

I. Improving the governance of operational activities for development

General Assembly resolution 63/311

“Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to propose to the General Assembly, at its sixty-fourth session, actionable proposals for the further improvement of the governance of operational activities for development” (para. 6)

A. Introduction

1. General Assembly resolution 63/311 reflected a broad consensus on the need to enhance the functioning of existing governing bodies for greater system-wide coherence, particularly with a view to improving the strategic overview, policy coherence, coordination, funding and accountability of United Nations operational activities for development.¹ Member States also requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to propose to the General Assembly, at its sixty-fourth session, actionable proposals for further improvement of governance of operational activities for development of the United Nations.

2. The present report responds to this mandate by putting forward proposals for improving the functioning of governing bodies. The proposals put forward are intended to help ensure that the tiers of governance, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies engaged in operational activities for development, function as an integrated “system”, with clear roles and well-defined lines of responsibility and accountability. These proposals are provided as a basis for further consultation and dialogue among Member States and governing bodies themselves on both the challenges and opportunities they would create in strengthening the governance of United Nations operational activities for development.

¹ In this paper, the term “governing bodies” refers to the governance system of United Nations operational activities for development, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the executive boards of funds and programmes and the governing bodies of specialized agencies. These governance structures vary greatly in terms of composition, role and functions, but play a key role in fostering system-wide coherence of United Nations operational activities for development. They are primarily of an intergovernmental character.

B. Key challenges in intergovernmental governance of United Nations operational activities for development²

3. As part of the process of preparing actionable proposals, many earlier reports and studies on United Nations reform in the economic, social and related areas have been examined, with particular focus on findings and recommendations to strengthen governance of United Nations operational activities for development. Key findings are presented in the annex to the present report. The reports and studies surveyed are of varying nature: some have been commissioned by intergovernmental bodies; others have been produced by expert, regional and interest groups; and still others submitted by the Secretary-General, former United Nations officials, independent commissions and think tanks. The quality of many of these studies reflects the political commitment attached to this issue by the international community over the years. There is a notable convergence in the analysis and recommendations of the various reports spanning a time period of more than 40 years. Some of the recommendations have been adopted by Member States over the years but many have never been acted upon, including those proposing further strengthening of guidance and coordination role of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

4. The present report proposes that the upcoming consultations of Member States on governance be organized within a framework that is issue-driven rather than focused on specific governing bodies. The options identified in the report as “a possible way forward” are intended to contribute to a consultative process through which decisions on strengthening governance of United Nations operational activities for development could be agreed to. To facilitate the dialogue process, the report has identified four priority areas (see paras. below) for enhancing the functioning of intergovernmental bodies governing United Nations operational activities for development, including key challenges and a possible way forward.

5. The present report highlights some of the current weaknesses in governance and provides an analytical framework that can facilitate in-depth dialogue, which could lead to significant recommendations by Member States to remove these weaknesses in the upcoming round of informal consultations of the General Assembly on system-wide coherence. The primary aim of the report is to facilitate constructive and pragmatic dialogue among Member States on priorities for improved functioning of intergovernmental bodies governing United Nations operational activities for development.

United Nations system-wide coherence begins in capitals of Member States

6. As has been often recognized, the process of enhancing the effectiveness of intergovernmental governance of United Nations

² The Secretary-General's discussion paper of April 2009 on strengthening governance of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for enhanced system-wide coherence, which was prepared to facilitate informal consultations of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, provides a succinct description of the current intergovernmental governance system.

operational activities for development will need to start in the capitals of Member States, as recommendations on strengthened coordination at the level of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council can be undermined by contradictory policies pursued by representatives in governing bodies of individual United Nations organizations/entities. The fact that global development issues are interconnected whereas in national Governments responsibilities fall within separate line ministries, poses a particularly important challenge for coherent policymaking on United Nations operational activities for development. However, without coherent policy and leadership within national Governments, disparate policies and fragmented implementation will undermine the effectiveness of United Nations development operations. Member States could therefore take the first step in enhancing system-wide coherence of United Nations operational activities for development by agreeing to adopt an “all-of-government” approach to policymaking.

Priority areas for improving functioning of governing bodies

7. As noted above, the present report identifies four priority areas for enhancing the functioning of existing governing bodies, including key challenges and a possible way forward. In order to further advance inclusive system-wide engagement on these important issues, it is recommended that these proposals be reviewed by the governing bodies of relevant United Nations entities, taking into account their special legal status and autonomous nature. The four priority areas are set out and analysed below.

1. Strengthen functional coherence between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, as well as the governing bodies of the specialized agencies

8. The key challenges and possible way forward in this area are as follows:

<i>Key challenges</i>	<i>Possible way forward</i>
<p>(a) Functionally coherent governance system: establish/reaffirm the role of each tier of the governance system: the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, as well as governing bodies of specialized agencies, in guiding, coordinating and implementing system-wide policies on United Nations operational activities for development</p>	<p>(a) (i) Undertake a review of existing legislation on role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Boards and governing bodies of specialized agencies, in intergovernmental governance of United Nations operational activities for development, with a view to establishing a functionally coherent system</p>

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| | <p>(a) (ii) Perform a comparative analysis of agendas, calendars, programme of work and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Boards as well as the FAO Council for WFP and the governing bodies of specialized agencies, and related subsidiary bodies, with a view of establishing more precise criteria for issues to be tabled for discussion and decision-making at different tiers of governance system³</p> |
| <p>(b) System-wide policy guidance: strengthen the role of the General Assembly in establishing overall strategies, policies and priorities of United Nations operational activities for development</p> | <p>(b) (i) Undertake an in-depth evaluation of quadrennial comprehensive policy review process, including division of labour between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards in guiding, coordinating and implementing system-wide policies with regard to United Nations operational activities for development⁴</p> |
| <p>(c) Normative - operational linkages: sharpen the distinction in work of the Economic and Social Council between providing leadership on development issues, policy coordination and operational policy for the United Nations development system</p> | <p>(c) (i) Strengthen the integrated programming of key elements of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, in particular, the high-level and coordination segments, the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum⁵</p> |

³ Development of such criteria should take into account need for flexibility e.g. in case of crisis situations or other unexpected international developments in socio-economic area.

⁴ Review of quadrennial comprehensive policy review process should involve consultations with key entities of United Nations development system, including specialized agencies. Evaluation of quadrennial comprehensive policy review could be performed by five highly reputable experts on United Nations operational activities for development, including legal aspects, appointed by Secretary-General. Evaluation Team should undertake consultations with national focal points dealing with United Nations operational activities for development at country-level as well as United Nations system entities. The report of Evaluation Team should be submitted to Secretary-General within four months from start of work.

⁵ *High-level Segment*, for example, could be positioned as forum for providing normative and intellectual leadership on critical development issue(s). *Annual Ministerial Review* could focus its thematic deliberations on a few critical policy issues affecting the global implementation of the development goal under review. Regional AMR meetings could serve as venue for discussing regional and national-level progress in realizing the IADGs. The biennial high-level *Development Cooperation Forum* has mandate to promote normative-operational linkages in work of United Nations system, i.e. how the global development agenda is being mainstreamed into strategic plans and country programmes of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies. DCF could contribute to strengthening of governance role of ECOSOC by promoting focused discussions on normative-operational linkages on priority theme of AMR. Role of *Coordination Segment* in promoting integrated and coordinated follow-up to outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits within United Nations system could be stepped-up. The CS could also serve as forum for enhanced dialogue with specialized agencies, as well as among governing bodies of funds, programmes and specialized agencies on specific theme under discussion. This would ensure that

	(c) (ii) Enhance role of the coordination segment in coherent governance of United Nations operational activities for development by focusing its deliberations, inter alia, on draft policy framework(s) developed collectively by United Nations system agencies and CEB through relevant clusters on themes of the Annual Ministerial Review and high-level segment
(d) System-wide policy coordination: improve guidance and coordination by the Economic and Social Council of United Nations operational activities for development	(d) (i) Explore ways to enhance the impact of the guidance and coordination role of the Economic and Social Council in United Nations operational activities for development, for example, by considering ways to strengthen substantive preparations for decision-making in the operational activities segment ⁶
(e) Multilateral operational coordination: build greater synergy in the work of the United Nations system for development, including specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant institutions	(e) (i) The Secretary-General, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group Chair could institute annual consultation among key United Nations system entities, including relevant specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, multilateral agencies, regional development banks and coordinating bodies, to promote enhanced coherence in operational policies

normative discussions taking place in AMR, HLS and DCF on progress in implementing development goals are translated into strategic policy framework(s), developed through collaborative inter-agency processes, for action by the United Nations system.

⁶ In the survey of earlier reform proposals, several ideas have been tabled to make system-wide guidance and coordination of United Nations operational activities for development by governing bodies at central-level more effective, including creation of Operations Board; Sustainable Development Board; single governing body; and Group composed of national policy-makers dealing with United Nations operational activities for development at country-level to provide advice and recommendations to Member States prior to decision-making, or alternatively, empowering a smaller body from within ECOSOC membership, composed of national officials responsible for United Nations operational activities for development at country-level, to help perform guidance and coordination role of Council.

(f) **System-wide policy implementation:** promote more effective implementation of system-wide policies at level of the Executive Boards and governing bodies of specialized agencies

- (f) (i) Strengthen dialogue among Bureaus or relevant political leadership of governing bodies of United Nations entities on implementation of system-wide policies, such as by convening regular meetings of the Bureaus of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes to promote coherent consideration of issues of common concern, or establishing a United Nations system consultative mechanism, reporting to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, comprising representative(s) of the Economic and Social Council Bureau, the Bureaus or relevant political leadership of governing bodies of the funds and programmes, as well as specialized agencies with significant engagement in operational activities, charged with performing annual review of progress in implementing system-wide policies
- (f) (ii) Promote enhanced harmonization of agenda-setting of the Executive Boards, including through further synchronization of agenda items of common interest to be considered at respective regular and annual sessions, and at a Joint Meeting of Boards with regard to UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP⁷
- (f) (iii) Require the Executive Boards to develop agency action plans for implementing quadrennial comprehensive policy review guidance, with annual progress reporting to the Economic and Social Council
- (f) (iv) Explore new ways that governing bodies could consider issues of system-wide concern, including common country programmes⁸

⁷ The Annual Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF with the participation of WFP was established in accordance with GA resolution 52/12 B of December 1997. The current selection of up to four or five agenda items for discussion in the joint meeting is made jointly by the Bureau members of the three Executive Boards. Items selected for discussion generally cover specific operational matters or process issues of cross-cutting interest to the participating organizations.

⁸ See further discussion in Chapter 2 of this report on possible modalities for submitting and approving common country programmes.

Key challenges

Possible way forward

- (f) (v) Each governing body could review functional coherence with other relevant entities; in this regard, the Bureaus of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP could review the functioning of the Joint Meeting of Boards
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2. Ensure that countries participate in governing bodies on equal basis

9. The key challenges and possible way forward in this area are as follows:

Key challenges

Possible way forward

(a) **Equal participation and voice in governance:** strengthen participation of national policymakers dealing with United Nations operational activities for development at country-level in programme countries in deliberative and negotiation processes of the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards

- (a) (i) Each governing body to review equitable participation and develop proposals to further strengthen participation as necessary
- (a) (ii) Together with other parts of the UN system, Executive Boards could examine how they function, identifying good practices, considering suggestions to improve the inclusiveness and quality of debates and decision making, and examining options to enhance the capacity of Member States delegations to shape the debate
- (a) (iii) Review experience of major multilateral institutions in strengthening participation of national policymakers of programme countries in governing bodies (e.g. World Bank Executive Director system)
- (a) (iv) Encourage discussion among Member States on how to better utilize existing resources to promote enhanced participation of national policymakers dealing with United Nations operational activities for development at country-level in programme countries in deliberative and negotiation processes of the Executive Boards and the Economic and Social Council

Key challenges

Possible way forward

- (a) (v) Consider establishing trust fund to facilitate participation of relevant officials from programme countries in meetings of the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards, where appropriate
- (a) (vi) Consider providing special technical support to representatives of programme countries to facilitate more informed participation in deliberative and negotiation processes of the Executive Boards and the Economic and Social Council
- (a) (vii) Funds, programmes and specialized agencies to conduct more regular briefings to Member States on progress in implementing strategic priorities of respective entities, including system-wide policies

3. Improve substantive preparations for meetings of governing bodies

10. The key challenges and possible way forward in this area are as follows:

Key challenges

Possible way forward

(a) **Secretariat support services:** further enhance capacity of secretariats of governing bodies to prepare meetings, monitor their results and provide quality documentation

- (a) (i) Each governing body to perform functional review of its secretariat support services based on an agreed common methodology
- (a) (ii) Each governing body to evaluate annually quality of meeting documentation
- (a) (iii) Economic and Social Council secretariat to further strengthen substantive cooperation with specialized agencies in order to ensure stronger linkages to expertise, networks and policy analysis of those entities in preparation of meetings of Council
- (a) (iv) Convene regular consultations among secretariats of governing bodies

Key challenges

Possible way forward

- (a) (v) Bureaus of governing bodies to assume more significant role in monitoring quality of substantive preparations, in particular, agenda-setting, country representation and drafting of legislative decisions⁹

4. Enhance impact of intergovernmental decisions

11. The key challenges and possible way forward in this area are as follows:

Key challenges

Possible way forward

(a) **Information for decision-making:** improve quality of information on United Nations operational activities for development to Member States to facilitate decision-making at intergovernmental-level

- (a) (i) Create central repository of information on United Nations operational activities for development¹⁰

(b) **Policy dialogue processes:** strengthen policy dialogue between Member States and United Nations decision-makers on priority issues facing United Nations development system

- (b) (i) Revitalize the operational activities and coordination segments of the Economic and Social Council as hubs for policy dialogue between national policymakers in programme countries and Executive Heads of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies

(c) **Intergovernmental negotiations:** current structures of intergovernmental negotiations in governing bodies often put premium on political, rather than technical issues and approaches, to decision-making, which, over time, has made many resolutions lacking in meaningful and operationally-relevant guidance

- (c) (i) Make deliberative and negotiation processes in governing bodies more action-oriented through better definition of key operational criterion and analysis of field-level realities

- (c) (ii) Consider adopting organizational model for the Economic and Social Council based on stand-alone segments convened throughout year

(d) **Evaluation of system-wide policies:** strengthen impact evaluation of system-wide policies governing United Nations operational activities for development

- (d) (i) Establish system-wide evaluation function¹¹
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Proposed next step(s)

⁹ As is currently practice in UNICEF.

¹⁰ See further discussion on central repository in Chapter 5 of this report.

¹¹ See further discussion on proposed modalities for establishment of an independent system-wide evaluation function in Chapter 3 of this report.

12. It is proposed that the four priority areas identified above provide the organizing framework for the intergovernmental consultative process on strengthening the functioning of existing governing bodies. Deliberations organized around these priority areas, drawing on the rich proposals made over the years, will help in defining the path to improved and more coherent governance structures.

C. Conclusion

13. The main conclusion of the present report is that improving the functioning of existing intergovernmental bodies is critical for more effective United Nations operational activities for development at the country level. This will require Member States to take action in several areas, including committing to greater coherence in policymaking in capitals, establishing enhanced clarity on the roles and functions of different tiers of the governance system, significant strengthening of capacity of programme countries to participate in intergovernmental policymaking on United Nations operational activities for development, making decision-making processes at all levels more action-oriented, and stepping up relevant secretariat support to the respective governing bodies based on a functional needs analysis.

Annex

Key recommendations of earlier reports and studies on improving the functioning of governing bodies of United Nations operational activities for development¹²

Study/report	Working methods, representation, preparations	Intergovernmental governance
1. Commission on International Development: partners in development – Pearson Report (1969)		Improve review of whole-of-United Nations system issues, including Bretton Woods institutions Institutionalize coordination among United Nations agencies, Bretton Woods institutions, multilateral agencies, regional development banks and coordinating bodies in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further linkages between aid and development policies and those dealing trade, monetary policy and private capital movements • Move towards standardized performance assessments across United Nations system, including Bretton Woods institutions • Establish authoritative estimates of development objectives and aid requirements • Provide balanced and impartial review of donor aid policies and programmes
2. Report of Group of Experts on the Structure of United Nations system – Gardner Report (1975)	Working methods Convene well-prepared sessions of General Assembly or proposed Development Committee, rather than ad-hoc world conferences Organize Economic and Social Council work programme on biennial basis, with short and frequent subject-oriented sessions spread throughout year, in New York, Geneva or other cities such as Nairobi, depending on topic and secretariat location Devote initial substantive session of Economic and Social Council (presumably in January) to identification of themes and issues to be included in biennial work programme	General Assembly Strengthen central role of General Assembly in global policy-making Rename Second Committee to Development Committee charged with establishing overall global development policies Economic and Social Council Prepare meetings of proposed Development Committee Coordinate policy-making within United Nations system on development issues and operational activities for development, including monitoring of implementation

¹² Many of the reports and studies examined in this annex resulted in adoption of GA resolutions with significant implications for functioning of intergovernmental bodies governing UN development operations. The following GA resolutions are particularly relevant in this context: 45/204, 46/182, 50/227, 62/208 and 63/311. Additional reports that may be of interest include those submitted earlier by the Secretary-General to facilitate intergovernmental deliberations on such issues, including the most recent one entitled “strengthening governance of operational activities for development of UN system for enhanced system-wide coherence” (Apr. ’09).

Study/report	Working methods, representation, preparations	Intergovernmental governance
	<p>Design Economic and Social Council work programme so that all issues currently addressed by subsidiary bodies are discussed over two-year cycle, with one-week ministerial session (e.g. last week of June) devoted to overall policy review, followed by separate discussions, two weeks each, first, on programme budgets and medium-term plans of entire United Nations system, and, secondly, to review operational activities</p> <p>Representation Officials from capitals having the required expertise, flexible instructions and capacity to follow-up directly on implementation of agreed decisions would attend Economic and Social Council sessions, with travel support provided to developing country participants</p> <p>Promote active participation of specialized agencies in work of Economic and Social Council</p> <p>Preparations Restructure and strengthen central Secretariat so as to be able to provide intellectual direction on issues of system-wide concern</p>	<p>Assume direct responsibility for work performed by subsidiary bodies except regional commissions and others of highly specialized nature (e.g. Statistical Commission)¹³</p> <p>Establish small negotiation groups to facilitate consensus-building on priority issues</p> <p>Review programme budgets and medium-term plans in economic and social fields with support of revitalized Committee on Programme Coordination¹⁴</p> <p>Governing boards of funds and programmes Consolidate governing boards of operational funds administered by United Nations into single Operations Board, reporting to Economic and Social Council, with membership small (18-27 countries)¹⁵</p> <p>Evaluation Create small full-time body of independent experts to provide intergovernmental organs with information on programme management & execution and progress in achieving policy goals, with Joint Inspection Unit alternatively transformed into this entity</p>
<p>3. Ad-hoc Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations system (1977)</p>	<p>Working methods Rationalize General Assembly working methods and procedures</p> <p>Improve coordination of 2nd and 3rd Committees with 5th Committee</p> <p>Organize Economic and Social Council work on biennial basis through shorter but more frequent subject-oriented sessions spread throughout the year</p> <p>Convene periodic Economic and Social Council meetings at ministerial-level to review major issues</p>	<p>General Assembly Serve as principal forum for global policy-making</p> <p>Economic and Social Council Act as central forum for discussion of international economic and social issues of interdisciplinary nature</p> <p>Formulate policy recommendations addressed to Member States and United Nations system</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate implementation of General Assembly policy</p>

¹³ With most subsidiary bodies discontinued, the report makes several proposals to make rules governing participation in work of ECOSOC more flexible.

¹⁴ Based on draft plans prepared by an inter-agency planning unit.

¹⁵ With operational funds maintaining fund-raising identity.

Study/report	Working methods, representation, preparations	Intergovernmental governance
	<p>Preparations Prepare concise and action-oriented documentation for General Assembly and Economic and Social Council sessions</p>	<p>guidance Ensure overall coordination of activities of United Nations system Undertake comprehensive policy reviews of United Nations operational activities for development Assume, to maximum extent possible, functions of subsidiary bodies Improve consultative relationships with non-governmental organizations Consolidate planning, programming and coordination responsibilities in Committee for Programme Coordination</p> <p>Governing boards of funds and programmes Consider establishing single governing body responsible for management & control of United Nations operational activities for development, replacing existing governing bodies</p>
<p>4. North-South: A Programme for Survival – Brandt Report (1979)</p>	<p>Working methods Make agendas more purposeful and results-oriented, with better time management and more economical documentation Review present system of negotiations to see whether more flexible, expeditious and results-oriented procedures can be introduced without detracting from cooperation within existing groups¹⁶</p>	<p>Create high-level Independent Advisory Body composed of 12 members, with one-third from developing and developed countries and individual experts respectively, serving in individual capacity and appointed by SG to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise Member States, General Assembly and its organs with view of improving the effectiveness of United Nations and other international institutions engaged in development and international economic cooperation in achieving their global objectives¹⁷ <p>Establish small negotiation groups on priority issues composed of countries of which respective issue is of most interest to facilitate consensus-building Convene occasionally summits of limited number of countries to forge commitment and advance consensus on high-priority issues as precursor for discussions in universal forums such as General Assembly</p>
<p>5. Some reflections on reform of United</p>	<p>Working methods</p>	<p>Establish Economic Security Council composed of 23 members, replacing</p>

¹⁶ The Commission on Global Governance (discussed later) also proposed establishing **constituency-based system** in executive boards of UN development agencies so as to facilitate more pragmatic decision-making.

¹⁷ The reports of the proposed Advisory Group would be made available to the public.

Study/report	Working methods, representation, preparations	Intergovernmental governance
<p>Nations – Maurice Bertrand - Joint Inspection Unit (1985)</p>	<p>Reduce overlap in agenda of intergovernmental bodies</p> <p>Representation Involve technical ministries in intergovernmental deliberations on development issues with a view of influencing national policy-making</p> <p>Appoint Economic Ambassador, coming from Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, part of each delegation in NY, to participate in Economic Security Council</p> <p>Preparations Set-up an inter-disciplinary secretariat to service Economic Security Council with team of economists, sociologists and other specialists of high qualifications</p>	<p>Economic and Social Council and Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD</p> <p>Economic Security Council would play similar role as Security Council in area of peace and security</p> <p>Establish single governing body (and single development agency) for United Nations operational activities for development at regional-level</p> <p>Adopt constituency-based intergovernmental negotiations based on definition of interest groups whose composition and dimensions vary according to subject dealt with, and method of representation of these groups¹⁸</p> <p>National level Enhance policy coherence of Member States in intergovernmental bodies</p>
<p>6. Report of Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review Efficiency of Administrative and Financial Functioning of United Nations – The Group of 18 (1986)</p>	<p>Working methods Undertake comparative analysis of agenda, calendars and programme of work of General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and related subsidiary bodies</p> <p>Rationalize agenda-setting, procedures and methods of work of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council in order to reduce number of meetings and documentation</p> <p>Improve system of reporting from subsidiary bodies to principal organs with a view to reducing and minimizing duplication in documentation</p> <p>Adopt fewer and more strategic resolutions</p>	<p>Consider establishing single governing body responsible for management and control, at intergovernmental-level, of United Nations operational activities for development</p> <p>Improve intergovernmental review of reports of Joint Inspection United Nations</p> <p>Strengthen independent evaluation of United Nations operational activities for development</p>
<p>7. Report of Special Economic and Social Council Commission on In-depth Study of United Nations</p>	<p>Working methods Rationalize method of work of General Assembly in economic and social fields</p> <p>Improve prioritization of policy issues to be discussed in General</p>	<p>General Assembly Establish overall strategies, policies and priorities for United Nations system in respect of international cooperation, including operational activities for development</p>

¹⁸ In order for negotiations to improve or alter world consensus, all participants need to agree on negotiation structures at outset.

Study/report	Working methods, representation, preparations	Intergovernmental governance
<p>Intergovernmental Structures and Functions in Economic and Social Fields (1988)¹⁹</p>	<p>Assembly each year</p> <p>Make representation in Economic and Social Council universal²⁰</p> <p>Eliminate overlap in General Assembly and Economic and Social Council agenda²¹</p> <p>Convene 2nd and 3rd Committees for four weeks each year</p> <p>Hold 4-5 weeks annual session of Council in July/August each year, with high-level segment undertaking in-depth review of selected programme areas</p> <p>Convene subject-oriented sessions of Council, as appropriate²²</p> <p>Representation</p> <p>Strengthen participation of executive heads of United Nations organizations in Economic and Social Council deliberations</p> <p>Preparations</p> <p>Improve and rationalize system of reporting to General Assembly and Economic and Social Council</p> <p>Perform periodic evaluation and appraisal of quality and content of reports prepared for Economic and Social Council</p> <p>Strengthen Secretariat support</p>	<p>Serve as principal forum for policy-making and provision of policy guidance to United Nations operational activities for development</p> <p>Economic and Social Council</p> <p>Serve as central forum for substantive coordination of international economic and social issues of global and interdisciplinary nature and for formulation of recommendations to Member States and United Nations system</p> <p>Provide coordination of activities of United Nations system</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate implementation of General Assembly policies</p> <p>Recommend to General Assembly overall priorities and policy guidance on operational activities for development – the Third (Programme and Coordination) Committee of Council would devote its deliberations to operational activities²³</p> <p>Discuss each year limited number of operational issues requiring coordination and harmonization of action among relevant United Nations system organizations</p> <p>Undertake comprehensive policy review of operational activities every three years</p> <p>Obtain regular reports from specialized agencies on steps taken to give effect to relevant recommendations of General Assembly and Council</p>

¹⁹ Chairman's text dated 4 May 1988 on the draft conclusions and recommendations of Special Commission.

²⁰ In an informal paper presented by G-77 on 1 September 1987, six reasons were identified for the inability of ECOSOC to fulfil its mandate: (a) restricted membership, (b) expansion of its subsidiary machinery, (c) short duration of meetings, (d) inadequate secretariat support structure and (e) lack of recognition of Council's authority by other intergovernmental and inter-secretarial bodies of UN system.

²¹ The Special Commission proposed that GA and ECOSOC should establish a process of periodic review and evaluation of United Nations intergovernmental structure and functions in economic and social fields.

²² In an informal discussion paper presented by Canada, universal membership of ECOSOC was proposed as well as organization of work programme along five main sectoral lines, which would be served by three Committees of the Council, with one focusing on UN operational activities for development.

²³ In an informal discussion paper, Japan proposed the creation of **sessional committee** of Council to deal solely with coordination of operational activities for development.

Study/report	Working methods, representation, preparations	Intergovernmental governance
		<p>Governing boards of funds and programmes Exercise responsibility for formulation, appraisal, approval, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects</p>
8. Challenge to the South – The Report of the South Commission (1990)		<p>Summit of Leaders Establish representative group of leaders of developed and developing countries under auspices of United Nations to periodically review world economic situation, prospects for development and environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend guidelines for action by specialized agencies of United Nations and other major actors on the global scene
9. The United Nations in Development: <i>reform issues in the economic and social fields – A Nordic Perspective</i> (1991)	<p>Working methods Systematize General Assembly and Economic and Social Council agenda-setting Make greater use of groups with limited membership to deal with specific issues or sectors Minimize overlaps in General Assembly and Economic and Social Council mandates</p> <p>Preparations Streamline reporting to Economic and Social Council</p>	<p>Establish International Development Council, as high-level forum to discuss development issues and provide overall guidance to United Nations operational activities for development :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on normative aspects of development, delegating administrative and managerial issues to system of Executive Boards • Absorbing policy functions of five boards (United Nations DP, United Nations ICEF, United Nations FPA, WFP and IFAD), while Executive Boards, composed of no more than 20 representatives, provide policy guidance to senior management on continuous basis • Replacing either Second or Third Committee of General Assembly, ensuring universal participation, or constituted as one segment of Economic and Social Council, with 54 members <p>IDC role would resemble that of Development Committee of World Bank</p>
10. United Nations DP Human Development Report (1992)		<p>Create Development Security Council, composed of 11 permanent members and 11 on basis of rotational election to²⁴:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design broad policy for all development issues, ranging from food security to ecological security, from humanitarian assistance to development assistance, from debt relief to social development, from drug control to international migration • Prepare global revolving five-year budget of development resources flows • Provide policy coordination framework for smooth functioning of international development and financial institutions
11. Renewing the	Working methods	Establish United Nations System Consultative Board , reporting to General

²⁴ The report argued that size of ECOSOC makes it difficult for Council to exercise its coordination role.

Study/report	Working methods, representation, preparations	Intergovernmental governance
United Nations System – Erskine Childers and Brian Urquhart (1994)	<p>Extend working periods of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council</p> <p>Explore ways to enhance negotiation and decision-making capacities of poorer countries in General Assembly and Economic and Social Council</p> <p>Improve traditions and timings of debate, traditional composition of resolutions and discipline in requesting reports including proscribing their length</p> <p>Introduce “Question time” in General Assembly</p> <p>Representation</p> <p>Promote more strategic composition of participants in Economic and Social Council deliberations</p> <p>Preparations</p> <p>Improve Economic and Social Council documentation, and make more strategic, in order to attract ministerial attendance</p> <p>Designate one focal point within Secretariat to plan, marshal and monitor quality, coherence and volume of socio-economic documentation</p> <p>Undertake business process review of legislative support services</p>	<p>Assembly, through Economic and Social Council, comprising Economic and Social Council bureau members, bureaus of executive governing bodies of major agencies, and one representative of each other agency to formulate common policy-approaches on all matters requiring system-wide effort</p> <p>Convene Board biennially to review progress in system-wide implementation of selected policies and programmes, including United Nations -wide reform efforts</p> <p>Establish General Committee, as standing capacity of General Assembly, to monitor & evaluate its discharge of responsibilities for coordination of policies and activities of agencies under Article 58 of United Nations Charter</p> <p>Establish single governing body for United Nations operational activities for development at regional-level, under auspices of respective Regional Commission</p> <p>Examine reports of regional governing entities in single global governing body for United Nations operational activities for development, providing overall global policy guidance and accountability, with report submitted to Economic and Social Council</p> <p>General Assembly to review and debate every five years overall, global, inter-regional, regional and country policies in operational development programmes</p>
12. Our Global Neighbourhood – Report of Commission on Global Governance (1995)	<p>Working methods</p> <p>Make modus operandi of Economic Security Council practical and efficient</p> <p>Promote informal exchanges in Economic Security Council among national leaders</p> <p>Streamline and modernize procedures of General Assembly and its committees</p> <p>Reduce and rationalize General Assembly agenda</p> <p>Make General Assembly work more focused and results-oriented</p> <p>Convene General Assembly theme session in first half of each year on major priority issue</p>	<p>Create an Economic Security Council composed of no more than 23 members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess overall state of world economy and interaction between major policy areas • Provide long-term strategic policy framework for stable, balanced and sustainable development • Secure consistency between policy goals of major international institutions • Promote consensus-building for evolution of international economic system <p>Retire Economic and Social Council</p> <p>Submit major recommendations of Economic and Social Council subsidiary bodies to Economic Security Council, others to merged 2nd and 3rd committees, with NGO accreditation shifted to General Assembly</p> <p>Governing boards of funds and programmes</p>

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	<p>Merge 2nd and 3rd committees of General Assembly</p> <p>Enhance opportunity for intellectual dialogue among leaders in General Assembly</p> <p>Reduce overlapping agendas of Economic and Social Council and 2nd and 3rd committees</p> <p>Representation</p> <p>Heads-of-State and finance ministers to participate in Economic Security Council</p> <p>Preparations</p> <p>Imaginative and unconventional approach required to service Economic Security Council</p> <p>Secretariat staff and research capacity of high-quality with ability for strategic thinking on economic, social and environmental issues</p> <p>Consider inviting competitive bidding from United Nations and private agencies for any significant piece of work done on behalf of Economic Security Council</p> <p>Foster substantive collaboration between staff of Economic Security Council and Bretton Woods institutions, WTO, ILO and others</p>	<p>Provide operational governance of respective entities</p> <p>Establish constituency-based system so that all countries have voice on executive boards</p>
<p>13. A world in need of leadership: tomorrow's United Nations - A Fresh Appraisal – Erskine Childers and Brian Urquhart (1996)</p>	<p>Representation</p> <p>Enhance strategy-negotiating and coordinating role of Economic and Social Council through more strategic composition of participants in Council's deliberations</p>	<p>Establish United Nations System Consultative Board comprising Economic and Social Council bureau members, bureaus of executive governing bodies of major agencies, and one representative of each other agency to formulate common policy-approaches on all matters requiring system-wide effort</p> <p>Establish single governing body for United Nations operational activities for development, with regional governing bodies for programmes in each region</p> <p>National level</p> <p>Enhance policy coherence of Member States in intergovernmental bodies</p>
<p>14. The United Nations in Development-Strengthening the United Nations</p>	<p>Working methods</p> <p>Consolidate agendas of 2nd and 3rd committees of General Assembly</p> <p>Convene Economic and Social Council whenever necessary to</p>	<p>Establish functionally-integrated governance system:</p> <p>General Assembly, United Nations conferences and treaty-making bodies</p> <p>Perform agenda, norm and standard-setting through dialogue and</p>

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<p>through change: <i>fulfilling its economic and social mandate</i> – The Nordic United Nations Reform Project (1996)</p>	<p>address urgent developments in economic, social & related fields requiring guidance and coordination by Council</p> <p>Review subsidiary structure of Economic and Social Council in order to assess whether tasks can be absorbed by Council and other forums</p> <p>Preparations</p> <p>Improve preparations for substantive meetings of Economic and Social Council, with higher-quality reporting, focused agenda, and more active bureau</p> <p>Compile sectoral, operational and agency-oriented reports into consolidated Economic and Social Council report on development</p>	<p>negotiations; policy-making; and oversight of subordinate bodies of United Nations system</p> <p>Economic and Social Council</p> <p>Provide policy guidance to all parts of United Nations system, including specialized agencies and regional commissions; coordination of intergovernmental, inter-agency and operational activities, particularly with respect to implementation of comprehensive policy review of General Assembly and integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences including assessment of analyses and data collection; priority-setting as regards resources and activities; and consolidation of medium-term plans and budgets</p> <p>Strengthen Economic and Social Council guidance of functional commissions and expert bodies</p> <p>Governing bodies of funds, programmes and agencies</p> <p>Undertake policy interpretation, preparation and application; strategy development; approval of programmes and budgets; oversight of operations management; and monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>Long-term vision</p> <p>Unified governance arrangement for consolidated United Nations development system</p>

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<p>15. Renewing the United Nations: programme for reform – Report of the Secretary-General (1997)</p>	<p>Working methods Conceptualize & organize General Assembly agenda around priorities of United Nations medium-term plan Consider holding Economic and Social Council segments at different pre-established periods during year, without affecting totality of Council meetings Extend duration of Operational Activities Segment to enable Council to provide effective policy guidance to work of different programmes and funds Adopt ex-ante, rather than ex-post, review by Council of work programme of functional commissions Convene meetings of Executive Boards of United Nations DP/United Nations FPA and United Nations ICEF back-to-back, with joint meetings, as appropriate, and with joint committees comprising members of both boards to review issues and matters of common concern</p> <p>Representation Economic and Social Council segments attended by ministers directly concerned with respective themes. Active participation of LDCs, beneficiaries of operational activities, is especially important in order to render dialogue more meaningful Establish trust fund to facilitate participation of ministers and/or high-level officials of LDCs in Operational Activities Segment</p> <p>Preparations Improve preparations for Operational Activities Segment so that policy issues arising from reports of Executive Boards of funds and programmes are effectively identified, and level of participation in Council that can give necessary political weight to policy prescriptions emanating from it, is promoted</p>	<p>Economic and Social Council Rethink role of Economic and Social Council, possibly providing it with greater authority under Charter Consolidate and re-configure Economic and Social Council subsidiary machinery Replace Committee on Development Policy by panel of experts on relevant policy issues set-up by Economic and Social Council on ad-hoc basis, with members appointed on recommendation of Secretary-General Promote closer integration of governance oversight of United Nations DP/United Nations FPA and United Nations ICEF, with consecutive and/or joint meetings of Executive Boards, and convene joint committees to review issues and matters of common concern</p>

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<p>16. The role of the Annual Joint Meeting²⁵ of Executive Boards of funds and programmes – Informal note by Anthony Beattie, President of Executive Board of WFP (2004)</p>	<p>Working methods Adopt more strategic approach to agenda-setting, planning 2-3 years in advance Improve quality of debate Aim to achieve operationally useful conclusions Encourage discussions on outcome of Annual Joint Meeting, in the Executive Boards Invite Executive Boards to report back on implementation of conclusions of Annual Joint Meeting of Boards Exploit synergies by reflecting objectives and current concerns of Annual Joint Meeting of Boards in terms of reference for joint field visits</p>	
<p>17. Assessment of value-added of joint meetings of the executive boards of United Nations DP/United Nations FPA, United Nations ICEF and WFP – Report of Secretary-General (E/2004/60:2004)</p>		<p>Consider adopting more formal approach to Annual Joint Meeting of Boards, e.g. granting of decision-making authority Examine how empowered Annual Joint Meeting of Boards would advance system-wide coherence and agreed development goals, including recommendations of QCPR²⁶ Conduct periodic reviews of relevance and effectiveness of Annual Joint Meeting of Boards, including complementarity with Operational Activities Segment of Economic and Social Council</p>
<p>18. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations – An Issues Paper – Gert Rosenthal (2005)</p>	<p>Working methods Organize Economic and Social Council segments at different intervals throughout year Strengthen focus on Economic and Social Council core functions Reduce formality in Economic and Social Council proceedings</p>	<p>Economic and Social Council Reduce Economic and Social Council membership to 36 countries Achieve consensus on Economic and Social Council subsidiary status to General Assembly</p>

²⁵ The Annual Joint Meeting of Executive Boards of the four funds and programmes (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP) originates in GA resolution 52/12 of December 1997. The resolution “accepts that management of funds and programmes would be enhanced by greater integration of intergovernmental oversight, and requests ECOSOC, in the context of the next TCPR, during its Operational Activities Segment of 1998, to consider arrangements for closer integration of the governance oversight of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF, with consecutive and/or joint meetings of the existing executive boards, bearing in mind the respective mandates of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes.

²⁶ Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of General Assembly.

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	<p>Representation Assume present disconnect between Economic and Social Council natural constituency and national economic policy-making at country-level as “given”</p> <p>Preparations Improve technical quality of inputs to Economic and Social Council meetings</p>	<p>Serve as Council of Ministers for Economic and Social Affairs with authority to review medium-term plans, or equivalent, of all United Nations system organizations</p> <p>Coordinate follow-up to outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits</p> <p>Undertake in-depth policy debates in Council with decisions adopted by General Assembly</p> <p>Establish closer relationship with Security Council</p> <p>Strengthen partnership with Bretton Woods institutions and WTO in order to give Council better access to ministries of finance, trade and development</p> <p>Bring non-governmental and private sectors more fully into work of Council</p>
<p>19. Report of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence – Delivering-as-One (2006)</p>	<p>Working methods Establish clear lines of accountability among different governance mechanisms in order to promote robust oversight of United Nations system performance and results</p> <p>Representation Comprise Sustainable Development Board with senior officials from development, planning, finance and foreign ministries, with appropriate skills and competence</p> <p>Preparations Establish Development Policy and Operations Group, supported by Development Finance and Performance Unit, composed of talented officials from all parts of United Nations system to provide high-quality support to Sustainable Development Board</p>	<p>Establish Global Leaders Forum comprised of leaders of 27 countries rotating on basis of geographical representation, with participation of executive heads of major international economic and financial institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership on development and global public goods-related issues • Develop long-term strategic policy framework to secure consistency in policy goals of major international institutions • Promote consensus-building among governments on integrated solutions for global economic, social and environmental issues <p>Create Sustainable Development Board, superseding Annual Joint Meeting of Executive Boards of funds and programmes²⁷ and meeting at ministerial-level, when required. The main tasks of SDB would be to²⁸:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse One Country programmes and approve related allocations • Maintain strategic overview of system • Review implementation of global normative and analytical work of United Nations in relation to One United Nations at country-level • Oversee management of funding mechanism for Millennium

²⁷ ECOSOC would establish the Board and determine its membership in line with experience gained from the composition of the Executive Boards of funds and programmes. The Board would comprise a subset of Member States on basis of equitable geographical distribution. Major NGOs with key role in international development cooperation architecture would be enabled to participate in meetings of Board.

²⁸ After three years, the effectiveness of Sustainable Development Board would be assessed. This assessment would also include consideration of scope for integrating boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF as segments of the Sustainable Development Board, rather than maintaining them as stand-alone boards.

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		<p>Development Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review performance of Resident Coordinator System • Consider and comment on strategic plans of funds, programmes and specialized agencies • Commission periodic strategic reviews of One Country Programmes • Consider and act on independent evaluation, risk management and audit findings <p>Governing bodies of funds and programmes Consider issues requiring particular agency focus including those relating to multi-year funding frameworks</p> <p>National level Establish all-of-government approach in Member States to international development to ensure coordination in positions taken by their representatives in decision-making structures of all relevant organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions</p>