund is itself so governed that although the developing countries constitute 74 per cent of its own membership they comprise scarcely 34 per cent of its voting strength. These are not the conditions foreseen by the United Nations Charter.

**An International Trade Organization**

In the conviction of Keynes and many of his associates in the original design of the Bretton Woods institutions, the Fund could only succeed in its functions alongside a properly constituted and mandated International Trade Organization (ITO).

A genuine ITO is needed to replace the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which was only supposed to be a temporary mechanism pending the ITO’s establishment.

A strong, open and non-discriminatory trading system is needed that can strengthen the capacity of all countries, but particularly the poorer, in access to major markets on one hand and against unilateral retaliatory measures on the other. Such a system must be universal; GATT has had less than 130 member states. It will be impossible to achieve equitable growth among large

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165 Mahbub Ul-Haq, *op. cit.*, ‘It may be characterized as a somewhat harsh and over-zealous policeman for the poor nations’.
proportions of humankind unless all independent countries have the opportunity to achieve their share of world trade and product.

There is also increasing need to develop equitable alternatives to regionalizing trade, which can only lead to conflicting trading blocs. A proper ITO is also needed to provide a credible, integrated mechanism for resolving trade disputes.

The optimistic treatment given to the 'successful' completion of the GATT Uruguay Round at the end of 1993 was symptomatic of a problem that has been emphasized during this study—that the real world's full range of economic problems are not only not addressed on an equitable and 'all-win' basis at the United Nations, but not anywhere else either. The majority of member states were made to wait in the wings until the last days while the industrial giants negotiated among themselves. GATT and World Bank documents purportedly analysing the agreement's benefits for developing countries have met with sharp criticism not only from Southern but also Northern experts, who assert that it offers little trading promise for the countries of the South and the vast majority of humankind. According to OECD calculations less than a third of the income to be gained from the accord will accrue to the South, and most of that third will go to a handful of countries. OXFAM has calculated that continental Africa will actually lose not less than $2.6 billion a year.

The establishment of a new 'multilateral' body (commonly referred to most recently as a 'World Trade Organization') has brought much confusion. It purports to afford a common dispute settlement procedure for goods, services and intellectual property rights; but if the basis of dispute is the 'accords' contained in the Final Act of the Uruguay Round, then most developing countries are at a major disadvantage in even invoking such procedure, which itself has intimidatory features.

It was, and it remains, entirely appropriate to envisage the global strategies for the work of the IMF—and an ITO—being negotiated and agreed at the United Nations. That this original intention was blocked early on does not discredit its validity. That the IMF, under G-7 control, has ceased to act as a mechanism of equilibrium and redistribution of economic forces between surplus and deficit countries and almost exclusively bears down on the deficit countries, does not discredit the original design either.

On the contrary, the global economy has proceeded inexorably downhill. While the United Nations has been denied its role as a forum for agreeing equitable macro-economic strategies, such strategies have not been formulated at the IMF either. For most developing countries the experience has been disastrous. For the industrial countries, short-term advantages will inevitably evaporate.

\[^{164}\text{I.a. Lance Taylor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Ajit Singh of Cambridge University; David Greenaway in the} \text{Economic Journal, cited in Third World Economics, No. 79, 16–31 December 1993, pp. 7–9. Also Goldin, Knudsen and van} \text{der Mansbrughe, OECD Development Centre, cited in art. Christopher Huhne, 'Not everyone stands to get fat on GATT', in Business} \text{Section, The Independent on Sunday, 3 October 1993, London.}\]

\[^{167}\text{art. Kevin Watkins, Guardian Weekly, 26 December 1993.}\]

\[^{168}\text{In a background paper for the North-South Roundtable Dr. S. P. Shukla has observed that 'the new system will confer} \text{international legitimacy on what, under the existing GATT system, can only be described as illegitimate power play or} \text{unilateral arm-twisting,' op. cit.}\]
A combined, properly and equitably functioning IMF and ITO could have avoided most of the major causes of the actual world economic crisis—failure to stabilize commodity prices, including oil; the steady sinking of developing countries into debt both through manipulation of interest rates and continuous frustration of their efforts to earn through exports; the fruitless attempts to export unemployment as though the 1920s–1930s had never happened; the sharply eroded terms of trade; and the new vulnerability of national currency reserves to totally unregulated electronic speculation for private gain.\textsuperscript{169}

The world will remain at severe risk while its only universal multilateral institution does not include the kind of mechanism that Keynes outlined in the midst of the last world war as an essential institutional safeguard against a repetition of the 1930s.

Fortunately, pressures for reform of IMF policies, for a return to balanced treatment of both surplus and deficit countries, and for reform of its governance, are now coming from its newer members. It is possible to envisage a new phase in the history of the Fund before long. It is also to be hoped that realization of the dangerous consequences of a lack of macro-economic strategies for the world as a whole will also generate pressures for a genuine International Trade Organization directed by the United Nations to secure equitable trading opportunities for all peoples.

The Secretary-General should request the services of a group of independent international economists to prepare an outstanding paper for his submission to governments during the 50th Anniversary, with recommendations for the reform and completion of the three missing specialized agencies of the UN system:

- an equitably governed low-interest capital lending facility under United Nations authority (consolidating the present IDA, IFAD, and UNCDF), under policy guidelines established by the General Assembly and properly coordinated with UN development activities by ECOSOC;
- an equitably governed monetary fund and clearing union genuinely functioning as a specialized agency in the UN system, directed by ECOSOC under overall policy guidelines established by the General Assembly;
- the emergent World Trade Organization (WTO) brought under equitable governance as a proper specialized agency in the UN system, following fair world-trade policies established by the General Assembly on the recommendations of ECOSOC.

\textsuperscript{169} For an excellent survey see Professor Paul Streeten's paper in \textit{International Governance}, University of Sussex, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 2–35.
It is not that large sums of money are involved ... The real reason is the great inertia of the elaborate administrative structure which no one, it seems, can change ... Governments created this machine (which) is so organised that managerial direction is impossible.

Sir Robert Jackson, 1969

Poverty does not obligingly slice itself into neat sectors called Agriculture, Health, Children, Energy, Population, etc. Of all the enemies of human society it is the most highly complex. Poverty easily rebuffs narrow sectoral attacks, devours inappropriate development, and thrives on protectionism that prevents its victims from earning their way through trade. It profits from the diversion of development funds into the multiple overheads of adversaries competing against each other.

The launching of operational development work in 1946–1949 was motivated by the feeling that in no other area could the practice of international cooperation be so well advanced. Indeed, it is widely agreed that the UN system has performed vital services to developing countries. This end, however, has only been achieved by constant and determined efforts to surmount multiple layers of obstacles, many of them within the system's own machinery. The system's successes are testimony to how much more could be done against poverty if such organizational obstacles were removed.

Governments' energies in the economic and social sector have been devoured by the complexities of the UN system's operational development activities. Funding of these activities now exceeds regular budgets for other fully global work of the system. This is not, however, a valid explanation for the fact that far more energy is devoted by governments to the system's $3.4 billion per annum of assistance to developing countries, than to the macro-economic problems which deprive the same countries of $500 billion of income they could be earning each year.
These deep contradictions are also reflected in the actual expenditures of the system on operational activities. The same governments govern the array of funds and agencies delivering development resources as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Expenditures on development activities of the UN System, 1991 (grant and capital)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development grants (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, agencies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-interest loans (IFAD, IDA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial-rate loans (World Bank, IFC) net reverse transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,397.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,130.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4,049.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,479.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under high interest rates over which they have no control the developing countries have on balance over the years been transferring more capital back to the North than they have been receiving, even within the UN system.

Regrettably, all the attention given to operational activities has not significantly improved them. Again and again governments have toiled to remedy only surface features of the real problems, or failed to carry decisions adopted at the UN into agency governing bodies (or even into the UN’s own funds’ governing bodies).

No group of intelligent officials knowing the nature of poverty would dream of designing the tangle of mechanisms for operational activities built up over the last forty years. It is vital to get serious results from the current round of reform in order, at last, significantly to enhance the impact of these activities. This would also liberate energies for the global strategies that would progressively enable developing countries to dispense with such assistance. That was supposed to be the whole ultimate aim of these activities.

Key problems

1. The UN system’s development assistance is scarcely 16 per cent of total official development assistance (currently about $55 billion a year). The far larger bilateral assistance flows are expressions of the inevitably separate and shifting policies and politics of some twenty governments. Developing countries themselves have the responsibility to coordinate all these flows; they should at least be able to count on assistance from the UN system in formulating their forward development plans. They cannot do so, because the UN’s development activities are administered by as many wholly separate authorities as bilateral assistance.

2. The programming and document drafting that countries have to do for external assistance

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175 UN doc. 47/419/Add. 2, but adjusting WFP figures in Table B-1 item 5 to subtract emergency food aid expenditures.
OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

authorities should be kept to a minimum. This may be impossible to expect from bilateral sources but there is no such excuse for the UN system. Its procedures are, however, nearly as diverse as for bilateral programmes, and, despite decades of admonition, their burdens on governments have constantly multiplied.\textsuperscript{176}

3. Two-thirds of all official ‘aid’ to developing countries compels them to take each donor country’s own expertise and equipment, whether or not it is the best for their needs.\textsuperscript{177} From the ‘untied’ UN system they should be able to expect the best in the world. Inadequate attention to quality in appointments, and pressures from voluntary funding, far too often prevent the UN system from meeting this primary expectation as well.

4. Operational activities for development are far too centralized at headquarters levels, and fractured among them. These fractures are reproduced at both the regional and country levels where the system’s help in coherent development activities is most vitally needed.

5. Many countries need outside multi-disciplinary advice, some because they lack such skills, others for the benefit of objective counsel bringing similar experience from elsewhere. The UN system could, uniquely, provide such advice, but it is not organized in the right places and the right ways to do so.\textsuperscript{178}

The analysis that follows will proceed from the premise that operational activities should be designed not from the global but from the country level, and thence outwards to the regional level where the primary support apparatus should be; and thence to headquarters level.\textsuperscript{179}

THE COUNTRY LABYRINTH

Some 23 entities of the UN system have grant development assistance funds to spend at country-level.\textsuperscript{180} The Secretary-General reported in 1992 that ‘the bulk of the countries have an average of between 5 and 10 United Nations organizations present … in others there are up to 15 or more organizations (sometimes including regional centres)’.\textsuperscript{181}

The UNDP country office does gather together much of the system. It represents UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, WFP, and virtually all the smaller technical agencies. However, this does not

\textsuperscript{176} Governments were already requesting ‘the minimum burden on the administrative resources of Member States’ as early as 1966 in General Assembly resolution 2188 (XXI). They were doing so again in reform debates in 1989.

\textsuperscript{177} Some 63 percent of all official development assistance outside the UN system is ‘tied’; that is, the expertise and equipment must be procured in the ‘donor’ countries. Annual Reports, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris.


\textsuperscript{179} The rationales for this reversing of traditional analyses that start at the global level is discussed in Childers, \textit{op. cit.}, footnote 167, paragraphs 15 and 200.


\textsuperscript{181} Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system, Note by the Secretary-General, para. 97, UN Doc. A/47/419, 29 September 1992.
mean that assistance from these bodies is integrated in UNDP’s ‘country programme’ with the government. UNFPA’s governors demand a separate country programme. So do UNICEF’s. WFP programmes its development food aid separately.

**Separate country offices**

UNICEF, FAO and WHO currently maintain their own separate offices and lines of authority back to their headquarters, with separate programming procedures and documents. In many developing countries there are thus four quite separately directed and staffed offices (UNDP, UNICEF, FAO and WHO), and in an increasing number a World Bank office as well.

Only in the last few years have the separate entities agreed to begin being housed under the same roof. However, the fact that the separate UNICEF Representative may at last be in the same building as the separate UNDP Resident Representative, and even that the separate Country Representative of FAO might join them there, does not ensure joint programming, or less individual flag-flying.

The burdens the UN system’s fragmented programming procedures impose on governments are particularly egregious when added to those of up to 20 bilateral and other multilateral (i.e. European Community) ‘aid’ sources. Each of these wants country programmes to be drafted and negotiated, with additional documents for each project within all these programmes.

Governments have often suggested that they could do with some relief from having to receive up to 100 separate ‘aid’ missions in a year. Their senior staff spend considerable proportions of their lives in the airport VIP Lounge, on the road to and from it, and briefing these bearers of good intentions.

**Multiple overlapping**

If there is an inevitable lack of coherence between bilateral assistance flows there is no conceivable rationale for the fragmentation in every country of the UN system’s limited resources. If each fund and agency did quite different things, the aggregate effect would still be incoherence in what should be a holistic development process. The fact, however, is that they work separately in a considerable number of the same development fields.

Naturally each fund or agency, imbued with enthusiasm for its particular mission, has developed well-rounded arguments for its separate status, separate fund-raising and separate

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182 ‘Country programmes’ are the multi-year commitments between an assistance organization and the government as to development efforts in which it will be helped, and the target sums that will be involved. From these programmes the individual ‘projects’ are then drawn up.

183 op.cit., footnote 181, paragraphs 75–76. WFP ‘will explore’ with UNDP more ‘umbrella projects’ for UNDP technical assistance in WFP-assisted projects.

184 In the case of WHO which is strongly decentralized the line of authority is in the first instance to its regional offices.

185 In General Assembly resolution 44/211, paragraph 15 (d), 22 December 1989.

186 Numerous sources, including OECD Development Assistance Committee reports, UNDP studies, government statements in UN fora. See also article by S. McCarthy who served as an economist in the Botswana Government 1971–1976, Development Dialogue 1978:1.
Table 5. Activities in the same fields
(grant assistance, millions of dollars) 187

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development area</th>
<th>UN voluntary funds</th>
<th>Agency regular budgets 188</th>
<th>Agency 'multi-bi' 189</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>WFP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources</td>
<td>124.7</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>226.6</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>150.6</td>
<td>250.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>123.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, communications</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>158.7</td>
<td>201.5</td>
<td>373.9</td>
<td>213.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social conditions</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

procedures. Each enjoys support in corresponding branches of governments. Demands for 'accountability' in each separate governing body reinforce the separate programming procedures, documents and offices. The assault on poverty is muffled and diffused.

The Resident Representative

Governments in New York have always intended the Resident Representative of the UNDP to coordinate the global proliferation and overlapping which envelops developing countries. 190 The lot of these officials has ever been a lonely one.

During the UN operation in the Congo (Zaire) Secretary-General Hammarskjold personally devised a UN Civilian Operation where the senior official of each agency or fund in the system was the 'Senior Adviser (on e.g. Education, Agriculture, Children, etc.) to the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Congo', who did indeed coordinate the ONUC operation as a whole. 191 Hammarskjold's personality combined with the extreme exigencies of the Congo crisis ensured compliance with this structure. Hammarskjold also hoped that ONUC might become a model for the deployment of the UN system in other developing countries, since such a scheme was no less valid in non-emergency situations.

Unfortunately, the perennial silent emergency that is poverty has not compelled such collaboration. In the 1970 reorganization of UNDP, governments were unable to agree on a

187 Data for 1991 from Table B-6 in UN doc. A/47/419/Add.2.
188 This column, and that for 'multi-bi' do not show how, along with the funds, more than one agency may be involved in the same development field using these resources.
189 'Multi-bi' is shorthand for funds drawn from bilateral-assistance budgets but allocated to multilateral organizations, i.e., specialized agencies.
190 Initially, the Resident Representative of the UN Technical Assistance Board; after 1965, of its successor, the UNDP.
191 Hammarskjold's pencil sketch of this structure is to be seen in his own diagram for it, then rendered into typed form by Brian Urquhart, both original documents now displayed at the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, Uppsala.
system-wide instruction making the UNDP Resident Representative the coordinating team leader over all development activities whencesoever funded. It was initially hoped that UNDP would at least gain significant leverage because governments affirmed (at New York) that UNDP should be 'the principal funding channel' for all technical cooperation by the system. This hope soon evaporated when the same governments began channeling new 'multi-bi' project funds directly to the specialized agencies.

This in turn helped to undo an important initiative to pull the UN and the agencies together somewhat along the ONUC model. The Capacity Study's recommendation that UNDP Resident Representatives should have senior technical advisers from relevant agencies, paid by UNDP, was adopted in New York.\(^\text{192}\) FAO's very system-minded then Director-General, A.H. Boerma, sent Senior Agricultural Advisers (SAAs) to UNDP offices. Within the decade, however, FAO under a very different head had begun to feel the power of 'multi-bi'.\(^\text{193}\) The SAAs disappeared and soon there were separate FAO 'Country Representatives' and Offices.

**The contest between the UN and the Agencies**

FAO was not alone among the agencies in this separatism. Their relations with the UN over development activities have always been affected by the larger issues of 'polycentrism', but voluntary funding of development activities soon exacerbated these difficulties.

The agencies' regular budgets are derived from obligatory assessments, like the UN's. When voluntary development funds were first contributed in 1950 they were allocated by percentiles among the then key agencies.\(^\text{194}\) Gradually eroding as priority planning by governments improved, these 'agency shares' were decisively replaced in 1970 by the new UNDP 'Indicative Planning Figures' (IPFs). In these IPFs the total funds anticipated over five-year periods are apportioned out directly to the developing countries, which then indicate their priorities for use of their IPFs in UNDP country programmes. The agencies would henceforth be engaged and earn project-support income solely according to priorities agreed between UNDP and governments.

Almost the only common purpose which the Western governments could recognize (vis-a-vis the Agencies) was that of restraining (their) budgetary growth.

*Douglas Williams, 1987*\(^\text{195}\)

In the 1970s, 'donor' governments began resisting increases in the system's regular budgets. Agencies that were originally set up as standard-setting centres of excellence and global forecasting


\(^{193}\) The effect of multi-bi allocations away from UNDP has been especially severe in the highly systemic area of agriculture and rural development. In 1991 FAO received a total of $195 million from every one of UNDP's industrial-country donors plus Saudi Arabia; UNDP could allocate in the same year only marginally more in the agriculture sector, $226 million.

\(^{194}\) The initial percentiles were: UN 23, ILO 11, FAO 29, UNESCO 14, ICAO 1, and WHO 22.

now felt compelled to devote more and more energy to securing their own shares of operational
development funds. Thus, the pervasive influence of voluntary funding reached into the heart of
the agencies' paramount roles, while further exacerbating the situation at the country level.

**Staff quality and training**

Inadequate attention in UNDP over the quality of its Resident Representatives has also frustrated
coordination and provided argument for separatism. The vital qualities needed for substantive
joint programming have too often been missing, even in UNDP-financed projects.

It is not generally understood that these 112 or so officials have to be extraordinarily gifted
people. Perceiving needs and opportunities to mesh development efforts together, and knowing
the right questions to ask across sectoral fences to ensure that one effort is not negated by another,
requires talent far beyond mere project management. Knowing how to integrate systemic factors
like population, environment, and the capacities and concerns of women in development is not
taught in many academic institutions.

If country-level leaders do not have these qualities there is not the remotest possibility of
coherent programming. A high-quality UNICEF Representative will not accept being coordinated
by a mediocre UNDP Resident Representative. Far more serious attention to selection of these
pivotal officials, and to their special training and intellectual development, are vital ingredients in
improving operational activities. Special training and continuous reinforcement are also needed
among programme staff throughout the system.

Ironically, proposals to organize such training and reinforcement as part of the work of a
common Staff College for the system were deferred by governments at the same time as the
reorganization of UNDP in 1970. They have been consistently ignored since then.

**The UN Resident Thespian**

In 1980 the purported country-level coordinator became rather like a quick-change actor who
changes roles and costumes between appearances on stage.

The 1975 experts' restructuring report had recommended 'a single designated (UN) official' to
coordinate all country activities of the system whencesoever funded. After four years of
inter-secretariat argument it was announced that in the normal case this would be the UNDP
Resident Representative, using the title of 'UN Resident Co-ordinator' and reporting to the
Director-General in the UN Secretariat. When not wearing that hat, however, the same person
would continue to work for, report to, and be paid and promoted by, the Administrator of UNDP.

Thus, a person with full-paid responsibilities to UNDP was merely to change title and

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106 In the Capacity Study, Vol. II, Chapter 8, paragraphs 24–26 and 71–74, 1969. Secretary-General's recommendations in 1972,
UN docs. A/8829 and Add.1; A/8935. In the 1975 expert group's report on restructuring, op. cit., paragraph 94 (a). In reports
by the Director-General 1989 and 1990, A/44/324/Add. 3 paragraph 97 (d)–(f) and A/45/273 paragraphs 154–166.
become, in the eyes of all colleagues of the system, a totally impartial UN-system team leader. No government would even contemplate, in its own affairs, an arrangement for coordination so inherently in defiance of human psychology.

While other UN funds and specialized agencies were noticeably unenthusiastic, UNDP Resident Representatives, heavily charged with delivering UNDP's funds, obviously needed additional help to correlate all the separate country programmes and the hundreds of large and small projects of the entire UN system. Member-governments, however, provided no support staff for them as Resident Coordinators and actually reduced their UNDP staff. Programming cycles of the system remained unsynchronized. Direct 'multi-bi' funding to the agencies was greatly increased until by 1991 it equaled more than half of all contributions to the 'principal channel', UNDP.

Once again, the twin elements that alone can make the presently configured UN system function as a system—uniform policy combined with intellectual authority—were not there.

*Resolution 44/211*

In 1989 the General Assembly adopted resolution 44/211, hailed at the time as a reforming breakthrough for Operational Activities. It called, as often before, for greater coherence by all sectors of the system; more integrated programming with less documentation burdens on beneficiary governments; a programme rather than project-by-project approach; and improved team leadership at the country level under the UN Resident Coordinator.

The 1993 report on implementation of this and a succeeding resolution (47/199) shows some progress, some of it decades delayed. A common 'country strategy note' is pledged. UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF will harmonize 80 per cent of their country programme cycles by 1996. The most significant new element is the first real attempt to train senior country-level officials of the separate funds and agencies as teams, using the first-class capabilities of the ILO International Training Centre at Turin. But there is still no sign of a country programme of the system. Donor governments now want the Resident Coordinator to be free of policy and programmatic responsibility to any one fund but the developing countries have not agreed. There is constant concern that tighter coordination may mean stronger political and other conditionalities applied by governments.

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197 A programming cycle in the system is the forward period of several years for which a 'country programme' is authorized. Governments have had increasing difficulty under indebtedness in maintaining their equivalent cycles but in most cases they do have a periodic fresh starting point for new strategies.

198 In 1991 contributions to UNDP and funds it administers totaled $1.34 billion; 'extra-budgetary' (multi-bi) contributions to the operational activities of specialized agencies totaled $0.67 billion. UN doc. A/47/419/Add.2, Tables A-1 and A-6, 1 October 1992. During the 1980s the same governments endorsed World Bank expansion of commercial-rate technical assistance for which they had created the grant-based UNDP, and also Bank expansion of Environment work for which they had established UNEP.

199 An example: twenty-six years after the General Assembly first called for it, work is to begin on a common Manual of procedures.

200 Harmonization of these cycles was explicitly urged by the 1975 General Assembly expert group, op. cit., paragraph 121.

201 Draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.22, paragraph 4 (b): 'Separating the post of UN representative/resident coordinator from that of resident representative of individual funds and specialized agencies ...'; in UN doc. A/47/723, 17 December 1992.
the donor governments through the UN itself under their special leverage in voluntary funding.

A continuing feature of every reform process is the lobbying by civil servants of individual funds and agencies to ensure that sufficient separatism is reinscribed in resolutions. The finally agreed text of the General Assembly's 1992 resolution on country-level coherence had the classic imprints of such deft footwork in what is to be 'borne in mind'. It requests the Secretary-General to:

strengthen the resident coordinator system with the aim of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system at the field level, through a fully coordinated multidisciplinary approach to the needs of recipient countries under the leadership of the resident coordinator, bearing in mind the complementarity of the system and the need for a division of labour within the respective spheres of competence of individual agencies, programmes and funds.\(^{202}\)

Poverty continues to thrive.

It is time to end the tinkering at the country level. Since this should be part of integrated reform actions, recommendations will be made after examining the situation at the regional and global levels.

**THE REGIONAL KEY**

The sectoral approach is altogether inappropriate for a problem which calls for an integrated approach and organic co-operation by all the parties concerned;

Any action in respect of development at world level means ignoring regional or national particularities and makes for a superficial view of the problem, generalities and ultimately mere talk.

This being so, the only possible structural response lies in the organization of integrated systems of co-operation at regional level.

*Maurice Bertrand*\(^{203}\)

Just as the UN has become very weak as a magnetic centre at the global level, so it is weak at the regional level, even though it has, in each region a full intergovernmental Commission of the Economic and Social Council.\(^{204}\)

The secretariats of the commissions serve their members with statistical data, analyses of socio-economic trends, and policy proposals for common governmental action in the region. This

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203 In *Some Reflections on Reform of the United Nations* (prepared by M. Bertrand as Chief Inspector, Joint Inspection Unit); paragraph 160, JIURep/85/9 in UN doc. A/40/988, 6 December 1985.

204 Membership curiously varies. ECE includes Canada and USA as Members; ECLAC includes Canada, France, Italy, Netherlands, UK and USA; ESCAP includes France, Netherlands, UK and USA; ESCWA and ECA have no external Members but Egypt is a Member of both.
Locations of the Regional Offices of the United Nations System

- **New York** UNDP, all Regional Bureaux, UNICEF
- **Washington** WHO, Americas
- **Alexandria** WHO, East Mediterranean
- **Cairo** ICAO, Middle East and North Africa
- **Dakar** ICAO, UNESCO, Education, Africa
- **Abidjan** UNICEF, West Africa
- **Accra** UNICEF, West Africa
- **Addis Ababa** UNESCO, Arab States
- **Nairobi** UNESCO, Science & Technology, Africa
- **Bujumbura** WHO, Africa
- **Harare** WHO, Africa
- **Asuncion** WMO, Americas
- **Caracas** UNESCO, Coordinator & Higher Education Latin America & Caribbean
- **Montevideo** UNESCO, Science & Technology Latin America & Caribbean
- **Mexico City** ICAO, North America/Caribbean
- **Cinvestor** UNESCO, Chairperson & Higher Education Latin America & Caribbean
- **Bangkok** ESCAP
- **Dakar** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Paris** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Rio de Janeiro** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Brasilia** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Buenos Aires** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Bucharest** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Johannesburg** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- ** Cairo** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Nairobi** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Amman** UNESCO, Middle East & North Africa
- **Bangkok** UNICEF, East Asia
- **Beijing** UNICEF, East Asia
- **Tokyo** UNICEF, East Asia
- **Ankara** UNICEF, East Asia
- **Nairobi** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Addis Ababa** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Buenos Aires** UNESCO, Science & Technology
- **Brasilia** UNESCO, Science & Technology
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- **Johannesburg** UNESCO, Science & Technology
work is also very valuable for UN global analyses. Since the commissions obviously need to research and synthesize material in the sectoral fields of the specialized agencies, it would only be rational to assume that they would serve as their regional offices. This does not happen anywhere. The ECA and ECLAC secretariats do have joint Food and Agriculture Divisions with FAO, but like the other agencies FAO nonetheless maintains separate Regional Offices in the two regions, and not even in the same cities. 205

Regional scatterization

The regional 'jungle' to which Sir Robert Jackson alluded a quarter of a century ago is indeed alive and rampant. 206 The widely scattered locations of regional offices ensure that their staff have the least possible contact with each other (see map on opposite page). UNICEF, FAO, ILO, UNESCO and WHO all maintain regional offices and if any are in the same city as a UN Regional Commission it is not for UN-system reasons. The regional programme and country-support bureaus of the largest funds (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF) are not in the regions at all but in New York. 207 The system's differing geographic definitions of regions would require a separate map altogether.

Here again there has never been any doubt about needed reform. In 1966 the General Assembly plaintively requested the Secretary-General to provide an explanation of the system's regional geography. In 1977 the General Assembly tried to get some control over this jungle:

Subject to such guidance as may be provided by the Governments concerned
(the) organizations of the United Nations system should take early steps to
achieve a common definition of regions and subregions and the identical
location of regional and subregional offices. 208

Seventeen years later not one such 'early step' has been taken by any organization of the system.

Lacking the staff resources themselves, the regional commissions have inevitably spread themselves thin over many sectors. 209 There has been a perpetual tug of war over roles of both intergovernmental machinery (commissions versus agencies' regional conferences of ministers) and secretariats (commissions versus agency regional offices). These contests take place in full sight of member-governments of the same single UN system.

The regional commissions have for many years sought roles in operational activities for

205 In 1968 the new FAO Director-General Adeke Boerma, supported by U Thant, proposed that the Executive Secretary of ECA should serve as the FAO Regional Director for Africa and that FAO's regional office be moved from Accra into ECA at Addis Ababa. African Ministers of Agriculture rejected the proposal; the (globally representative) FAO Council agreed with them; no comparable act of rational organization at the regional level has happened since. c.f., i.a. Martin Hill, op. cit., p. 58.
207 UNFPA has, however, launched regional multi-disciplinary planning teams with agency membership, based in each region.
209 Maurice Williams, veteran of the system, provided an excellent report on the regional commissions to the Director-General in June 1988. It was considered too controversial and was only distributed informally in English.
development, and have largely been rebuffed both by UN funds and by specialized agencies, all of which guard their allocations for regional programmes. Here, too, the law of non-use reducing ability to be of use applies: funds and agencies have plausibly argued that the commissions now lack technical competence to undertake many operational programmes. Down the years, the highly uneven quality of commission Executive Secretaries has not helped. The professional staffing of the commission secretariats has also been mostly a subject of headquarters indifference, with very little reinvigoration.

It is time to breathe new life into the regional commissions ... (Their) strength lies in their multi-disciplinary reach ... They too need restructuring and streamlining ... We need a fresh look at the distribution of analytical and operational capacities between global and regional structures.

Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali

As Mr. Boutros-Ghali is urging, the entire machinery of the system's economic and social activities should be decentralized to regional and country level, and he has correctly perceived that the commissions can play pivotal roles in such a fresh structure.

The Regional Commissions should be completely reorganized to become the centrepieces for the UN system's regional research and operational programmes, integrating all regional offices in their secretariats, and providing high-quality multi-disciplinary support services to country teams. Technical support for work within countries should obviously be drawn from regionally (or subregionally) stationed staff, who would be far more closely versed in their individual and shared problems and could visit them more economically.

Apart from the essential context for these decentralized UN-system bureaus and offices, the Commissions should not be reorganized on any uniform model. They should be carefully designed in each region in relation to the work of intergovernmental and non-governmental regional organisms that they have themselves, in many cases, helped to foster. They should support, not duplicate these regional and subregional entities.

It will be said that since the Commissions are not presently equipped for such roles, they should not be given them. It is essential that governments cease to be deflected from needed reorganization by such arguments. If the Commissions are the right place for these functions, they should be so organized.

Again, specific recommendations will be set out after examining the global dimension.

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210 A Joint Inspection Unit report in 1974 (JlU/REP/74/5) which was so bold as to suggest such a role for the commissions provoked a furore. The commissions have since been allowed to be executive agents for some UN fund-financed regional projects.

211 Maurice Williams, op.cit.


213 Foreword to the Secretary-General's report to ECOSOC, para. 31, UN doc. E/1992/82/Add.1.
THE GLOBAL LEVEL

Seen from the country-level experience of the UN system's efforts to fight poverty, and from the regional level where support for countries should be based, the system's global-level irrationalities in development work are glaring. These are problems that can affect the quality of life, if not life itself, for millions of people. They should not be tolerated any longer.

1. There is no serious justification, except possibly 'identity' for fund-raising, for the maintenance of five separate development funds to disburse only $2.5 billion a year among 4 billion people, or 62 cents per capita, 214, each with separate programming authority and procedures while their actual work overlaps in multiple ways.

2. These fundamental disjunctures are compounded by the same governments allocating more than $0.3 billion a year to the regular budgets of over a dozen agencies and other elements in the UN system for development activities. Much of this work is separately programmed and all of it covers the same development needs addressed by one or more of the funds.

3. The combined tangle described in 1. and 2. above is further compounded by seventeen countries that are donors to UNDP (and the other UN funds) allocating $0.6 billion a year in funds directly to thirteen agencies for projects also separately programmed by them.

4. The operational activities of the UN system also nominally include the work of a world bank which applies totally different programme policies, and a monetary fund whose conditionalities require countries to tear down whole portions of the capacities built up in them with the help of the rest of the UN system.

5. There is no effective intergovernmental oversight machinery over all this. ECOSOC and the General Assembly have the mandates (Articles 58 and 63) but other branches of the same member-governments defeat their efforts to manage these activities.

6. There is no effective secretariat-level overall management of them. Each agency and each fund allows its (external relations) representative to discuss in the various 'co-ordination mechanisms' only those limited areas of collaboration it is willing to contemplate. 215

VOLUNTARY FUNDING OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

It will have become obvious that voluntary extra-budgetary financing has played a pervasive part both in creating the tangle of the system's operational activities and in negating efforts to rationalize them. The fact that voluntary funding has existed since 1950 should not deter its re-examination now.

214 1991 data for expenditures of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP in food for development, and IFAD, Table B-1, UN doc. A/47 419/Add.2, and WFP 1992 Annual Report Table 1.

215 In the Joint Consultative Group on Policy one fund rejected 'joint programming' in favour of 'collaborative programming'.
The United Nations and each of its major sectoral agencies were founded on the principle of financial burden-sharing through legally obligated proportional assessments. There was no anticipation of voluntary contributions creating additional and separate budgets. Indeed, UN technical assistance began under assessed regular budgeting. The establishment in 1949 of the voluntarily funded Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) has profoundly affected the system. No development enterprise has since been launched in the UN under regular assessed financing.

The departure from assessed burden-sharing by all member states was impelled by the belief that only a voluntary process would mobilize substantial and increasing funds. At the first-ever UN pledging conference in 1950, 50 governments volunteered a total of $20 million. By 1992 total equivalent (grant) contributions for UN-system development purposes were some $4.0 billion. The apparently large increase since 1950 is extremely deceptive. Only to maintain the 1950 value of $20 million against (compound) inflation in developing countries the total of contributions for UN-system development activities should now be $37.5 billion. Moreover, the number of countries to be assisted has increased from 32 in 1951 to over 140 in 1993. The population of developing countries has more than doubled over the same period, from 1.7 billion to 4.1 billion.

Voluntary financing has also generated more bending of basic UN principles than in any other area of the system.

The 'donor' concept

The donors of aid have made more grave mistakes both at home and in the field than have the recipients. The less developed countries, after all, have had neither the opportunities nor the means to make too many mistakes. ‘Donor’ is, by the way, an unfortunate concept, since the value of the donor-recipient relationship is greatest when both sides feel that they have something to give and something to gain.

Ernst Michanek, 1971

United Nations development activities are supposed to be processes of genuine cooperation between states respected as equals, for commonly accepted Charter goals. Voluntary funding,

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216 'The expenses of the Organization shall be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly.' Article 17.2.
217 Voluntary financing was not even envisaged for enforcement costs under Chapter VII of the Charter; at San Francisco the view was that there should be ‘the fairest possible distribution’ of expenses of enforcement; Report of Rapporteur, p. 12, UN Doc. 881 II/3/46. UNICEF, the first voluntary fund, was created in 1946 for emergency relief, not development.
218 The basis of the Assembly’s decision was a landmark ECOSOC resolution 222 IX in August 1949, recommending EPTA.
219 The original UN Secretariat Technical Assistance programme has been continued in the UN Secretariat, until 1992 as the Department for Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD, since 1992 DDSMS). Its core budget has been financed from the UN’s regular (assessed) budget, but it is an ‘executing agency’ of UNDP-financed projects as well.
221 Note by the Secretary-General, UN Doc. A/47/419/Add.2, 1 October 1992.
222 Average, compounding annual rates of inflation in developing countries have been 16 per cent from 1950–1980; 28 per cent from 1980–1990; and 40 per cent between 1990–1992. Data by courtesy of UNDP’s Human Development Report Unit.
223 Report of Secretary-General in UN Doc. E/1893; in 1993, A/47/419/Add.2. Population data from UNFPA.
however, has fostered a ‘donor-to-recipient’ idea that countries contributing most in financial terms should have a preponderant voice in all such funds. Violating the twin UN (and Western-democratic) principles of equality of governance and relative capacity to pay, this perspective is also false as to facts. The recipients not only contribute over 10 per cent of the central funds but between 40 and 80 per cent of the costs of the projects themselves. Concern among beneficiary governments that the ‘donors’ use the leverage of their voluntary contributions to impose their own models of development and their political conditions for use of funds has already been noted.

No country, or group of countries, was supposed to be able to impose conditionality on the use of such UN-system capacities.

**Fund-raising syndromes**

Most development activities are multi-year and require carefully planned inputs of personnel, facilities, and operating budget by the beneficiary country. Assessment funding would at least have provided an assured financial base for two years at a time.

Voluntary financing also places these activities under year-by-year uncertainties about the decisions of some twenty governments, compelling executive heads to spend inordinate amounts of time competitively soliciting for each year’s pledges.

Since governments can alter voluntary contributions from year to year, one major reduction can result in the cancellation, pruning or deferment of projects that have been laboriously prepared under the system’s voracious documentation requirements. Valuable national personnel and budgetary resources assigned to them are then left suspended in confusion. Conversely, donor demand for ‘high delivery rates’ results in recurring feverish drives to launch isolated projects lacking sustainability.

**Senior appointments**

Such narrow and at all times politically conditional financial dependence is also extremely unhealthy for staffing. Socio-economic development is one of the most complex and culturally sensitive fields of all UN-system endeavours. With the original intention of ensuring special competence, voluntarily financed staffing is exempted from the geographical quota required for assessment-funded secretariats. Regrettably, this exemption has been abused in appointments.

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224 In *The World Development Plan—A Swedish Perspective* (Uppsala, Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, 1971), p. 34. Dr. Michalek had by 1971 served as Director-General of the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), delegate to ECOSOC and UNESCO, chairman of the Governing Body of ILO, and consultant to the Jackson Capacity Study.


226 In the single worst instance to date a sudden $42 million cut in the US contribution to UNDP converged in 1975 with failures to pay-in some $72 million of other pledges, and with inflation on procurement. This plunged the Development Programme into a total liquidity crisis, causing chaos in every country programme.

227 Each UN fund does operate informal geographical ‘spreading’ in its personnel practices, but is supposed to be able to exercise full discretion to find ‘only the best’ for a given development responsibility.
Despite the Charter’s implicit principles against appointments by virtue of special influence it has become ‘traditional’ for UNDP and UNICEF to be headed by Americans, regardless whether an American may be the best qualified person—or even the best American—available. Secretaries-General have, to date, simply accepted the US nomination for these key posts. Other major ‘donors’ insist that their nationals hold senior posts in the funds and programmes, whether or not they are the best qualified to serve developing countries. 228

‘Burden-sharing’
Voluntary funding has also produced enormous disparities in burden-sharing among the most capable countries. 229 In 1991 four Nordic countries with a combined population of only 23 million contributed to UN grant funds 50 per cent more than the United States with a population of 250 million. The voluntary system has also allowed grotesque disparities in the contributions of oil-producing as compared with non-oil-producing governments. For example, Saudi Arabia with a GNP per capita of $7,050 contributed only $12 million, while India with GNP per capita of scarcely $350 contributed over half that, $6.6 million.

Assessment of the system’s present voluntary development contributions would produce major variations from present patterns, as a selective table illustrates:

**Table 6. Voluntary vs. Assessed Budgeting: some illustrative figures (US$)** 230

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Regular UN Budget assessment (1992)</th>
<th>If assessed for development costs of $4bn</th>
<th>Current voluntary contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>9,454,212</td>
<td>38,640,000</td>
<td>12,141,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>10,931,433</td>
<td>44,400,000</td>
<td>315,375,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>298,619,001</td>
<td>1,000,000,000</td>
<td>611,171,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>4,825,587</td>
<td>19,600,000</td>
<td>5,927,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

228 The influence of voluntary contributions is also seen in the UN Secretariat where nationals of 20 ‘donor’ countries occupy 68 per cent of extra-budgetary posts. UN doc. A/47/416, Table G, 7 October 1992.

229 In 1991 the United States contributed to UNDP and all other UN development funds $243 million; Sweden $242.76 million; Netherlands $199 million; Canada $132 million; Japan $130 million.

230 These figures are illustrative only of what assessment, using the same percentile as for the UN regular budget, would fall upon countries that are significant voluntary contributors to central development funds. Given that most poorer developing countries contribute only small amounts to central funds but significantly to the costs of their own projects with the UN system a different assessment formula would undoubtedly be necessary.

231 Data from A/47/419/Add.2.
Voluntary funding has resulted in serious distortions of UN principles; it has been a key cause of proliferation of separate funds; it has produced far less increase in resources in real terms than is commonly thought; and it is a major obstacle to coherence in operational activities. In 1991 there came the first sign of a possible reversal of this long trend. The Nordic Governments tabled proposals for the financing by assessment of up to 10 per cent of the UN funds' costs, or a substantial part of their administrative budgets.232

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM?

In considering how best to move the system's operational activities out of the tangle outlined in the foregoing pages the familiar issue of constitutional or non-constitutional reform again arises. The 1969 Capacity Study adduced an 'ideal model', the consolidation of the development capacities of the UN and the development portions of the specialized agencies into a single UN International Development Authority. Noting that this would 'inevitably entail a complete upheaval and the amendment of the UN Charter and of Agency constitutions' the Study concluded that it was politically unattainable at that time.233

In 1975 the General Assembly's expert group recommended a UN Development Authority under the Director-General, consolidating UN funds under a single governing body but maintaining their fund-raising identities.234 Though far less radical than the Capacity Study, this proposal also disappeared in subsequent negotiation after lobbying by funds and agencies.

It is poignant to note that Jackson and his colleagues urged that the ideal model not be permanently abandoned: 'With a prospect of twenty-five years or more of activity ahead, it is imperative to have a pole star toward which to travel'.235 Twenty-five years later it is still only a pole star. The question is therefore once again, if not immediate constitutional change, then what?

Mere centralization at the global level is not the answer. As Maurice Bertrand cogently put it, 'What must be got rid of is the approach to the problem of development at the world level, and 'remote control' over concrete problems arising in the poorer parts of the earth by staff members living in the great capitals of the developed world'.236 The best possible service to the needs of the peoples of developing countries, not the accumulated global structure of the overall UN system, should determine the organization of operational activities.

The capacities of the system for this service should be located in a coherent way where they can best and most sensitively provide it, namely the country and regional/ subregional levels.

233 op. cit., Vol. II, Part IV, Chapter Seven, paragraph 33.
234 op. cit., paragraphs 140–148. In an impassioned last-minute appeal UNICEF managed to persuade the group to exempt it 'for the time being' from the consolidation (paragraph 141).
235 op. cit., paragraph 33.
236 op. cit., paragraph 161.
Operational activities should be decentralized to these levels to the optimum extent consistent with accountability.

Member-governments should by now be prepared to undertake significant restructuring for these purposes at least at these two levels, even if they are not yet ready for global restructuring. There are no constitutional constraints: the United Nations Charter does not include a single sentence stipulating how the system shall be organized at the regional and country levels. It will be wise to reorganize the regional level on a long-term basis. The system's organization within developing countries, however, is by definition supposed to be service-oriented and temporary, diminishing until its representation there is no greater than in industrial countries.

Reform of operational activities must proceed from the premise that the separate identity of UN funds, or of specialized agencies in respect of their operational roles, is not sacrosanct. UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, subsidiary UN funds, IFAD, and the operational capacities of the agencies all exist solely to serve the temporary needs of the peoples of developing countries. They have no other raison d'être and no permanent status.

The twin ingredients of uniform policy and consent through high-quality intellectual leadership must be fully and consistently applied to these reforms; failure to do so will merely protract the decades of tinkering. A far more serious and professional investment in staff quality and in training and intellectual reinforcement must also be made throughout the system's operational machinery.

The operational activities of the system must be brought back under the guiding principles of the Charter in all respects. This means an end to special influences through financing, and a restoration of the high motivation that launched the original UN Technical Assistance effort.

Governments should once and for all adopt a clear decision in the General Assembly that there shall be only one United Nations system office in any developing country, headed by a United Nations Coordinator appointed by the Secretary-General, without personal responsibility for the management of any one programme.

The General Assembly should request ECOSOC to plan a total conversion of the Regional Commissions into the regional research and operational-support arms of the entire UN system. The Assembly should decide that regional bureaus of UN funds should be relocated in the commissions and, recalling its own resolution 32/197, that all regional offices of the system shall be incorporated in the reorganized commissions (or sub-regional units thereof).

At the global level all UN development funds should be brought under the working responsibility of the Deputy Secretary-General earlier urged, and ECOSOC should formulate a plan for their consolidation in the long-deferred single UN Development Authority.

Detailed recommendations are made in Chapter XIII.
VI. HUMAN RIGHTS

Our common humanity transcends the oceans and all national boundaries. It binds us together in a common cause against tyranny, to act together in defence of our very humanity. Let it never be asked of any one of us—what did we do when we knew that another was oppressed?

Nelson Mandela, 1992

The United Nations has a record of considerable achievement in the field of human rights even if it has too often been marred by double standards and the influence of power-politics. If nothing more had been done in forty-five years at the United Nations than the negotiation and adoption by from 51 to 180 states of the nearly 70 instruments of the International Bill of Human Rights, this alone would fully justify the existence of the organization. The UN human rights system depicted in the diagram (p. 106) discloses a huge volume of continuous activity.

The increase in emergencies involving threats to or active violations of human rights on a large scale has, however, put the UN's machinery under heavy strain, with resulting problems of coordination and consistency. For example:

- The Security Council has assumed judicial human rights powers in the creation of a war crimes tribunal for former Yugoslavia.
- It is by no means clear how the work of the new Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which will inevitably deal with human rights, will be rationalized with existing mechanisms including the Human Rights Commission.
- When UNTAC was set up in Cambodia its mandate included human rights (oversight, promotion, investigation) but the UN's human rights bodies were not involved.
- On the other hand attention to human rights abuses was never properly built into the UN's Mission in Angola (UNAVEM II), with tragic consequences.
- Human rights have not been built into the Somalia operation. UNOSOM II has itself been accused of rights violations.

In so politically and sociologically sensitive an area as human rights, integration that may make sense operationally may not be wise in every case, but some greater coherence is clearly needed.

The 1993 Second World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna showed that while progress has been made in acceptance of the human rights mission of the UN system in recent years, the UN's membership is divided on a key issue, with many ramifications.

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237 On receiving a special Carter-Menil Human Rights Award from Mrs. Dominique de Menil and President Jimmy Carter at the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas.

238 Security Council resolution 808, February 1993, and resolution 827 of 25 May 1993 formally establishing the Tribunal; also Secretary-General’s report UN doc. S-25704.
United Nations Human Rights system (unofficial diagram)
The human rights movement should itself give equal priority to economic, social and cultural rights together with civil and political rights. It should search for ways to play as prominent a role in the future in the monitoring and implementation of economic, social and cultural rights as it has in the past in the monitoring and implementation of civil and political rights.

*Ian Martin, Secretary-General Amnesty International 1986–1992*

There is not yet an agreed meeting point between the North’s concentration on civil and political, predominantly individual human rights, and the largely collective economic, social and cultural rights which the South has long claimed are neglected. But even as the dichotomy between what are often called ‘the two baskets of rights’ was debated in Vienna, in every region of the world an increasing volume of large-scale violations involved both.

It is now clear that human rights violations will occur under situations arising from one, or a mixture, of several forces that have been long in gestation and are only new in their eruption:

1. The collapse of nation-state structures imposed from outside on societies with totally different traditions creates vacuums of governance, law, economy and public welfare. The world is full of potential Somalias.

2. The slower erosion of the centralist nation-state elsewhere encourages cultural and other groups to seek status, expression and socio-economic advance as more than ‘minorities’, but not necessarily as independent nation-states. Examples range from the Quebecois to the Catalonians to the Quechua. Some 300 million indigenous people now demand an end to the long denial of their identity.

3. The imperial frontiers (or in some cases partitions) that had to be accepted in the decolonization of the South, and those that have resurfaced in the decolonization in the East, pose at least two sources of tension.
   a. Homogeneous ethnic groups, either separated by such frontiers or suppressed within them, are increasingly restive now that Cold War constraints and sponsors are gone.
   b. In other instances old cultural and ethnic tensions, never fully resolved while under one or another form of empire or authoritarianism, are now unleashed, exacerbated by socio-economic conditions (which also make for their easy exploitation by demagogues).

4. New independent nation-states are by no means necessarily the answer, or feasible, but there is a virtually total vacuum of innovative alternatives.

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We are global citizens with tribal souls

Piet Hein240

No region of the world and no culture is free of these immensely complex problems. To cite but one long-hidden example, 1 in every 18 human beings alive today worldwide is a member of an indigenous people, living inside a nation-state. The UN is not equipped at present to help member states and peoples to find their way peaceably through the necessary transitions. It is founded on the twin premises of the sovereign independence of states and the sacrosanct nature of national borders. Neither of these premises takes account of the phenomena mentioned above. A summary listing of their characteristics shows the need for a new dimension in the work of the UN.

- Beyond the universal principles and protections of the Bill of Rights there can be no general models for the changed institutions that may be needed; by definition these must be endogenously determined or they will fail;
- Unlike the work of existing UN organs the causes cannot therefore be addressed by adopting universally applicable policies through, e.g., General Assembly resolutions;
- By definition, existing UN Human Rights machinery for ‘minorities’ is ameliorative or protective within an existing state structure, and does not cover most of these phenomena;241
- If societies are to find their way peaceably through these transitions the procedures of Chapters VI and VII of the Charter, including peace-keeping and preventive diplomacy, are not the whole answer, only the last-resort emergency response.
- These phenomena are multi-disciplinary. They need the perspectives of anthropology, sociology, economics, human geography, political science, and law.
- Very little work has been done anywhere on these potentially volcanic problems. A world that has only thought in terms of the nation-state for several centuries must harness its creativity and wisdom to evolve even first precepts for addressing them.
- The challenges involve in many cases devising entirely new, creative forms of representation and governance within states, and may in many cases also involve devising novel means of expression without ‘statehood’;242
- Such work cannot be confined to academic and other research institutions; it must engage the minds of the governments of existing nation-states. It must also preoccupy their representatives at the UN.

The UN has had a long experience of making the discussion of commonly shared problems respectable among states. It should exercise leadership over these newly revealed problems. If it does not, it will be confronted with succeeding waves of crises in collapsed and conflicting states.

A new kind of forum is needed, at a level above the Human Rights Commission and to work in ways quite unlike existing UN bodies, to meet the above desiderata. It must be a place of intellectual enquiry and discussion, engaging exceptional women and men well-versed in the precepts and practices of governance. It must bring these together with innovative and highly

240 The Danish poet, Copenhagen, 1960.
241 i.e., the UN Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.
242 It is not strictly correct to say that these are ‘novel’. A wide range of formulae and mechanisms of expression in fact existed around the world before the post-Westphalian nation-state was extended over it.
knowledgeable minds from many disciplines, and from non-governmental organizations. It must, of course, be broadly representative of the cultures and regions of the membership of the United Nations.

The first function of this new UN forum should be to examine these deep issues, and evolve innovative and culturally sensitive options for representation and governance. The aim would be to make it possible for states to study such new approaches, even to seek the counsel of such a forum. It should not seek to adopt universal policies.

However, if such a new body is to carry out this ground-breaking work it must also be a forum of resort for petitions, and be the intergovernmental mechanism overseeing UN responses to grave situations of these kinds.

Recommendations are made in Chapter XIII for the creation of such a body under some such title as the United Nations Council on Diversity, Representation and Governance.

**THE HIGH COMMISSIONER**

As large-scale human rights emergencies have multiplied, so has concern that the UN be able to move more rapidly but also more innovatively. Its existing machinery has to some extent been adjusted to urgent action. Nonetheless, in 1993 the demand resurfaced for the establishment of a high-level United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights. The 1993 Vienna Conference recommended that the General Assembly give this priority consideration and, late in 1993, the Assembly decided to create such a post.

There is great merit in the basic rationale for such a post,

- to act as the source of respected early warning of impending human rights emergencies and, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to take appropriate initiatives to pre-empt them;
- to provide needed human rights analyses to the proposed new Council on Diversity, Representation and Governance;
- to advise the Secretary-General when to bring into play his or her own good offices or (under Article 99) the Security Council;
- to bring the UN's relevant human rights machinery into prompt action over major violations;
- to ensure that the international community begins to apply the Bill of Rights in a more balanced way as between its two 'baskets' of rights;
- to supervise an enhanced programme of technical assistance to countries to build human rights institutions and mechanisms;

243 In resolution 1990/48 ECOSOC authorized the Human Rights Commission to hold special emergency sessions, which it did twice in 1992 over former Yugoslavia. The Committees that monitor civil and political rights, and racial discrimination, have also begun to request specific countries for urgent special reports (e.g., Iraq, and Burundi and Rwanda respectively).

244 The idea was first advanced by Uruguay in 1951; the Commission on Human Rights actually proposed the establishment of such a post through ECOSOC in 1967 but it could not secure agreement in the General Assembly. U.S. President Carter urged it during his administration. The most comprehensive and up to date presentation of the idea has been made by Amnesty International for the Vienna Conference in, *Facing up to the Failures: Proposals for Improving the Protection of Human Rights by the United Nations*, AI doc. IOR 41/16/92, December 1992, London.
to provide a frank annual report to the international community on the state of world human rights, and to open more fruitful dialogue between the UN and NGOs dealing with human rights;

- to improve coordination of human rights machinery.

A number of political and practical problems need close attention in connection with the proposed post of Human Rights High Commissioner.

It will inevitably be an intensely political function, involving the internal affairs of member states. The post must therefore be at the highest level under the Secretary-General, and must always be filled by a person of such international stature and known impartiality as to command the confidence of the membership as a whole.\(^\text{245}\)

The High Commissioner's stature will also help the incumbent in a responsibility that would do much to reassure many member-states that were nervous about Northern proposals for the post—namely, acting on behalf of the Secretary-General in human rights situations where otherwise the Security Council may engage itself. Concern about this is no monopoly of the South. It exists also because there are good reasons for normally trying to keep UN human rights responsibilities separate from UN peace-keeping missions. A High Commissioner could, and should, organize human rights components of major UN country missions in such a way that they are in tandem with but distinct from peace-keeping operations.

All these attributes, combined with another essential, that of public accountability and a high degree of working transparency, would mean that it would usually be an extremely high profile post and must be generally accepted as such.

The demands upon and expectations of the incumbent of this post are likely to be excessive. At the same time its credit must be conserved for situations that could not be tackled by anyone else. For both these reasons and for a measure of additional confidence among members, the High Commissioner should be assisted by one deputy (heading the Centre for Human Rights) and four deputy Commissioners, also well known human rights experts, drawn from the other regions and assigned coordinating roles.

The High Commissioner should not have a large staff but should rely upon existing UN human rights staff including, of course, Special Rapporteurs. As the Vienna Conference has recommended, the staff and technical (computer and communications) capacities of the Centre for Human Rights must be strengthened. The allocation to date of less than one per cent of the UN regular budget to human rights is at variance not only with the vast mandates for human rights that governments have so creditably adopted for the world body, but with the intense interest of the peoples of the world in human rights.

There are several other problems of coherence in the human rights machinery. At present a state party to several human rights treaties must implement entirely separate reporting processes for each treaty-monitoring body. This imposes burdens on the state party and also prevents any

\(^{245}\) In their earlier study on reorganization of the UN Secretariat, op. cit., the authors have recommended that the senior-most official responsible for Human Rights have the rank of Deputy Secretary-General. While bearing this rank the incumbent's working title would use the Commissioner formulation.
There are also problems of inadequate correlation between and follow-up on reports. There is a clear need to establish a judicial resort, an International Human Rights Court, ideally under the World Court. Knowledgeable institutions also urge the creation of a serious research capacity in or associated with the Centre for Human Rights. All of these needs should constitute a priority charge upon the High Commissioner for recommendations to the relevant UN organs.

The High Commissioner should also recommend how to end the frustration of the NGO community over access to and adequate participation in the UN's human rights machinery. The United Nations cannot evade its responsibility, under the Charter and International Bill of Rights, not only to governments but to peoples of member-states in issues affecting the fundamental liberties and socio-economic well-being of citizens. The credibility as well as the performance of its human rights machinery critically depends upon NGOs having due access in all human rights bodies without exception.

OMBUDSMAN FOR THE UN SYSTEM ITSELF

This study addresses only the most salient reform needs in any component of the system. One other important need should, however, receive early attention, and it is a mechanism for independently monitoring the compliance of the UN system itself with its Human Rights mandates.

Serious issues have been raised by authoritative sources regarding the involvement of agencies of the UN system, including the World Bank and the IMF, in development and monetary practices infringing or categorically violating human rights in developing countries.

The need for an ombudsman-type function is also increasingly obvious regarding UN peace and security operations. The greater the UN's involvement in peace-enforcement and other operations that may employ force, the more vital it becomes to have transparent and independent human rights supervision. This is needed as much to protect the organization from false or inflated charges of human rights abuse as to ensure that if these occur they are properly investigated and reported. A recent example of this need was the alleged actions and behaviour involving civilians by UNOSOM II forces in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Full recommendations in the area of Human Rights, particularly detailed regarding a proposed Council on Diversity, Representation, and Governance, are provided in Chapter XIII.

246 c.f., i.a., report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, UN doc. A/CONF.157/PC/23 and various country and NGO submissions in the same A/CONF.157 series.
247 i.a., Human Rights Committee A/CONF.157/PC/6/Add.4.
248 i.a., The United Nations and Human Rights: Towards Effective Mechanisms for Compliance, paper by Dr. J. Benomar, Director, Human Rights Programme at the Carter Centre, for its Colloquium presided over by President Carter, 23 January 1993.
249 In Swedish, from which the now universal term is derived, ombudsman means either a woman or a man.
VII. HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY CAPACITIES

Economic stagnation, absolute poverty, over-population, environmental degradation, use of military force, and human rights violations crowd the list of factors likely to trigger future humanitarian crises.

*The Bellagio Statement, 1992*

In 1991 the authors prepared detailed recommendations for improving the system's humanitarian emergency machinery. The General Assembly that year adopted some of the key improvements needed. This study concentrates on major problems that have not been resolved or that have since assumed far greater significance.

**EFFECTIVE RESPONSE MACHINERY**

The 1991 Assembly reform resolution sought decisive improvement in coordination for emergencies by requesting the Secretary-General to designate 'a high-level official, emergency relief coordinator' absorbing existing UN coordination functions including the former UN Disaster Relief Coordinator and an Inter-Agency Standing Committee chaired by that official. Mr. Boutros-Ghali subsequently established the post of Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs heading a strengthened Department (DHA). The inter-agency committee has been functioning. Member-states have pledged the target $50 million for a new central revolving fund for rapid first action in emergencies.

These measures were probably the best that could gain full consensus in the year of the Persian Gulf War and amid deep anxiety among the majority of member-states over the independence of the UN in major crises. A reluctance to afford stronger coordinating power to the Secretary-General was, of course, reinforced by the traditional lobbying of funds and agencies for their continued status quo in emergency as in development activities.

The authors had recommended that such a coordinating post have the rank of Deputy Secretary-General. Such rank would at least have provided the new official with clear status as regards the executive heads of funds and agencies of the system involved in humanitarian

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253 In Resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 on 'Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance'.

254 The lobbying was well reflected in the qualifying language immediately following designation of the new high-level coordinator: 'in cooperation with the relevant organizations and entities of the system dealing with humanitarian assistance and in full respect of their mandates.' Resolution 46/182, paragraph 34.
emergency operations. Mr. Boutros-Ghali, however, has assigned the rank of USG to the post. This gives its incumbent only equal rank with the heads of UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, and makes him one rank junior to the heads of UNDP and such emergency-engaged agencies as WHO.

At the end of 1993 the first incumbent in the post, Jan Eliasson of Sweden, tendered his resignation after exhaustive efforts to make it work.

... essential conditions must be met if the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is to have any hope of successfully fulfilling its mandate ... The second condition is the full cooperation of all parts of the system. When it comes to humanitarian emergencies there is no room for rivalries and turf fights.

Canada, General Assembly, 1992

Although less than two years have passed to test the viability of the new arrangements it cannot be assumed that more time will produce more coherence. The 1991 reform did not overcome the separatism and built-in competition that is so pervasive in the UN system even in face of the human desperation of emergencies.

The joint needs assessment and appeal procedures under the Inter-Agency Committee may have somewhat improved this element of needed coherence, but even here the old 'go it alone' psychology survives. At the actual ground level of activities coinciding with UN peace-keeping operations there have been embarrassing experiences in Somalia and former Yugoslavia.

In the actual mounting and running of emergency operations, at any time any of the executive heads can run circles around the purported DHA Coordinator, and he has no authority to stop this. The only possible 'referee' of these potential scrimmages, the Secretary-General, simply does not have the time to do this for every fresh emergency. He has in fact already experienced the embarrassment of having to countermand uncoordinated decisions.

Division of labour

As the reform resolution reflected, the same argument for the separatist status quo in operational development activities is used over emergency operations—that there should be a 'clear division of labour' among the various funds and other agencies of the system. In the UN system this is a contradiction in terms.

'Division of labour' is at least an arguable organizational concept where separate entities are doing different things and should continue to do them, at least at certain levels of an operation. In itself this requires that there be one overall authority establishing and maintaining such a division


256 Noting the progress, Malaysia nonetheless observed, 'As in the past—before the existence of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs—relief agencies have been engaging in and undertaking fund-raising activities of their own accord'; in the November 1992 General Assembly debate, op. cit., p. 31.
and deciding over any possible jurisdictional disputes that may still arise. In the present
UN-system emergency machinery there is still no such overall authority. And, in development
activities as well as in emergency operations, the organizations are doing largely the same things.

UNHCR, which was established as a legal protection agency for refugees, is nowadays
running huge truck and aircraft relief supply operations of all kinds. UNICEF also runs supply
operations. WFP does the same with food aid, often for UNHCR. WHO quite rightly arranges
emergency medical assistance; but so may UNICEF, sometimes in tandem, often not; so may
UNHCR, sometimes with the other two, sometimes not.

The real 'division of labour' that needs concentrated effort is between a unified UN-system
emergency machinery and the volunteer NGOs upon which it must in any case in the end depend.
That need remains seriously neglected in the continued jockeying and jostling of UN-system
organizations vis-à-vis each other and the intrinsically weak new DHA 'Coordinator'.

Decentralization

The second confusion concerns the undoubted need to avoid merely establishing a higher-level
authority at the headquarters level which then stifles or delays necessary and often urgent
ground-level decision-making in emergencies. Heads of funds used this argument energetically in
1991 when lobbying to ensure that the weakest possible mandate be given to the new UN DHA
Coordinator, and that the rank of the post not even be specified by the General Assembly.

What presently exists, however, is not 'decentralization' at all. Decentralized authority
means that one official responsible to the Secretary-General organizes an integrated emergency
relief operation; chooses as its ground-level manager someone who can be relied upon for sound
and efficient daily decision-making (and for knowing when a decision needs headquarters input);
and then delegates to that chosen person.

In the existing structure of the system's emergency machinery this—real decentralization—is
virtually impossible.

Fundamental questions remain about the ability of anyone to exercise
effective coordination within the existing UN structure. Is the authority
provided to the new Department vis-à-vis the operational UN organizations
adequate to its coordinating task, or does its required respect for their existing
mandates, however conflicting and overlapping, programme it for failure?

Thomas G. Weiss and Larry Minear

It is all too clear that the scale and the simultaneity of humanitarian emergencies witnessed in the
last few years is not going to abate. So many neglected political and inter-cultural problems, so

257 During their testimony as emergency experts, Co-directors of the Humanitarianism and War Project, Brown University, U.S.
much absolute poverty have accumulated, that minimal and inadequate reforms of the UN system’s machinery will not suffice.

The situation may be summarized, bluntly, as follows.

1. The laboriously negotiated 1991 reform resolution did not provide for a single overall organizer and manager of the UN system’s humanitarian emergency operations. The new Department of Humanitarian Affairs can manage preventative assistance to disaster-prone countries; the collection of data; the development of improved early warning systems and—hopefully—joint appeals for resources. What then happens on the ground remains, for each fresh emergency, the same old potential tangle.

2. It is indeed legitimate for UNHCR to claim that the UN’s responsibilities to care for the material welfare of refugees and other displaced persons must be met, but that does not mean this must be done by UNHCR. Its efforts to shelter and feed displaced persons are entirely admirable, but it can be argued that it is completely inappropriate that an Office supposed to concentrate on the legal protection of now over 40,000,000 uprooted human beings is encumbered with these massive operational responsibilities.

3. It is indeed legitimate for UNICEF to claim that the UN’s responsibilities to care for the material welfare of children who are victims of wars, internal upheavals and other disasters, must be met. That does not mean this has to be done separately by UNICEF, when it is in any case impossible to single out children for succor in emergencies.

4. The UN must certainly have machinery to mobilize and deploy large quantities of food aid to the victims of emergencies. WFP has a justifiably first-class reputation for its logistical efficiency. This does not mean that WFP has to remain a separate operational organization that must also be ‘coordinated’ with UNICEF and with UNHCR and with WHO and with UNDP, and possibly FAO—before achieving coordination with the voluntary relief NGOs who do most of the ground-level food distribution work.

5. There are few, if any, grounds for assuming that the 1991 resolution provides the authority to make this diffusion of capacities and functions work properly. The only element of separatism in the system’s emergency machinery that can have any arguable basis is the ‘identity’ of voluntary funds for purposes of mobilizing contributions. With the sole exception of the citizen-donation portions of UNICEF’s and UNHCR’s resource-mobilization, even the necessity to maintain these separate identities would need the reaffirmation of governments that they cannot provide their present contributions without them.

In view of the foregoing it is evident that member-governments confront a choice. They can try to make the present machinery based on the 1991 resolution work better for a few years—when they will assuredly once again be debating an agenda item entitled ‘Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations’. Or they can decide now to come to decisive grips with these aspects of the system by the 50th Anniversary.

258 There is an entire labyrinth of unresolved legal problems concerning the protection of people displaced from their homes but not—or not yet—across a frontier, or for other reasons unable to qualify as protected Refugees under existing international law. The number of such displaced persons currently stands at around 24,000,000.
On these choices will unquestionably depend the rescue of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people in the humanitarian emergencies that lie ahead.

As will be recommended in greater detail in Chapter XIII, the authors of this study are convinced that governments should no longer postpone the obvious conclusions from all accumulated experience. If they were now setting out to equip the UN system with highly effective emergency response machinery they would not even consider creating the tangle that now exists. The emergency relief capacities and functions of WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR should be relocated and consolidated in a proper Operations branch of the Department for Humanitarian Affairs. The identities of these emergency funds should be managed as separate ‘windows’ by DHA pending an in-depth study.

Individual UN agencies now find themselves batted from the DHA to the Secretary-General to the Under-Secretaries for Political Questions. Furthermore these competing coordinators seem to require decisions on the smallest matters to be referred back to them rather than be taken nearer the action.

NGO paper, 1993

A NEW COORDINATION PROBLEM

In the last few years a relatively new phenomenon has emerged in humanitarian emergencies, namely that relief operations are more frequently accompanied by United Nations peace-keeping operations. This has already posed serious new issues of coordination, because it means that humanitarian emergency operations under the putative coordination of the Under Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs may be linked with activities under the responsibility of USGs for Political Affairs and for Peace-keeping.

This phenomenon has two dimensions. At headquarters, it calls for efficient teamwork between a minimum number of senior officials who either meet with the Secretary-General to receive his or her decisions on ongoing ground-level problems between military and humanitarian operations, or work on these together and report.

In their 1991 study on reorganization of the Secretariat the authors recommended a single Department for all political, security and peace affairs headed by a Deputy Secretary-General. To assure adequate rank for humanitarian emergencies, as for human rights, they recommended that both these areas should come under another Deputy Secretary-General, with a third Deputy heading all economic, social, development and environmental affairs. This would create a viable...
small team of top managers under the Secretary-General.\textsuperscript{261} Mr. Boutros-Ghali has chosen instead to leave all Departments directly reporting to him.

The advent of so many combined UN military and humanitarian operations by itself puts in serious question such reliance upon the time and stamina of any Secretary-General as the only active coordinator in the house. The authors remain convinced of the critical need for Deputies Secretary-General coordinating their respective departments under the overall direction of the Secretary-General.

However, in view of the now ever more rapidly escalating volume of human rights as well as humanitarian relief challenges there is palpable need for both areas to carry the rank of a Deputy Secretary-General. This means that there should now be four substantive Deputies, constituting a viably small team to work together as the close advisors to the Secretary-General, who should meet with them as a team or in smaller combinations to render those decisions needed in his or her ultimate responsibility. (This will be further discussed in a later chapter on Management.)

One other ingredient is essential. In a major emergency operation, a Secretary-General must repose the vitally necessary degree of trust and confidence in the judgment of a chosen Special Representative with clear lines of communication with headquarters for various types of problem. A reorganization that creates the small top-level team around the Secretary-General described above, and that provides for unified humanitarian emergency machinery, will stand infinitely better chance of avoiding turf battles, and of coping with those coordination problems that are inevitable and inherent in emergencies.

\textbf{Humanitarian staff}

It is necessary to repeat here the earlier warning that serious attention must be given to the extremely uneven quality of the staff involved in UN-system humanitarian emergency operations. It is well known that these posts have suffered from indifference by personnel managers to the special qualities and qualifications needed for this work. The observation of a reputed and UN-supportive NGO should also be heeded: 'All organizations face the same problem of unevenness but the UN agencies are particularly susceptible to lobbying by donors and diplomats'.

The Secretary-General will not be able to overcome this serious problem unless a Deputy Secretary-General (no less) is mandated to commission an independent, system-wide assessment of staff by neutral veterans of emergency work together with some outside personnel specialists. It is critically important to eliminate those who are wholly unsuitable, to train those who could be made suitable, and to establish stringent guidelines for future recruitment.

This study does not encompass problems of UN peace-keeping and other forms of military

\textsuperscript{261} There would be a fourth Deputy in charge of all Administration and Management.
operations under UN authority. There is, however, a new and increasingly urgent problem of security that affects the very viability of humanitarian emergency operations, and therefore needs attention here.

**UN HUMANITARIAN SECURITY POLICE?**

Additional measures for respect of humanitarian aid and for protection of relief personnel are now necessary. The blue ensign of the United Nations and the symbols of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, and of other relief agencies, no longer provide sufficient protection.

*Under Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, 1993*

Only a few years ago no one would have imagined a day when Red Cross workers would feel compelled to hire local gunmen to protect their operations and warehouses. Nor was it imaginable that civil servants of the UN system working in humanitarian emergencies would be killed by bandits with the frequency now so tragically the case.

Mr. Eliasson’s observation is a shocking but necessary commentary on the conditions which humanitarian emergency operations are henceforth all too likely to encounter. The question, however, is what sort of protection should be provided?

UN civil-service emergency workers are not allowed to carry arms. NGO authorities would much prefer never to face the need to hire gunmen that became commonplace in Somalia, to cite but one current example. There are also cogent reasons for doubting whether the necessary protection should be organized from UN military contingents.

In the first place the need for protection of humanitarian personnel and their transport and warehouses may well arise before there is any UN military intervention. Secondly, if in such intervention UN troops are compelled to take forceful action, there is no way to prevent local belligerents from losing confidence in the impartiality and non-military content of UN humanitarian convoys, warehouses and other operations. Thirdly, the United Nations has a clear protective responsibility for NGOs, yet their very work may depend upon maintaining some visible distance from UN military forces.

As was well demonstrated on an ad hoc basis in Northern Iraq, there is a distinct role and there are special advantages in organizing security police for the protection of humanitarian operations. The time has come when governments should consider establishing a separate and distinctive United Nations Humanitarian Security Police.

Detailed recommendations covering issues in this chapter are provided in Chapter XIII.
VIII. THE DECISION-MAKING MACHINERY

The United Nations offers every country a forum where, with its resources of knowledge and experience, it can take a lead in framing the universal agenda...

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

INTRODUCTION

Member-states use intergovernmental organs as meeting places in all fields of human concern, for prescribing global and regional policies and action-programmes, for adopting new international laws of behaviour, for governing the organizations of the UN system, and for electing or confirming the appointment of its executive heads. Reforms in the machinery for the UN system as a whole have been recommended in earlier chapters. Here the concentration will be on the machinery of the UN itself. Many of the following problems apply also to the agencies.

1. The General Assembly is the ultimate and ECOSOC the first recipient of reports and recommendations from a large number of subsidiary mechanisms. This is an integral chain of business; reform has repeatedly failed because it was attempted piecemeal.

2. The capabilities of UN intergovernmental organs are seriously affected by the following factors:
   a. The working periods per year for the Assembly and for ECOSOC are absurdly restricted. Past reform efforts have been badly flawed by assuming that these narrow time-frames cannot be changed, unless to reduce them even further.
   b. Negotiating and decision-making capacities both in the main bodies and in specialist meetings are severely hampered by the inability of many poorer member-countries to deploy sufficient delegates and advisors. The simultaneity of many meetings crowded into the narrow calendar exacerbates this.
   c. The capability of all member-governments properly to represent their constituents at the UN is also seriously handicapped by their failure to meet, in their own representation, the United Nations standards of gender equality that they have themselves adopted.
   d. Traditions and timings of debate, the traditional composition of resolutions, and lack of discipline in requesting reports and prescribing their length are all further handicaps.
   e. UN organs do not yet make full use of the extraordinary advances in communication technology that could facilitate deliberating and negotiating, at relatively low cost.

3. Some of the problems of negotiation and decision-making that had their origins in the Cold War may now recede. But many others are direct reflections of North-South tensions which have not receded, and now pervasively obstruct reform of the machinery.

4. Recurring criticism of the 'one nation, one-vote' principle, demands for special influence based on economic power, and propositions for reducing policy-forming bodies to 'manageable size' have created deep suspicion among smaller countries of all reform proposals.

The United Nations has become repetitive, rhetorical ... the proliferation of committees, subcommittees, commissions, special conferences and the like strongly shape the substance of matters that dominate the time of the Secretariat and the agenda of the General Assembly.

*New York Times, 1984*

The great bulk of editorial and political criticism of the UN system's intergovernmental machinery has emanated from industrial countries since the developing countries acquired their majority of votes in the General Assembly. Much of it implies that only UN organs have such weaknesses, or only since the 'new majority' arrived. Most of this criticism misidentifies the sources of problems, or misses the real problems altogether.

There are indeed repetitive resolutions, but analysis shows that the longest-repeated resolutions originate in positions taken by industrial countries, and many before the new majority arrived. Nonetheless, the repetition should be reduced.

There have been emotive speeches, but UN organs are models of oratorical decorum, even of dullness, compared with some national parliamentary sessions. And it is particularly true in the UN that one group's 'rhetoric' is another group's incisive policy enunciation. There are other, far more important problems associated with UN debates.

There has been constant criticism that developing countries have sought to 'politicize' the agenda in organs of the system that should be kept 'non-political'. The record since 1946 shows quite as much 'politicization' by industrial as by developing countries; here again, one group's 'politicization' is another's assertion of key principles. There are other, genuine agenda problems.

The dominance of committee work cited in the article quoted above would be praised as good machinery in most democracies. The notion that UN machinery has proliferated committees in some manner unique among official institutions does not withstand serious scrutiny. In the whole economic and social sector, which has most of the subsidiary bodies, they numbered something over 150 in 1986, and there has already been substantial pruning. Since 1945 the number of committees and subcommittees of the US Congress has increased from 71 to 299.

Routine criticism obscures many extraordinary achievements from public knowledge. For example, if a national parliament had adopted since 1946 a comprehensive code of nearly seventy human rights instruments for one homogeneous country, no one would call it 'a useless talking shop'. What the system's intergovernmental machinery needs and deserves is more constructive and knowledgeable criticism of its real problems.

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The UN deals in one way or another with virtually every aspect of the human condition and the natural environment. Its decision-making processes have inevitably become a maze of reports and resolutions. Like any fifty-year-old machinery it needs overhauling, and its operators need to improve and update their techniques. The following examination will work its way inwards, initially dealing with problems that might seem symptomatic but that can seriously clog the decision-making machinery.

Some of the accumulated difficulties can be perceived in the flow of business into ECOSOC in 1983.267

Table 7. Flows of business to ECOSOC in 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of flows (by category)</th>
<th>Number of reports</th>
<th>Total number of pages of reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Global Commissions</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Regional Commissions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Funds &amp; Programmes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Committees</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Member States</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Expert Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Secretariat units</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>104 reports</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,051 pages</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These reports were requested by member-governments. They responded to them by requesting 56 distinct new reports from the Secretariat; 92 other Secretariat actions which were bound to require more reports; and 79 requests to other UN bodies certain to generate still more reports.

Documentation

It is a commonplace among delegates that, when they have run out of time on an agenda item, or cannot agree what to do about it, the solution is to ask the Secretary-General for another report on it. This is not noted in any jocularity; often the idea of a further report arises from genuine

bafflement. The problem is that such further reports seldom solve anything. More time for deliberation, and the introduction of some intellectual discipline could avert this.

Delegations seldom stipulate the desirable length of reports they have requested. More stringent discipline has been introduced since 1983 on the Secretariat side, but this is extremely difficult to enforce when delegates often lack time to think through what they really want. When in doubt civil servants tend to be influenced by the belief that they will be damned if they do (report economically) and damned if they don't.

In an earlier chapter it was recommended that the Secretary-General must have one fully empowered point in the house to plan, marshal, and monitor the quality, coherence and volume of economic and social documentation. This, however, will only cover the producer's side of the equation. The users must show corresponding responsibility.

Every intergovernmental body should assign responsibility for document planning to one member of its Bureau. Instead of last-minute notions delegates should budget time to discuss what kind of report, with what bodies of information and recommendations, they seek. Consulting with the proposed new Secretariat documentation unit the Bureau officer can establish a target number of pages. Following the excellent discipline of a 'Financial Implications' Note for proposals having likely costs, it should become mandatory to record an envisaged document page length in the text of all resolutions and decisions throughout the UN economic and social system. The number of errors of judgment that this discipline may generate will pale into insignificance beside the volume of indigestible and useless paper that its absence produces.

▶ Technology for decision-making

Given the low-cost computer technology now available, unnecessary amounts of time are consumed in negotiating and drafting resolutions, often at the cost of clarity and enduring consensus on them.

Any veteran of UN decision-making procedures can painfully recall how many meetings are postponed—for up to a whole day—when someone says, 'Mr. Chairman, my Delegation cannot continue without a properly printed presentation of the original draft and the various amendments so far tabled' (usually with ancillary requests for at least two languages). It has also been remarked several times in this study that lack of institutional memory causes delegations to re-invent their own earlier decisions (and to be unaware how often these have not been implemented in the past).

Delegates should have keyboards and monitors in working-level meeting rooms. At their Missions and at the meeting they should have access to complete packages of software providing past reports and resolutions on the issue(s) at hand. When a draft resolution is tabled it can at once be displayed on each delegation's screen, and proposed amendments can be seen against relevant sentences (and in at least one other language). Hard copies could be obtained as easily.

Having readily 'on screen' all prior resolutions on the topic could also facilitate drastic abbreviation of preambles. Delegates are accustomed to these long sequences of Recallings and
Bearings in Mind and Emphasizings. It can certainly be important whether a given earlier resolution is or is not recalled in a Preamble; but to the rest of humankind these preambulars are impenetrable bodies of in-house language that render the United Nations itself mysterious and remote. Most parliamentarians cannot decipher them, and journalists who may genuinely wish to report the work of the UN to the outside world cannot do anything with them.

If delegates could easily see the preambular section of the earlier resolutions they could dispense with much of the resounding repetition by brief references. The political nuances would be preserved; the communication value of the resolution for humanity at large would be immeasurably enhanced.

At least for an experimental period member-states should also allow the Secretariat to write reports in the ordinary language of human beings. Human beings write 'to' when the UN writes 'with a view to'; they say 'because' and have never heard of 'in the context of'. And since 99.99 per cent of humankind do not have the faintest idea what mutatis mutandis means, and the equivalents in other ancient languages are never employed in UN documents, it might make the UN more tangible to its citizens if archaisms were eliminated save, perhaps, in legal papers.

On the rare occasions when someone has actually been allowed to write a UN report free of these arcane mysteries, delegates themselves have expressed gratitude. They could be assured that the world beyond would unquestionably do so, and reading of UN papers by 'we, the peoples' might actually increase.

Further into the maze, reform becomes enmeshed in real and profound issues of international politics.

'ONE NATION, ONE VOTE'

From a purely practical point of view (it) is difficult to envisage a workable alternative to the one-vote-per-country system, whatever its apparent inequities, unless the world were to return to the old idea of Might is Right.

U Thant, 1964

The only instance of a deliberative assembly suddenly acquiring a population-based majority without great turmoil is the UN General Assembly. The relative ease of that transformation owed much both to the countries that lost their accustomed majorities and to ‘the new majority’ which had to accept continuing minority-decided constitutional provisions. It also owed much to the fact that ‘one nation, one vote’ had been inscribed in the Charter.

When the UN was founded, few envisaged complete decolonization even in this century. The architects of the new Seat in Manhattan were advised to plan for expansion to perhaps 70

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264 In his address at the University of Denver, 3 April 1964.
265 Namely, the ‘Permanent Five’ having veto power over amendment of the Charter, choice of Secretary-General, composition of part of the membership of a key organ, the Security Council, and action under Chapter VII.
members.\textsuperscript{270} One nation, one vote had not been inscribed for a decolonized South but for the founders plus another twenty or so largely from Europe.

The principle was thoroughly discussed in 1943–1944, and did not need to be debated at San Francisco.\textsuperscript{271} US State Department staff had already discarded weighting of votes, noting that 'such a system would provoke the traditional resistance of a majority of states to overt denials of the equality of states'.\textsuperscript{272}

However, people in powerful countries often assert that 'some states are more equal than others'. Aware of this, the smaller (including smaller industrial) members at San Francisco did insist on a full discussion of 'the sovereign equality of states'. In hindsight, it is a pity the Conference did not put into Article 2 of the Charter its agreed definition of sovereign equality:

\begin{itemize}
\item that states are juridically equal;
\item that each state enjoys the right inherent in full sovereignty;
\item that the personality of the state is respected, as well as its territorial integrity and political independence;
\item that the state should, under international order, comply faithfully with its international duties and obligations.\textsuperscript{273}
\end{itemize}

Respect for the 'personality' of all states, regardless of size or power, was seldom a problem before decolonization. As a member of the Burmese Delegation in 1952 U Thant witnessed how 'the United States could usually muster (a two-thirds) majority. It was like a one-party system functioning in the Assembly'.\textsuperscript{274} By 1964, however, as Secretary-General, he was addressing the new unease about a principle that had not been questioned while the West had an effective majority:

A system of weighted voting based on population or resources or wealth would produce results which might be especially unwelcome to those who are critical of the present system ...\textsuperscript{275}

Population differences in the one-nation one-vote system are glaring when a state of only a few hundred thousand citizens is admitted with equal vote beside states of tens or hundreds of
millions. Yet most highly populous states do not urge weighted voting; if they did China and India, with 34 per cent of humanity but only 2 out of 184 votes, would be loudly heard.

The danger of arguing for amending the Charter with a voting system factoring in wealth may escape the affluent at any one point in time, but the economic histories of oil-producing developing countries point to it. Tomorrow, 'wealth' might be water.

It is not, therefore, surprising that the sages in the US State Department in 1944–45 warned that 'it would be difficult to secure general support for any index of power with its corresponding system of voting'.

The accompanying chart demonstrates that throughout the history of UN membership the distribution of votes has been almost exactly in ratio to the populations of more affluent states of the industrial North and of the poorer states of the South.

The sages in the US State Department in 1944–45 warned that 'it would be difficult to secure general support for any index of power with its corresponding system of voting'.

The accompanying chart demonstrates that throughout the history of UN membership the distribution of votes has been almost exactly in ratio to the populations of more affluent states of the industrial North and of the poorer states of the South.

**Votes in the General Assembly in relation to world population**

![Chart showing the distribution of votes in the General Assembly in relation to world population.](chart)

Notes: - The developing countries' share of total votes from 1945 was high because of Latin American membership.
- Since decolonization the shares of votes have closely corresponded to shares of world population; slight new gain by 'North' in 1992 from added ex-USSR and E. Europe members.

This gives added point to U Thant's concluding observation on the matter in 1964: 'The world is perhaps an untidy place, but it is hard to imagine another system by which the voting in the United Nations could be more equitably arranged'.

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276 Ruth B. Russell, *op. cit.*

277 It is sometimes argued that such population equity does not take account of non-democratic governments in the South. Former Australian Ambassador to the UN Dr. Peter Wilenski, speaking to the UN Association in Canberra in 1991, said that 'There is not much difference in the voting patterns of democratic and non-democratic states with similar national interests. Thus, it would seem that the constitutional basis of the General Assembly is the right one.'
THE SYSTEMIC NORTH-SOUTH FACTOR

The North-South factor, however, does affect virtually every aspect of the working of the intergovernmental machinery, not only in the visible play of political positions but in many more subtle ways as well. These include the effect of the comparative strengths of delegations in securing a meeting of minds and in the evolution of agreed policies.

Delegation Capacities

The delegates of the South felt their poverty in the negotiating rooms and in the bargaining that took place in the corridors. They were often too few to be effective ... The delegates from the North came mostly in multi-disciplinary teams equipped with comprehensive data bases, while those from the South had to rely only on their own knowledge and intuition.

A Southern delegate, 1992

In principle, each member-state can be represented in a session of the General Assembly, or other organs of the UN system, by the same number of representatives as any other, and each is provided with the same number of travel authorizations under standard rules. In practice, all deliberation and all negotiation throughout the UN system is continuously hampered by a serious imbalance in the capacities of the two major groupings of member-states.

These North-South imbalances in the representational and negotiating capacities of member-states are well known, but do not seem to have been verified by statistical data. The following table provides recent data on the total 'strength' of delegates and advisors attending the 1991 Assembly session, i.e. before the increase in membership. The phenomenon, however, persists.

Table 8. Representational strengths, 1991–1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States from</th>
<th>Missions Number of states</th>
<th>Number of votes (%)</th>
<th>Number of staff</th>
<th>Number of total staff</th>
<th>General Assembly Delegations Number of delegates</th>
<th>Number of advisors</th>
<th>Increase in strength (%)</th>
<th>Total GA strength (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

278 From an unpublished paper by Tewolde Berhan G. Egziaber, Ethiopian delegate to negotiations for the Convention on Biological Diversity.
For year-round representation and negotiation the North maintains resident at the UN proportionately more staff than the South. More affluent Northern states deploy many additional personnel for the Assembly, achieving still greater total capacity for the group than the South.\textsuperscript{281} 

Similar patterns obtain for ECOSOC. At the 1991 Second Regular Session the North, with 29 per cent of seats and votes, deployed 49 per cent of the total number of Members (Delegates) and Advisors; the South, with 71 per cent of votes and seats, could deploy only 51 per cent of Members and Advisors. The same pattern extends throughout the machinery of the agencies. The disparities are worst of all at specialist meetings and working groups where vital economic and technological agreements are to be negotiated.

This persistent imbalance in representational and negotiating capacities often erodes mutual confidence; the very atmosphere in a committee room changes as representatives arrive and the imbalance is manifested. The actual negotiating disadvantages for Southern member-states described by the Ethiopian delegate quoted above inject an inherently undesirable element into UN-system processes. They are often compounded by special ‘donor’ influences.\textsuperscript{282} 

The problem is not for the South alone; it is often felt adversely by Northern delegations as well. On every occasion when the South cannot muster enough staff to cover all simultaneous meetings, one or more meetings are simply delayed. Everything from informal ‘contact’ meetings to drafting groups, to the very opening of scheduled meetings of main organs may be delayed. The total agenda gets backed up. All delegations suffer the consequences in irritable late-night meetings producing time-pressured resolutions often unsatisfactory to everyone.

As long as poverty and indebtedness persist in the South most developing countries will be unable to increase their resident staff in (hard-currency) expensive cities that host UN-system bodies, or to send enough supplementary representatives to UN venues. If this cannot be recognized as a part of the overall North-South economic disparity, and supplementary travel allowances provided, then the minimal remedy must be to re-phase meetings.

\textbf{Gender balance}

The need for far wider, multi-disciplinary training and in-service orientation for UN diplomats has already been discussed. It is also impossible to ignore gender imbalance in delegation capacities. Member-states are the first stewards of a Charter that pledges gender equality in its Preamble and in its Purposes and Principles. They have adopted far-reaching instruments of human rights against gender discrimination. However, their implementation of these principles in the composition of their own UN Missions and Delegations falls lamentably short.

\textsuperscript{281}The population ‘reservoir’ from which countries can draw mission and delegation staff is not a dominant factor. India, with a population 50 per cent larger than the European Community can afford to maintain in its New York UN Mission only 18 staff, compared with the Community’s members’ total of 180.

\textsuperscript{282}‘The delegations of the South were, in the eyes of the Secretariat, light-weight, and rules of procedure and bureaucracy could be applied on them strictly. But delegates of the North controlled the finances of the Secretariat and the bureaucracy bent over backwards to accommodate them.’ From the paper cited above.
Apart from the overall percentiles, two points are of interest in the above table. The common assumption that, in gender equality, the industrial North is well ahead of the South is not borne out in the UN's intergovernmental machinery. The second and glaring point is in the much higher percentile of women delegates and advisors assigned to the General Assembly's Third Committee. In the United Nations, of all places, women are still regarded as more competent to deal with Social issues than Political, Economic, Legal, Financial and others.

**Table 9. Percentage of Women in Missions and Delegations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mission staff (%)</th>
<th>General Assembly Delegates (%)</th>
<th>Assembly Committees (%)</th>
<th>ECOSOC 1991 Delegates (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An inevitable generational change, North and South, has taken place in the composition of delegations to a system now in its fifth decade. Institutional memories possessed by the first generation of veterans have disappeared. Many of their replacements inevitably lack knowledge of the organizations of which they become the governors; and it would seem that rotation has accelerated, compounding the problem.

In these circumstances ardent staff of the various funds and secretariats have become far too adept as lobbyists on behalf of their particular pieces of the total system. In the final version of far too many resolutions their footprints can be detected as they seek—and usually gain—special advantage for a fund or department. The real implications of a highly nuanced sub-clause in a resolution are not even apparent to all delegations until the benefiting entity puts it into effect.

International civil servants should certainly be available to delegates, on request, to provide specific background information. This should be done with delegations as a group so that all acquire the same facts and private lobbying is curtailed. However, here again the compression of more and more workload into the same time-frames has seriously reduced such group-briefing.

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It must also be said that the specific point advanced by the lobbying civil servant is often not authorized by the Secretary-General, and is not infrequently even at variance with official policy. Recent Secretaries-General have been far too lax in their directives on this to executive heads of funds in particular. Every Secretary-General shares responsibility to re-establish the essential independence of governing organs on the one hand, and of civil servants on the other.

Member-states, however, hold concomitant responsibility. They should assure to themselves adequate time for secretariat briefings. They should reassert the ground-rules whereby, when they genuinely wish to know what the Secretary-General wants to recommend on any point of substance, they obtain a clear representation from an appropriately senior official.

All of the foregoing applies equally in the agencies, where the influence of directors-general over government representatives is inherently stronger, often because their Missions are very small and isolated. The entire basic code of international civil service is in need of renewal and reinforcement throughout the UN system.

If refraining from lobbying is a vital tradition that needs to be restored, effective reform of the decision-making machinery will also need readiness by all members to set aside traditions that now slow and sometimes defeat what governments actually wish to achieve. An exhaustive mapping of the flow of business in the UN system is needed in order to re-phase and streamline it. It will be useful to begin by getting a clear idea of what finally comes to the General Assembly from all sources.

**THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The General Assembly of all member states was one of the victims of the cold war. There is now a need to restore to it the role which was envisaged for it originally, one in which the equality of nations and peoples is a living reality expressed in terms of their shared interest in managing change and growth in the contemporary world.

*Ambassador Butler of Australia, 1993*  

The most widespread criticism of the General Assembly concerns the size of its enormous annual agenda and the repetitiveness of agenda items, but the specifics are seldom cited. A clear picture of what the General Assembly actually deals with, and how many agenda items other than housekeeping it repeats, is crucial to improving its functioning. The following table analyses the subject-matter of the Assembly agenda by number of items and by repetition.

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285 Richard Butler, Australian Ambassador to the UN, speaking at a ceremony on 25 May 1993 in Ottawa launching Canada's programme to celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the UN.
### Table 10. Agenda of 48th General Assembly, 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject-matter</th>
<th>No. of Items (R = repeats)</th>
<th>Percentage of total no. of items</th>
<th>Percentage of total by subject-area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace and Security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disarmament and Zones of Peace</td>
<td>27 (R19+)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Peace-keeping and financing</td>
<td>11 (R10)</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-state disputes</td>
<td>8 (R8)</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine (including Report of UNRWA)</td>
<td>7 (R6)</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Security and Terrorism</td>
<td>5 (R2)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of Peace</td>
<td>4 (R1)</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future of territories</td>
<td>2 (R2)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic and Social, Environmental and Development Activities</td>
<td>14 (R9+)</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Economic &amp; Social 9.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights and Decolonization</td>
<td>13 (R7)</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Human Rights 8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian and Emergency Assistance</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Humanitarian 7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Law and Criminal Justice</td>
<td>8 (R3)</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Law and Justice 5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Cooperation with Regional &amp; Cultural Organizations</td>
<td>5 (R5)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>UN Cooperation 3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter and other UN Reform/Restructuring</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>UN Reform 3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Budgeting and other UN Administrative matters</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>UN Budget 8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinct items</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of Secretary-General</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>Distinct Items 4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Debate</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Members (report)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Information</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Research</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Property</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credentials &amp; election of officers and UN officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedural items</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysed from Annotated Preliminary List of Items, UN Doc. A/48/100, 15 June 1993. It should, of course, be borne in mind that Agenda Items do not necessarily consume the same amount of time, and that some have many sub-items; e.g. 10 under the Item 'Development and International Economic Co-operation'.

Authors' own categorization.

14 out of 29 sub-items in three additional Items were repeated from the 47th Session.

Some sub-items repeated in a tenth Item.

i.e., Items not falling into any category.
Thus, about 27 per cent of the 1993 items are governance and housekeeping; 30 per cent deal with economic, social, development, human rights and humanitarian matters; a larger proportion, some 42 per cent, deal with international peace and security.

Before drawing quick reform conclusions about the Assembly's 'repetitive agenda' the causes need analysis. For how many years have which subjects remained on the Assembly's agenda?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration (years)</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Subjects of recurring agenda items (no. of years in parenthesis)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45–50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Apartheid (47). Palestine (46, 45, 45).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis demonstrates that the UN General Assembly is the enduring echo chamber of conflicts and other issues that the world community has been unable to resolve. These agenda items have persisted because a majority of member-states (including industrial states in many instances) refused to allow the issues they reflect to be swept under the rug of history.

Subject descriptions are informal abbreviations of resolution titles.
The politics of many repeat items are easy to identify. How long some are likely to remain on the agenda must depend on the ultimate satisfactory resolution of these conflicts, some as old as the UN itself. It is no more reasonable to expect that some of these can be removed now than to expect that, for example, Civil Rights should be removed from the agenda of national legislatures.

Most of the irritation over this agenda repetition has come from within a minority of member-states that did not agree with the original resolutions. Most such criticism asserts or implies that the developing countries are largely responsible for the repetition. Analysis does not confirm this. The table above shows that nearly a quarter of all repeat items were inscribed before the 'new majority' of developing countries had even arrived. The table following, identifying the sources of the 52 repeat agenda items, shows that only a third emanate from groups of developing countries, and seven of these items are efforts to prevent the nuclear weapons of the Cold War from spreading into their regions. More originated from Northern countries, largely on arms issues during the Cold War. More than half of all the repeat items have general membership acceptance.

Table 12. Sources of repeat General Assembly items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>General Assembly</th>
<th>Security Council</th>
<th>Developing Countries</th>
<th>Single Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security Council membership</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms control</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disarmament, peace &amp; security</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear-free zones</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine &amp; Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartheid</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decolonization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of the Sea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic/social</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

292 Resolutions or reports from established bodies and UN conferences/special sessions or tabled by a single country and accepted as an agenda item.
293 Reduction of Military Budgets tabled by the USSR in 1973, not accepted by Western powers; also Israeli nuclear armament tabled by Iraq in 1979.
294 Including Israeli attack on Iraqi nuclear plant, 43 states in 1981.
295 East Timor.
296 Cyprus and Afghanistan.
297 Falklands/Malvinas; US attack on Libya; Antarctica.
298 On two groups of islands, tabled by Madagascar.
Disarmament agenda items

In order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating ... plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments.

Article 26, UN Charter

About half of all the repeat agenda items deal with issues of arms limitation, disarmament, measures to establish regional zones free of nuclear weapons, and specific nuclear-weapons issues.

These items arose in the Cold War, during which Article 26 remained inert and the Security Council's Military Staff Committee was unable even to begin planning 'a system for the regulation of armaments'. Instead, the General Assembly became the direct recipient of arms regulation proposals and efforts by groups of countries to keep nuclear weapons out of their regions. The Assembly was used by the Cold War contestants to score points in proposals and counter-proposals on nuclear and other weapons of mass-destruction.

The continuation of these armaments items in a 1993 agenda largely reflects the continued transition out of the Cold War and the resultant considerable confusion in the whole disarmament and arms limitation field. Peace and security are not within the purview of this study, but it may be noted that the place of arms and related issues on the General Assembly agenda will require a review by members of the future functioning of Article 26 and, hopefully, the activation of the Military Staff Committee in ways acceptable to the membership as a whole. The current discussions about the respective roles of the Assembly and the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, prompted by the Agenda for Peace, should extend to this area.

WORK CALENDARS

Delegations complain of being rushed, inundated with documentation outrunning their absorptive capacities, of having to give short shrift to matters demanding time, discussion and careful thought.

Paper for a President of the General Assembly

In the analysis so far the factor of inadequate time at the disposal of delegates has arisen again and again. Yet the great majority of proposals for improving the efficiency of the General Assembly and ECOSOC take for granted that whatever reform is needed, neither body should work for longer

From a 'non-paper' prepared in the Office of a recent President of the General Assembly.
periods in the year. Failure to take account of needed time has bedeviled the whole history of attempted reforms of the machinery. It must now be squarely faced.

It is worth recalling the not untypical 1983 session of ECOSOC. Even if the documentation had been half its actual volume, delegates would have been expected, in only some 35 working days over two Council sessions, to digest mentally, discuss substantively, and use for effective ‘coordinating’ conclusions, some 50 reports of some 2,000 pages. And member-governments have now reduced ECOSOC’s work time to one consolidated session of only about 25 working days in a year.300

This is surely food for serious thought. First, the membership of the UN’s intergovernmental bodies has expanded since 1945, in the case of the Assembly approaching four-fold, ECOSOC exactly thrice. Effectively moving even the agenda of the late 1940s through bodies with so many more voices to be heard and views to be absorbed in drafting would be difficult. The workload assigned by the world to the United Nations system has, however, also vastly expanded since these calendars were first adopted. A few examples can quickly demonstrate this.

ECOSOC and the Assembly originally had only the seminal Universal Declaration of Human Rights and one umbrella resolution on Decolonization on their human rights agenda; today they must oversee the implementation of a whole constellation of human rights instruments. The Law of the Sea is another major work item added in recent years. And where the environment was only referred to in passing forty years ago, Agenda 21 from the 1992 Rio Conference has placed another enormous additional workload of over 350 pages of detailed actions on these (and other) organs.301

Even these immensely complex topics are only a fraction of the UN agenda expansion.

In addition, as discussed earlier, the deliberative and policy-making organs have never yet carried the workload in macro-economic strategy and policy for which the United Nations was originally to be, and constitutionally remains, the mandated centrepiece. Current reforms must also take account of this mandate which has been so long kept off the agenda.

In mechanical terms, of course, it is not particularly difficult to add more and more agenda items to a body’s workload without extending its work calendar. Everything simply gets more compressed; this is in fact what member-governments have been doing for many years. Delegations do, however, repeatedly complain that they have too much documentation to absorb in too little time, and at the end of every session of almost every UN intergovernmental body they can be heard saying that they have not been able to do justice to important subjects. Resolutions often reflect these problems, in last-minute patching together of disparate drafts from different groups, over which disagreement often arises later.

All the complex issues which the world now thrusts into the UN system’s intergovernmental machinery cannot be efficiently compressed into calendars that were set forty years ago. It is true

300 In General Assembly resolution 45/264 of 13 May 1991.
that UN organs are not fully legislative bodies, but they increasingly assume quasi-legislative functions; and where they negotiate and then oversee the implementation of new international law they are indeed legislative. It is therefore well worth while to compare the annual amount of time that governments now spend on the agenda of the world, with the time they allot to the agenda of their own countries, and to that of a regional multilateral community.

In the following table it should be noted that not only the plenaries but the committees of the multilateral and national bodies cited meet far more extensively every year than do their equivalents in the UN.

### Table 13. Working calendars: The UN, the EC, and various national Parliaments

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<tbody>
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<td>UN General Assembly</td>
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<td>Assembly Committees</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>Zambia</td>
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303 The Assembly does increasingly have to meet in resumed session for various numbers of days between March and September but this is only ad hoc. Its regular Session begins in the second week of September and closes before Christmas, for a total of only 13 weeks.
304 Assembly committees are also having to meet ad hoc during the year. Committee sessions in national Parliaments average, for Canada 180 days per year; Britain 160; US House 139; India Lokh Sabha 119. Ed. Lees and Shaw, Committees in Legislatures (Durham, Duke University Press, 1979).
305 ECOSOC since 1991 meets only once each year, for 4 to 5 weeks between May and July.
306 Meets for one week in every month except August. Committees of the European Parliament meet every month except August in the weeks in each month other than the week when the Parliament is meeting.
307 The European Council of Ministers also meets by sector in the case of some sectors several times each year.
308 Extra sessions in January and July.
It is surely not surprising that representatives to the world’s main organs of deliberation, policy-making, and governance complain of inadequate time to negotiate and draft the best possible and most constructive decisions—‘even just to think’, as one exhausted and frustrated delegate recently remarked.

It is sometimes difficult to escape the feeling that some key governments do not really believe that the General Assembly and ECOSOC are the right place to discuss important problems and are therefore unwilling to make the necessary time available for such discussions. The problem is, of course, that these vital issues are not discussed in global terms in any other representative international institution.

**Using high-level debates**

The ‘thinking’ is also supposed to be stimulated by high-level theme debates in ECOSOC and the annual general debate in the Assembly. But the present calendars of both bodies allow little chance for governments actually to make use of the considerable effort which they invest in these debates. Rushed onwards into their agenda, not even the delegations, leave alone their governments at home, have time to study, synthesize and draw upon whatever new, or newly emphasized perspectives on world problems may have surfaced in these debates. Their progressive impact certainly extends outwards over ensuing months; but by the time such impact may return into the UN’s machinery another round of such debates is already upon it.

Both debates should be scheduled to allow sensible absorption of their contents. This cannot be done when they are jammed into overloaded single annual sessions.

Serious consideration should be given to making the high-level debate in the General Assembly biennial, except in years of major international crisis. There should be a ‘theme’ debate in the intervening year—as high-level as possible—that can engage the best thinking of the heads of agencies. The present annual high-level debate has settled into a ritual that cannot sustain international media attention; heads of state and government simply do not secure the attention that their presence and statements might seem to justify.

**‘The last ship before Christmas’**

For no better reason than traditions set nearly fifty years ago the working calendar of the General Assembly is contrived on an increasingly impossible time-frame between the second Tuesday of September and the date of the last steamship sailings to Europe before Christmas. Tradition again has it that—except more recently for some resumed meetings of the Fifth Committee—the Main Committees of the Assembly are supposed to start their business each year only after the General Debate and produce all needed resolutions for plenary adoption by the Friday before Christmas. Regardless how work might be reallocated between ECOSOC and the General Assembly, the maintenance of this original calendar forces member-governments to squeeze their total workload in these organs into impossibly brief periods.
Even in 1945 there were those, Australia in particular, who argued that at least the Economic and Social Council should be in more or less continuous session across each year in order to achieve the objectives of the Charter. In the 1988 ECOSOC review, the Group of 77, representing the great majority of member-states, proposed increased working time for the Council. Several recent Presidents of the General Assembly have emerged from the September-December session convinced that the prime organ of the UN should extend its work across the year.

As noted earlier, because meetings of major governing bodies are held directly before the ECOSOC session it is impossible for Council members to receive their reports in time to digest them. The reports of all the specialized and technical agencies' governing bodies are also jammed into the same single Council session.

The Council is supposed to consider and synthesize all these complex reports into effective coordination of activities, and meaningful policy advice to the General Assembly. It is commonly felt among delegates that they can do little more than rubber-stamp them because, once again, of shortage of time. As a result, the relevant Committees of the Assembly do the Council's work for it.

The recommendations made earlier to consolidate the emergency assistance capacities of the system in one efficient Department of Humanitarian Affairs can significantly ease the governance workload. The present laborious and intrinsically flawed attempts to 'coordinate' UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, and DHA (to name only the major actors) should be replaced by one single governing Board under ECOSOC, and the General Assembly's overall guidance should be (at least) biennialized.

**'Question Time'**

It is also high time to introduce in General Assembly Committees a standard number of 'Question Times' in every year, when any Delegation may table a Question to the Secretary-General in advance in writing and may follow up with supplementary questions on the response.

A time-honoured and usually invaluable practice in many national parliaments, Question Time—because institutionalized—would overcome the frequent sense of decorum and other diplomatic niceties that constrain ambassadors from asking sharp questions of the Secretary-General. As in parliaments the relevant departmental head would make most responses in person before the relevant Committee on behalf of the Secretary-General, but delegations should be able to direct Questions expressly for response by the Secretary-General personally.

There is no reason why the UN Secretariat (as, indeed, all other organizations in the system) should not be kept on its toes in awareness that it must answer any and all such questions as and when raised. The value can lie in anything from quelling some shoddily reported rumour about mismanagement, through bringing to the surface some actual problem of malfeasance at an early

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stage, to reminding a Secretary-General, in time, of the limits to his or her prerogatives in reform and restructuring. National experience does indicate a small percentage of silly interventions among Questions but in general the procedure, carried out before all peers who are busy people, has the effect of compelling the questioner to be as sure as possible of the facts (or the basis for doubts) before formally tabling a Question.

- Decentralizing governing bodies

More far-reaching reforms than recently adopted are also needed in the governance of operational development activities. In the current round all attention has been focused on intensively debated proposals for rationalizing the funds’ governing bodies at the global, headquarters level. These proposals neglect the principle of decentralization which the General Assembly adopted (in Resolution 44/211) for all other aspects of operational development activities. The precept being pressed in another multilateral entity, the European Community, that no question should be dealt with at a level higher than its nature requires, is entirely applicable to governance.

In an earlier chapter it has been recommended that development activities at last be fully decentralized to the country and regional/subregional levels. Their governance should also be decentralized. Detailed recommendations will be found in the concluding chapter, but essentially, a single governing body for all operational development activities in each region should meet annually at each UN Regional Commission seat to deal with that region’s country and inter-country programmes. The reports of these regional governing bodies would be synthesized at UN headquarters and examined every three years by a global governing body and then ECOSOC and the General Assembly. Governance at the global dimension should be only for overall global and interregional policy and programming, and periodic aggregate oversight and accountability, every five years.

This devolution, together with consolidation of the funds and programmes as earlier discussed, will have a transforming effect on the flow of business into ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

- Instituting the calendar of an integral chain of business

From all the foregoing it will be obvious that no reform effort can succeed unless the entire flow of business through the UN intergovernmental machinery is treated integrally. The attempt to treat each organ and even its subsidiaries piecemeal is like bad traffic engineering—for example, widening a single bridge and thereby worsening the bottlenecks at each end.

One permanent need in the Secretariat and one short-term reform investment are connected with this.

The decades of shuffling, separating, then reuniting, then separating the units that provide secretariat services to the major UN organs dealing with economic and social matters must end.
There is palpable need for one office led by a civil servant highly qualified in managing this work to be responsible for all such services, so that the total flow can be overseen in one place. In the short term, member-states should establish (preferably under the Committee on Conferences) an intergovernmental expert group that should begin by commissioning a review of the business flows through the machinery by an international team of top-quality professional legislative managers.

Such expertise must, of course, remain at the service of political decision-makers; it is obvious that in the prevailing climate of North-South tension overhauling this machinery remains charged with political considerations. But it would repay all members to be able to see what an internationally representative team of professionals would identify as professional business-flow problems, and what they would recommend to resolve them. Member-governments can then identify what parts of the problem really have political implications.

The second requirement for effective reform of the machinery is to open up the working calendar. This means only what it says. By how much the calendar must be extended across each year, involving which bodies and for how many sessions lasting how long, is a highly technical job of mapping the flows and laying them along the entire chain. What is certain is that trying to fit the world's economic, social, and environmental agenda for the 21st century into the forty-five-year-old calendar of an organization that then had only 28 per cent its present membership is absurd.

Extending sessions across the year will certainly cost more money. The extra cost should, however, be examined against the ultimate cost of continuing the calendar compressions. Poor or mediocre intergovernmental decisions in the UN system end up costing considerable sums in the delegation and secretariat time that has to be spent later in re-examining what was too hastily adopted (not least on UN reform itself). And where present highly compressed calendars contribute to the failure to tackle major international issues at their point of origin, governments confront vastly larger costs when they sooner or later have to deal with the consequences. Investment in extended working time will yield more effective and more economical policy formulation and governance.

Some suggested principles and criteria for overhauling the machinery, together with recommendations made above, are included in the concluding chapter. Nothing less than this kind of all-encompassing exercise can do justice to the world's only universal machinery for intergovernmental deliberation, technical exchange, negotiation, and policy and programme decision-making for the 21st Century.
The System as originally envisaged

- The United Nations and agencies are headquartered together.
- General Assembly sets macro-monetary, trade, finance policies that are developed in the Economic and Social Council, and implemented through IMF, ITO, IBRD. The Assembly coordinates all agencies' policies (Art. 58), and budgets (Art. 17.3). The Council coordinates all agency activities (Art. 63).
- The Secretary-General is executive leader of the System, with deputies of at least equal rank with heads of agencies.

COORDINATION AT HOME

The best gift Member-States could give the United Nations for its Fiftieth Anniversary would be more coordinated and coherent national policies towards the United Nations and specialized agencies.

Finland 1992

No survey of the UN's intergovernmental machinery can properly conclude without reverting to the Achilles Heel of the whole present design, the lack of policy coordination in home capitals.

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311 UN organs shown are those dealing with economic and social matters.

312 Specialized agencies for industrial development, atomic energy, and intellectual property were not yet envisaged in 1945; the diagram, however, shows these later agencies, and IFAD.

313 It was taken as doubtful that the World Bank would be headquartered with the rest of the System. The Universal Postal Union traditionally hosted by Switzerland at Berne might have remained there.

314 In the Preparatory Committee for the 50th Anniversary, 13 November 1992.
The System as of 1994

- The System is totally scattered. No agency headquarters is located at the Seat of the UN.
- The UN is not the centrepiece for macro-policy formulation; industrial powers oppose this. There are no global macro-policies. There is no genuine world trade or monetary organization.
- The General Assembly does not coordinate agencies' policies or budgets or ECOSOC their activities.
- Secretary-General unable to exert adequate leadership. No deputies. All UN senior aides are well below the rank of agency heads.

'The UN' cannot magically overcome the manifest difficulty of its member-governments in coordinating their policies in their capitals before their delegations start out for the various separate governing bodies of the system. Yet, this is so central a problem in the evolution and functioning of the system that members should examine it together.

The General Assembly should undertake a collaborative study of existing mechanisms for internal governmental coordination of national policies in the UN system, including any special efforts. Institutes of public administration and international affairs could make independent analyses of how policy in the UN system is prepared by, and to what extent really coordinated within, their governments. All available experience including other major multilateral institutions, should be assembled for the membership as a whole, as part of the 50th Anniversary review for a strengthened system.

IX. FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The United Nations will frequently be ineffective; it will never be pretty. But the world body is our best shot. Its weaknesses largely stem from the impossible demands placed on it by, and the inadequate support it receives from its member states.

Jonathan Moore, former US Ambassador to the UN.316

The financing and management of the United Nations have been under evaluation and reform of one kind or another for most of its life. Member-governments have initiated eight, and Secretaries-General three of eleven major exercises at scarcely five-year intervals.317

Most of these exercises took place in the midst of financial crises, not arising from secretariat mismanagement but when some member-states refused to pay major sums they legally owed.318 Some of these exercises have in reality been attempts to secure more power at the UN, accompanied by political and media assertions that the UN's financial management problems are uniquely serious. The modesty which might have been inspired by national shortcomings is not usually conspicuous.319

The effect of all this has been seriously to debase the coinage of UN management reform rather than to address the UN system's real problems in this area. The UN remains in deep financial crisis. It certainly also needs improved management.

FINANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Budget growth

Members making the larger contributions have long demanded that the rate of growth of the UN's budget must be held as close to zero as possible in line with their own claimed domestic policies. The facts about UN budget growth have often been mythologized.

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316 In an article, 'Free Fall by UN Must be Averted', The Los Angeles Times, October 17, 1993.
318 Thus, the 1961 Committee of Experts on the Review of the Activities and Organization of the Secretariat following a financial crisis when France and the Eastern bloc refused to pay peace-keeping assessments; Special Committee on Peace-Keeping Operations in 1964; ad hoc Committee of Experts in 1965 on system-wide finances, again following refusals to contribute; Negotiating Committee on the Financial Emergency of the UN in 1975; and the 1985 'Group of 18' following US refusal to pay full dues and numerous other defaultings.
319 In 1993 a senior official of a member-state whose citizens had lost a sum equal to some 250 years of UN budgets through mismanagement of publicly accountable institutions informed the national congress that, 'We are trying to teach the UN fiscal responsibility'.

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In 1946 the UN Regular Budget was $21.5 million. In 1992 it was $1,181.2 million. This represents an increase by 55 times during 46 years, which would not in itself be a horrendous growth for an institution that started from scratch.

The UN's regular budget has always been raised from members and expressed in US Dollars, the value of which has greatly declined since 1946. Thus, in real terms the UN regular budget has grown only 10 times since 1946. The same real-terms growth pattern has applied to the regular budgets of the assessment-financed specialized agencies (ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO).

Since 1946 the UN's membership has increased from 51 to 184, bringing onto its agenda the condition of virtually the whole of humankind, the numbers of which have more than doubled. Governments have commendably launched dozens of major global programmes in response to these increased commitments. Against this background the UN's budgetary increase has, if anything, been extraordinarily modest. Eight years ago demands to reduce the budget forced a 13 per cent UN staff cut and a hiring freeze; today there are complaints from the same sources about the Secretariat's difficulties in handling the peacekeeping and other emergencies now being heaped upon the organization.

The table below sets out the total investment made by the international community through the UN system as a whole. Most of the programmes did not even exist in 1946, including today's extensive voluntary grant-assistance development activities. The table also shows the amount that member-states are spending per capita of humankind in each field through the system.

The estimated total world-wide expenditure through the UN system in 1992 was $10.5 billion. Some idea of what this sum means in reality may be gauged from the fact that the expenditure of the citizens of the United Kingdom on alcoholic beverages for a year is three-and-a-half times the actual UN-system expenditure.

The UN system's expenditure was only 0.0005 per cent of the world's gross domestic product, and only 0.0007 per cent of the GDP of 24 industrial countries. It represented an expenditure of $1.90 per human being alive in 1992. This would not seem to be exorbitant in a world whose governments spent about $150 per human being on military expenditures.

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320 Table 2, UN Doc. E/1993/4.
321 Estimates obtained by halving biennial 1992–1993 expenditures given in Table 4, UN Doc. A48/1, adding the estimate of $1,400 million given by the Secretary-General for 1992 extrabudgetary peace-keeping expenditures in ibid. paragraph 108. Estimates include both regular and extrabudgetary sources but do not include IBRD, IMF and IDA (see data in Chapter VIII). N.B.: while halving biennial estimates is reasonably accurate for most programmes, by definition it is much less assured for humanitarian emergency expenditures.
324 Estimated from recent reductions in such expenditures reported in SIPRI Yearbook 1993 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 337.
Table 14. Overall world-wide expenditures of the UN System in 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>UN and Agencies (US$ million)</th>
<th>Emergencies (US$ million)</th>
<th>Per Capita of humankind (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy-making</td>
<td>177.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Affairs</td>
<td>395.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace-keeping operations</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>774.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Statistics</td>
<td>145.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>403.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries</td>
<td>817.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>275.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>241.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>298.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade &amp; Development</td>
<td>291.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>268.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Settlements</td>
<td>127.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>402.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>418.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>284.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanitarian Assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,699.8</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>375.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td>294.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>269.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,383.8 m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,099.8 m.</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significantly, 39 per cent of this amount ($4.09 billion, $0.74 per capita) was for emergency work in peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance. This underscores the failure to use the UN system to tackle the root causes of what usually become extremely costly problems.

Seldom have so many important people argued so tenaciously about so little money.

*John G. Stoessinger*

It does not make very good sense for any member-state to insist, as categorical policy, that investment through the UN system be held at zero-growth because governments are endeavouring to do so for their own public expenditure (in many cases because of enormous military budgets).

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The end-costs to member-states of postponing expanded UN work in fields vital to mitigating the causes of conflict and humanitarian crisis have been rising exponentially. For example, at its inception in 1951 UNHCR had responsibility for about 1 million refugees. By 1992 UNHCR confronted the plight of some 19 million, and another 25 million displaced persons. UNHCR's expenditure in 1992 (included in the above table) had reached $1.1 billion.\(^{326}\)

\section*{Transparency}

The overall system's budgets are virtually impossible for the ordinary person to aggregate, and not easy for anyone to understand. The main difficulties can be quickly identified, with key remedies.

1. All regular (assessed) budgets are planned in biennial periods and virtually never expressed in annual terms, in itself causing confusion for outside scrutineers and not infrequently for delegations. Budgets should also be rendered in annual terms for transparency to the public.

2. It is the more difficult for the world to learn its total annual investment in the whole UN system because member-governments have failed to implement their own original commitment to achieve one UN-system consolidated budget. The ACC is at last producing consolidated figures that come a little closer to being decipherable by the lay person.\(^{327}\) The Secretary-General improved on this presentation for public consumption in his 1993 report.\(^{328}\)

\section*{Improved financial integrity}

Although Inspectors find current internal accountability and oversight mechanisms in the United Nations to be seriously deficient, they cannot associate themselves with the somewhat sanctimonious and non-specific denunciations of United Nations practices as being somehow atypical of conditions in individual Member States.

\textit{UN Joint Inspection Unit, 1993}\(^{329}\)

In any one year it needs only a couple of turgidly inaccurate press articles, and a television equivalent, to sustain the picture of a UN riddled with gigantic fraud and waste. Here again, normally careful political leaders and editors seem ready to accept a standard of misinformation about the UN that they would never accept about their own governmental public-service bodies.


\(^{327}\) Beginning 1991 in response to suggestions from the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination; see UN Doc. E/1993/84, 10 June 1993.

\(^{328}\) Figure 4 in \textit{Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization}, UN Doc. A/48/1, 10 September 1993.

\(^{329}\) UN Doc. A/48/420, paragraph 10.
The Secretary-General and other executive heads, however, share in the responsibility for misinformation when they fail to provide comprehensive rebuttals, or even order the Public Information staff to remain silent. Weaknesses should be openly acknowledged, best of all on the initiative of the Secretary-General before they are distorted and magnified by shoddy or stereotyped reporting. Where such weaknesses are the result of budget or hiring freezes the Secretary-General should say so.

Nonetheless, UN civil servants are human, and financial abuses can inevitably happen. Their volume in any one year, however, pales into insignificance beside the corruption within far more easily monitored city, leave alone national, governments in all cultures.330

Of such abuse the bulk occurs where it usually occurs in large organizations—in emergency operations where cash or supplies are being moved in urgent and often obscure situations, or where contracts must be issued under great pressure. Given the appalling under-staffing of peacekeeping operations and the disorganized state of humanitarian emergency assistance the surprise if any is that there is not more fraud and waste in these operations. Governments, which are ultimately responsible for these problems, can go far to remedy them by authorizing proper staffing of peacekeeping and by consolidating emergency humanitarian assistance work under one Department as recommended in this study.

A further ironic consequence of zero-growth demands has been the severe under-staffing of the UN's Internal Audit Division (IAD). In zero-growth regimes, administrative capacities almost invariably suffer. Despite recurring appeals by UN officials, neither Secretaries-General nor member states have paid sufficient attention to the IAD, or to the Central Evaluation Unit (CEU). In 1993 governments had still only authorized 46 professional posts for the IAD, a quarter of these only junior posts.331 The Secretary-General has thus had available only some 30 fully qualified auditors and 6 professional staff for all in-depth evaluation to cover the entire work programme of the UN in thousands of expenditure lines, carried out at New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, five Regional Commissions, over a hundred country offices, huge world conferences, and in addition over a dozen complex peacekeeping operations. This ratio of auditors to total staff is barely one-third the ratio in the US government.332

There can be further improvements. Internal procedures to enable staff to report palpable misconduct without fear (and on the other hand without creating an atmosphere of witch-hunting) should be improved. The UN's ability to pursue miscreants through national jurisdictions needs to be strengthened.333 After decades of periodic suggestions for an Inspector-General to be attached

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330 Although the media exerted their best efforts to exploit the leaked (1 March 1993) valedictory report of Richard Thornburgh to the Secretary-General after his year as USG for Administration and Management, it was notable that he devoted less than 4 very mildly-toned pages out of 34 to these problems. He made no specific allegation or reference, only to 'fraud, waste and abuse of the type which has so recently been highlighted in the reports of audit agencies in the news media'.

331 JIU report UN Doc. A/48/420, paragraphs 33 and 37 (c), 12 October 1993. Also UN Board of Auditors, General Assembly Supplement 5, A/47/5 paras. 291–296.

332 ibid., paragraphs 57–60.

directly to the Office of the Secretary-General, this issue is now being actively pressed. This may, on balance, be helpful but not really effective if the IAD remains so grossly under-staffed. To carry maximum credibility and universal confidence the appointee must be of impeccable repute and with top-calibre qualifications for such work. Care must be taken not to confuse such an additional internal audit function with the work of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations (and the agencies), which is mandated to provide 'objective information, advice and assurance to the General Assembly' through completely independent financial and management audits.\(^{334}\)

Member-states enjoying a significant proportion of contract and other procurement benefits from the UN should not expect one of their nationals to be appointed Inspector-General.

The personal responsibility of staff members, and particularly of supervisors, under UN Financial Regulations and Rules should be thoroughly reviewed with the help of independent senior civil service experts, and fresh instructions and guidelines issued. All staff holding financial responsibility above a prescribed value should receive special written directives, and intensive training.

Appointment or promotion to a management-level grade in a UN assistance fund should carry a formal undertaking that the staff member cannot accept, for five years after retirement or otherwise leaving the service, a position in any institution that has enjoyed assistance from that fund.

**The Joint Inspection Unit**

An existing unit mandated to carry out wholly independent inspection and evaluation functions should not be disbanded because of the new Inspectorate-General.

The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) was launched in 1968 with inter-agency capabilities, to investigate 'all matters having a bearing on the efficiency of the services and the proper use of funds.' It was established as a permanent, subsidiary body of the General Assembly in 1978.\(^{335}\) It comprises eleven inspectors who are supposed to be drawn from national inspection bodies or with equivalent special experience and skills in supervision, administrative, financial and management issues and assessment. Although nominated by member-states with due regard to rotation and geographical spread they serve in their individual capacities. The Unit reports its proposed forward work programme to the General Assembly, which can of course comment and suggest additions or other changes.

Properly employed the JIU is a quite different body from an Inspectorate-General of the UN-proper. The JIU should be more innovative and creative in its analyses than any formal audit unit. Its inspectors can and do rove (usually in teams of two) throughout the UN system. A JIU

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\(^{334}\) See the letter of 17 February 1994 from the Chairman of the Panel, Sir John Bourn, Comptroller and Auditor General of the United Kingdom, UN Doc. A/48/876. Other current members of the Panel are the Auditors-General (or equivalent) of Ghana, Belgium, Canada, Austria, France, India, and the Deputy Audit Director of Switzerland.

\(^{335}\) UN Docs. A/AC.124/R.55 and A/6343; General Assembly resolution 31/192, 22 December 1976.
Report cannot ever be altered by a Secretary-General (or of course, any other executive head or manager in the system); the only ‘recourse’ available to disagreeing or disgruntled civil service heads is a following, separate ‘Note by the Secretary-General’ transmitting such views on a JIU Report to the General Assembly.

At its best the JIU, developed by its pioneering first Chief Inspector Maurice Bertrand, has provided invaluable service, for example in the reports cited in this study on Personnel and Accountability and Oversight in the Secretariat. The problem is that the quality of its reports has been far too uneven, seriously eroding its repute and the attention which organizations and departments may give its findings.

This problem lies squarely and indisputably with member-governments, in recurring neglect of their own stipulations for the Inspectors as people who must have been members of national or international inspection bodies or have equivalent experience, i.e., in personnel and management. In 1983, for example, six of the eleven inspectors were diplomats.336

Presidents of the General Assembly should routinely attach, to every nomination to fill an inspector post, a copy of the JIU Statute Article 2 which stipulates the minimum qualifications. The Secretary-General is consulted during the nomination process and thus shares in responsibility. ‘Old boy networking’ notwithstanding, member-states should be held accountable for any failure to find, among 184 countries’ administrations and large corporations, top-quality people for these valuable eleven posts.

THE PERENNIAL FINANCING CRISIS

If all governments paid their assessed contributions in full and on time there would be no serious UN financial problem, at least at its present level of operations. Late payments, and failures to pay, gravely debilitate an organization that is not permitted to go into debt, especially when a proliferation of emergency peacekeeping operations is putting new strains on the old budgeting system.

The Ogata-Volcker Report, 1993 337

In mid-1993 Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali reported as follows on the current financial situation of the UN.338

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1. Unpaid assessments had accumulated over many years to $2.23 billion, comprising:
   a. $936.6 million against regular budget, of which $366.2 million was past accumulation and
      $572.4 million for the current period;
   b. $1,413 million against peacekeeping accounts, $456.1 million of past non-payments and
      $840.8 million current arrears.

2. Half-way through 1993 the arrears for the year stood at $572 million or half the year's
   needed resources. Only 47 member-states had fully paid their regular budget assessments
   (19 industrial and 28 developing countries).

3. Almost two-thirds of the total $2.23 billion outstanding to the UN was owed by two
   permanent members of the Security Council:
   a. The United States, Host Country to the UN and principal beneficiary of income from it, owed a total of $834 million;
   b. The Russian Federation owed a total of $598 million.

By September 1993, in the midst of the UN's largest-ever emergency operations the Secretary-
General had to curtail meetings of principal organs and other normal operations.

Unpaid Assessed Contributions

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339 This pattern continued. By October 1993, with 75 per cent of the 1993 budget already spent, the equivalent of 72 per cent of
   it had not been paid-in. UN Doc. A/48/503, paragraph 8.
340 According to the City Government of New York not less than $800 million a year in net income to the greater New York region;
   some $127 million in procurement of goods and services for UN development activities (UN Doc. A/47/419/Add. 3); and con­siderable further procurement earnings for peace-keeping operations.
341 As provided in UN Doc. A/48/503, paragraph 14, 18 October 1993. All balances are as at 30 September.
The Assessment principle

When the UN was founded, only one method of financing it was envisaged: 'The expenses of the Organization shall be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly' (Article 17.2). This made payment of assessed dues obligatory in international treaty law. The General Assembly allocates to each member a percentage of the total budget, calculated through a formula currently involving a 10-year average of its Gross Domestic Product, with downward adjustments for low per capita income and high foreign debt.

At the beginning, the United States' share of the regular budget was just on 50 per cent and, of course, there were very few extremely poor members. Since then, in an agreed framework of special parameters the US share has been adjusted downwards to 25 per cent, and the contributions of the poorest countries cannot fall below 0.01 per cent of the budget. An outline of how the formula works in practice may be useful, with some sample money figures selected at random along the scale.

The United States' 25 per cent share of the regular budget is currently $310 million; Japan half of that at 12.45 per cent; Germany 8.93 per cent; Russia 6.71 per cent; France 6 and Britain 5 per cent; Italy 4.29 and Canada 3.11 per cent or $31 million; Brazil is assessed 1.59 per cent of the budget; China 0.77 per cent; India 0.36 which is $3.6 million, Nigeria 0.20 and Indonesia 0.16 per cent; and so on down to 0.01 per cent, or $102,000 for 87 member-countries at the bottom of the income scale.342

Peacekeeping costs are also assessed, but since 1973 the General Assembly has applied a slightly different scheme for these. Each of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council is supposed to pay 22 per cent more than what its share would be under the regular budget formula; a second group of affluent countries pay the same percentages; a third group of the less well-off pay one-fifth their regular apportionment; and a fourth pay one-tenth. A major problem is that the Secretary-General only has a $150 million revolving fund, and each time the Security Council approves a peacekeeping operation a projected budget must pass through the General Assembly before he can even send out a letter to members with their assessments for that new operation. That in itself results in delay in payments.343

Late payment-in of these two sets of dues has been a problem for decades, and there is to date no penalty interest charge. In the late-1993 graph of unpaid assessments shown on page 149 the United States owed nearly half of the lower, regular-budget amount outstanding, and the Russian Federation about half of the peacekeeping amount. Late payments have steadily depleted the UN's Working Capital Fund (currently authorized at only $100 million, only some 13 per cent of regular

342 Latest Assessment Table in UN Doc. A/48/503/Add. 1, 11 November 1993.
budget expenditures), and have increased the running deficit. Governments have so far refused to allow the Secretary-General to borrow even for a week.

As their indebtedness has grown, developing country members have found it increasingly difficult to maintain prompt payments. However, the major cause of the UN's recurring risk of bankruptcy has been deliberate withholding of amounts due by a few member-states.\footnote{The single largest impact on UN finances came in 1985 when the US Congress cut the US contribution by one fifth, demanding that weighted voting be introduced in the UN. For good summaries of this and other financial crises, see \textit{i.a.}, Joachim W. Muller, \textit{The Reform of the United Nations} (New York, Oceana, 1992).} How this is allowable needs to be set out clearly.

1. The Charter (Article 19) only stipulates that a member whose arrears equal or exceed two years of its due contributions shall lose its vote in the General Assembly. Any member can therefore retain its vote by keeping just under the two-year threshold. The drafters of the Charter never envisaged members with larger assessments deliberately withholding dues over many years.

2. Permanent Members of the Security Council, not being elected to it from the General Assembly, cannot lose their voting privileges in that body even if delinquent beyond two years.

3. Article 19 does not cover the persistent and widespread practice of payment late in the year. The Working Capital Fund has long been depleted through recurring crises, and the UN is not allowed by governments to borrow even for a week or a month. The organization has managed to avert total financial collapse in recent years only by juggling available cash between peacekeeping and other funds ahead of actual drawings on them.

4. Large-scale peacekeeping operations in highly volatile crises are obviously difficult to cost accurately in advance. If members do not promptly pay in at least the assessment made on projected costs, the UN can quickly run into grave financial trouble. Countries contributing troops may also not receive reimbursement, making prompt payments of their overall assessments even more difficult, especially for developing countries.

That these situations have developed again and again over the last three decades cannot be attributed to UN 'mismanagement'. Every year Secretaries-General have published the up-to-date crisis figures, have issued public general appeals for prompt payments-in, and have sent individual letters to delinquent governments.

\textbf{‘Incentives’ and currency issues}

Governments have accepted penalty systems—politely called ‘incentives’—in other parts of the UN system.\footnote{The ITU and UPU have consistently exercised their granted authority to charge interest on payments not received on 1 January. ICAO distributes any interest earned to member-states according to the dates and amounts of their actual payments-in of dues each year. Three other agencies have been evolving penalty schemes. UN Doc. A/C.5/42/31, paragraphs 30–38, 5 November 1987.} The General Assembly has been reluctant to date to adopt any such scheme for UN
assessments, principally because of the hardship it would impose on many countries suffering trade disadvantages.

Every member-state has to pay its assessment in actual US Dollars. Impediments to earning hard currency in the present adverse trading and monetary system make this the more difficult for developing countries. There have been various proposals over the years to establish a Special Drawing Right (SDR) for UN assessments, based upon a basket of currencies. Such a ‘UN SDR’ might ease the problem for many developing countries and, since the U.S. Dollar is no longer stable, for industrial countries at various times.

**The Ogata-Volcker Report**

In February 1993 a group of eminent financiers, co-chaired by Shijuro Ogata and Paul Volcker and convened by The Ford Foundation to analyse UN financing problems, sent their recommendations to the Secretary-General. The key remedies they urge are that the UN should go onto a quarterly payment schedule, with interest to be charged on late payments; countries making appropriations late in the year should rephase the appropriations for the UN; the Working Capital Fund should be doubled to $200 million; peacekeeping payments could be made from defense budgets and should be buttressed by a $400 million revolving reserve fund. A single budget for peace-keeping should be considered.\[346\]

Adoption and firm application of these measures would go far towards resolving the problem of stable financing of the UN at least at present levels.

**Who ‘contributes the most’**

The ‘donor-recipient’ mentality that entered the UN system through voluntary development funding has already been discussed. A similar mentality of ‘contributing the most’ or ‘most of’ the assessed budgets of the UN system has long distorted attitudes in some countries towards UN financing. It has provoked public antagonisms against the UN, has given apparent legitimacy to the withholding of dues, and has reinforced continuing demands for special influence both in governing bodies and in secretariats. It creates tensions within the overall membership that could yet tear the United Nations apart.

The United Nations is not a corporation of stockholders. The formula of assessment of contributions was accepted by all members at the inception of the United Nations. It is grounded in the principle of relative capacity to pay. The same principle underlies Western democratic revenue-raising and governance, established only after centuries of debate and even revolution. It accepts that it is at least as great a burden for the poorer citizen to find a lower money-amount of taxes as it is for the more affluent citizen to find his or her larger money-amount. No democracy

\[346\] c.f. footnote 337.
would now tolerate demands that citizens and corporations contributing larger money-amounts to revenues should have special powers in governance; or that they could withhold their taxes with impunity until some policy they dislike has been eliminated; or that they should be entitled to key government positions.

The comparative economic situations of the industrial and the developing countries produce the same relativity of burden: it is at least as difficult for a low-income member-government to find its smaller money-amount of assessed dues as it is for any wealthier member to find its naturally larger money-amount.

Understanding of this principle among all citizens is accepted in democracies as of crucial importance to raising their revenues peaceably and stably. States members of the United Nations have no less responsibility to their citizens over the same principle for the financing of its assessed budgets.

редistributing the financing of the UN

I believe our assessment rate should be reduced to reflect the rise of other nations that now can bear more of the financial burden.

President Clinton, 1993

The most important statement for the long-term political health of the United Nations in many years may prove to be in President Clinton's first address to the General Assembly. His assertion that the United States' share of UN peacekeeping assessments should be reduced is already a major change in US policy towards the organization. It could offer the first serious chance also to reduce the US regular budget assessment, and thus the UN's overall unhealthy dependence on one member-state.

This was not the first proposal for a reduction. The United States obtained reductions of its assessment for the regular budget from 49 per cent in 1946 to 30 per cent in 1957, and to the present 25 per cent in 1974. In 1985 the late Prime Minister Olof Palme of Sweden proposed a ceiling of ultimately 10 per cent on the assessed contribution of any member-state, with redistribution of the difference among capable countries. Significant support was reflected in India's early endorsement. In 1986, amidst the crisis caused by major US withholdings, Sadruddin Aga Khan and Maurice Strong included a comparable US reduction among alternative options in a detailed unofficial paper.

Despite constant complaint of the cost of the UN to the US, attitudes in leading US circles have hitherto been ambivalent about a further assessment reduction since it would greatly reduce

US political leverage at the UN. Neither the Palme nor the Sadruddin-Strong proposal was officially welcomed. In addition other industrial states refused to consider such reduction at least until the US had paid up all of its arrears. The US has since pledged that, although only by annual stages, all arrears will be liquidated. The way may thus open for wider reduction of the US share of the regular budget as well.

In considering this it is important to bear in mind that down the years, as the national incomes of various members have changed, bargaining over the assessment rates has involved considerable horse-trading and group dynamics. The present assessment rating does not strictly follow per capita levels of national income, or product; if it did a number of oil-producing states, for example, would pay considerably more, and they manifestly should. The United States would also be paying significantly more.

Nonetheless, decades of experience indicate that it is unwise that any member-state (it could be some other in the future) be responsible for so large a single segment of UN resources. A 10 or 12 per cent ceiling on the individual share of budget of any member-state is so important to the political health and stability of the world organization that it should be the starting premise of the assessment formula.

This should, however, form part of a thorough review by a fully representative panel of outside economists commissioned by the General Assembly. This review should propose the formula for redistribution after reducing the US assessment and for evening up under-contributions. So long as they remain indebted and impoverished non-oil producing developing countries should not be asked to bear burdens that would inevitably only result in new arrears.

President Clinton's proposal should be widened to the regular budget assessment and energetically pursued as a valuable new opportunity. As Olof Palme told the General Assembly in 1985, 'a more even distribution of the assessed contributions would better reflect the fact that this Organization is the instrument of all nations'.

Additional financing sources

The Ogata-Volcker Report did not rule out that a time might come when additional sources of financing UN activities should be examined. However, it took the view that 'for now, the system of assessed and voluntary contributions provides the most logical and appropriate means of

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351 Members of the European Community, in particular, were adamant that they would not compensate for US withholdings by increased assessments on them.
352 The US did subsequently make payment for all its current share of peace-keeping operations.
354 As but one illustration, Brunei Darussalam has the same level of per capita GDP as Ireland but has only one-sixth Ireland's assessment.
355 Statement on 21 October 1985 during the commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the UN in the General Assembly.
financing the UN, as it permits and encourages member-governments to maintain proper control over the UN’s budget and its agenda.  

An alternative view is, of course, that the financial record of governments regarding the UN leaves a great deal to be desired and that, minimally, citizens should have some means of expressing their support for it beyond donations to one or two of its funds. Schemes for additional financing of the UN are, however, easy to suggest but would not be at all easy to implement.

In addition to the possibilities (and potential drawbacks) of privately subscribed endowment funds, a range of international taxation schemes has been examined by various sources. International taxation would be automatic, more or less universal, with higher yields from those earning more. If member-states agreed, a United Nations surcharge could be levied on any one or several of the following:

- all arms sales in the recently established United Nations Arms Register or, for example, on a more restricted basis, on all land-mines produced after a certain date; or
- a fractional levy on all transnational movement of currencies (it has been estimated that a levy of 0.003 per cent on the $900 billion being traded daily would produce some $8 billion);  
- or on all international trade; or on the production of such specific (and polluting) materials as petroleum and hydro-carbons, or on all mineral raw commodities (there will, of course, be the future revenue from the Seabed Authority);  
- More often proposed is a United Nations levy on international air and sea travel, on the grounds that the UN must maintain a peaceful environment for international travellers;  
- Consideration might be given to designating one day in each year as ‘United Nations Communication Day’, when all postage charges and telephone calls (and a fraction of broadcasting advertising revenues?) would carry levies accruing to the UN, with special public information on the world organization.

Each member-government would have to agree to levy any such taxes, and collect and transfer them to approved parts of the UN System. Thus, international taxation revenue would essentially rise through and stay under the control of member-governments. One possibility for income moving more directly to the UN—but still with government licencing in each country—would be an annual United Nations Lottery, administered by a special authority under the Secretary-General. This might be sensitive in some cultures, but it would be a fruitful form of very visible and citizen-involved ‘voluntary automaticity’.

Some guiding principles for serious exploration of any alternative financing would seem essential. First, any such financing of the UN and its System should be supplementary to a more
healthily apportioned, and a fully honoured assessment system. Secondly, there must be representative governance of any such additional contributions. Thirdly and closely connected, any such additional financing must be transparently accountable to citizens.

MANAGING THE UNITED NATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

It has been emphasized in this study that better UN leadership of the system greatly depends upon the quality of top leadership and management in the UN Secretariat. The critical need for a Deputy Secretary-General to assist the Secretary-General in all matters of international economic cooperation and sustainable development has already been discussed.

In 1991 the authors published a paper recommending a substantial reorganization of the Secretariat, including reduction of USGs and ASGs, amalgamation of departments, and establishment of four Deputy Secretaries-General to help the Secretary-General coordinate major areas of UN work.359

Later in 1991 in an initiative by Australia's Ambassador Peter Wilenski a group of 22 Permanent Representatives of both industrial and developing countries assembled a working paper on a resolution for the General Assembly containing very similar proposals.360 In preparation for General Assembly discussion, the group (which had by then grown to over 30 member-states including the Chair of the Group of 77) brought their proposal to the Office of the Secretary-General.

The reception was not encouraging, and in deference to the then-incoming Secretary-General the matter was not pressed. Thus no overall guidelines on reorganization came from the General Assembly. In his first reorganization in February 1992, Mr. Boutros-Ghali did combine departments, in somewhat different ways and with less coherence, but did not propose Deputy Secretaries-General. Developments since then, however, only reinforce the need for such posts, and the proposition has gained further support.361

The diagram on the accompanying page shows the reorganization that is needed. It differs from the 1991 plan only in the addition, recommended herein, of the rank of Deputy Secretary-General for the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights established since then, and in the restructuring in Humanitarian Assistance also recommended herein.

The detailed argumentation for deputies is not repeated here. They were envisaged at the very inception of the UN, but when the major powers tried to have them appointed through the same, veto-prone procedures as the Secretary-General, smaller countries refused and the proposal was

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359 op. cit. at footnote 2.
361 i.a. in the 'Blue Book' prepared by Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Gareth Evans, Cooperation for Peace (St. Leonards, NSW, Allen & Unwin 1993), pp. 170 et seq.
Proposed Reorganization of the Secretariat

1. In charge of present DESIPA, DPCSD, residual headquarters functions of DDSMS after decentralization into regions, UNCTAD, UN research institutes; and of the proposed UN Development Authority consolidating operational funds.
2. No addition; this post would absorb the post of Administrator of UNDP.
3. Fully operational for all UN-system emergency relief; absorbs relief functions of UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO. No addition; this post can absorb the post of Executive Director of the World Food Programme which would be dissolved.
4. With rank of Deputy Secretary-General.

162. However, even the Assistant Secretaries-General (no USGs were envisaged then) were to have 'a status at least equivalent to that of the heads of the specialized agencies.' This recommendation was never carried out. In the ensuing Cold War period any consideration of the appointment of Deputies was even more difficult.

The state of affairs prevailing in the management of the Secretariat in recent years all too clearly reflects the consequences. The notion that a Secretary-General can, single-handedly,

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163. Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway 'were perfectly aware of the need for deputies' but not on the terms urged by the powers. For a good summary of the debate at San Francisco see Goodrich and Hambro op. cit., pp. 268–9.

164. Report by the Executive Committee to the Preparatory Commission, which prepared very detailed proposals on the Secretariat for the General Assembly; UN Doc. PL/EX/113 Rev. 1, Chapter VI, Section 2, paragraph 64.
provide all the needed leadership and coordination of both the Secretariat and the UN system in a politically and economically troubled world is totally unrealistic. It is essential that he or she be assisted by a small number of top-quality managers, with rank above all other officials, able to coordinate the main activities of the UN and of the system and to synthesize policy proposals and current operational issues so that the Secretary-General can exercise the most effective leadership.

Appointments are the prerogative of the Secretary-General, but the basic architecture of the top level of the UN Secretariat is also a critically important responsibility of governments. In the reforms that should be a significant feature of the 50th Anniversary, governments should outline this basic architecture in a clear General Assembly decision.
X. THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE

The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

Charter Article 101.3

The Charter is appropriately stern about the United Nations civil service. The international community cannot afford the current decline from its original high motivation and quality.

That decline has been under way for many years, and member-governments cannot escape much of the responsibility for it. The widely held belief that the UN was virtually irrelevant during the Cold War period is no excuse. While the UN was unable to resolve the great East-West conflict and reduce the global arms race, it developed extremely useful techniques for containing conflict, and it led the movement to decolonization. It then faced the epochal challenges of mass poverty that decolonization exposed. That development in itself emphasized the need to preserve the special ethos and the high calibre of staff that characterized Dag Hammarskjold’s stewardship. Today, with poverty afflicting more human beings than ever, and an already dangerously damaged environment, the UN also faces huge burdens in its original mandate for maintaining peace and security. In face of these unprecedented responsibilities staff morale in the UN is low, and staff quality is increasingly questionable.

Internal as well as external analyses gave detailed warnings of weakness over twenty years ago. Member-governments were urged by their own experts to act in 1975. If this trend is to be halted and positively reversed it is necessary to understand how it was allowed to come about in the first place.

GOVERNMENTAL PRESSURE

In the performance of their duties the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization.

Charter Article 100.1


\[^\text{365}\] In 1975 the representative intergovernmental expert group earlier described explicitly warned the General Assembly of the needs for ‘a major effort’ to make the Secretariat staff ‘a top-quality service,’ to upgrade their skills and, in an especially significant reference, ‘to improve their morale’. UN Doc. E/AC.62.9, paragraphs 92–94, 28 May 1975.
Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities.

Article 100.2

It has been so often asserted that it is now widely believed that government pressures on recruitment and promotions began after decolonization introduced the 'new majority'. Unfortunately the UN began with a built-in governmental pressure on its staffing that has continuously violated both Articles quoted above.

1. The fact that the very head of the UN civil service cannot be freely appointed by the membership, that a candidate for Secretary-General must first be acceptable to five countries (Permanent Members of the Security Council), has fundamentally weakened respect for these Charter provisions from the outset.

2. From the outset a pattern was imposed on the Secretariat by the so-called 'gentleman's agreement' that nationals of the five Permanent Members must hold the five key top posts (ASG, then USG; since expanded to include nationals of two other, economically strong member-states). This deviation from the spirit of the Charter in itself generated special pressure from other countries (Northern first, and then also Southern) for compensatory 'representation'.

3. Secretaries-General have, further, been expected to violate Article 101.1 and accept the nationals nominated by these countries for these posts. This has seriously infringed the independence (and not infrequently compromised the quality) of the top ranks of the civil service over some 45 years. It has made holding all other member-governments to non-interference in the selection of staff seem almost discriminatory.

Not surprisingly, admonitions from any of these specially favoured countries about Charter principles concerning the civil service has not carried much weight with the rest of the membership.

**Ensuring quality recruitment**

A civil service can only be sensitive and effective if its reservoir of recruitment is its whole constituent community; no good national service is allowed to comprise only people from the metropolitan area. It was over this first fundamental need, of geographically balanced as well as quality recruitment, that good management collided with the tendency to governmental pressure.

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366 Also Article 101.3. This 'geographical distribution' requirement applies in the major specialized agencies as well. The analysis here focuses on the UN Secretariat but many of the factors have existed in the agencies and the same essential remedies apply.
The idea has also been put about that the system's geographical staffing requirement was created after decolonization by and for the 'new majority'. It was in fact stated in the Charter and other agencies' original constitutions, when major decolonization was not even forecast within this century, because the smaller countries in the original membership did not wish to see the system's civil service filled with nationals of only a few major powers.

An expanding civil service cannot achieve geographically balanced staffing, together with top quality, by passively accepting candidates who have simply applied, or who have been pressed on it by governments. Four conditions are interdependent and indispensable:

1. There must be positive and advance outreach by the Secretariat to the total human reservoir, to maintain a geographically (and gender-) balanced roster of very thoroughly screened candidates.

2. UN-system executive heads must be immune to pressure from any member-government over any post, at any level, and must be seen to be immune both by senior officers and by governments. Governments must abide by their pledge in Article 100.2.

3. The method and procedures for recruitment (and promotion) must be seen to be equitable among member-countries so that no grounds exist for competitive government pressures. Rosters must therefore be known to have a viable spread of well-vetted candidates from all member-countries, and they must be the main basis for recruitment.

4. Executive heads must have the continuous support of governments in their search for only the best, not the merely acceptable, as the key criterion in recruitment. For a relatively small UN civil service it is not enough that a resume shows no reason why a person should not be recruited; there must be reasons why that particular person should be recruited.

All of these conditions were critically important for the UN system's secretariats at their inception. They became even more vital to the future of the service when the membership suddenly began to expand exponentially with decolonization. A full cohort of staff had by then been established from the original small membership. There was thus a crucial period when a complex and sensitive effort was needed to implement Article 101.3 in quality, geography and integrity.

In that make-or-break period, while some heads of departments made special efforts others did not. The crucial effort to establish a roster simply was not made.

The reservoir of recruitment under the geographic criterion expanded from 51 countries in 1945 to 73 by 1956; to 112 by 1966; to 138 by 1976 (and to 184 member-countries today). A quality roster from such a constantly expanding reservoir of countries could only have been built by an expanded and highly skillful Personnel staff. It would have needed enough trained talent-searchers and enough funds to travel to distant countries for in-depth interviews and other vetting, especially since many new members had a very limited supply of highly trained and educated people for any purpose. In the most critically important period such a programme was not adequately implemented because of both indifferent leadership and 'zero-growth' budget demands from industrial countries.
In 1978, fully twenty years after decolonization had begun Chief Inspector Bertrand reported that a roster had been recently developed but it contained ‘inordinate numbers of candidatures’ from five Northern countries, and India. There were ‘countries and whole regions with scarcely any names on the roster’. \(^{367}\) Perhaps needless to say, as late as 1978 women candidates comprised only 8.8 per cent of names in the roster. \(^{368}\)

Even this grossly inadequate roster was not being drawn upon for the great majority of appointments; the Chief Inspector reported that there was ‘no provision making consultation of it compulsory’ and no machinery for verifying consultation. \(^{369}\)

In face of the Secretariat’s inability to build a properly balanced roster, and of the established staff from the older member states, concern grew among new members that equitable participation in the Secretariat would continue to be denied their nationals. Many of their governments therefore added their pressures to those long practiced by other members.

**The leadership factor**

In their selection of the executive heads of the system member-governments also bear heavy responsibility for the quality and integrity of the civil service. Their choice determines whether a head will be uninterested in staff matters and in stewardship of the international civil service, or one who may be open to political pressures. \(^{370}\) They have left most terms of office, including the Secretary-General, essentially open-ended. This makes the service more vulnerable to the pressures of any government: a weak or egocentric incumbent will view every ambassadorial blandishment about a staff matter with an eye on votes for a further term of office.

Apart from a capacity for leadership, a Secretary-General (or head of an agency or fund) can affect staff quality by two key decisions. The first is choice of Personnel chief. A Secretary-General who has been chosen without regard to managerial capabilities may well give the job to a diplomat or politician to effect geographical balance. \(^{371}\) There have been some excellent Personnel chiefs, but the record also shows poor ones who played politics with posts and promotions at critical periods in the life of the Secretariat. Inadequate rosters of candidates combined with poor Personnel leadership leads to department heads in effect doing their own recruiting. When a

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\(^{367}\) Report by Maurice Bertrand, Joint Inspection Unit, p. 26, UN Doc. JIU/REP/78/4, August 1978. The Northern countries were USA, Canada, UK, France, and Federal Germany accounting for 40 per cent of all names. India (9 per cent) had become a member of the UN very early (October 1945) and by 1978 its nationals were occupying Secretariat posts in excess of its geographical ‘quota’. M. Bertrand reported that 10 African countries had no names whatever, and another 10 only one or two names in the roster. By 1978 almost all African countries had been members of the UN for over 10 years, some for nearly 20 years.

\(^{368}\) *ibid.*, p. 27.

\(^{369}\) *ibid.*, p. 28.

\(^{370}\) One head has recently even provided journalists with sardonic comments about bureaucracy and the staff of whom he was supposed to be the leader and inspiration.

\(^{371}\) A good Secretary-General in management terms need not himself or herself be a skilled manager; the essence is that the incumbent must have a keen interest in managing and leading the Secretariat; must understand civil-service needs and watch over them; and must be able to choose senior officials for their special competences, not their political provenance.
Secretary-General has chosen any of these heads badly they will in all likelihood recruit (and promote) badly and for political reasons.  

The second key decision by a Secretary-General or other executive head arises at the first hint of governmental pressure about a post or a promotion. Declining it will quickly become known throughout the diplomatic community and discourage future pressure from anywhere. Accepting pressure even once will set in motion an unstoppable avalanche of pressures.

Member-governments put the international civil service at grave risk by appointing the system's executive heads in the current haphazard and politically oriented way. Such procedures would not be tolerated in most countries for any important public organization, university, foundation or business corporation. There is no search process, and those with both special veto powers over the choice of Secretary-General and the largest capacities to search for the best candidates have not, so far, made any sustained attempt to establish one. Nor is there any serious attempt to evaluate the qualifications and suitability of candidates.

The damage in the UN civil service was accelerated after the death of Dag Hammarskjöld, by an increasing tendency to bow to pressures on staffing matters from all regions. In 1978 Secretary-General Waldheim made a surprising appeal against 'the mounting pressures from all sides to secure jobs, especially at senior levels in the Secretariat', and he appointed a courageous staff member, James Jonah, as ASG for Personnel, but it was already too late. By 1979 staff leaders were openly referring to 'political and personal favouritism'. Mr. Jonah stated that he knew of no government that was not guilty of interfering in the Secretariat, usually by pressuring the Secretary-General over hirings or promotions.

During the subsequent campaign for the Secretaryship-General the trading of promises of high-level posts for votes (Northern no less than Southern) ushered in a decade of further deterioration.

**CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES**

From the 1970s onwards key industrial countries began to argue that UN staff salaries were too high, and they are now in effect frozen. It is common knowledge that the main UN system is thus no longer attractive for many high-quality professionals, who find better remuneration and job

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372 *i.e.*, the report of the Staff Council to the Secretary-General in 1980; UN Doc. A/C.5/35/37; also the revealing disclosures of Wahid Tarzi, a Personnel officer, in the *Secretariat News*, January 1979 *et seq.*

373 *i.e.*, 1980 paper by Professor Finger noting that a US Permanent Representative offered 'to forgo political pressure on personnel appointments if the Secretary-General could offer reasonable assurance that pressure from other delegations would be resisted'.


375 Staff Committee statement reported in the *Secretariat News* of 31 January 1979.

satisfaction in their own public services, and very much better in the private sector or in other intergovernmental organizations.

UN pay levels in North America and Europe are between 24 and 50 per cent lower than the equivalents in the European Co-ordinated Organizations. In addition, staff members of the EU (European Community) stationed in New York, Geneva and Vienna are provided with free housing.

Governments have been extraordinarily inconsistent in these policies. Those governments who complain most about UN salary levels pay supplementary remunerations or housing subsidies to their own nationals occupying senior posts in the UN, a clear breach of the Charter. As the controlling governors of the Bretton Woods institutions the same governments authorize much higher pay scales in those institutions. World Bank Group professionals enjoy up to 35 per cent higher remuneration than their equivalents in the UN Secretariat. Governments that perennially pounce on the air travel of UN staff in other than Economy Class until very recently authorized Bank and IMF staff of all grades routinely to fly First Class.

Governments have also authorized expansion of Bretton Woods staff even while insisting on UN staff cuts. Between 1979 and 1992 the World Bank's professional-level staff strength was nearly doubled, while a 13 per cent staff cut was forced on the United Nations. As a result, as earlier noted, the UN has not only ceased to be able to attract top-quality economists and sociologists, but has lost some of its best to the Bretton Woods institutions.

Such trends have contributed to the demoralization of UN staff, and a cynicism virtually unknown in the early decades of the organization pervades the working environment.

It is a long time since the UN Secretariat had any real sense of having a leader of the civil service. Cronyism has become widely entrenched in secretariats. Dedicated staff have learned that it is unwise to criticize malpractice or incompetence because they have no reliable protection from managerial cliques. The introduction, under ‘donor’ pressure, of corporation staff management techniques in some UN entities has already strengthened cronyism and transformed a once creative working environment into apprehensive drudgery.

The resolve of the brightest and most dedicated staff to stay in the service and do the best they can is now cracking. The early sense that to work for the United Nations was a high privilege, a vocation, a job unlike any other, is seriously endangered.

Governments, by their decisions, appointments and pressures, bear the main responsibility for this deterioration. Any serious effort to restore the international civil service must therefore start with a change in governmental attitudes.

379 Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali has now very commendably ordered all staff concerned to cease to accept such supplements.
381 In 1979 the Bank reported 2,382 specialist-level staff; in 1993, 4,005 higher-level staff plus 913 higher-level ‘long-term consultants’. World Bank Annual Reports for 1979 and 1993.
THE ISSUE OF 'DEADWOOD AND MEDIOCRITY'

Constant talk about 'deadwood', 'mediocrity', 'bloated bureaucracy', etc., does not promote optimism about any significant improvement. What is desperately needed is serious work on the problems. The General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to organize an independent commission of internationally respected civil-service and recruitment specialists. It must be so composed as to enjoy the trust and cooperation of staff associations as well as of the member-governments. It should carry out a thorough screening of the actual competence for their designated posts of officials at mid-professional and above grades. Such a process alone would reliably establish how many existing staff actually have a useful function in UN service. Responsibility for the costs of the termination of those who do not must be shared by member-governments.

This process will inevitably be costly. As this study has frequently had cause to observe, neglect of obvious problems at an early stage almost always has expensive consequences. These must be accepted if the United Nations system is effectively to carry out the constantly enlarged tasks which member-countries wish it to perform.

Sweeping talk of 'mediocrity' is unprofessional and misleading. The fact is that after nearly fifty years of budget freezes, staff cuts, hiring freezes and attempted micro-management by its member-states, the United Nations is still trying to establish a sound Career Development programme. The potential of a significant number of staff is simply not known because of poor job assignment, indifferent supervisors (themselves inadequately supervised by poorly chosen departmental heads), and the lamentable paucity of in-service training and retraining. The real extent of irredeemable 'mediocrity' can only be identified by proper, independent screening.

Member-governments should also now provide for the training resources on which most insist for their own national civil services. As in their earlier studies the authors again urge serious attention to the need for a common-system UN Staff Training College economically organized as a network based on existing institutions.

Permanent staff contracts

The practice of issuing permanent contracts to civil servants after a period of probationary service came from national services of industrial countries. Its advantages are motivation, institutional

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382 Paragraph 3 of UN Doc. A/C.5/47/6, 25 August 1992. It was only after 32 years that the intention to establish such a system was announced (UN Doc. ST/SGB/166 of 18 May 1978).

383 A former senior management specialist has informed the authors that on the face of it, something like 80 per cent of the professional staff of one UN organization are unsuitable for its work; but that if proper screening, vocationally apt assignment, and effective retraining were applied the net real deadwood would be small.
memory and career development for the UN system. External pressures on a system of limited-term contracts would be likely to make the Secretariat unworkable.

The advantages of permanent contracts, however, begin to slip if indifferent quality is made permanent. Some governments, including those who would not contemplate it in their own civil services, have called for an end to permanent contracts. Obviously there is a need for a review of the most desirable combination of permanent and other contracts for the United Nations civil service.

All contracts should clearly carry a recertification requirement at the end of a sensible period (between 7–10 years) that will have allowed for full testing of a staff member’s suitability. This punctuation point would also give the Secretary-General greater flexibility in staffing and running the Secretariat. 384

The testing point should be the occasion for a written and oral examination administered by a board independent of the Secretariat hierarchy, to reassess and guide the staff member’s career development. The same process would, of course, also help identify staff who should not be retained.

▶ Senior echelon terms

The term of service of incumbents in senior-echelon (USG and ASG) posts has recently swung from sometimes seemingly eternal extensions regardless of age or other factors, to an impossibly short year-by-year contract. The latter practice is now apparently being modified.

All USGs and ASGs serve in any case at the pleasure of a Secretary-General, and should have no permanency. 385 They should be chosen well enough in relation to the special requirements of their posts to warrant contracts of at least half the term of a Secretary-General—which the authors have elsewhere urged should be a single term of seven years.

▶ Outside resources

The civil service needs intellectual enrichment to improve its analytical and policy work. The UN needs to draw upon and to engage the world’s intellectual and scientific community. There must be far more imaginative resort to such outside resources. Programmes for staff enrichment courses in outside institutions, a positive policy of staff participating in outside ‘think tank’ exercises, and fellowships at the UN for distinguished figures in the various disciplines are among obvious possible improvements.386

384 The Preparatory Commission in 1945 actually recommended that middle and upper staff making their career in the Secretariat ‘should be given five-year contracts, renewable for further five-year terms if their work is satisfactory’. UN Doc. PC/Ex/113 Rev. 1, Chapter VI, Section 2 E, paras. 59–63, 12 November 1945.
385 A practice that has crept in over the last two decades, whereby an appointee from within the UN civil service retains his or her lower-level contract permanency, must be firmly stopped.
A sustained quality roster

Extended freezing of outside recruitment for financial reasons has dangerously weakened the junior segment of the cohort of human resources that any effective civil service must maintain. For this and the reasons earlier noted, the resources must now be provided to build and then to maintain a top-quality system-wide roster meeting geographical requirements. Resort to this roster must be made compulsory, and should be monitored by an independent body like the ACABQ.

In this connection it is essential to recognize that, by any reckoning, the staff composition of the United Nations has not, even now, caught up with its universal membership. The image of a UN civil service dominated by nationals of developing countries is another myth, quickly discredited by a study of the facts about 'posts subject to geographical distribution'.

The total staff of the United Nations and its subsidiaries worldwide in 1992 was 31,127. Of these, 6,891 were professional, 21,263 were general service staff (locally recruited), and 2,973 were on limited project contracts. Posts subject to geographical distribution are internationally recruited professional posts financed against the regular (assessed) budget, which number 3,476. Special language-competent staff have to be exempt; therefore the total number of posts subject to geographical distribution in 1992 was 2,608, or 8 per cent of all UN staff. The following table shows their North-South distribution.

Table 15. Distribution of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage of all staff</th>
<th>Percentages in senior posts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D-1 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing countries</td>
<td>44.6 (30.5)</td>
<td>48.5 (6.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>51.5 (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Percentage of women shown in parenthesis |

Decolonization was virtually completed some twenty-five years ago. Today a minority of countries and of the world population still has more nationals in regular professional and in senior posts than the great majority. Nationals of 20 Northern countries also occupy 68 per cent of all

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187 The General Assembly has adopted a complex formula for rating how well member-countries are 'represented' (over-, under-represented) on the basis of contribution and population.

188 The Composition of the Secretariat, UN Doc. A/47/416.

189 Data from Tables C and D-1 in Report of the Secretary-General on Personnel Questions, UN Doc. A/47/416, 7 October 1992.

190 All European countries except those derived from former Yugoslavia, plus Australia, Canada, Cyprus, Japan, New Zealand, Turkey, and the USA.
professional posts financed by extrabudgetary resources. Four Northern governments still hold the power of veto over the selection of the Secretary-General, the head of the UN civil service. The virtual reservation of certain top-level posts for six industrial countries has continued. The minority also has an effective veto (through consensus) in all UN budget decision-making.

**THE GENDER IMBALANCE**

... to reaffirm faith (in) the equal rights of men and women ...

*Charter Preamble*

The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.

*Charter Article 8*

The United Nations has been a leader in standard-setting on gender issues for the world as a whole. Supposed to be an Equal Opportunity Employer before that concept was even known in most countries, its Secretariat (a Principal Organ of the United Nations) is in standing violation of the Charter in abjectly failing to meet these standards.

In 1992, forty-six years after the Charter was adopted, barely 30 per cent of the Secretariat’s regular professional staff are women. At the senior, decision-making levels the percentages fall to absurdly low levels. Few other parts of the UN system do much better.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali has most commendably affirmed his intention to reach as close as possible to gender parity in policy-making posts by 1995. This must of course include parity in the most senior positions. The Secretary-General announced a good move in early 1993, the creation of a special pool of women staff candidates for promotion, particularly to higher-level posts.

Departmental and division heads should be advised in writing that their contribution to implementation of Article 8 of the Charter will be a prime factor in any review of their performance. A period of real, not cosmetic, affirmative action in recruitment and promotion must be instituted. The gender content of the roster should be specially audited. The international network of women’s organizations should be actively enlisted to bring its content to required levels.

**Job descriptions**

The authors have recommended in earlier studies a strict rule, monitored by the ACABQ, that all posts, including all senior posts, must have technically detailed and published job descriptions

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1 Table G, UN Doc. A/47/416.
2 The Secretariat is so designated in Charter Article 7.1.
before they are filled. This would make glaringly obvious any attempt to appoint candidates without the right qualifications. It would strongly deter government pressures and protect executive heads from such pressures.

There must, of course, be a sensible spread of geographical representation in the top echelon. That will require a serious effort to find top officials who match Job Descriptions as well as geographical representation. The top echelon should also be liberated from its present country-reserved posts.

The practice of executive heads simply accepting the nomination of one or a group of governments for a senior post must cease. Only the best-qualified candidates should be nominated, and executive heads should make the judgment after serious enquiry. The holding open of such posts to unscreened national appointees is an affront to the United Nations and a violation of Article 101.1. If the government concerned cannot propose a top-quality candidate in reasonable time the executive head must move on to other sources. 395

ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE

The debilitating atmosphere and the rise of cronyism have sapped staff confidence in justice within secretariats. Even peer appeal boards lack full trust because no staff member seeking redress can feel confident any longer that he or she may not be intimidated. This state of affairs has been well known. In 1993 the General Assembly reprimanded the Secretary-General for failure to propose 'a just, transparent, simple, impartial and efficient system of internal justice' as it has requested most recently in 1990. 396

The independent commission suggested earlier should propose a proper resort system whereby staff can report malfeasance without fear, staff seeking redress can have proper counsel, and all staff can have the requisite measure of protection from imperious behaviour by poorly-chosen superiors. The commission should reconsider an ombuds function for staff matters which exists in many countries and organizations including some in the UN system. Again, the General Assembly has requested Secretaries-General to report on such a function, without concrete results. 397 In 1993 Inspectors even referred to 'vengeful managers', and 'feelings of arbitrariness and discrimination (which) might ultimately destroy the organization'. 398

395 Secretaries-General have been known to wait while a government, unable to persuade its top choice to be a candidate, lowers its own standards and searches downwards until finally it has a candidate, who has then simply been accepted.
396 General Assembly resolution 47/226, 30 April 1993, Part II.
398 op. cit. paragraphs 81–86; the Inspectors were also quoting a 1987 report by the Under Secretary-General for Administration and Management at a meeting with Staff, cf. Secretariat News, 31 August 1985.
The Anniversary would be a fitting occasion for a solemn reaffirmation of Article 100.2 by all governments in all prime organs of the system. 1995 should begin a new era of respect by member-states for the integrity and independence of a civil service upon which the future effectiveness of the organization in large part depends.

In a situation like the one now facing all peoples of the world, as represented in this Organization, it is understandable that staff members should sometimes feel frustrated and even depressed. In that they are not different from their fellow beings in other positions influenced by the trend of world events. There is only one answer to the human problem involved, and that is for all to maintain their professional pride, their sense of purpose, and their confidence in the higher destiny of the Organization itself, by keeping to the highest standards of personal integrity in their conduct as international civil servants and in the quality of the work that they turn out on behalf of the Organization. This is the way to defend what they believe in and to strengthen this Organization as an instrument of peace for which they wish to work.

Dag Hammarskjöld, 1961
Last words to the Staff 399

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399 In the General Assembly Hall, on the occasion of Staff Day, 8 September 1961, ten days before his death in Africa.
XI. 'WE, THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ...'

No institution will endure unless there is behind it considered and complete public support.

US Secretary of State Cordell Hull, 1944

The peoples of the United Nations introduce the Charter and then completely disappear from that document.

In the Preamble they proclaim the broad objectives of the organization and announce that they 'have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims'. There follows perhaps the swiftest delegation of authority in the history of constitutions: 'Accordingly, our respective Governments ... have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an organization to be known as the United Nations'.

Not envisaged by the powers who prepared the draft of the Charter, the idea of a Preamble only arose at San Francisco. At a moment when hundreds of millions of citizens around the world had suffered the chaos and carnage of a second global war, a Preamble having the peoples of the world launch a new world organization for peace and justice was irresistible. It was regarded as a signal improvement on the cold and legalistic opening of the Covenant of the League of Nations, 'The High Contracting Parties ....'

The 'We, the peoples ...' was proposed by the United States and clearly owes its inspiration to the opening words of the US Constitution. There, however, the similarity ends. The drafters of that constitution perceived no governmental authority between the citizens and their new charter and so 'We, the people of the United States' themselves 'do ordain and establish this Constitution ....'

NGO CONSULTATIVE STATUS

One further acknowledgment of citizens in the UN Charter occurs in Article 71, which provides for ECOSOC to arrange consultation with 'non-governmental' organizations (NGOs) concerned with matters within its competence. About a thousand NGOs now have such status in one category or another. ECOSOC delegates have recently begun to pay more attention to their representations.

However, although numerous NGOs were also working on political and peace and security matters in 1945, the Charter provides NGOs with no means of consultation with either the General Assembly or the Security Council.

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400 In his statement opening the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, 21 August 1944.
401 The original proposal was from Field Marshal Smuts of South Africa; Goodrich and Hambro, op. cit., pp. 53–55.
402 The constant battles in ECOSOC during the Cold War over accrediting economic and social NGOs suggest that even if there had been provision for Assembly and Security Council consultation nothing useful would have happened.
Within the ILO's fields of endeavour, trades unions constitute an element of citizen representation in its tripartite structure. UNESCO's National Commissions have engaged various professions and their NGOs. UNICEF's National Committees have built strong supportive bridges between citizens and the Fund's work. The bold initiative of FAO in creating within its secretariat a unit to promote the popular global Freedom From Hunger Campaign must also be noted.

A number of governments have long included national NGO representatives (and/or parliamentarians) in their delegations. Parliamentary committees are paying increasing attention to UN matters. In many countries, with varying degrees of dynamism, United Nations Associations have striven to maintain public interest and knowledge of the world organization, and they have their global World Federation (WFUNA), with a lively student and youth accompaniment (ISMUN).

When all these, and other mechanisms have been taken into account, however, it has to be said that there is no political forum for the world's peoples in the United Nations and its system. Until quite recently the hauteur of most secretariat and diplomatic officials about NGOs was matched by the disinterest and disdain of large portions of the NGO community for the UN as merely 'another bureaucracy'. The very UN phrase for them—'non-governmental'—has been seen as two-edged: negative, distancing on the part of an intergovernmental body, but perhaps usefully protective against officious outsiders.

UN global conferences have been far better entry points for NGOs, and although still usually kept a protective distance of kilometres away from the intergovernmental meetings, they have won increasing acknowledgment and influence. The 1985 Nairobi third world Conference of the UN's International Decade for Women, and the 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development, were decisive advances.

A turning-point

Quite suddenly, however, there is a new dynamic between the UN system and 'the peoples of the United Nations' reflected in various popular movements. It is stimulated by six main forces:

- The thousands (at least 25,000) of NGOs working on Environment in its now enlarged dimension have perceived the indispensable role of multilateral machinery. They have become impatient that the United Nations has been kept so marginalized in global economic issues, which they are not prepared to entrust to the Bretton Woods institutions (or the G-7).
- After many years of holding 'the UN' at arms' length, the constantly expanding human rights NGO community has decided to assert itself in all relevant UN bodies. The 1993 UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna was perhaps the decisive illustration of this significant trend.
- A huge number of citizen supporters of humanitarian relief have seen their NGOs working alongside the UN in more and more crises, not always in happy circumstances. Humanitarian NGO leaders want to get involved in UN policy issues. Senior UN officials and UN diplomats have

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403 Within its broad mandate on behalf of the parliamentary community the Inter-Parliamentary Union also devotes increasing time to the UN; also such organizations as Parliamentarians for Global Action.
increasingly acknowledged that this NGO community is indispensable to the UN's humanitarian and even perhaps to its peacekeeping work.

- NGOs of the international women's movement have mobilized the interest of hundreds of thousands of women in a wide range of international political, economic and social issues. They have perceived the centrality of the UN system in these issues. Their leaders are equally determined to take a hand in the future of the UN.

- The world parliamentary community is increasingly engaged. Parliamentarians for Global Action, with some 700 member-MPs from 45 countries, has discussed some form of parallel assembly. Other groups are also interested. In a significant development, in 1993 the Standing Committee on External Affairs and Trade of Canada's House of Commons requested the Government to agree that it host an actual preparatory meeting on a UN parliamentary assembly in 1995.

- Underlying these developments are the general transnational expansion of the democratic idea, ever larger popular concern for human rights and UN promotion of them, and the constantly increasing sense of solidarity among young people through transnational media and music.

There are two main reasons why these developments must be actively nourished and built upon.

**A wider support base for the UN**

Of the truths that remain hidden though useful, knowledge of temporal world governance is most useful and most unknown. Since this knowledge is not directly gainful, it has been neglected by all.

_Dante Alighieri_ 406

The United Nations has frequently suffered severely from inadequate public knowledge and awareness of its work, especially at critical moments when member-governments have misused the organization or impugned its activities.

Governments are, for the most part, represented in the UN system by national civil servants, making an additional layer between citizens and the world institution. The UN is therefore very remote from its ultimate constituents, and far too dependent on how (and whether) a small number of national officials and media commentators interpret it to them. Moreover, governments have continuously reduced the proportion of main UN system public information budgets (the UN's from an early 12 per cent to less than 5 per cent). Most government leaders only refer to the existence of the world institution in relation to specific peace and security crises. In the oldest democracies the policies their governments plan to advance in the UN are not put to public debate either in elections or in parliament.

Overall, there is a marked general tendency to assume that public discussion about the UN is

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404 A more recent but rapidly growing group of parliamentarians devoted to global issues and the UN is the Assembly of Parliamentarians with over 500 members from 37 countries, fostered by the Italian Radical Party.


not really important; that executive governments will look after UN matters for their citizens as part of ‘foreign affairs’.

Citizens have as much right to be informed, and to be heard, about their governments’ policies in the UN system as about any other policies. The difference in regard to UN policies is that up to now the public has no independent means of obtaining information about the UN, except, sometimes, NGOs. After nearly fifty years, with very few exceptions, the established media do not regard most of the work of the UN as an important subject on which they should keep the citizenry informed. As it approaches the 21st century the UN still has no effective Fourth Estate.

▶ Enfranchisement by necessity

As the Cold War fades away, we face not a ‘new world order’ but a troubled and fractured planet, whose problems deserve the serious attention of politicians and publics alike.

Paul Kennedy

The second reason why the new popular interest in transnational problems and the UN must not be neglected is that governments can no longer make effective progress without citizen involvement.

In many cases the citizenry are so poorly informed that when large additional funds are needed for UN work, the public support base for such decisions is perilously small. The political confusion in many countries over the need for larger contributions of military and other personnel for UN operations has recently also exposed the effects of inadequate public knowledge and debate.

Governments are already faced with the need to ratify far-reaching global ecology treaties. If citizens and their NGOs had not educated themselves on these issues, their governments would have little or no public support for such accords. In the next two decades governments, if they wish to face up to the future, will also have to adopt genuinely global macro-economic policies through the UN, as national commitments. Their citizens will have to be far better informed and engaged in these global issues, if they are to support such policies.

The most thoughtful of leaders in the universe of NGOs are the first to acknowledge that they cannot provide the central sustaining mechanism that is needed. NGOs are indispensable within the total community surrounding the United Nations, but they thrive by their disparities. Some are well-funded and strongly led, but only because they maintain a very specific focus of activity. Most are by their nature dependent upon the enthusiasm of a handful of dedicated volunteer leaders. Their best service in connection with the United Nations is to inform their particular constituents and add their voice through their particular professional, technical, or humanitarian concerns.

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The NGO dilemma

By the end of 1993 their recent successes had confronted the NGO community with serious new problems. Several hundred additional environmental NGOs had been accredited to the UN. Other ‘issue-oriented’ international NGOs were clamouring for greater access.

On one hand, even the most sympathetic governments were having to point out that it would hardly be manageable for UN organs and subsidiary bodies, with their own membership from a few dozen to a maximum of 184, to hear spoken representations from hundreds of NGOs; and that their delegations could not even cope with the volume of official documents, leave alone every NGO’s individual proposal-paper.

On the other hand, the older-accredited NGOs were beginning to feel overwhelmed and even ‘sidelined’ by the energetic and often very well-prepared newcomers from the fields of environment, women’s rights, humanitarian relief and other high-profile issue areas. Governments still not particularly well-disposed towards NGOs could find ample ammunition from within these tensions and disarrays. And the Secretary-General, despite some statements supportive of NGOs, had allowed their ejection from their small lounge inside the Secretariat building, along with various restrictive new security measures regarding their access to UN areas, even the Dag Hammarskjold Library.

There is thus a considerable danger that the major gains the NGO community has recently made could be seriously dissipated if it is unable to agree on efficient proposals for improved access and representation.

The essence of the change facing the NGO community may be summarized as requiring the best possible answers to a number of strategic questions:

1. To date, in which type of influence on governmental decision-making have they been most effective:
   a. Within member-countries through pressure on and advocacy to parliaments and government ministries?
   b. In the regions, which may be a more open and receptive area for NGO action?
   c. In concentrating on key delegations at UN organs or other regular bodies?
   d. In representation to the total intergovernmental community, e.g., at UN world conferences?
2. How can NGOs in a given issue-area consolidate their analyses and proposals so that they can mount an effective representation, acceptable to busy delegations, or at least the minimum number of positions on which they can agree?
3. What facilities from the Secretariat itself must NGOs, in their greatly increasing numbers, minimally demand of the Secretary-General, and how can they assemble these demands in the most cogent and persuasive manner?
4. How can the NGO community more generally help to build bridges of communication between the citizens whom they variously represent, and the member-governments of the UN system?
ECOSOC has already decided to conduct an open-ended review of the new problems arising from the greatly increased interest of the NGO community in the work of the UN. It would be wise for the NGO community to respond with an initial dialogue accompanied by a proposal to return after perhaps two years, to give them a breathing-space to sort out this extremely complicated tangle of problems and give of their best in a second round with ECOSOC.

Meanwhile, a more solid and structurally sound means must be developed for the enfranchisement of 'we, the peoples' in what, according to the Charter, is their United Nations. The 50th Anniversary would be a timely occasion to begin to develop permanent machinery to engage its original sponsors in the implementation of the Charter.

**TOWARDS A MORE DEMOCRATIC UNITED NATIONS**

We need a new study for the purpose of creating a world assembly elected directly from the people of the world as a whole, to whom the governments who form the United Nations are responsible.

*Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary of the UK, 1945*

Many NGOs and numerous individual commentators have called for one or another form of popular world assembly. Mikhail Gorbachev recommended an assembly of public organizations in his 1988 speech in the General Assembly. In a widely noted paper on the UN's 40th anniversary a former UN civil servant, Marc Nerfin, urged consideration of a 'Citizen Chamber'. There has been a succession of NGO Conferences for a More Democratic United Nations (CAMDUN).

Having adopted a gradualist approach, the World Federalist Movement has done considerable work on the idea and has recently published a detailed paper.

For the most part governmental leaders have looked rather askance at such proposals, not so much as a threat but as an exercise in utopianism. The fact that the various movements for an actual world government have long discussed such an assembly has rather conveniently preserved the notion that the concept is 'starry-eyed'.

A peoples' world assembly does not mean supranational government. A British Foreign Secretary whom no one ever called starry-eyed urged study of it even as the UN was being born. Ernest Bevin's 1945 statement in the House of Commons, excerpted above, carefully defined the relationship of such an assembly to the newly established UN. 'In the meantime', he said, 'there

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408 In resolution 1296 of 1993.
must be no weakening of the institution which was built at San Francisco’. A world people’s assembly must not, he said, be considered a substitute for it, ‘but rather a completion of a development of it’.

Fifty years on, it is time to re-examine the Bevin idea.

Some principles

1. The fundamental means for choosing peoples’ representatives in such an assembly must be democratic and by universal adult franchise, even if for a while this may prove difficult in member-countries with limited experience in democratic elections.

2. The objective should be to enable the citizens of member-countries to have their own representatives in a specific organ of the United Nations that can
   - express citizens’ views on major international problems and crises, and on UN action on them;
   - influence governments’ formulation of UN policies;
   - watch over the management and financing of the UN;
   - enhance the collective accountability of its member-governments.

3. These functions must not, of course, abridge or confuse the UN’s intergovernmental processes. But a peoples’ assembly must have a genuinely useful role in those processes, complementing the knowledge and perspectives brought to intergovernmental organs by government delegations.

4. The assembly must have legal status as a United Nations body, for its political legitimacy, budget, and members’ access to the Seat of the UN. It must be entitled to issue its own official reports and communications, distributed as UN documents.

5. The assembly must have a regular budget adequate to finance the remuneration of its members, their attendance at its sessions, and research and evaluation activities under its own authority.

6. It should adopt its own programme of work, which should not be limited to its functions in relation to intergovernmental business but include its own original activities to develop policy and programme proposals for the UN.

There is by definition no precedent on a global scale for any such assembly. The idea of achieving democratic representation from among nearly 6 billion people of every culture on earth in one workable assembly is indeed daunting. Yet India has an operating representative assembly elected by universal franchise among 850 million by no means homogeneous people. By far the most impressive multi-national model available, whatever its growing pains, is the European Parliament, which has elected representation from 12 countries and some 345 million people.\(^{112}\)

\(^{112}\) The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) has decided to establish a parliamentary assembly that will have representatives from 50 countries and 800 million people.
The European Parliament approach

It is still a huge leap from the European Community model to 184 or so countries and all of humankind, but comparable doubts and practical questions confronted the originators of the European Parliament. The following sketch of steps towards a UN Parliamentary Assembly draws on the phased evolution of the European body.

Table 16. Development of a UN Parliamentary Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Parliament (EP)</th>
<th>A UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The EP began as an assembly of representatives elected to it from within the already-elected memberships of parliaments of the European Community.</td>
<td>Under Article 22 the General Assembly would establish the UNPA as a subsidiary body. Parliaments of member-states would select a number of representatives to this first UNPA, in proportion to population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While beginning its functions the EP in effect also acted as a constituent assembly, working out the electoral process and functions of a directly elected regional parliament.</td>
<td>The UNPA would initially meet once a year, after the General Assembly, and debate and adopt comments on its session. It would also develop detailed proposals for its conversion into a directly elected world parliamentary assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since 1979 the EP has comprised Members elected directly by the citizens in each EC member-state according to its voting system, its number of seats mainly a function of its population. Total, 518 MEPs.</td>
<td>The constituent UNPA's proposals for its conversion would be sent to the General Assembly. Debate, consultation with home governments, a second reading, etc. would probably take several years, during which governments and parties explain the plan to citizens. When agreement has been reached the Charter is amended to create the UNPA as an additional Principal Organ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the time actual citizen elections to the UNPA could happen, many more countries will have experience of democratic national elections. The constituent UNPA will need to decide such questions as minimal criteria for open and pluralist elections, electoral assistance and monitoring. If proportional representation spreads as it has in Europe, voter turn-out will be encouraged.

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413 To meet the problem of huge populations of some countries, a sliding scale requiring increasing numbers of citizens for each additional representative could be agreed.

414 Election of Members to the European Parliament is by proportional representation in all countries except the UK. Interestingly, the UK has had the lowest voter turn-out (36 per cent) for these elections, most others managing between 60 per cent and 90 per cent.
Table 17. Functions of a UN Parliamentary Assembly in relation to the existing UN structure

The European Community has statutory powers which the United Nations does not have. Comparison of functions hereunder gives a picture of the work that a multi-national parliament can do, but also suggests the limitations that governments are likely to place on a UN Parliamentary Assembly at least until a further evolution at a later stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Parliament functions</th>
<th>UN Parliamentary Assembly functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consulted by the Council, the main decision-making body of the European Community.</td>
<td>Consulted by the General Assembly, the main decision-making body of the United Nations; also by ECOSOC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holds two Readings in parallel with Council on its drafts of legislation in many fields, influences Council decisions.</td>
<td>Holds Reading on major decisions before ECOSOC, i.e. economic/social policy, human rights or ecological instruments, enabling influence on ECOSOC/GA decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conveys Opinions to the EC Council and the Commission on other subjects. (Can Censure the Commission and secure its resignation).</td>
<td>Conveys Opinions to the General Assembly, ECOSOC, Security Council, and to the Secretary-General on any other subject. (Strength and unanimity of a critical Opinion would have strong effect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holds Question Times to the Commission, the Council, and the Conference of Foreign Ministers.</td>
<td>Holds Question Times to the Secretary-General and the Presidents of the GA, ECOSOC and the Security Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can request that EC policies be extended or amended, and propose initiation of new ones.</td>
<td>Can request that any policy adopted by the General Assembly be extended or amended, and propose new policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has Budgetary powers. Can reject EC Budget as a whole, or amend non-compulsory items.</td>
<td>Budgetary power unlikely, but GA process should allow for a Reading of draft and conveyance of views on it by a deadline.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A host of extremely difficult problems will of course attend the building of this new piece of machinery into the UN architecture.

Governments of very populous countries may have to concede that only a sliding-scale formula could result in a fully global Assembly still of workable size. On careful reflection an

415 On, e.g., the EC internal market, social policy, research, cohesion bills.
416 In 1987, 2,591 written questions were put to the Commission; 201 to the Council; 150 to the Foreign Ministers. Short supplementary questions can be put to the attending Commission or Council officials 'which sometimes provide lively exchanges'. Emile Noel, Working Together: The institutions of the European Community (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the EC, 1988), p. 33.
intermediate stage of regional elections would probably entail more uncertainties than benefits, at least in the near future. Small island states of common culture and limited means might choose combined representation through a common election. Even if the present pace of democratization continues and spreads, difficulties over fully meeting democratic criteria can be anticipated. Use of proportional representation will strengthen the democratic base, however, and produce very interesting multi-national pluralisms in the body itself.417

Through all such growing pains the functions outlined above would increasingly provide citizens with a real sense of engagement and influence in the United Nations through their own elected representatives in the Assembly. None of these functions would abridge the existing powers of governments in the UN, but they certainly would require alignment of calendars. Some slowing down in intergovernmental decisions on long-term policies would be amply rewarded.

Care has been taken not to suggest functions that might be altogether beyond the acceptance-levels of governments for a first phase in this Parliamentary Assembly’s life. Thus, it is suggested that it would not have a Reading role in General Assembly political and legal matters, but could hold Question Times and render Opinions on these—which can be very powerful. It would have the full range of Reading, Opinion and Question Times in all ECOSOC areas.

It will also be noted that in the above scheme the Parliamentary Assembly’s role in relation to the Security Council would be limited to conveying Opinions and holding Question Times with its President. It is highly unlikely that governments (of any region) would allow more than this in the foreseeable future. But enabling UN Parliamentarians to express their views on crises before the Security Council and to discuss actions it is taking with its President would be a significant improvement.

> **Innovating work**

The Parliamentary Assembly should also add an element of innovation and imaginative search for better ways of doing things that is not in the professional diplomat’s brief. Some concrete examples can be briefly cited here.

An early priority in the Assembly’s own work programme could be examining and selecting the best means of additional financing of the UN. Parliamentarians could do this without the built-in resistance of executive government, and with a more sure touch regarding citizen involvement and support for any needed national legislation.

Again, it is not a criticism to observe that diplomats are not particularly well-suited to oversee and improve the UN’s public information and education activities. A Parliamentary Assembly could co-opt communication specialists to help its members apply their own well-attuned insights into these extremely important activities which have suffered serious neglect for many years.

417 In the European Parliament various Members representative of national parties that win seats through proportional representation have formed political groups and alliances. These carry reflections both along the Right-Left political spectrum and of particular interests such as regionalism and ecology.
The rest of the UN system

The foregoing outline proposal is limited to the United Nations as the only institution in the system that is mandated to encompass all of the problems and concerns of the citizens of the world. If earlier recommendations are advanced for at last making the UN the centrepiece and coordinator that the founders intended, the UNPA will affect the system as a whole. It would be able to request Hearings with the new UN System mechanism of the General Assembly and with the improved intersecretariat machinery. As has happened in the European Parliament, it is likely that UN Parliamentarians will press for coherence and be highly critical of empire-building and turf wars.

Choosing leaders

The foregoing scheme does not stipulate a formal function for the UN Parliamentary Assembly in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. The inevitable keen interest of UN Parliamentarians, however, could be relied upon to make executive governments more conscious of their crucial responsibility in this matter. The Parliamentary Assembly could press for proper search processes, and offer its views on the key characteristics needed in an incumbent for any next term of office.

Conclusion

Canada’s House of Commons has courageously shown that it is time to come out of the easy refuge of skepticism about the democratization of the international community. The European Parliament has endorsed the proposal for a UN Parliamentary Assembly.418 The intergovernmental machinery has performed remarkable services to date. But the condition of the world strongly indicates that the future of its only universal public-service institution is far too serious a matter to be left to governments alone.

Les peuples de la Terre
Vont-ils enfin s’unir
Pour cette immense affaire
D’un monde à reconstruire? 419

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419 ‘Shall the peoples of the Earth at last unite, for the immense challenge of a world in need of reconstruction?’ Opening verse of the Chorus in Europoème: Oratorio Mysteria pour le monde du XXIème siècle. By Bernard Zamaron, Luxembourg.
XII. IN A TIME BEYOND WARNINGS

I do not wish to seem overdramatic, but I can only conclude from the information that is available to me as Secretary-General that the Members of the United Nations have perhaps ten years left in which to subordinate their ancient quarrels and launch a global partnership to curb the arms race, to improve the human environment, to defuse the population explosion and to supply the required momentum to development efforts. If such a global partnership is not forged within the next decade, then I very much fear that the problems I have mentioned will have reached such staggering proportions that they will be beyond our capacity to control.

U Thant, May 1969

The problems and weaknesses in the UN system that are reviewed in this study concern the only set of institutions in the world that have the capability to reflect the aspirations, fears, and material needs of the whole of humankind. These are also the only institutions mandated by virtually all governments to respond, in equity and sensitivity, to universal problems and needs.

The need for the reform, and where necessary restructuring, of the UN system has never been so urgent. If the marvellous future that science once promised can still be seen on the horizon, so, too, can an unprecedented increase in human misery. There is a possibility of all kinds of social dislocation, political upheaval and armed violence, inside or between neighbouring states, or both simultaneously. The potential for conflict between whole regions, even cultures, cannot be ruled out.

Three fundamental characteristics of these problems can no longer be evaded:

- They cannot be resolved by individual, or even, in most instances, regional groups of states; they have world-wide causes and effects.
- They are not ‘sectoral’, or single-phenomenon problems; they have multiple socio-economic and political causes and effects.
- These problems will not find their own solutions; whatever the blessings of market forces they cannot by themselves provide the answers, and sometimes they may even exacerbate the dangers.
The costs of neglecting root causes

Unfortunately, the achievement in stabilizing the national economies of the developed countries finds no parallel in stabilization of the economies of the underdeveloped countries. Nor has sufficient progress been made in stabilizing and integrating the world economy as a whole. The world continues to be divided into two economic regions with only marginal trade relations between them. 420

Although the description of the world economy quoted above could easily apply to the present time, it was in fact given to the UN Economic and Social Council thirty-eight years ago by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. It highlights poignantly the failure to come to grips with the fundamental causes of the vast and dangerous array of problems that governments now face, and how expensive that neglect has been.

The human cost of such neglect has relentlessly increased as more and more people have been pressed to the margins of survival, and the demands of industry and consumer alike push natural resources to their limits. The international community is increasingly confronted with the enormous, and growing, financial cost of tackling political and socio-economic crises that were entirely predictable and have been developing over several decades.

The need to address root causes

The root causes of major transnational problems cannot be neglected any longer without catastrophic consequences. These root causes can be effectively tackled only by internationally agreed and implemented policies that offer equitable, 'all-win' solutions. This tremendous challenge will require a far more highly tuned and responsive United Nations system, with stronger international leadership and cooperation and greatly improved machinery both to generate truly global policies and to implement them.

The perception of chain-reactions in human affairs, with compound consequences that can affect peace itself, is not new. The UN Charter states that 'conditions of stability and well-being (are) necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples'. 421 The ability to agree on global strategies to deal with closely inter-connected economic, social, environmental, political and military factors has so far largely eluded governments.

420 Statement by Secretary-General to ECOSOC on 16 July 1956, in UN Doc. SG/493.
421 Article 55, United Nations Charter.
When the last excuse ended

The decade that U Thant warned in 1969 remained before these problems would begin to go out of control was a period of great ironies. The 1970s saw virtually complete decolonization, universal membership in the UN system, and, for the first time in human history, international access to all peoples and territories on the planet.

In an almost unbroken series of United Nations ‘mega-conferences’, governments demonstrated an unprecedented ability to collaborate in analysing the socio-economic and ecological problems outlined above. By the beginning of the 1980s the international community had completed the first-ever comprehensive inventory of all humankind, its problems and its natural environment.

There was now detailed knowledge about most of the world. The holistic or systemic character of problems long presumed to be ‘sectoral’ was also brought into clear relief. The last excuse for failing to build a global partnership was gone. But the General Assembly’s adoption in 1974–1975 of major decisions for new international economic relationships produced no partnership or momentum to implement them. If anything, the 1980s saw less reference to any such idea than ever before. Secretary-General U Thant was all too correct in his forecast. It was indeed at the beginning of the 1980s that these problems, so long neglected, began to accelerate and interact in the direction of chaos.

The time for warnings is now past. It may well be that the possibility of the extinction of the human species by weapons of mass destruction has receded. There remains, however, the increasing possibility of a slower form of extinction through indifference and by failure to act.

The instruments for such action do not need to be invented. The United Nations system is in place, however much updating and strengthening it may need. The UN system needs the urgent and sustained attention of all governments. They are directly responsible for it, and it is their responsibility to ensure that at long last the warnings are heeded.

Basic conclusions and recommendations from the analyses in this study have been presented in each chapter. They are summarized in the table on the following page. This concluding chapter assembles all recommendations in considerable detail, so that the full scope of a reform proposal can be properly assessed, especially where it breaks new ground.

A few preliminary observations may be of help.

**GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

For reasons discussed at the outset the recommendations do not propose any radical restructuring such as a single, integrated United Nations. Almost all can be implemented without amending either the Charter or the constitutions of any of the Specialized Agencies. In a few instances—for example, a UN Parliamentary Assembly—the logical sequel to creating it under Article 22 would be Charter amendment to give the reform full authority.

To the greatest extent possible, care has been taken to avoid proposing additional machinery. If implemented, the recommendations would in fact considerably streamline existing machinery and make it far more efficient. One organization of the system would be dissolved; ultimately, several others would be amalgamated. The few additional pieces of machinery proposed carry their own logic for a UN system designed decades ago that must respond to the challenges of the next century.

Again and again reforms have failed to address the vital issue of locating functions where they can best work. The study recommends decentralization where it belongs and is needed—not between global headquarters that are already far too separated, but from a global level made more coherent to regions, sub-regions, and countries. Authority is always reluctant to undertake significant decentralization. It must, at last, be carried through in the UN System. Like any significant reconfiguration it must then be monitored, nurtured, and adjusted with experience.

A number of recommendations include drawing upon outside experience and wisdom through special short-term international teams that should be commissioned by the General Assembly, ECOSOC, or the Secretary-General. Some of the very best reform proposals have been submitted to governments by such expert groups. They can concentrate on a reform need as delegates cannot; they combine expert knowledge of the subject-area with a vital element of detachment and wider experience; and they will be representative of groups and regions in the membership. The problem with proposals from expert groups has not been in their provenance but in their subsequent neglect or fragmentation.
Strengthening the UN System: Key Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECRETARIAT</th>
<th>ECOSOC</th>
<th>GENERAL ASSEMBLY</th>
<th>OTHER ORGANS AND AGENCIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary-General</td>
<td>Biennialized General Debate in GA; Thematic Debate in off-year</td>
<td>Open up ECOSOC and GA calendar</td>
<td>UN Council on Diversity, Representation and Governance (former Trusteeship Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation unit</td>
<td>Streamline flows of business</td>
<td></td>
<td>UN Parliamentary Assembly Initially with representatives of parliaments; later by direct popular elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement Ogata-Volcker UN Financing Proposals</td>
<td>Resolutions must specify reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling on Assessment (Palme Proposal)</td>
<td>Question Time</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Major System-wide Changes**

- Executive Committee of the UN System (re-mandated ACC)
- Commission on the UN Civil Service
- UN Staff College

- UN System Consultative Board (Bureaus of ECOSOC and Agencies)
  - General Assembly monitoring of implementation of Article 58
  - Restore reciprocal representation

- UN Monetary, Trade and Finance Conference to:
  - Reconstitute IMF
  - Establish genuine ITO
  - Establish UN soft-loan capacity

**Consolidation**

- Reconsider original plan for common seat of the UN System
- Implement Article 17.3; develop single consolidated UN System Budget
- Constitute IDA, IFAD, UNCDF in new UN soft-loan capacity (above)
- Consolidate development funds in UN Sustainable Development Authority
- Consolidate WFP and UNHCR, UNICEF relief functions in DHA under Deputy S-G
- UN Humanitarian Security Police to protect emergency relief operations

**Decentralization**

- Governance of Regional and Country Operational Activities
- Development funds’ regional bureaus in reorganized Regional Commissions
- Integrate all regional offices in reorganized Regional Commissions

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423 Diagram shows only organs and departments dealt with in this study and only key recommendations among those presented in Chapter XIII. New measures and bodies are in bold lettering.

424 For International Economic Co-operation and Sustainable Development. We maintain our previous proposals that there should, in all, be four deputies, and that the High Commissioner for Human Rights should have the same rank.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Key factors in Non-constitutional Overhaul

1. Member-Governments, parliaments, and non-governmental organizations should be prepared to overcome the system's major weaknesses with courage. If constitutional change is judged to be unfeasible at least for the present, this puts a high premium on addressing every other major means of improvement.

2. The image of the UN system as an intractably large and reform-defying bureaucracy is a myth of distance, ideological denigration and media distortion. The number of its distinct institutions is less than in a small government. The staff of the system world-wide is no larger than the civil servants in one city of a medium-sized country.

Executive heads are only civil servants, who should be instructed by their governors. The system can be greatly improved, and without great difficulty, if its myths and excessive pomp are discarded.

3. The original plans approved by governments for the system have been ignored in many crucial respects. This is a major reason why it has not worked well, because the original design contained essential elements to bind it together. These remain valid today. The most important elements lost from the original design, are:


   b. A distinct Chapter in the Charter defining and prescribing the UN System, its relationships, and the responsibilities of member-governments for its coherent operation.

   c. Proper implementation by the General Assembly of Article 58 of the Charter, and by ECOSOC of Article 63.

   d. Proper implementation of Article 17.3, with the development of a consolidated budget for the UN System.

   e. The proper implementation of all provisions in the still legally binding Special Agreements between the UN and the Agencies.

4. There are no unqualified saints, and no unalloyed sinners in the system. Not all heads of Specialized Agencies have behaved like 'feudal barons'; and not all Secretaries-General have taken their senior system colleagues and the work of their agencies seriously enough. There are dedicated, highly competent staff who are genuinely system minded in the agencies as well as the UN. Dynamic reform now can still mobilize these assets for the system as a whole. They will not be there much longer if there is no serious reform.

5. Clear, uniform policy instructions by all governments in all relevant governing bodies will be indispensable for any useful overhaul of the system.

6. Even without constitutional change, governments must establish a means of making the United Nations system accountable as a system, through a new intergovernmental body.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROCESS OF REFORM

From the considerable cumulative experience in attempted reforms in the UN system in past decades a number of cautionary notes, and some concrete operational recommendations, are set down hereunder.

1. Governments must be far more conscious that many weaknesses in the UN system can only be corrected by improving the quality of the people they appoint to lead it.

2. Care should be taken not to confuse mechanistic shuffling of units with installing the ability to generate teamwork and to coordinate through intellectual authority.

3. Care should also be taken to avoid decisions made out of dissatisfaction with the present leadership of an organization of the system which, on all other criteria, should be given a new responsibility.

4. In every reform or reorganization care must be taken to stipulate and provide for necessary changes in senior job descriptions, and for as thorough retraining of staff as is the norm in reorganizations in the private sector.

5. Choosing between improvement and restructuring is vital. It will not help to restructure where the need can be well met by wise managerial improvements. Equally, to avoid restructuring by palliative reforms will not solve weaknesses that simply are structural.

6. In all proposed reform or restructuring, governments should stipulate the lines of responsibility that will strengthen coordination between organizations or units, and access by officials to the resources within a secretariat (or the wider system) that they will need to do their redesigned work. Experience indicates that, for the most human of reasons, it is not wise to leave such stipulations to the civil service heads.

7. Arguments about the existing 'comparative advantages' of a given organization need careful scrutiny. Responsibilities and resources should be placed where they will best be implemented in the interests of the full world community. Governments must then guard against nullifying such reform by their subsequent resource allocations.

8. The General Assembly should adopt a standard discipline that before voting on any reform package it will obtain an independent 'Reform Impact Report'. This report should recall the weaknesses that were to be addressed, and advise the Assembly to what extent the negotiated reform will meet them; where it will not do so; and any serious lacunae in it as to structure, designation of responsibility, access to capacities, or budgetary provisions. This report function could be entrusted to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

9. The ACABQ should be requested to maintain a fully comprehensive data bank of all significant reform and restructuring decisions by the Secretary-General and/or the General Assembly since 1960. The data should be in computer memory, accessible to Delegations and the public. The data bank should also store mandatory follow-up reports.
10. For each of the three years following any reform or restructuring decision the ACABQ should issue an independent report on implementation to the General Assembly, clearly identifying delays or inadequate implementation, and their causes and loci of responsibility. ACABQ should recommend adjustments in light of experience, but otherwise clearly state the impact of further delay.

11. At the end of not more than five years after a significant reform/restructuring measure, the ACABQ should commission an independent evaluation of its impact, with recommendations.

A COMMON SEAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

It is now seldom recalled that the founders of the UN firmly intended, and in fact the first General Assembly provided, that the headquarters of Specialized Agencies should be located at the Seat of the UN itself. There were supposed to be only ‘very strong reasons’ for any exception to this ‘general principle’. Fifty years of experience demonstrate what was lost by the total ignoring of this key feature of the original design.

1. A detailed study of how a common Seat of the United Nations System might be established should be commenced in 1995 under authority derived from the Charter (Article 58) and the headquarters clauses in the Special Agreements between the UN and the Specialized Agencies.

2. It should be carried out by a representative independent panel of intergovernmental and non-governmental experts, appointed at the request of the General Assembly by the Secretary-General, in consultation with other executive heads.

3. The following should be included in the terms of reference:
   b. The concept of twin locations (i.e. New York/Geneva) is less and less desirable. Earlier assumed divisions between work on peace, security and political affairs, and economic-social and humanitarian problems are increasingly exposed as unreal and even counter-productive.
   c. The criteria for selection of a site for a common Seat should include those suggested in 1945. 425
   d. The panel’s review should neutrally cover all present host countries as well as others for the common Seat of the United Nations System. It should consider the

longer term evolution of international relations and avoid short-term geo-political and other considerations.

e. First location at a common Seat would encompass:

i. All global level elements of the UN Secretariat including the UN development and humanitarian funds (after amalgamation and decentralization as recommended); 426

ii. The five major Specialized Agencies, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO and WHO;

iii. IFAD, a reconstituted IMF, and a properly constituted International Trade Organization (ITO).

f. Air, marine, and electronic communications, climate and intellectual property rights play increasingly sensitive roles. The early accommodation of ICAO, IMO, ITU, WIPO and WMO should be fully taken into account.

g. The panel should include adequate provision for a UN Parliamentary Assembly, and far better accommodation for non-governmental organizations.

h. The panel should also commission technical studies to ensure that the Common Seat should benefit from the full range of contemporary communications technology, under the control of the United Nations, with outstanding facilities for world media and a unified UN System Public Information Department (as originally recommended).

AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL BOARD OF THE UN SYSTEM

There is at present no body of any kind through which member-governments can maintain the cohesiveness of the UN system and oversee its best functioning. This is one of the few new pieces of machinery recommended in this study.

1. The General Assembly, acting under Articles 22 and 58, should establish a new ‘United Nations System Consultative Board’.

a. Its purpose should be to engender a greater multi-sectoral involvement of governments in the work of the United Nations, and to provide a mechanism for joint monitoring of the coherence and efficacy of the system.

b. The Board should comprise the respective Bureaus of ECOSOC, of the executive governing bodies of the major Specialized Agencies, and a representative of the bureaus of other Agencies. It should be assisted by the ACC. 427

c. The General Assembly should elect the Board Chairperson.

426 This study will propose later hereunder the amalgamation of some organizations that have separate headquarters and hence are not cited here.

427 See paragraph 5, in the further Recommendation on p. 193.
RECOMMENDATIONS

d. The Board should meet every other year immediately after the substantive session of ECOSOC, holding a one-day consultation with the Council to begin its work.

e. The Board should report through ECOSOC to the General Assembly under Article 58; dissent from its reports should be recorded, with explanation.

2. The General Assembly should establish its own standing capacity to monitor and evaluate its discharge of United Nations responsibilities for coordination of the policies and activities of the Agencies under Article 58.

a. The General Committee should constitute a body of itself of appropriate size for such a task. It should have the means to commission outside independent assistance.

b. The Committee should report annually to Plenary on progress in and obstacles to the full implementation of Article 58 (with stated consequences), with appropriate recommendations.

c. In this work the Committee should consult the Secretary-General and the heads of the Agencies, but its report should be independent.

MAKING THE SPECIAL AGREEMENTS WORK

In the original design, key features of the relations between the United Nations and the Agencies were stipulated in the Special Agreements. Member-governments have allowed many of these crucial provisions to be ignored. Their full implementation is vital to build a responsive, coherent United Nations system. The question of a common Seat for the system has been dealt with above. The following are the other key provisions needing restoration.

Reciprocal representation

1. The Secretary-General should carry out an in-depth study of the performance of all UN-Agency agreements on reciprocal representation, by a senior veteran of the UN system familiar with these processes. The terms of reference of the study should include:

a. How reciprocal representation can be improved by the UN and by Agencies to

i. enhance delegations' dialogue on major global issues, their formulation of multi-disciplinary strategies, and their governance of the system;
ii. improve inter-secretariat relations at senior and professional working levels;
iii. improve the quality and timeliness of UN and Agency secretariat services to intergovernmental bodies, including responses to delegations' ongoing needs;
iv. reduce delays in moving decisions through the system.
b. An analysis with recommendations for the adjustments that could be made in reciprocal representation at a common headquarters location.

c. Recommendations for improved seating arrangements for Agencies at meetings of UN organs.

d. Recommendations for the future monitoring and periodic evaluation of reciprocal representation by an appropriately neutral means, to guard against slippage.

2. The heads of the Agencies should be thoroughly consulted, in order to assemble their considered views on all aspects of such representation. Heads should be asked to stipulate as precisely as possible:

a. The working value they attach, both for system coherence and for their individual agencies, to each of their proposals to improve or add to current representation practices.

b. Their suggestions for adjustments of the organization of work of UN organs and their subsidiary bodies that would, in their view, make representation of their agencies more useful.

c. Their frank evaluations of current UN practices in its representation at meetings of their agencies’ bodies, in terms of coverage, level, content of presentations, and accuracy of reporting.

3. UN officials should be consulted on the same issues.

4. Member-governments should be consulted on a representative basis for their equivalent views of current reciprocal representation practices, and how these should be improved.

**Consolidated budget**

5. Even in 1994 the total size of the system’s budgets is not at all too large to defy their consolidation and rationalization, as was originally envisaged. The total funding is much less than that of many national budgets.

6. The General Assembly should decide, under Article 17.3, to establish an intergovernmental working group of experts in programme planning and budgeting to recommend the recasting of procedures for these purposes. Here again, governments will have to accept their responsibility to apply this decision through their delegations in all other governing bodies of the System.

7. The working group should be tasked to propose the procedures, and time-frames, that can enable the General Assembly to receive proposed budgets from throughout the system, and to rationalize and consolidate these with the UN budget, so that governments can adopt in one place at one time a comprehensive forward programme and budget for the UN system.
RECOMMENDATIONS

8. The same working group should be given the task of carefully reviewing and making recommendations on the viability of the present six-year Medium-Term planning cycle. It should be requested to take into account the adoption of synchronous single terms of office of seven years for the Secretary-General and heads of all major Agencies of the System as already recommended by the authors.

9. The proposed new Consultative Board of the UN System would oversee the development of the consolidated budget as one of its priority functions.

STRENGTHENING INTER-SECRETARIAT BONDS

The ACC as Executive Committee of the UN System

It has been a standard refrain of many reform studies that the body that supposedly brings the civil-service heads of the system together—the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination—is a very weak reed. It is time to make it more responsive, and for the first time clearly responsible to the General Assembly. The following recommendation is couched as headings of a General Assembly resolution.

The General Assembly should adopt the following provisions:

1. Acknowledging the contributions of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to the work of the UN system under the leadership of the United Nations;
   Recognizing the importance of building a more dynamic and coherent system to address increasingly complex and multi-disciplinary global problems;

2. Decides to rename the ACC as the Executive Committee of the United Nations System, responsible for developing and proposing to member-governments all necessary measures to enhance coherence and dynamic response to global problems within its members' competences, and for the prompt and thorough implementation of all decisions engaging the UN and one or more Agencies;

3. Decides that such decisions, being adopted in UN organs by the common membership of governments in the System, shall be treated as paramount by all other governing bodies, and requests all Member-States to act accordingly;

4. Decides under Article 58 of the Charter that the Executive Committee, comprising elected heads of the organizations of the System, shall be responsible to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council for the effective secretariat-level implementation of all such decisions by UN organs;

5. Decides that, to improve consultation towards these ends, the Executive Committee shall, in addition to the reports of the Secretary-General as chair, assist the United Nations System Consultative Board in the discharge of its functions.428

6. Decides to invite members of the Executive Committee, in rotation, to present to

428 The Board proposed in p. 190.
the Plenary of the General Assembly at each of its Sessions their analyses of global problems within their respective fields and, in addition,

Requests each member to notify the President of the Assembly of any serious emerging situation in its field of competence that, in its judgment, warrants especially addressing the Assembly in a year when not scheduled to do so.

7. Decides that the United Nations System Consultative Board shall be the overseeing and liaison body of the System with the Executive Committee, empowered to monitor its effective decision-making on all matters requiring the actions referred to in paragraph 2, including the work of the revised IACSD (recommended later in this chapter).

8. Requests the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures for the fullest substantive collaboration between the UN and Agencies both in the preparation and the presentation of reports for UN organs encompassing their competences.

Further requests the Secretary-General to ensure substantive UN participation in all important agency meetings.

ENSURING UNITED NATIONS LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

The study has analysed how the intellectual leadership of the Secretary-General in global macro-economic and development issues has been steadily eroded, including the attrition, and most recently the outright abolition, of the post of Director-General which was supposed to meet these needs. Such leadership is beyond the practical possibilities of any Secretary-General, and needs to be provided by one of several new Deputy Secretaries-General recommended in this and earlier studies.

1. The post of Deputy Secretary-General for International Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development should be established in the UN Secretariat as a matter of urgency by General Assembly resolution. The resolution should stipulate that the rank of the post should be one level below the Secretary-General and one level above all other officers in the UN system.

2. The Deputy would be the senior responsible for all United Nations economic and social research, analysis, policy development and programming, and thus in line overall responsibility for DESIPA, DPCSD, DDSMS, UNCTAD, relevant UN research institutes, and the operational funds and programmes. The Deputy’s Office would have overall responsibility for Policy Coordination presently assigned to DPCSD, and for all substantive economic and social reports. (See later recommendation headed ‘Documentation’.)

3. The resolution should stipulate that the future of the UNCTAD secretariat should
be determined in relation to the constitution of the ‘World Trade Organization’ as a full Specialized Agency of the UN System, responsible to ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

4. A comprehensive job description for the Deputy Secretary-General should be issued. Appointment by the Secretary-General should be confirmed by the General Assembly. The Assembly should actively use its confirmatory prerogative to assist the Secretary-General in appointing a dynamic figure of world repute in economic and social issues. A poor appointment will be worse than none.

5. The authorizing General Assembly resolution should itself place the Deputy in line responsibility over all economic and social, and operational development departments and other entities in the United Nations as noted in paragraph 2.

6. The resolution should also stipulate that the authorized UN Secretariat posts in the Deputy’s immediate Office have gazetted, individualized job descriptions and be filled with high-calibre professionals of appropriate background.

7. These posts should form the core of a joint UN-system staff in the Deputy’s office, the balance of which should be made up of carefully subject-identified secondments from Agencies of the UN system. The General Assembly resolution should also provide for these secondments, stipulating that the seconded officials should bring to the office the expertise and perspectives of their organizations, but should be responsible to the Deputy, and would not formally represent their Agencies.

8. The functions of the joint staff should be:

   a. To serve as the focal point for global analysis and watch, and formulation of policy options for the Secretary-General on behalf of the UN system;

   b. To assist the Deputy in the synthesis and rationalization of reports for ECOSOC and the General Assembly on socio-economic and sustainable development matters, actively drawing on all sources in the system and outside it;

   c. To act as the secretariat of the re-mandated ACC’s Advisory Board on International Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development (see hereunder);

   d. To serve as a system-wide planning bureau for the elaboration, on the basis of general policies and priorities laid down by ECOSOC, of short- and medium-term plans to serve as guidelines for the programmes of individual organizations. 430

**ACC services**

In the aftermath of the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the ACC has created a subsidiary body whose terms of reference cannot place Sustainable Development where it belongs for true effectiveness—within the larger body of global macro-economic problems and policies.

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430 The terms of reference draw upon those for the joint unit proposed in 1975 in *A New United Nations Structure for Global Economic Cooperation, op. cit.,* paragraphs 81–82.
1. The Sustainable Development Committee (IACSD) of the ACC should be reconstituted as the Inter-Agency Board for International Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development.

2. The Board's priority focus should be to maintain global watch and advisory flows, and develop coherent policy proposals for the Secretary-General on equitable trade, money, financial flows, debt and intellectual property rights, and the linkages between these factors and sustainable development.

3. The Board should be chaired on behalf of the Secretary-General by the proposed Deputy Secretary-General for International Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development.

   Its members should be the executive heads of the Specialized Agencies including the Executive Directors of the IMF and, if remaining part of the UN system, the World Bank. The executive head of a properly constituted new International Trade Organization, brought into full relationship with the United Nations, would also be a member. Heads of other UN-system entities should participate according to agenda.

4. The Board would be served by the joint planning staff of the Deputy Secretary-General's office. The Board should adopt a substantive work programme; should not meet purely pro forma; and should set the highest intellectual standards for its papers. It should not establish standard subsidiary machinery but, instead, should specifically task working parties of the most qualified staff among its members, with the ability to co-opt top-quality assistance from outside the system, both individual and institutional. All such working parties should have rigorous work-plans and should be dissolved on completion of each task.

5. The work of such a Board would be immeasurably enhanced by the establishment of a common headquarters Seat of the UN System.

**Documentation**

1. The UN Secretariat needs an office responsible for the creative management of economic and social reports, under an official with over-riding authority to make tough decisions, reporting to the Deputy Secretary-General. The office should listen once to the departmental and divisional drafters of reports and then come to firm decisions that will hold. Equally, of course, if a decision is a poor one, the office must accept full responsibility.

2. Far more than mere editing, the office must have the intellectual capability to understand the work and product of all sources of such reports. It should have this capability,

   a. To exert intellectual leadership in the planning of substantive proposal papers for delegations; in understanding what they seek in reports that they have already requested; and thus perceiving in advance how to provide them with material that will help them in their responsibility for overall UN leadership;
RECOMMENDATIONS

b. The office must include in its work creative and sensitive planning for UN-Agency collaboration on reports, overseeing these processes to conclusion in order to avoid any deterioration during drafting;

c. The office must also have the managerial capacity to know of all precedent documentation, for source-reference in order to help delegates avoid requesting reports; and to run a drafting-to-distribution monitoring system that will end delays in their receipt of documents;

d. Such an office must have the intellectual capability to correlate the drafting of all papers, so that what delegations finally receive is economical in total volume, avoids all jargonized padding or redundancies, contains important new insights or evaluations, and has multi-disciplinary integrity.

THE BRETTON WOODS SYSTEM

The study has discussed the present severe disjunctures between the United Nations and the existing Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The original 'Bretton Woods system' was supposed to include a proper, genuinely global International Trade Organization (ITO); this is not the same as the new contractual 'World Trade Organization' resulting from the Uruguay Round of the GATT.

1. The Secretary-General should make as one of his highest priorities for the 1995 50th Anniversary the assembly by eminent international experts of a paper analysing the present deterioration of the full world economy, and the instruments of multilateral management urgently needed to avert a North-South crisis that could lead to major instability.

2. The Secretary-General should not be intimidated in this by shortage of funds. A courageous call by him, for a group of the world's independent (or government-loaned) international economists to offer their services to the international community through the UN for these urgent purposes, would not go unheeded if he exerts the leadership many of them have long awaited from the United Nations.

3. The Secretary-General should request that this team include specific action-recommendations for the reform and completion of the three missing specialized agencies of the UN system—an equitably governed low-interest capital lending facility; an equitably governed monetary fund including a clearing union, working integrally with a similarly governed universal trade organization. Recommendations should also be made for secretariat functions in trade analysis, monitoring, and policy development, and for thus determining the future of the UNCTAD secretariat.

4. The paper should form the basis for the Secretary-General to mobilize international support for the convening of a high-level United Nations Monetary, Financial and Trade
Conferece as an early sequel to the 50th Anniversary. This must be a full-scale United Nations World Conference, convened by the Secretary-General, to bring about the development of the three agencies mentioned in paragraph 3 above.

OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Governments have expended inordinate amounts of time every year for several decades in trying to improve the functioning of a disconnected set of voluntary funds and agency activities that are supposed to assist developing countries in their economic and social development. It is time to stop this tinkering.

The following measures of reform should be adopted by the General Assembly, with an undertaking by Member-Governments that their Delegations in all governing bodies of the system shall ensure the pursuit of its relevant provisions by those bodies as well.

Country level

1. Governments should adopt a clear decision in the General Assembly that there shall be only one United Nations System Office in any developing country. Each should be headed by a United Nations Coordinator appointed by the Secretary-General, after consultation with the host Government, as a UN Secretariat staff member. This official should have no responsibility for the management of any one development fund or programme, and should be responsible only for Operational Activities for Development, humanitarian emergency assistance as and when this may arise, the present roles of representation of Agencies, and UN-system public information.

   a. No fund or agency should have any predominant claim to fill these posts; they should be advertised world-wide with a full and rigorously demanding job description.

   b. The Coordinator would head a resident professional team whose precise composition should be designed without any preconceived model, but against each country’s forward needs of advice and material support from the system. There being no operational experience of such an approach, it should be gradually introduced, first in a representative number of countries whose governments are agreeable, and in the remainder as soon as first experience is available to make any needed adjustments.

   c. The new country teams should be designed on a fully multi-disciplinary basis, not merely reflecting present funds and/or agencies of the system. In the balance of countries hosting the single Office the interim team should comprise Deputies for UNDP and UNICEF, and Senior Advisers from such other funds and/or agencies as
RECOMMENDATIONS

the forward needs of the country so indicate, reporting to their respective organizations through the Coordinator.

2. The recently decided 'country strategy note' of the system, and harmonization of programming cycles, should be quickly replaced by the development of a single country programme incorporating the present separate UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF country programmes and all other multi-year assistance inputs from whatsoever part of the system.

3. Member-Governments must recognize that substantive coordination and multi-disciplinary programming require discrete staff resources which should be provided to each country Coordinator.

Regional level

4. The General Assembly should request ECOSOC to plan and adopt a total reorganization of the Regional Commissions, to become the regional research and operational-support arms of the UN system.

The Commissions should be organized in these two branches. Appropriate sub-regional centres of the Commissions should be planned where these can provide better services to countries. Each Commission should be reorganized in relation to the particular needs of its region, and to support, not duplicate, the intergovernmental and non-governmental research and other entities that have been established in that region. Each Commission should develop active access for and mutually supportive working relations with the region's NGOs.

5. The General Assembly should recall its Resolution 32/197 and categorically decide that all regional offices of the system shall be incorporated in the structures of the reorganized Commissions, with the same undertaking of Members to make this uniform in all governing bodies.

6. The General Assembly should further request ECOSOC to decide that the regional bureaus and divisions of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and all other regional operational programming units under its authority shall be decentralized into the operational activities branches of the Commissions.

7. The Executive Secretary of each Commission should have a deputy for research and analysis, and a deputy for operational activities, the latter's appointment to be in consultation with the Committee described hereunder. The Secretary-General should prepare, for ECOSOC approval, fresh job descriptions for the posts of Executive Secretary and of the deputies, and with ECOSOC support should ensure the highest-quality appointments strictly in accordance with job descriptions. All relocated regional staff should be full staff members of the commissions.

8. The operational activities branch of each Commission should be organized on the same multi-disciplinary basis as the selected country Offices described in 1.c. above. Provision should be made for country-support advisory posts, according to the forward specialized needs indicated by the country Offices in each region. Each Commission's
operational activities branch should include a mobile multi-disciplinary advisory team of appropriate composition to assist countries on their request.

9. The governance of UN operational activities should be decentralized as recommended later in this chapter.

► Global level

10. The Secretary-General should use his authority under Article 97 to bring all UN funds under the working responsibility of the Deputy Secretary-General for International Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development proposed above.

11. The Secretary-General should appoint an Operational Activities Committee of the ACC’s Inter-Agency Board for International Economic Cooperation and Sustainable Development (recommended above). Chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General or deputy, its members must comprise the present heads of UN funds as well as representatives of Specialized Agencies. This Committee’s functions should be:

a. To advise the Secretary-General on the country and regional level reorganizations for Operational Activities; to organize and consider their monitoring and evaluation.

b. To advise the Secretary-General on appointment of the country-level Coordinators and the deputies for Operational Activities in the Regional Commissions, and to act as a continuing personnel panel charged with raising the overall quality of all staff engaged in operational activities, in terms of recruitment, promotion, and training.

12. The General Assembly should decide upon and request ECOSOC to formulate a plan for the establishment of a single UN Development Authority consolidating all present UN development funds, leaving their identities solely for purposes of fund-raising.

a. The headquarters secretariat of the Development Authority should be under the Deputy Secretary-General with a senior deputy eminently qualified in multi-disciplinary development planning and programming, absorbing the post of Administrator of UNDP. This senior deputy’s principal working-level aides would be the Operational Activities deputies in each Regional Commission, (absorbing some of the funds’ senior headquarters posts) and the country UN Coordinators.

b. The secretariat of the Authority should be staffed, including agency secondments, to support and not duplicate the operational activities branches of the Regional Commissions, and only for substantive overview, strategy and accountability support to the new decentralized regional and country-level machinery.

c. Pending a review of voluntary funding the Authority should also have staff to maintain the identities of funds solely for the purpose of mobilizing their financing. It should be supported by a special unit in the UN Department of Public Information.
13. ECOSOC should carry out an in-depth review of the financing of Operational Activities in the UN system by an independent panel to determine the maximum future funding by an assessment formula.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The chief recommendation concerns a set of problems arising from the weakening of the post-Westphalian nation-state, from unresolved legacies of the age of empires, and from the aspirations of cultural and ethnic groups. These problems are so widespread, yet have received so little sustained attention, that they merit the conversion of an existing and now under-used Organ of the United Nations.

1. Initially by its powers under Article 22, and in the next Charter revision process by amendment of Chapters XII and XIII to reformulate the Trusteeship Council, the General Assembly should establish a United Nations Council on Diversity, Representation and Governance (indicative title).
   a. The Council should have composition and method of election similar to that for ECOSOC, but Member-States should nominate experts in one or more of the disciplines involved in its mandates.
   b. The Council should have an exploratory and dialogue function without attempting the formulation of universal policies:
      i. To obtain from relevant specialists throughout the world the widest range of analyses and recommendations on means of peaceably accommodating cultural and ethnic aspirations; providing adequate domestic and international expression to groups hitherto treated as minorities within nation-states but aspiring to such expression; adjusting exogenously established boundaries; and creative options for the transition of societies from traditional centralist nation-state structures.
      ii. In this function the Council should invite learned papers and dialogue with a wide range of specialists and non-governmental wise persons in all disciplines and experiences related to cultural diversity, representation and governance. Its rules of procedure should facilitate such dialogue in the most open and congenial manner.
      iii. The Council should publish papers and, as it may judge, schema of options that may assist individual member-states and, as necessary the relevant organs of the UN system, in the peaceable resolution of problems and transitions in these areas.
   c. In a second function the Council should act as a forum of resort and petition by
groups seeking accommodation relative to one or more of these widely experienced problems. It would have to be guaranteed under the relevant Human Rights instruments of the United Nations that no harm shall befall them for having made such representation. It would equally be recognized that a member-state or states facilitating such petition would be demonstrating exceptional bona fides in its human rights obligations, and contributing to the general increase in understanding of these common problems in the international community.

The Council may refer such petitions to the relevant human rights body for further investigation and action, or to the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

d. The Council would continue to carry out such functions under the present Trusteeship mandates of the UN as remain needed.

e. In those exceptional instances where a collapsed state, by the ascertained wishes of its communities and their intact leadership systems, should be temporarily administered under a UN authority, the Council would establish the guidelines, oversee the administration, and decide its termination.

► The High Commissioner

2. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should be established at the rank of Deputy Secretary-General, to be appointed by and be responsible to the Secretary-General.

a. The functions of this post were outlined in Chapter VI. They should include an annual report on the state of world human rights (economic and social as well as civil and political), which should be the occasion for direct dialogue between the Commissioner and the General Assembly.

b. The Commissioner should be assisted by a deputy who would be the head of the Centre for Human Rights, and four others drawn from other regions who would be assigned coordinating responsibilities in the UN’s human rights machinery.

c. The post should always have a publicly circulated job description.

d. The High Commissioner should make creative efforts to build better relationships between the UN’s human rights machinery and NGOs concerned with human rights, and should recommend improvements in their access to and participation in such bodies.

► Human Rights and UN Operations

3. The General Assembly should appoint an independent Ombuds-Panel (or equivalent title) on the Human Rights Performance of the United Nations System.

a. The Panel should comprise one full-time Chief for this work, with an independent
office serviced by the Office of the UN High Commissioner, and a viable list of persons willing to serve on ready call, chosen on a representative basis.

b. The Panel should monitor, intermediate, and regularly report on the compliance of all major entities of the UN System with all Human Rights instruments. The Panel should present independent reports on such compliance to the General Assembly, the relevant executive head having the option of submitting a Note of Comment.

c. On every major UN field Mission comprising military and/or police units, one Ombudsman (with staff as may be needed) should independently monitor its work in relation to necessary human rights standards; intervene when and if necessary; report on incidents, report overall at appropriate intervals during long Missions, and report on their termination.

4. Member-States must meet the responsibilities inherent in the onerous Human Rights mandates they have adopted for the United Nations, and equip its Centre with suitable staff and other capacities including communication and public information without delay.

HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY MACHINERY

As with operational development activities, governments have for many years been trying to improve the operations of a number of separately established bodies that provide humanitarian emergency assistance. A major resolution in the right general direction was adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, but has manifestly been insufficient to overcome the separatism, competitiveness, and lack of coordination which governments have built up in this area too. Here again it is time to end the tinkering.

1. After many unsuccessful rounds of reform Member-States should recognize that the continued scattering of humanitarian emergency response capacities among separate funds does not and cannot enable the coordination that they have agreed is needed.

2. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) should be organized into two Divisions: one for prevention, data assembly, early warning, needs assessment and joint appeals and other resource matters; a second as an operations organization.

a. The emergency food aid capacities of WFP should be transferred into DHA to become the sole humanitarian emergency logistics arm of the UN system (the food-for-development work of WFP should be transferred into the consolidated Development Authority earlier recommended, thus enabling the closing of WFP).

b. The emergency capacities and functions of UNICEF should also be transferred into DHA.
c. The emergency relief capacities and functions of UNHCR should be transferred into DHA, liberating the High Commission to concentrate on its original mandates in legal protection for a now enormous number of displaced persons.

d. The identities of these funds should be managed as separate ‘windows’ by DHA pending a study by intergovernmental experts appointed by the General Assembly as to whether such separate identities need to be maintained for resource-mobilization.

3. ECOSOC should establish a single Governing Council for Humanitarian Assistance as the responsible intergovernmental authority for the funds and operations thus consolidated in DHA.

4. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be headed by a Deputy Secretary-General. The head of the new DHA Operations branch must be an internationally reputed veteran in emergency operations.

5. The Deputy Secretary-General should take special care to ensure that this consolidation of capacities at the headquarters level is accompanied by vigorous decentralization in operations.

Close teamwork with senior officials in development and in political affairs and peace-keeping should be organized in order to provide the best assistance to the Secretary-General in coordinating.

6. The Deputy Secretary-General should undertake an independent system-wide assessment of the quality and other aspects of staffing for humanitarian emergency work.

7. Security of Humanitarian Operations

The Secretary-General should prepare detailed recommendations to the General Assembly for the establishment, in consultation with the Security Council, of a new United Nations Humanitarian Security Police as a distinctive force to protect UN and NGO emergency personnel, their transport, and their supplies.

a. This force would consist of contributed volunteering national police agreed by their authorities to be on standby for rapid formation and deployment to emergencies whether or not UN military forces may be deployed.

b. The transport and in-country costs of Humanitarian Security Police should be met from humanitarian emergency funds.

c. Units should be trained in humanitarian security work, in special courses prepared in consultation with humanitarian relief NGOs, and with NGO as well as UN staff assisting the trainers.

d. The Police should have specially established rules of engagement, with a graduated range of weapons including armored transport, able to act without the presence of UN military forces.
e. The Police must be deployed with capability to communicate effectively and sensitively with local populations. The Secretary-General must establish guidelines and ensure an active policy for gender balance in the Police.

f. A basic Protocol for protection of NGO personnel, transport and warehouses should be elaborated with a representative consortium of humanitarian emergency NGOs.

THE DELIBERATIVE MACHINERY

The first recommendations concerning the work of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and subsidiary bodies concern methods that should be used to arrive at the right reforms, because these require very detailed expert study by specialists.

Streamlining

1. The matters coming before the deliberative bodies of the UN constitute an integral flow of business. Past attempts at 'streamlining' etc. have failed to no small extent because
   a. They have been piecemeal per organ or other body.
   b. They have almost invariably taken as given the traditional, highly compressed annual calendar of sessions.
   c. They have frequently been clouded with suspicion of attempts to acquire majority powers for a minority of member-states.

   Workable improvements require that the entire flow of business be examined integrally, with expert advice; that the annual calendar be opened up to whatever extent realistic analysis indicates; and that the perennial and inherently divisive attempt to qualify 'one nation one vote' be abandoned.

2. The General Assembly should establish an intergovernmental expert group (preferably under its Committee on Conferences) to review the entire flow of business through the machinery as one integral process.
   a. This expert group should be assisted by an international team of top-quality professional legislative managers to 'plot' the total flow in detail for a given year, and recommend how to overcome bottlenecks and other present irrationalities.
   b. The review should be entirely open as regards annual working calendars. The most efficient as well as economical durations of annual sessions, and their proper spacing in relation to each other, can only be determined once the total flow is expertly analysed with its real pressures on each body.
c. Governments, however, should be more open to the likelihood that work calendars established decades ago, for a UN with a very much smaller agenda and less than a third its present membership, will have to be extended.

d. Governments should instruct the expert group that it can assume as agreed the following elements:
   
   i. The Committees of the General Assembly, as now consolidated.
   ii. The Economic and Social Council with its present membership, but its annual High-Level Segment 'open-ended'.
   iii. The establishment of the United Nations System Consultative Board (recommended above).
   iv. The assumption by the General Assembly and ECOSOC of their originally mandated functions in the formulation of global macro-economic policies, and the full implementation of their Charter mandates under Articles 58 and 63.
   v. The institution of 'Question Times' in the Committees of the General Assembly (recommended hereunder).
   vi. The decentralization of governance of operational development activities (as above), and the ultimate consolidation of funds in a Development Authority.
   vii. The consolidation of governance of all UN-system humanitarian assistance activities (recommended above) together with the dissolution of the World Food Programme and elimination of its governance burdens.
   viii. The prospective establishment and development of a UN Parliamentary Assembly (see hereunder).

e. The expert group should be requested to consult Member-States on, and examine the idea of making the present General Debate in the General Assembly biennial, with theme debates in the off-year. The group should locate General Assembly special debates and ECOSOC high-level sessions on the annual calendar in such a way as to allow time for their content to inform the subsequent work.

f. In recommending the spacing of meetings the expert group should be instructed to take careful account of the special disadvantages experienced by delegations of lower-income countries in the numbers of qualified staff they can deploy to cover the deliberative and negotiating work of the UN.

Themes debates

3. The General Assembly should recommend to ECOSOC under Article 66.1 that it hold annual High-Level Theme meetings to which the relevant sectoral Ministers of the Council's current member-governments should be expressly invited. Papers for these meetings should always be joint UN-Agency products. The relevant agency head(s) should be present on the rostrum.
**Question Time**

4. 'Question Times' should be instituted as standard periods in the annual calendar of each General Assembly Committee. Delegations should submit written Questions in advance to the Secretary-General on any subject in the competence of a Committee, for obligatory response, with supplementary oral questions on an agreed formula. These regular proceedings should be published in the public UN records of the Committees.

**Secretariat services**

5. There should be one integral unit in the UN for secretariat services to all parts of the deliberative machinery dealing with economic and social affairs. This office should be led by a civil servant highly qualified in managing this work. The expert group (2 above) should also be advised to make its recommendations on this basis.

**Governance of Operational Activities**

6. Concomitant with the decentralization of programming and other functions of operational development activities, their governance should be decentralized to each region. This has been totally neglected in the recent changes.

   Member-States should adopt structures and processes of governance of these activities that achieve three goals: adequate oversight and accountability; governance of programming as close to the place of its implementation as possible; and liberation of the global machinery from the present inordinate time expended on funds totaling only some $3.5 billion p.a. in order to address structural problems that prevent developing countries from earning over $500 billion p.a.

   a. A single governing body for all operational development activities in each region should meet annually at the seat of the UN Regional Commission to deal with that region's inter-country and country programmes and relevant detail in accountability matters.

   b. The reports of these regional bodies should be synthesized at UN headquarters and examined only every three years by a single global governing body for Operational Activities. It should meet periodically to deal with global and inter-regional programmes, review reports from the regional bodies, and provide overall global policy guidance and accountability, with its report being submitted to ECOSOC.

   c. ECOSOC should render a report to the General Assembly on these governance documents. Unless so recommended by ECOSOC for urgent special policy consideration, every five years the General Assembly should review and debate overall global, inter-regional, regional and country policies in operational development programmes, and aggregate oversight and accountability matters.
Documentation

7. The General Assembly should decide, with effect in all organs and subsidiary bodies, on a standard discipline that no resolution or decision can be adopted without its stipulating the desirable length of any study or report it requests. One member of the Bureau of each organ or subsidiary body should be assigned responsibility for Documents Planning to ensure this discipline.

8. The Secretary-General should instruct that documents prepared by the Secretariat be rendered in ordinarily intelligible language, without Latin phrases (except where prerequisite in treaty and other legally specialized documents) or other arcane terminology.

Meetings technology

9. The working meeting rooms should be equipped with now low-cost computer hardware and software, to enable delegates to have immediate access, on individual monitors, to precedent documents and resolutions, and drafts being discussed with ongoing amendments.

Staff lobbying

10. The Secretary-General on one hand, and Delegations on the other, share responsibility to curtail very sharply the now prevalent practice of lobbying by UN-system civil servants on behalf of their particular fund, department, or agency. Fresh directives should be issued, and civil service heads should be held accountable for infringements. The organization of work and of a more realistic calendar of intergovernmental bodies should allow adequate time for secretariat consultation with and briefing of all delegations.

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT

In this study as in previous studies the authors strongly recommend the reorganization of the top of the secretariat to provide the Secretary-General with the coherent advice and assistance of four Deputy Secretaries-General. At the same time, the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be established at Deputy Secretary-General rank. This reorganization, which bears on all aspects of the leadership and effective management of the United Nations, should be decided in an explicit resolution of the General Assembly.

Further recommendations in this area begin with a number of broad principles, lack of attention to which has bedeviled previous efforts to improve UN finance and management.
1. Member-Governments must improve their management of their own financial responsibilities to the United Nations and the system. It should not be acceptable for any member-state to use its assessed contribution to keep the organization in near bankruptcy.

2. Member-Governments share responsibility for correctly informing citizens of the real level of investments made on their behalf in the system. By any reckoning they are modest, and should not be represented otherwise by responsible authorities.

3. Budgets should be made more intelligible and also expressed in annual terms for public understanding. Intelligibility will continue to be difficult until governments fulfill their own original commitments for one consolidated budget of the system.

4. The recommendations in the Ogata-Volcker Report to the Secretary-General for prompt and stable financing should be adopted as the minimum needed measures. The proposal for a United Nations Special Drawing Right (SDR) as the currency of contributions should be re-examined.

5. Member-Governments using arguments based upon the notion of 'contributing most' and 'more' to the UN should cease to do so. Such argument is antithetical to the Charter as well as to basic concepts of democratic revenue-raising. It has provoked difficulty in providing their due share in the countries where such language circulates, and dangerous tension in the UN body politic.

6. The present formula for assessments should be reviewed to develop a formula based on no member-state contributing more than 10 to 12 per cent of the regular UN budget. The difference should be redistributed among capable members, with correction of some untenable under-contributions, and without over-burdening low-income member-governments which would only perpetuate their arrearages.

7. Voluntary financing should be exhaustively reviewed. At a minimum, the administrative budgets of all entities of the system should be financed by assessment.

8. Additional and alternative sources of financing the UN system's work should be carefully developed both to increase its resources and to afford citizens a greater sense of involvement.

► Accountability and oversight

9. The UN's staff resources for peacekeeping and its logistical support must be significantly strengthened for all purposes including reducing instances of waste and possible abuse of funds. Governments must expect problems to arise in the other principal area of potential abuse, humanitarian assistance, until they decide to put coherence into this machinery by consolidating all such functions in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

10. The thoroughly inadequate staffing of the Internal Audit Division and Central Evaluation Unit must at last be corrected. An Inspector-General attached to the Office of the Secretary-General but able to report directly to the General Assembly may additionally help, but only if carefully reconciled with the functions of the External Auditors, which must
be preserved and indeed strengthened. The incumbent should not be drawn from any country that is a major beneficiary of contracts and other UN procurements.

11. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) should be retained. Its work can be maintained at the high standards of numbers of its reports only if member-states, which appoint the Inspectors, strictly adhere to the criteria for appointment which they themselves adopted in the General Assembly’s Statutes for the Unit.

12. The personal financial responsibilities of staff, especially those managing significant sums, should be thoroughly clarified and conveyed to such staff on their assignment. Staff holding any managerial position involving assistance to outside institutions must undertake not to accept employment by them for five years after leaving the service.

THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE

1. An independent commission of eminent civil servants should be appointed to review and recommend all necessary measures to strengthen a now seriously debilitated international civil service.

2. The commission should screen the staff for genuine ‘deadwood’, and relevant governments should work with secretariats to achieve replacements with their best talents. Staff presently not showing significant value to the system should be reviewed for reassignment, retraining, or termination.

3. For these and all other needs the long-shelved proposal for a common UN System Staff College network, economically using existing teaching and training institutions in member-countries, should be adopted. The Secretary-General should seek the assistance of an outside institution to carry out a high-quality feasibility study towards this end.

4. The staff need intellectual enrichment. The Secretary-General should adopt an affirmative programme to draw upon and engage the world intellectual and scientific community, with far more staff participation in outside ‘think tank’ and similar activities. The UN should have Fellowships for distinguished professionals in relevant disciplines.

5. The system of permanent staff contracts should include a recertification point at which the Secretary-General can terminate, with compensation, either to change the mix of disciplines or because of palpable unsuitability. An oral and written requalifying examination should also be mandatory at this point to strengthen career development and make best use of valued talents.

6. High priority must now be given to maintaining, and mandatorily using a roster that fully responds to the requirement of top quality and to geographical distribution.

To qualify for UN service a candidate must demonstrate, not merely that qualifications meet the job description but that the person is especially suitable to serve.
RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Every post, including all senior posts, should have a full Job Description, published before the post can be filled. Executive heads should never simply accept the nomination of one or a group of governments to a senior post.

8. The Secretary-General should be encouraged in his pledge to achieve gender parity in policy-making posts by 1995. This must extend to all top positions. Implementation of Article 8 of the Charter must be a performance criterion for departmental and division heads. The recruitment roster's gender balance must be assured and separately audited; the international women's network should be enlisted to help.

9. Member-Governments should recognize that they have allowed UN-system salaries to fall behind to the point where the service is no longer able to attract 'only the best' from many countries. Member-Governments must adopt consistent personnel remuneration policies, including between the main UN system and the Bretton Woods institutions.

10. The independent commission should recommend an entirely improved system of administrative justice for staff, providing adequate counsel and protection in due process.

11. Member-Governments should make the 50th Anniversary in 1995 the occasion for two critically important reforms affecting the international civil service:
   a. The adoption of proper procedures, with synchronous single terms, for their selection of executive heads in the system;
   b. A solemn reaffirmation of Charter Article 100.2 which binds them to desist from pressure or other influence on the Secretary-General and the staff.

'WE, THE PEOPLES ...'

In an age of expanding democracy within member-countries, a wider support base for the world organization is clearly needed to make it correspondingly more democratic. It is increasingly clear that governments can no longer make effective progress at the international level without citizen involvement at that level. Achieving this will be difficult, but urgent action is essential.

1. The community of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) now faces the consequences of its own recent successes, in an enormous expansion of the number of NGOs seeking greater access to UN-system deliberative bodies, and other facilities. For the open-ended review process now decided by ECOSOC, the community should make an initial presentation and then seek a deferment of the review for, perhaps, two years, in order to sort out the following questions among NGOs:
   a. The optimum places of NGO influence on governmental decision-making in the system, as between pressure and advocacy within member-countries, lobbying key delegations at UN organs or other bodies, and representation to the total intergovernmental community including at UN world conferences;
b. How NGOs working in a given issue-area can best consolidate their analyses and proposals in order to mount an effective representation, given that they outnumber by many thousands the number of Delegations at any UN body;

c. What facilities of the Secretariat itself must NGOs, in their now greatly increased numbers, minimally seek, and how they can propose these in the most cogent manner;

d. How the NGO community can more generally help to build bridges of communication between the citizens whom they variously but not electorally represent, and the member-governments in the UN system.

A United Nations Parliamentary Assembly

2. Since NGOs cannot, in their nature, fully and adequately represent 'We, the peoples of the United Nations', it is time to advance on an idea which was not considered 'woolly' by a hard-headed British Foreign Secretary at the very inception of the UN—a UN Parliamentary Assembly. The following principles to guide this development are recommended:

a. The fundamental means for choosing peoples' representatives in such an assembly must be democratic and by universal adult franchise, even if for a while this may prove difficult in member-countries with limited experience in democratic elections.

b. The objective should be to enable the citizens of member-countries to have their own representatives in a specific organ of the United Nations that can

   ▶ express citizens' views on major international problems and crises, and UN action on them;
   ▶ influence governments' formulation of UN policies;
   ▶ watch over the management and financing of the UN;
   ▶ enhance the collective accountability of its member-governments as its actual decision-makers and governors.

c. These functions must not, of course, abridge or confuse the UN's intergovernmental processes. But a peoples' assembly must have genuinely useful roles in those processes, complementing the knowledge and perspectives brought to intergovernmental organs by governments' delegations.

d. The assembly must have legal status as a United Nations body, for its political legitimacy, budget, and members' access to the Seat of the UN. It must be entitled to issue its own official reports and communications, distributed as UN documents.

e. The assembly must have a regular budget adequate to finance the remuneration of its Members, their attendance at its sessions, and research and evaluation activities under its own authority.
f. It should adopt its own programme of work, which should not be limited to its functions in relation to intergovernmental business but include its own original activities to develop policy and programme proposals for the UN.

3. Member-States should welcome and accept the offer of Canada’s House of Commons to host a first exploratory meeting in 1995 towards the establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA). The following principal elements in the progressive development of such an Assembly are recommended:

a. The General Assembly can create such a Parliamentary Assembly initially under Article 22 of the Charter; its due establishment as a distinct Organ can follow at a next Charter amendment process.

b. The establishment should follow the evolution of bodies like the European Parliament, in three phases:
   i. First, with the parliaments of member-countries electing their representatives to the UNPA;
   ii. The new Assembly then constituting itself the constituent body to work out rules and procedures for full-scale national elections of representatives to it, for submission to the General Assembly;
   iii. The General Assembly adopts the proposed rules and creates the new Principal Organ.

c. To ensure an Assembly of workable size governments of very populous countries may need to accept a sliding-scale formula requiring increasing numbers of citizens for each additional representative. Small island states might agree to combined representation through prior multi-national elections.

4. The powers and functions of a UN Parliamentary Assembly have been suggested in some detail in Chapter XI of this study. The essence of the progressive evolution of this dramatic addition to the capacities of the United Nations would be to give it serious work and real oversight functions on behalf of all citizens, as a complement to the continued central functions of executive government in the existing organs.

5. The reform and strengthening of the United Nations system deserves the concentrated attention of Parliaments throughout the world in 1995 as their contribution to the 50th Anniversary.
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