

28 June 2011

## **Thematic Debate on the United Nations in Global Governance**

### **Background**

The thematic debate on global governance is part of a series of initiatives on the topic of global governance by the President of the 65th General Assembly.

The general debate of the 65th General Assembly in September 2010 was dedicated to the topic of “reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance”.

In the spirit of the same topic, the President of the General Assembly subsequently convened a number of informal plenary meetings to promote constructive interaction between the General Assembly and the G20. The meetings provided an informal platform for Member States to discuss their views on the G20 activities as well as the agenda and outcomes of the G20 Summits.

In December 2011, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on "The United Nations in Global Governance". The resolution recognizes the need for inclusive, transparent and effective multilateral approaches to manage global challenges. It also reaffirms the central role of the United Nations in ongoing efforts to find common solutions. The resolution requests the Secretary-General, to submit to the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly a report focusing on global economic governance and development.

The emphasis on global economic governance in the resolution reflects the high attention given by Member States to the tremendous challenges, the rapid changes and the new actors of today's global economy. The 2008 global financial and economic crisis highlighted the increasing interdependent nature of the global economy, its effect on almost all countries and the inter-linkages between the different economic policy spheres such as trade, investment, capital and financial products and employment.

The crisis has also heightened calls for reform of global economic governance. The existing multilateral institutions established within the international legal framework (i.e., United Nations system, the Bretton Woods Institutions, and the WTO) are seen as being too rigid, and unable to respond rapidly to global crisis. Their sectoral, partial and specialized approach is often seen to lead to inconsistencies and systemic incoherencies in global economic policies which do not reflect the current global economic realities. A more integrated, coordinated, inclusive, effective and efficient approach to addressing global economic challenges in the 21st century is needed.

Limitations to the current global economic governance framework have brought about many types of informal groupings, gatherings and international cooperation that facilitate timely collective action and

response to current economic challenges. These informal groups such as the G8, G20, G24, and regional organizations, increasingly influence the current global economic governance. They work on integrated and coordinated decisions for all the members of the group and/or prepare joint positions for a decision and action to be taken in the formal governing organs of the treaty-based international organizations.

The global economy is only one of the challenges for the 21st century. Other challenges facing the global community include climate change and environmental issues like biodiversity and resource scarcity, social and health issues like food security, migration and pandemics, security issues like global terrorism, non-proliferation, organized crime and cyber crime. All of them call for a framework of governance that allows the effective management of such important global issues. The world in the 21st century has become more interconnected and interdependent. The challenges facing the international community in many issues affect all countries and their citizens. The many new actors and stakeholders involved in global governance are challenging the hegemony of traditional multilateral institutions, like the United Nations.

For sixty-years, the United Nations has played a central role in addressing many global issues. Confronted with new and future global challenges the UN needs to reposition itself and needs to build the capacity to live up to its mandate and ensure its decision-making process is more effective, efficient, transparent and inclusive.

In this context, expediting and ensuring success of ongoing processes to strengthen the General Assembly and the ECOSOC as well as reforming the Security Council and other relevant bodies and organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) as well as the review of the work of the Human Rights Council and the Peace Building Commission is but a first urgent step. While this will allow the United Nations to better realize its full potential in addressing threats and challenges related to economic development and social progress, peace and security and human rights, UN reform will need to continue to be a constant work in progress in order to keep up with global developments. Only then can the UN prove that it is a modern, flexible and adaptable organization.

While strengthening and reforming the current institutional and intergovernmental framework is critical for shaping global governance, it is also important to strengthen interaction between all stakeholders. States and the private sector, civil society and regional actors must continuously interact and listen to each other outside the formal institutional walls.

## **Objectives**

The thematic debate will contribute to discussions on ways to strengthen the multilateral institutional and intergovernmental framework on global governance, particularly global economic governance.

The thematic debate also aims to provide inputs to the report on global governance that is being prepared by the Secretary-General to be presented at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

## **Tentative Programme**

The global governance thematic debate will take place on Tuesday, 28 June 2011, in Conference Room 4 at the UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting will consist of two moderated high-level panel discussions. Member States will be given the opportunity to participate, to raise questions and share their views and perspectives during the panel discussions.

### **Panel I: Global economic governance - from rapid response to medium and long-term planning**

The current global economic challenges require a global economic governance framework that can balance the need for effective rapid responses and the ability to design effective and comprehensive global economic policies. It should also provide a balance between formal multilateral institutions established within an international legal framework such as the UN system, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the WTO, and informal approaches reflected in groupings such as the G20.

A key question facing the international community is how to establish effective global economic governance that ensures that objectives and policies mutually reinforce each other in support of sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and social development. Furthermore the role and contribution of the United Nations, with its universal membership and unique legitimacy, to ensure synergies between the various economic spheres needs to be further developed.

Panelists and participants could discuss how the global economic governance architecture can/should evolve by addressing questions such as:

- Is the current global economic governance architecture sufficiently able to react to new global challenges?
- Which international economic challenges and problems require most urgently global solutions?
- How can the United Nations best work and interact with emerging informal multilateral structures?
- Can a strong and stable UN mechanism be established to ensure a coherent approach in the economic sphere such as concerning financial markets, macroeconomic policies, and capital flows?

### **Panel II: The UN in 2025 – How can the UN remain relevant in addressing tomorrow’s global challenges?**

The challenges and opportunities facing the United Nations in the next sixty years will be very different to the previous sixty years. To remain effective and continue to have a central role in global governance the United Nations needs to ensure that it can address global challenges facing the international community in the 21st century in an efficient, effective and timely manner. Panelists will address how the United Nations intergovernmental functions can be enhanced to ensure its effectiveness while maintaining inclusiveness, transparency, and legitimacy. Also important is to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations institutional framework to ensure that it can implement its mandate in a transparent, effective and efficient manner.

Panelists and participants could discuss what the United Nations should look like in 2025 by addressing questions among others:

- What will be the major challenges and the type of response for the UN in the coming decades?
- How will the concept of effective multilateralism evolve in the 21st century?
- What role is envisaged for the UN with an increasing role of other actors and stakeholders in global governance?
- Is there a need for a new definition of “consensus”?
- Could constituency-based decision making be an option for the UN?

How will the relationship between states, the private sector and civil society evolve?

10.00	<p><i>Opening remarks by</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss</b>, President of the General Assembly</li> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon</b>, United Nations Secretary-General</li> </ul>
10.20 -1.00 p.m.	<p><i>Keynote speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr. Danilo Turk</b>, President of the Republic of Slovenia</li> <li>• <b>Mr. Pascal Lamy</b>, WTO Director General</li> </ul> <p><b>Panel Discussion I</b>  <i>“Economic global governance: from rapid response to medium and long-term planning”</i></p> <p>Moderator: <b>H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss</b>, President of the General Assembly</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mrs. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul</b>, Member of the Federal Parliament and former Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany</li> <li>• <b>Mr. Amar Bhattacharya</b>, Director, G24 Secretariat, Washington D.C.</li> </ul>
1.00 – 3.00 p.m.	<b>Lunch</b>
3.00 – 5.45 p.m.	<p><b>Panel Discussion II</b>  <i>“The UN in 2025 – How can the UN remain relevant in addressing tomorrow’s global challenges?”</i></p>

Moderator: **H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss**, President of the General Assembly

Panelists:

- **Ambassador Celso Amorim**, Former Foreign Minister, Brazil
- **Dr. Ramesh Thakur**, Professor of International Relations, Australian National University, Australia
- **Mr. Richard H Stanley**, Chairman, Stanley Foundation, Iowa
- **Dr. Adekeye Adebajo**, Executive Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) at the University of Cape Town, South Africa

5.45 – 6.00  
p.m.

*Closing remarks by:*

- **H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss**, President of the General Assembly

**Informal Thematic Debate of the General Assembly on  
“The United Nations in Global Governance”  
(New York, 28 June 2011)**

**Informal Summary**

**Overview**

1. The informal thematic debate of the General Assembly on the United Nations in Global Governance was chaired and moderated by H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of General Assembly. It commenced with opening remarks by Ambassador Deiss and by the United Nations Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon. This was followed by keynote speeches by H.E. Mr. Danilo Turk, President of the Republic of Slovenia, and Mr. Pascal Lamy, Director-General of WTO.
2. The morning panel discussion entitled “Economic global governance: from rapid response to medium and long-term planning” featured the following panellists: (1) Mrs. Heidemarie Wiecezorec-Zeul, Member of the Federal Parliament and former Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany; and (2) Mr. Amar Bhattacharya, Director, G24 Secretariat, Washington D.C. The panel discussion in the afternoon focused on the theme of “The UN in 2025 – How can the UN remain relevant in addressing tomorrow’s global challenges”. The panellists were: (1) H.E. Mr. Celso Amorim, former Foreign Minister of Brazil; (2) Dr. Ramesh Thakur, Professor of International Relations, Australian National University, Australia; (3) Mr. Richard H. Stanley, Chairman, Stanley Foundation, Iowa, US; and (4) Dr. Adekeye Adebajo, Executive Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. During both sessions, the presentations by the panellists were followed by an interactive discussion among delegations.
3. Ambassador Deiss concluded the thematic debate with closing remarks. The main substantive points raised during the meeting are summarized below.

**Opening Remarks and Keynote Speeches**

**Opening remarks by H. E. Mr. Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly**

4. H. E. Mr. Deiss highlighted the crucial importance of the United Nations in the quest for an efficient, representative and inclusive system of global governance. In order to play that role, he emphasized that both the UN system and the broader system of global governance must undergo important reforms.
5. According to the speaker, in the area of economic governance, the capacity of the international community to provide and implement long-term strategies for balanced and durable economic growth should be enhanced. Although the G20 was very effective in responding to the 2008-2009 global economic crisis, it did not enjoy the same legitimacy as the UN General Assembly and its system of annual Presidencies might impair the coherence necessary to implement a long-term strategic vision. In that context, the speaker mentioned that the rapprochement between the General Assembly and the G20 was encouraging and

should continue. Other issues that needed to be discussed included the role of ECOSOC and ways of strengthening it.

6. With respect to the role of the UN in 2025 and beyond, the President of the General Assembly pointed out the importance of having a more inclusive and representative system that gave proper role to non-governmental actors, civil society and the private sector. The UN needed to adapt to changing circumstances with flexibility and innovation, learning from the lessons of the last six decades. At the same time, he argued that global responses for the common good would sometimes require concessions in terms of sovereignty and national interests, stressing the important long-term gains that could accrue from short-term sacrifices.

### **Opening remarks by H. E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General**

7. The Secretary-General highlighted the major transformation that the world economy had experienced in the last twenty years. He pointed out that although interconnectedness between economies had increased and brought prosperity to many developing countries, not all countries had enjoyed its benefits. The global economic governance structures inherited from over 60 years ago had not yet adapted to these new circumstances. Reforms had been undertaken in some institutions, but key decision-making bodies still had a long way to go to properly reflect the growing importance of developing economies and emerging markets in the global economy.

8. The Secretary-General stated that the emergence of the G20 reflected this changing environment. The complementarities between the UN and the G20 were clear and both entities needed to continue to work in a mutually supportive fashion to contribute to shared development objectives, including the MDGs. He also highlighted that every multilateral institution and association had a role to play in global economic governance and that a division of labor could make best use of the comparative advantages of the respective organizations.

9. The Secretary-General stressed that, in order to address the pressing issues on the agenda, the multilateral system needed to be revamped into an inclusive, transparent and effective system, with an efficient, accountable and coherent UN at its centre. Given its legitimacy, the UN had a fundamental role to play in ensuring that the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable were taken into account in all decision-making processes. To strengthen its capabilities to do this, he mentioned that the aim of ECOSOC reform would be to make it a more dynamic, inclusive, relevant and operational body both in development and global economic governance.

### **Keynote speech by H. E. Mr Danilo Turk, President of the Republic of Slovenia**

10. H. E. Mr. Danilo Turk emphasized the pressing need to strengthen the system of global governance in the face of a range of complex and interrelated challenges, including non-traditional threats to peace and security, economic uncertainty, the prospect of a potential food crisis, high energy and commodity prices, high unemployment, global warming, and human rights violations. He stressed that economic disparities and failures in global governance could aggravate and inhibit the capacity of the international community to address other global challenges. The speaker also pointed to the paradox between the need for coordinated responses and the divergent interests and incentives, which served to both justify and impair global governance.

11. The speaker highlighted the difference between governance at national and global levels. At the global level, he argued that, in the quest for better governance, there was no alternative to collective action by nation states. Effective results could be produced through political will and a sense of common purpose. While common threats might generate collective action, maintaining such cooperation in the long term remained a difficult challenge.

12. According to the speaker, in order to play a central role in global governance, the UN needed to adjust and reform internally, as well as to develop effective partnerships with other stakeholders. He called for a more representative, yet effective, Security Council and argued that, among other things, the General Assembly should be focused on specific priorities and on enhancing cooperation with the other main UN bodies. ECOSOC on the other hand should be recalibrated and might serve as the interface between the UN and the G20. Finally, he argued that the Human Rights Council needed to be reinforced and should expend more effort in dealing with challenges to human rights resulting directly from the lack of economic and social development.

### **Keynote speech by Mr. Pascal Lamy, Director-General of WTO**

13. Mr. Pascal Lamy pointed out that globalization entailed benefits as well as costs and risks. According to him, there were in principle two ways of addressing the challenges posed by it. One option would be to reverse the process of globalization. This, however, was neither possible nor desirable. Reversing globalization was not possible since it had to a significant degree been driven by advances in technology that could not be turned back. It was not desirable since this would mean giving up the manifold benefits provided by globalization. According to the speaker, the other, more preferable, way of addressing the challenges posed by globalization was to strengthen the existing system of global governance.

14. He elaborated by describing the efficacy of the global governance system as depending on three pillars: leadership, legitimacy and efficiency. According to the speaker, satisfying these conditions had been problematic at the international level. Having effective leadership was a challenging proposition in an environment habited by sovereign states, while legitimacy was tested by the increased distance between decision-makers at the international level and the local populaces affected by their policies. The primacy of sovereign states also hindered efficiency at the international level, where countries could take inconsistent positions in different forums and moreover resist measures that were perceived to contravene their immediate interests.

15. Nevertheless, the speaker argued that all these constraints could be mitigated. For instance, the legitimacy of international governance could be strengthened through better incorporating global issues into national public debates and, at an international level, through enhancing the UN system as a forum for reporting, debate and accountability. Moreover, all three pillars of governance could be better strengthened through better coordination, cooperation and interaction between the UN, G20 and specialized agencies. In that regard, he also argued that a strong ECOSOC would allow for better coherence and a strengthening of global economic governance.



## **Panel discussion I: “Economic global governance: from rapid response to medium and long-term planning”**

### **Summary of the presentations by the panellists**

16. **Ms. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul** stated that the global economic crisis, and inter-related threats such as the spike in food prices, endangered the attainment of the MDGs. It was therefore important for developed countries to fulfil their obligations and commitments pertaining to development assistance. Moreover, she raised the spectre of additional complications arising from the growing inequalities generated by the crisis. These could hinder growth prospects and, given the resulting social and political tensions within countries, also make it harder for nation states to come to agreement on economic policies at the international level.

17. The speaker argued that the UN had an important role to play in shaping processes that generate agreements at the global level. However, the various existing UN processes pertaining to developmental issues had not been well-integrated or sequenced. She also called for consideration to be given to the proposal for an International Panel of Experts tasked with the assessment and monitoring of both short-term and long-term systemic risks in the global economy<sup>1</sup>. In addition to identifying and assessing the causes and impact of systemic risks and crises, the panel could also act as an early warning mechanism, give due consideration to regional particularities, and provide impetus to global policy efforts.

18. Finally, the panellist emphasized the importance of reforming ECOSOC. In that respect, she pointed to the importance of having a representative Global Coordination Council which would consider economic, social and environmental issues in an integrated manner.

19. **Mr. Amar Bhattacharya** referred to three forces that had shaped global economic governance. Firstly, there had been a remarkable structural transformation in the global economy since the mid-1990s, with developing countries growing at a significantly faster rate than their developed counterparts, leading to growing economic convergence. Secondly, there had been increasing interdependencies among countries. For instance, the recent economic problems in the developed world have had spill-over effects in the South. The increased concerns related to resource scarcity and climate change had also been a function of growing interdependencies and inter-linkages between policies and actions in individual countries. Thirdly, economic issues had become increasingly complex, in areas relating to employment, inequalities, food security, trade, tax cooperation and migration.

20. According to the speaker, existing governance arrangements had not kept pace with these trends and had been inadequate in addressing the various emerging policy challenges. On the issue of the G20, he pointed out the grouping had performed well in terms of having a coherent approach, in the sense of ensuring that, on any given issue, all relevant institutions had been consulted and engaged. Moreover, it had been effective in its response to the crisis. However, the G20's legitimacy could be questioned, given its informal status, size and composition. As a result, it was important that the grouping had stronger links with the UN.

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<sup>1</sup> As contained in the Report of the Commission of Experts of the President of the United Nations General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System (September 2009).

21. The panellist also stressed the importance of addressing governance issues pertaining to specialized agencies. He particularly emphasized the need to reform voice and participation in the Bretton Woods institutions and the selection of their respective heads. With respect to the UN, the speaker expressed the need for greater coherence and the importance of reforming ECOSOC.

### **Summary of the interactive discussion**

22. Salient features of the interactive discussion included the points summarized below:

- Participants emphasised a need for comprehensive reform of international economic and financial system to better promote development, and better respond to and prevent crises. In that regard, some mentioned the need for international organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to strengthen their development orientation and increase resources for development.
- A number of speakers stressed that the universal membership and unquestioned legitimacy of the UN made it well-positioned for taking a central role in global economic governance and development. In this regard, many delegations underscored that a strengthened United Nations framework for enhancing coordination and complementarity should be at centre of efforts to improve global economic governance.
- Many speakers pointed out the importance of the UN in harnessing and coordinating international responses to existing and future threats and challenges. At the same time, some reiterated that the UN needed to be equipped with the necessary resources and capabilities to effectively and quickly address global challenges.
- Participants referred to the need to improve the effectiveness of the UN. In particular, they pointed out that the proliferation of parallel processes and repetitive resolutions needed to be contained. They also called for an appropriate follow-up mechanism to be established within the UN to bridge the gap between policy making and commitments on issues related to global economic governance. More broadly, some speakers referred to the need to enhance the UN central role in areas of its competence, including development, human rights and security.
- Number of delegations underscored the importance of reforming ECOSOC. Some participants bemoaned the lack of visibility and effectiveness of ECOSOC, arguing that its deliberations should be more focused on outcomes. They emphasized the need to reform the decision-making processes and working methods of the Council and to strengthen its relations with the Bretton Woods institutions. Reference was also made to the proposal of establishing a Global Economic Council, at the level of the Security Council, with enhanced competencies and the authority to take binding decisions.
- Some speakers called for greater coherence and coordination across the UN system and other global policy-making entities. They gave importance to the need for closer coordination of macroeconomic policy decisions with other areas of global governance, including those related to the multilateral trading system, aid architecture, poverty eradication and sustainable development. On that note, some delegations argued that global economic governance should be seen in conjunction with global social governance and global environmental governance.

- Some speakers emphasized that any reformed system of global economic governance needed to ensure a balance between efficiency, inclusiveness and transparency. Some participants stated that priority should be given to increasing the representation and voice of developing countries in global economic governance. They also argued that strengthening the role of the UN in global economic governance should not entail a weakening of its inclusiveness. On a related note, a delegation referred to the importance of strengthening the General Assembly, where all countries participated on an equal footing.
- Participants emphasized the importance of determining the respective roles and core competencies of informal and formal bodies of global economic governance, and ensuring their cooperation. In this context, they underscored that the G20 must work in a complementary manner with the UN system and other international organizations. Some delegations pointed out that the G20 needed to be more transparent, inclusive and representative in its deliberations and should give priority to development. There was also a call for greater transparency in the interactions between the G20 and international organizations.
- A delegation referred to the increasingly important role of non-state actors, such as civil society and the private sector, in global economic governance and pointed out that the UN needed to cooperate with these new and evolving set of actors who may inject fresh views into its discourse.
- Some participants were of the view that the regional arrangements needed to be better incorporated into the framework for global governance, and in this context the governance initiatives at the regional level, as well as the linkages between governance mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels should be promoted. Some also mentioned the important role of regional bodies, including regional development banks, in the architecture of global economic governance.
- Others mentioned: the need to have clear and internationally harmonized norms and standards in a number of areas, such as financial regulation and supervision; the importance of converting widespread agreements on issues, such as the benefits of free and open trade, into political agreements; the need to bring back to the table debt restructuring mechanisms that would ensure fair debt crisis resolutions; and the pressing need to ensure that the international mechanisms of economic governance are conducive to the attainment of sustainable development and the MDGs.

## **Panel discussion II: “The UN in 2025 – How can the UN remain relevant in addressing tomorrow’s global challenges?”**

### **Summary of the presentations by the panellists**

23. **H.E. Mr. Celso Amorim** underscored the need for the UN to remain relevant in dealing with present as well as future challenges. He cited instances where the activities and intervention of the UN were very pertinent. For instance, the UN had proven its importance in supporting rehabilitation, recovery and development efforts of developing countries facing humanitarian emergency situations, like in the case of Haiti’s disastrous earthquake. Moreover, the speaker also stressed the importance of the UN as a forum for global and

regional political dialogue. As an example, he felt that its unique legitimacy and neutral standing could provide an important political platform for deliberations aimed to facilitate collaboration among the new political stakeholders emerging in the Arab world.

24. The speaker nevertheless emphasized the urgent need for reform of relevant intergovernmental bodies. In the economic and social sphere, ECOSOC needed to respond to current changes in a more timely and effective manner. In the area of peace and security, the UN should increase the transparency of the work of the Security Council and include non-permanent members as well as non-members more extensively in its consultations.

25. According to the panellist, transparency and inclusiveness were fundamental to legitimacy. In this connection, it was a welcome development that the G8 was effectively replaced by the more inclusive G20. However, the participation of African countries in the G20 should be increased. He argued that greater legitimacy would enhance the capacity of the G20 to serve as a consensus-building forum that was complementary to the formal global intergovernmental structures of the UN system. At the same time, he pointed out that the G20 might also need to consider discussing political issues in addition to having dialogue on global financial and economic challenges.

26. **Dr. Ramesh Thakur** underscored that global governance had to respond to a wide number, range and complexity of issues in an increasingly intertwined but also fragmented world. The world had changed enormously since the creation of the UN. Security challenges had morphed from being solely about defusing national security threats to also including risk assessment and management as well as the preparedness to cope with complexity and uncertainty.

27. The speaker emphasized that a major task was to structure the institutions of international governance to make them more robust, resilient, flexible and adaptable. This would in turn enable them to better deal with the rapidly changing nature and source of present-day threats. He pointed out that the challenges related to areas such as international peace and security, economic development, international trade, human rights, and the environment required cooperation and joint action. The speaker moreover emphasized the importance of multilateralism in an increasingly interdependent, globalized and networked world. At the same time, limitations on the effectiveness of multilateralism had been evident, including in the work of the UN on security issues where it had frequently failed to prevent conflict, enforce punishment, come to defense or use authorized force to protect civilians. More predictability, reliability and consistency were needed for collective action efforts to keep pace with emerging international challenges.

28. The panellist referred to five priority items that would need to be tackled in order to mobilize collective action more effectively. These included reforming the Security Council to reflect the growing importance of major powers in Asia and better represent Africa, increasing the coordination between the G20 and the UN, and ensuring the accountability of the G20 to the UN General Assembly or Security Council. He also pointed to the need for more effective involvement of civil society and the private sector in collective action and reform of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

29. **Mr. Richard Stanley** emphasized that the role of the United Nations must go beyond dealing with the interdependence between nation states and also incorporate interactions with civil society and the private sector. He also referred to a number of conditions for having a

more effective multilateralism. An important starting point was that UN Member States should apply a truly global perspective in their deliberations and decision-making. ‘Zero-sum thinking’ was inadequate since human survival, dignity and decency depended on a sense of shared responsibility that would recognize the importance of collective action for common public needs.

30. The speaker also stressed that effective multilateralism would require institutional development. He pointed out that the increasing number of institutions, actors, and stakeholders had led to a form of “messy multilateralism” that needed to make way for a more principled form of multilateralism. In this connection, he felt it was important that the G20 should not be seen as a threat but a complement to the UN since it could serve as a valuable consensus-building forum. At the Secretariat level, he underscored that reform initiatives should focus on enhancing and strengthening the “Delivering as One” initiative and reinvigorating the work of UN staff. At the intergovernmental level, the speaker referred to the need for more coordination among representatives of each Member State in different multilateral organizations. At the same time, he argued that decisions should not always require consensus. Resolutions should be fully implemented and adhered to even when they were based on a majority decision. He also argued that the General Assembly should refrain from micromanaging the Secretariat.

31. Finally, the speaker emphasized the need for the UN to find effective and practical solutions to address existing challenges. In this regard, he stressed that the key function for the UN was to help Member States identify and promote their common long-term interests. Successful examples in this connection included the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the adoption of first United Nations General Assembly resolution on the Responsibility to Protect.

32. **Mr. Adekeye Adebajo** noted that the United Nations would only account for a small share of the entire development system. Developed countries preferred the world of weighted voting systems, embodied by the IMF and others, where their economic size would translate into a greater decision making power than that of developing countries. In terms of the UN role in peace and security, the panellist highlighted the need to focus on peacekeeping. He also underscored the critical importance of reforming the Security Council and making sure that its composition reflected existing global political dynamics. In this connection, he argued that it was scandalous that Africa and South America were the only two major regions without a permanent seat in the Security Council.

33. According to the speaker, the experience of the last few decades had shown that the United Nations was most effective when it engaged with external actors, encouraged and cooperated with local powers, and promoted an effective division of labour between relevant regional and international mechanisms. Moreover, the organization should refine its strategy to better address domestic and regional factors that undermine peace and also ensure that its resources were spread evenly.

34. The speaker strongly criticized the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC). In his view, the ICC suffered from a lack of credibility. According to him, there was a general perception in African countries that the court was selective in how it assessed or laid charges. He also pointed out that ICC prosecutors were currently investigating cases in six African countries while they had not opened an investigation in any country outside the African continent.

## Summary of the interactive discussion

35. Salient features of the interactive discussion included the points summarized below:

- Participants reaffirmed the central role of the United Nations within the global governance framework. Its legitimacy, convening power, expertise and field presence were seen as indispensable in addressing fundamental challenges related to international peace and security, development, human rights and environment.
- Some speakers emphasized that the major United Nations bodies, namely the General Assembly, the Security Council and ECOSOC, had to remain at the core of global governance processes. At the same time, they underscored that the United Nations required adequate funding to properly carry out its functions.
- The debate illustrated a wide consensus on the need to improve the current system of global governance. Speakers pointed out that, in order to enhance its relevance and efficiency, the UN should overhaul structures and procedures. Participants also underscored the importance of having constructive and transparent multilateralism and the need to reconcile the central elements of leadership, legitimacy and efficiency. Moreover, some stressed the need to strengthen the implementation of internationally agreed actions.
- Some speakers emphasized the reform of the Security Council as a priority matter. They argued that the composition and working methods of the Security Council needed to be revised to better reflect today's realities. Some participants also supported the establishment of a Global Economic Coordination Council, at a level equivalent with the Security Council, which would be entrusted with responsibilities in economic, social and environmental matters. On a related issue, some speakers suggested that due consideration be given to adopting constituency-based representation and decision-making.
- Some speakers expressed support for the proposal to create an International Panel of Experts tasked with the assessment and monitoring of global economic and financial risks. They argued that setting up this panel could be an initial step towards improving the global economic governance framework and would contribute to a more systematic identification of emerging challenges.
- Delegates stressed the importance of adequately involving all relevant stakeholders in global governance processes. On this note, the involvement and participation of civil society and the private sector was seen by some participants to be a crucial factor in making global governance more effective and broad-based.
- Many participants deemed the cooperation between the UN and informal mechanisms, in particular the G20, to be essential and of utmost importance. Participants called for further exploration of practical ways to enhance this cooperation, including through briefings and other forms of information exchange. They also called for strengthening collaboration between the UN and other international organizations.
- Some speakers emphasized the important role that regional and sub-regional institutions could play in complementing the global governance structure. Those institutions were seen

as having the ability to better address specific regional needs and demands and serve as a middle-way intermediary between global and national policy-making.

### **Closing Remarks by the President of the General Assembly**

36. The President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss, concluded the debate on “The United Nations in Global Governance” by highlighting a number of points raised during the meeting.

37. These points included: the broad consensus among delegates on the need to improve the current system of global governance and to reaffirm the central role of the United Nations; the tension between the global nature of challenges and the sovereignty of states to design and implement policies that hampered the existing governance framework; the importance, in the context of the reform of the global governance system, of striking a balance between the central elements of leadership, legitimacy and efficiency; and the need for global governance to go beyond crisis management and also to be capable of addressing medium- and long-term issues, such as economic development and climate change.

38. The President of the General Assembly also highlighted the importance of ECOSOC in terms of economic, social and environmental governance and also as a bridge between the United Nations and informal processes like the G20. At the same time, he underscored the views expressed during the debate that ECOSOC urgently needed to reform its structure and procedures. The President concluded that the thematic debate had made a contribution towards advancing the discussion on the role of the United Nations in global governance and expressed his thanks to all the speakers, panellists and participants.

28 June 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,  
President of the 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Thematic Debate on The United Nations in Global Governance**

Your Excellency the Secretary-General  
Your Excellency the President  
Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to welcome you to our informal debate. I warmly thank you all for having responded to my invitation to take part in our consideration today of the United Nations in global governance, an issue which I am convinced is of crucial importance in these early stages of the twenty-first century.

We are at a critical juncture, when we are in greater need than ever before of a system of global governance that is efficient, representative and inclusive. The world as we have always known it is being dramatically changed by three substantive movements that we can no longer ignore. First, the challenges and problems that confront us increasingly have global dimensions and thus require a collective, coordinated response. Second, demographic, economic and political adjustments are taking place all over the world, and third, while endeavouring to face those new realities, the structure of global governance is becoming increasingly fragmented and complex. We are witnessing criticism and marginalization of the traditional multilateral institutions and a proliferation of ad hoc groupings and initiatives. However, the system that is emerging is, as yet, incapable of finding solutions to critical questions that include, inter alia, the situation in the Near East, global warming, the conclusion of the Doha Round, and the reform of the United Nations Security Council. It is against that background that I proposed the topic of "reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" for the general debate of the 65th General Assembly in September 2010.

The Heads of State and Government who were present in New York made extensive allusion to that topic in their statements, and expressed their conviction that the United Nations is the central forum for global debate. However, they also made it clear that, if the United Nations is to be capable of playing that role, reforms must be undertaken urgently. That was an unmistakable signal that, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we must continue to deliberate, and find real solutions that will improve the system of global governance. That message was reinforced in December 2010, when the General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution on the United Nations and global governance that was sponsored by some 100 States. That will make it possible for work to be continued beyond the 65th session.

I am happy that we will continue this debate with you today. I hope that our discussion will make a useful contribution to the report on global governance that the Secretary-General will present to the



66th session of the General Assembly, pursuant to the resolution that I just mentioned. At the end of the day, I will formulate several conclusions that will be available on the web page of the President of the General Assembly and serve as a reference document.

The first round table, this morning, will allow us to discuss in greater depth the matter of global economic governance and, in particular, the capacity of the international community to go beyond crisis management and to formulate and put into practice longer-term strategies for balanced and durable global economic growth.

The G20 demonstrated its ability to deal quickly, and in a concerted manner, with the economic and financial crisis that erupted in 2008. However, what can be said about its legitimacy? What can be said about its capacity to become a leader outside times of crisis?

Efficiency does not bestow legitimacy. As far as I am concerned, that is the sole preserve of the General Assembly, which, with its 192 States Members and its system of 'One State, one voice' is, par excellence, the democratic forum at the global level. It is therefore important to find ways of legitimizing the decisions that were taken by the G20.

I am very happy that our attempt to bring the G20 closer to the General Assembly, that was begun under the Presidency of Korea, is being intensified under the Presidency of France this year.

With regard to strategic leadership, it seems to me that the G20 is at a critical stage. The French Presidency has proposed several very pertinent fields that include, in particular, economic imbalances, agricultural prices, food security, development, employment and social protection floors. Those ambitious objectives are to be commended, and the Cannes Summit will demonstrate the extent to which the G20 can achieve results on matters over which the interests of its members are sharply divided. However, in the longer term, is the G20 system of annual Presidencies compatible with a strategic vision? Does that system make it possible to ensure the coherence of initiatives that are taken over several years under various Presidents?

There are many other questions to be answered concerning global economic governance, especially with regard to the role of United Nations economic entities. I am thinking, at the intergovernmental level, of ECOSOC in particular. How can it be strengthened? How can it be made into an essential actor in global economic governance? At the agency and special programme level, how can mandates be better coordinated?

Those are of course just a few examples.

This afternoon's round table has a very visionary ambition, in that it plans to look ahead to 2025 and reflect on how the United Nations can remain relevant to meeting the global challenges of the future.

That will mean that we have to deal with a wide range of questions. One important element is to attempt to identify the type of global challenge that we will face in the future, in order to identify the types of global entity that we will need. We will also have to ask ourselves how we can be more

representative and inclusive of non-governmental actors, civil society and the private sector, all of which are playing an ever larger role in global governance. How can we hear their voices more clearly while maintaining their non-governmental specificities?

In order to ensure that the United Nations remains relevant to the world in 2025 and beyond, we have to learn the lessons of the past 60 years and effect the requisite reforms. We must dare to be flexible and innovative in order to ensure that working methods are efficient. However, it also seems to me to be essential to accept that we can't have it all: the sovereignty of the nation State that we have known up until the present day, defence of national interests, globalization and an efficient system of global governance. We must realize that global responses for the common good will necessitate concessions. We will have to see beyond national positions to the common good. What may appear to be a loss in the short term is undoubtedly the only way we can gain in the long term. The fight against climate change is the best example. The economist Dani Rodrik, in his last work on globalization, describes the tension between the sovereign State, democracy and globalization as the political trilemma of the global economy. I would say that we will have to find out how to square the circle.

It is on this type of question that I invite you to reflect and express yourselves today. We are lucky enough to have amongst us during this debate some very high-calibre guests, who will share with us their experiences and views on global governance. I invite you to take advantage of their presence and make the discussion as interactive and stimulating as possible.

## The United Nations in Global Governance: Rebalancing Organized Multilateralism for Current and Future Challenges

Ramesh Thakur\*

The world has changed enormously since the creation of the United Nations. There are four times as many state actors, a correspondingly greater number and proportion of nonstate actors, and a tremendous diversity in the types of state and nonstate actors compared to 1945. There has been a matching proliferation in the number, nature and types of threats to national security and world peace alike. Consequently, the growing number and types of actors in world affairs have to grapple with an increasing number, range and complexity of issues in an increasingly networked, deeply intertwined but also more fragmented world.

The security problematique has morphed from defusing and defeating national security threats to risk assessment and management and being prepared – normatively, organizationally and operationally – to cope with strategic complexity and uncertainty. That being the case, the overwhelming challenge is to structure the institutions of international governance such as to make them more robust – so that they can withstand both exogenous and endogenous shocks; resilient – so that they can bounce back when they do buckle in the face of some shocks; and flexible and adaptable – so that they can deal with the rapidly changing nature and source of threats, including black swans.

### *The Importance of Multilateralism*

Multilateralism refers to collective, cooperative action by states – when necessary, in concert with nonstate actors – to deal with common problems and challenges when these are best managed collaboratively at the international level. Areas such as maintaining international peace and security, economic development and international trade, human rights, functional and technical cooperation, and the protection of the environment and sustainability of resources require joint action to reduce costs and bring order and regularity to international relations. Such problems cannot be addressed unilaterally with optimum effectiveness. This rationale persists because all states, as well as some nonstate actors, face mutual vulnerabilities and intensifying interdependence. They will benefit from and are thus required to support global public goods. Even the most powerful states cannot achieve security nor maintain prosperity and health as effectively acting unilaterally or in isolation. We have seen this demonstrated again and again, and so the international system rests on a network of treaties, regimes, international organizations and shared practices that embody common expectations, reciprocity and equivalence of benefits.

In an interdependent, globalized and networked world, multilateralism will continue to be a key aspect of international relations. Limitations do and always will exist. The utility and

effectiveness of formal multilateral institutions are, inevitably, conditioned and constrained by the exigencies of power. Powerful states may work through or around multilateral institutions at their pleasure and selectively. Some issues may defy multilateral approaches. Changing normative expectations may cast doubt on the constitutive values of specific international institutions. But the theoretical rationale of institutionalism – that all states benefit from a world in which agreed rules and common norms bind the behaviour of all actors – is broadly intact and indisputable.

All actors depend upon multilateralism and the underwriting of regularity and public goods in the international system. But if they are to remain viable, international organizations and the values of multilateralism embedded in them must be reconstituted in line with 21<sup>st</sup> century principles of governance and legitimacy. Just as importantly, they must be capable of addressing contemporary challenges effectively. This may involve moving beyond the original roots of multilateralism, reassessing the values on which multilateralism is based and promoted, and recognizing that contemporary and prospective challenges call for more agility, nimbleness, flexibility, adaptability and anticipatory rather than always reactive solutions.

At the centre of the existing multilateral order is the United Nations. Of course one part of the United Nations is an international bureaucracy with many failings and flaws and a forum often used for finger pointing, not problem solving. Too often has it demonstrated a failure to tackle urgent collective action problems due to institutionalized inability, incapacity or unwillingness. Yet the world body remains the embodiment of the international community, the focus of international expectations and the locus of collective action as the symbol of an imagined and constructed community of strangers. Moreover, the UN record since 1945 demonstrates an under-appreciated capacity for policy innovation, institutional adaptation and organizational learning, for example with respect to peacekeeping missions.

That said, without continual structural and procedural reforms, the legitimacy and performance deficits will accumulate and there will be an intensifying crisis of confidence in the world's system of organized multilateralism centred on the United Nations. The values and institutions of formalized multilateralism as currently constituted are neither optimally effective nor legitimate. The chief multilateral organizations do not meet current standards of representivity, consent, juridical accountability, rule of law, broad participation, and transparency – and therefore political legitimacy. This is an acute problem precisely because international organizations play an increasingly important and intrusive role in people's lives. The more this happens, the more people will realize that multilateralism is value-laden, connoting fundamental social and political choices regarding the balance between the market and equity, human rights, governance, and democracy. A range of public policy decisions and practices have been transferred to the international level, raising a number of pressing normative challenges to the Westphalian foundations of multilateralism as citizens become rights holders and states are deemed to have responsibilities of sovereignty.

That is, the challenge to the values and institutions of multilateralism results not merely from any particular distribution of power, but also from systemic factors like the nature of the state, the nature of power, the nature of security and threats to international security, the actors who drive security and insecurity, and the global norms that regulate the international behaviour of state and nonstate actors alike.

### *Repositioning the United Nations for Tomorrow's World*

The centre of the multilateral order cannot hold if the power and influence embedded in international institutions is significantly misaligned with the distribution of power in the real world. A global financial, political and moral rebalancing is currently underway. From 2000 to 2010, the share of global GDP of the world's three leading emerging economies – Brazil, China and India – doubled and their share of world trade almost tripled. Their dynamism and optimism is in marked contrast to Europessimism.

As power and influence seep out of the US-led trans-Atlantic order and migrate towards Asia, Latin America and eventually also Africa, how and by who will the transition to a new system of structuring world affairs be managed? Conversely, how successfully and speedily will the newly empowered big players of the Global South manage their transformation from occasional spoilers to responsible globalizers?

The world is interdependent in areas as diverse as financial markets, infectious diseases, climate change, terrorism, nuclear peace and safety, product safety, food supply and water tables, fish stocks and ecosystem resources. In addition to their potential for provoking interstate military conflicts, these are all drivers of human insecurity because of the threat they pose to individual lives and welfare.

The challenge of global governance – governance for the world to produce order, stability and predictability even in the absence of a world government – is sixfold:

1. The evolution of international organizations to facilitate robust global responses lags behind the emergence of collective action problems;
2. The most pressing problems – nuclear weapons, terrorism, pandemics, food, water and fuel scarcity, climate change, agricultural trade – are global in scope and require global solutions: problems without passports in search of solutions without passports. But the policy authority and legal capacity for coercive mobilization of the required resources for tackling them remain vested in states;
3. There is a disconnect between the distribution of decision-making authority in international institutions and the distribution of military, diplomatic and economic power in the real world;
4. There is also a disconnect between the concentration of decision-making authority in intergovernmental forums and the diffusion of decision-shaping

influence among nonstate actors like markets, corporations and civil society actors;

5. There is a mutually undermining gap between legitimacy and efficiency. Precisely what made the G8 summits unique and valuable – informal meetings between a small number of the world's most powerful government leaders behind closed doors on a first name basis, without intermediaries and with no notes being taken – is what provoked charges of hegemonism, secrecy, opaqueness, and lack of representation and legitimacy. The very feature that gives the United Nations its unique legitimacy, universal membership, makes it an inefficient body for making, implementing and enforcing collective decisions;
6. During the Cold War, the main axis around which world affairs rotated was East–West. Today this has morphed into a North–South axis. The Copenhagen conference on climate change was suboptimal in outcome in part because of the colliding worldviews of the global North and South.

The net result of the sixfold governance deficits is to disempower, disable and incapacitate joint decision-making for solving collective action problems. As a corollary, the fundamental challenge for the international community is how to restructure and reform the United Nations in order to reposition it at the centre of collective efforts to manage current and anticipated global problems over the next quarter and half century.

The paradigmatic institutions of global governance have been the G8 and the United Nations. The G6/7/8, set up in 1975, was always a narrow club of self-selected countries and, as such, never possessed either electoral or representative legitimacy. Conversely, its many real accomplishments notwithstanding, the United Nations has struggled to be relevant and effective. Both the G8 and the UN Security Council had become structurally obsolete by the turn of the century. Looking at the two together, unlike China, Brazil and India are not permanent members of the UN Security Council. Unlike Japan, China and India are not members of the G8. It is difficult to imagine any real contemporary global problem that can be addressed with the requisite degree of effectiveness and legitimacy without the active participation of all three Asian giants at the top table of decision-making.

The emergence of the G20 spoke powerfully to the need for an alternative global steering group to draw in all the world's powerful actors as responsible managers of the world order as stakeholders, not merely rule-takers. Potentially, the G20 offered the best crossover point between legitimacy, efficiency and effectiveness. Its purpose would be to steer policy consensus and coordination, and to mobilize the requisite political will to drive reform and address global challenges while navigating the shifting global currents of power, wealth and influence. But in order to be legitimate, it still must work with and not independently of or against the United Nations.

Unfortunately, what began as a major institutional innovation with the first G20 leaders' summit in 2008 has fallen victim to aimless meandering and a rhetoric-action gap where

photo-ops have displaced global leadership. The group's identity has been diluted and its effectiveness compromised. Far from being a streamlined executive body for global governance, the G20 is arguably already bloated and unwieldy.

A tripartite division of labour is necessary:

- Only technical experts – including national and international civil servants – can do the necessary thorough groundwork by way of advance studies, pre-negotiations, and identification of options with attendant costs and benefits;
- Only heads of governments personally engaged and with sufficient familiarity with and trust in one another can focus and deliver on the tradeoffs as a steering group on behalf of the world;
- Only universal organizations, led by the UN system, can authenticate and legitimize the grand bargains.

Thus the real challenge is how to retain the positive attributes of the existing nodes of global governance while shedding their pathologies. One answer is to configure and operate either the G20 or the United Nations as the hub of networked global governance. Whichever of the two succeeds in the task first will enjoy a considerable advantage in positioning itself at the centre of the new multilateral order.

The United Nations is the symbol and core of global governance but lacks the attributes of a world government. It must continue to lead efforts for the creation and maintenance of a rules-based order that specifies both the proper conduct to be followed by all state and nonstate international actors and mechanism and procedures for reconciling differences among them. The United Nations will continue to play a central role in the development of global governance through filling five gaps in all issue-areas: knowledge (empirical and theoretical), normative, policy, institutional, and compliance (monitoring and enforcement).

For many, globalization is both desirable and irreversible for having underwritten a rising standard of living and material prosperity throughout the world for several decades. For some, however, globalization is the soft underbelly of corporate imperialism that plunders and profiteers on the back of rampant consumerism and almost brought the world to its knees in 2008–09. There is growing divergence in income levels between countries and peoples. The deepening of poverty and inequality – prosperity for a few countries and some people, marginalization and exclusion for many – has implications for social and political stability among and within states. The rapid growth of global markets has not been accompanied by the parallel development of social and economic institutions to ensure balanced, inclusive and sustainable growth. Labour rights have been less sedulously protected than capital and property rights, and global rules on trade and finance are less than equitable. Even before the global financial crisis, many developing countries were worried about the adverse impact of globalization on economic sovereignty, cultural integrity and social stability. “Interdependence” among unequals is

tantamount to the dependence of some on international markets that function under the dominance of others. The financial crisis confirmed that absent effective regulatory institutions, markets, states and civil society can be overwhelmed by rampant transnational forces. It also raised questions of the roles of international financial institutions and ratings agencies – with their known proclivity to insist on austerity and reduced spending for cutting deficits instead of looking to fostering economic growth as the means to raise public revenues – in dictating policy to elected governments.

Globalization has also let loose the forces of “uncivil society” and accelerated the transnational flows of terrorism, human and drug trafficking, organized crime, piracy, and pandemic diseases. The notion that endless liberalization, deregulation and relaxation of capital and border controls (except for labour) will assure perpetual self-sustaining growth and prosperity has proven to be delusional. For developing countries, lowering all barriers to the tides of the global economy may end up drowning much of local production. But raising barriers too high may be futile or counterproductive. Where lies the golden middle?

No other body can tackle these pathologies more effectively, with greater legitimacy, lesser transaction and compliance costs, and higher comfort levels for most countries as their organization, than the United Nations system.

### *Structural and Procedural Reforms*

How can the United Nations be recalibrated to rise to the new and emerging challenges?

Most attention on structural reform in the UN system has been focussed on the Security Council. It is unrepresentative in both permanent and elected membership, unanswerable to the peoples of the world, unaccountable to the General Assembly, not subject to judicial oversight, and yet has betrayed the high hopes placed in it in 1945. With respect to the primary responsibility being vested in it, of maintaining international peace and security, there were two requirements: that states would not resort to the use of force unilaterally, but would come together to use force collectively when ordered to do so by the security Council. The historical record since 1945 shows that those resorting to the use of force unilaterally need fear Security Council censure and punishment only rarely, while those who need international military assistance cannot rely on the Security Council for prompt and effective help. Given the changing nature of armed conflicts and the fact that civilians now comprise the overwhelming victims of conflict-related violence, disease and starvation, reliable and predictable protection of civilians from conflict-related grave harm is the litmus test of the UN’s credibility as the security provider.

In addition to a better permanent membership that reflects today’s power balance, the Security Council must also be more representative of a broader constituency of interests



in its elected members. One possibility might be to adopt or adapt the IMF's constituency system of representation.

One of the best ways to empower the UN's member states is to empower the General Assembly as the only plenary UN body. The UN Security Council is the most important UN organ and its geopolitical centre of gravity. But as it progressively expanded its powers and reach, so it steadily constricted the role and relevance of the General Assembly. The United Nations derives its unique legitimacy and its unmatched convening power from its universal membership; the only UN body in which all UN member states come together is the General Assembly. That should be a major source of its authority and legitimacy. But the very same universality makes the General Assembly a suboptimal organ for efficient decision-making.

One solution to the conundrum lies in capacitating the office of the President of the General Assembly. One concrete example of institutional innovation would be to create a new post of Science Adviser to the President of the UN General Assembly. The modern world is pervasively influenced by science and technology in myriad ways on a daily basis. Similarly, international organizations touch upon human and social activity every day in countless little and not so little ways. It has become increasingly important to bring these two facets of human life together through appropriate governance arrangements that will put science and technology at the service of humanity without borders. That is, science, technology and innovation for human development for all will not simply happen but must be made to happen through global governance. This in turn presents an opportunity for the United Nations, as the custodian of the Global Agenda, to reclaim relevance with most member states and "the peoples" of the world, and, within the United Nations, for the General Assembly to reassert leadership in an important dimension of the Global Agenda. This can be done with the creation of a new post of Science Adviser to the President of the United Nations General Assembly, and for a Knowledge Compact to be among the early priorities for the Science Adviser that would set out the principles governing the global exchange of science.

The question of the most legitimate method of choosing the chief executives of international organizations – from the heads of the World Bank and the IMF to the UN Secretary-General – can no longer be avoided. As we have seen in recent times, the leakage of legitimacy of the CEO can quickly translate into ineffectiveness of performance of the institution itself.

Article 97 of the UN Charter says that the Secretary-General "shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council." But the selection process is not specified above and beyond this vague formulation. Instead it was adopted by the General Assembly in 1946. The General Assembly could just as easily change the terms and conditions of the appointment so as to make the Secretary-General less subservient to the Security Council, for example through a non-renewable single term of office of seven years. It could also use its power of appointment to provide substantial

input into the selection beyond rubber-stamping the choice made by the Security Council, whose overriding motto is: offend no permanent member. There are many possibilities. The key point is that attention needs to be given to this now, immediately after the Secretary-General has been renewed, in order to detach consideration of the issue from the immediacy of an impending selection.

The American revolutionaries defined tyranny as the fusion of legislative, executive and judicial powers in one authority. There is some risk that the UN Security Council may progressively approximate such a tyrannical fusion of powers as it becomes more active and assertive. To match the growing powers of the Security Council there is a matching growing need for an independent constitutional check on the world's only all-powerful law enforcement executive body. The broader UN community must manage the UN's most critical bilateral relationships without compromising the UN's independence and integrity by appeasing any one or more of the P5.

Procedurally, the consensus and majoritarian basis of decision-making of some international organizations has also come into question. According to the existing rules of many international organizations, the status quo of no action is an acceptable outcome if agreement to act cannot be reached through consensus. But while this may be acceptable to member states, it is less and less tolerable to vast numbers of peoples in the face of genocide, terrorism, nuclear apocalypse, and climate change. For many observers, international organizations that are rendered paralyzed, even if following proper rules of procedure, then their helplessness to deal with the most pressing problems makes them illegitimate. That is, their procedural legitimacy contributes to the erosion of their performance legitimacy.

UN Security Council decision-making procedures may be flawed and defective, but at least they are regulated and subject to international oversight and are therefore preferable to unilateral action. For multilateral enforcement action to be effective, it must be based on a unity of purpose and action in the international community so as to avoid fracturing the existing consensus. For collective enforcement action to be equitable, it must balance the competing interests among the many constituencies that make up the international community and avoid privileging the interests and viewpoints of one over the others. To achieve freedom from fear, citizens must be assured that national authorities with the legal monopoly on the means of violence will not unleash the agents and instruments of violence on the people; and states must be assured that the most powerful will aim to settle differences of opinion around the negotiating table and not on the point of tank turrets, helicopter gunships and missiles – let alone nuclear warheads. When countries disagree on the substance of policy, they must agree on rules and procedures for resolving differences by peaceful means.

Multilateral institutions must recognize and involve nonstate actors on the basis of criteria that ensure their legitimacy and effectiveness. In the areas of social and economic welfare and humanitarianism in particular, nonstate actors have become integral and

essential components of multilateral action. Twenty-first century multilateralism cannot be confined therefore to relationships among states but must reflect the plurality of international relations, including the key roles of nonstate actors. By the same token, NGOs themselves must acknowledge, and act on the acknowledgment, that they are now oftentimes actors and participants in the global policy process. With influence on decisions come responsibility for the consequences and distributional impacts of the decisions. Similarly, the for-profit private sector too must take a greater interest in issues of international governance and pay its due share of the costs of the provision of global public goods.

### *Conclusion*

The survival and vitality of international organizations depend on two factors: the capacity to change and adapt and the quality of their governance. Based on human solidarity across borders and transcending national perspectives, the United Nations provides and manages the framework for bringing together the world's leaders to tackle the pressing problems of the day for the survival, development and welfare of all peoples, everywhere. Yet multilateralism is under unprecedented challenge, from arms control to climate change, international criminal justice and the use of military force overseas. At such a time, it is especially important to reaffirm the UN's role as the principal embodiment of the principle of multilateralism and the main forum for its pursuit. For it remains our best and only hope for unity-in-diversity in which global problems require multilateral solutions. It is the embodiment of the international community and the custodian of an internationalized human conscience. It represents the idea that unbridled nationalism and the raw interplay of power must be mediated and moderated in an international framework of rules and norms. This is what makes the United Nations the centre for harmonizing the ever-present national interests and forging the elusive international interest.

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This paper draws and builds on the following works:

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