UN 2030:
Rebuilding Order in a Fragmenting World

Chair's Report

Independent Commission on Multilateralism

ICM

INDEPENDENT
COMMISSION ON
MULTILATERALISM

IPI

INTERNATIONAL
PEACE
INSTITUTE

The Hon. Kevin Rudd
26th Prime Minister of Australia

*Dedicated to the women and men serving
under the flag of the United Nations
in countries across the world.*

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Foreword

Five years ago, I had the idea to establish an Independent Commission on Multilateralism. But the time was not yet ripe. I knew that such an ambitious project would only succeed if it had an ambitious leader.

Cometh the hour, cometh the man. When I met Kevin Rudd, I knew I had found the right person to chair the Commission. He has vast experience and knowledge in global megaprojects like the G20 and combating climate change. Yet he is a realist, with skills honed from the cut and thrust of Australian politics. In short, he is a rare breed: both visionary and pragmatist.

Since its launch in September 2014, the Independent Commission on Multilateralism (ICM) has held wide-ranging consultations on sixteen topics affecting international peace and security. Kevin has not been a figure-head; he has been the captain at the helm. He actively led almost all sixteen retreats. He traveled the globe to solicit views and gather fresh ideas on how to restore world order. And he devised an inclusive process that involved all those willing and interested to improve the international system.

While Kevin was clearly at ease talking to experts on a diverse range of complex topics, he also made a special effort to reach out to those outside the UN system and diplomatic circles—namely youth, civil society, and the public at large (particularly through the Internet and social media).

As a result, the full ICM report—which will be released on September 21st—summarizes the combined proposals for UN reform arising from the Commission's consultation process over the last two years. It will contain fresh ideas, based on a deep knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of today's multilateral system. The full ICM report, together with the policy reports on each of the sixteen topic areas that will also be released online, will represent the outputs of this unique, consultative process. We hope they will contribute to more effective multilateralism at a time of significant global challenges. In particular, we encourage the next UN secretary-general to draw on the ICM's recommendations.

This report is the Chair's Report. For the ICM process, it is a bonus. Through his extensive consultations and travels as chair of the ICM, Kevin has gained valuable insights that build on his vast international and domestic political experience. In this paper, Kevin provides his personal views on the world situation and how the UN can be adapted to cope with the rapid pace of change. It is a cry from the heart from someone who believes in the UN. Those who seek to make the world and the UN a better place should heed its warnings and advice.

Terje Rød-Larsen, *President, International Peace Institute*
Oslo, August 15, 2016

Preface

The reason I am writing this report is that I believe in the United Nations. I believe in its ideals. I am proud of its history, despite its failures. And I am passionate about its future. The UN appeals to the better angels of our human nature, while also seeking to protect humanity from the worst. If we read its founding charter with fresh eyes, seventy years removed from the collective carnage of the last world war, its language still resonates with our own generation, and with the challenges of our age. There is a certain timelessness to the charter. It is not simply a political construction of its time, but instead speaks to universal values of continuing relevance to every age, not bound by a particular time, place, or civilization.

If we were to condense these values, and the mission based on them, into a single sentence, it might be this:

> "The United Nations calls us to defend the dignity intrinsic to all human beings by preventing war, building a sustainable peace, delivering fundamental social and economic justice to all, preserving the planet we share, and, in the event of natural or human catastrophe, acting with solidarity to save other members of the human family in need."

These are good values. They are alive in the UN Charter of 1945. They are also alive in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. They give rise to a common mission, a progressive mission, and a mission unapologetically directed to the betterment of humankind, however flawed the institution of the United Nations might happen to be at any particular time. The UN, for all its faults, is therefore an institution worth defending.

The United Nations is now seventy years old. And the world of seventy years ago was a vastly different place than the world of today. The question inevitably arises, therefore, whether this postwar institution called the UN remains "fit for purpose" to meet the needs of the international community in the century unfolding before us. If not, what can be done in practical terms to bring its mission, structure, and resourcing up to date to meet the formidable challenges ahead?

This was the subject of conversation between the UN secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, and the president of the International Peace Institute, Terje Rød-Larsen, in the summer of 2014, as the UN prepared for its seventieth-anniversary celebrations. It was decided that IPI would convene an independent review of the UN multilateral system. Its purpose was to make recommendations on the system's future for the next secretary-general to consider at the beginning of her or his new term in January 2017. And Terje asked me to chair it.

Thus was born the Independent Commission on Multilateralism (ICM), which was launched in September 2014 during UN General Assembly week in New York. The ICM's terms of reference were straightforward:

- What are the major challenges facing the twenty-first century global order?
- Is the UN multilateral system fit for purpose to meet those challenges?
- If not, what changes need to be made to the UN's functions, structure, and resources to fill the emerging deficit in effective global governance?

In undertaking its work, the ICM has sought to be as open, transparent, and consultative as possible. It divided its work into sixteen functional areas of the UN's work (detailed in Annex 1) and brought together experts from the Secretariat, permanent missions, civil society, and academia, as well as those with field experience, for a series of separate policy retreats on each of these thematic areas over an eighteen-month period. The ICM adopted this approach because it judged it was better to start from the premise of what functions the UN was created to perform, rather than what institutions the UN subsequently established. It was deemed necessary to get back to the basics of what exactly the UN is supposed to be doing, as opposed to accepting

prevailing institutional arrangements as given. Form should always follow substance. Not the reverse.

This paper is the ICM Chair's Report. It very much reflects my personal reflections on the future of the UN, informed by the hundreds of conversations I have been privileged to have around the world with people who have worked for, or with, the UN system, both in capitals and in the field. The Chair's Report is not written in traditional UN style and seeks to avoid "UN dialect" wherever possible. Its purpose is to be provocative, to stimulate debate, and hopefully therefore to contribute in a small way to the collective wisdom of our wider UN family as we seek together to chart the institution's future.

The full ICM report will be released in late September 2016. The full report will summarize the proposals put to the ICM through its formal consultation process over the last two years. It will be followed by the release of each of the detailed sixteen policy papers online. These reports are intended not just for the incoming UN secretary-general. They are intended for member states, both in capitals and in their permanent missions. They are also intended for the wider public engaged in answering the question of how we sustain our fragile global order for the future, given the great and turbulent changes now facing it.

Neither the Chair's Report nor the full ICM report that will follow have any official UN status. Whatever status these reports may obtain in the future will, hopefully, be the result of the clarity of the analysis and the usefulness of the ideas they put forward.

I am a life-long supporter of the UN: as a student, diplomat, foreign minister, prime minister, and now as an ordinary, global citizen. The UN has not always been universally popular in my home country, Australia. But I have long been proud to be among its principal defenders in the hurly-burly of our national politics. I am therefore privileged to be able to make this modest contribution to our collective thinking on the institution's future. I believe deeply that all women and men of goodwill need to put their hearts, minds, and energy to work on how we best sustain a strong, relevant, and vital United Nations. The UN is a global "public good" for us all—for our common future on this fragile planet we share.

The ICM itself has been a massive team effort. It has been led by the ICM secretary-general, HE Hardeep Puri, and his deputy, and later successor, Barbara Gibson. The team has also included the following: Els Debuf, Ariun Enkhsaikhan, Warren Hoge, Walter Kemp, Jimena Leiva Roesch, Adam Lupel, Youssef Mahmoud, Maximilian Meduna, Nadia Mughal, Thong Nguyen, Omar El Okdah, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, Véronique Pepin-Hallé, Asteya Percaya, Anette Ringnes, Rodrigo Saad, Hillary Saviello, Jill Stoddard, Albert Trithart, and Margaret Williams. I have also been greatly assisted, all in his spare time, by Daryl Morini, Senior Program Officer at the Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI), of which I am proud to be president. Being president of ASPI is my full-time position in New York. This exercise, for the ICM, has been purely a labor of love. I deeply appreciate the combined efforts of all these individuals, their great professionalism, their limitless enthusiasm—and, importantly, their ability to understand an Australian sense of humor. For this is a feat of cultural diplomacy in itself.

I would also like formally to thank the three sponsoring governments for their financial support for the ICM's operations: Canada, Norway, and the United Arab Emirates. Without their support, the ICM would simply not have happened.

Of course, any factual or analytical errors contained in this report are ultimately my responsibility. Given that I have never actually worked within the UN system, I'm sure there will be a number of them. I would simply ask for the reader's forbearance and forgiveness as these come to light.

I commend this Chair's Report to the international community for its consideration.

Kevin Rudd, *Chair, Independent Commission on Multilateralism*

New York, August 15, 2016

Introduction

> *"The United Nations was not created to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell."*
>
> *Dag Hammarskjöld*
> *UN secretary-general (1953–1961)*

The core argument of this report is simple. First, **the UN matters. In fact, because it is such an embedded part of the postwar order, it matters a lot.** So much so that if it were to fail, falter, or just fade away, this would further erode the stability of an already fragile global order.

Our current order faces new, mounting, and compounding challenges. There are major new tensions in global geopolitics that we have not seen in a quarter of a century, with a rapid deterioration in US-Russia and US-China relations, accompanied by a new strategic rapprochement between Russia and China. There have been even more profound transformations in global geoeconomics, where China is now the world's second largest economy, and soon to become the largest, supplanting the United States after more than 150 years of global economic dominance.

Beyond these classical "balance-of-power" considerations between major states, we are also seeing the rise of new non-state actors—principally, but not exclusively, in the form of violent jihadism, which does not accept the state-based system at all and operates entirely outside the already flimsy fabric of international law.

We are also witnessing another wave of challenges to the current order through the accelerating dynamics of globalization. This, in turn, is generating new demands for more effective global governance to deal with "the globalization of everything." At the same time, globalization is unleashing dangerous new political, economic, and social counterforces—a potent cocktail of nationalism, protectionism, and xenophobia—that are beginning to threaten the fabric of the current order in new ways, and at multiple levels.

We seem, therefore, to be approaching a new global "tipping point" that departs from the comfortable assumption of recent decades that the dynamics of greater global integration were somehow unstoppable. So at a time when we are seeing the emergence of new forces that threaten to pull the world apart, the very institutions the international community established to bring the world together through cooperative forms of global governance should be more important than ever before. Yet the uncomfortable truth is that these same institutions have never been weaker.

Second, after seventy years, the UN has become so "factored in" to the international order that we are barely conscious of the continuing stabilizing role it plays in setting the broad parameters for the conduct of international relations. **We tend to take the UN for granted.** We see it as a comfortable part of the international furniture. A permanent fixture—a given. But as history reminds us, nothing is forever, least of all the durability of global institutions, whose history is recent and whose precedents are fraught. Nor is history necessarily linear; we are not somehow destined to enjoy increasingly "progressive" forms of global governance. As noted above, historical "regression" is equally possible. And if the UN itself one day disappears—or, more likely, just slides into neglect—only then would we become fully aware of the gaping hole this would leave in what would remain of the postwar order. Without the UN, we would be left with increasingly brittle state-on-state relationships, with little remaining to mediate, negotiate, or resolve inter-state crises when they arise. By that time, it would simply be too late to lament the UN's demise.

Third, while **the UN today is not broken, it is in trouble.** Many fear it is starting to drift into irrelevance as states increasingly "walk around" the UN on the most important questions facing the international community, seeking substantive solutions elsewhere and increasingly seeing the UN as a pleasant diplomatic afterthought. Many are concerned that the UN, like many old institutions, is being overwhelmed by the major systemic changes and challenges now buffeting the international community at large. This report argues that the UN has a twentieth-century institutional structure and culture that is struggling to adapt to these new twenty-first-century realities. And if it fails to adapt, the UN will slowly slide into the shadowlands.

Fourth, the report concludes that this need not be the case. It argues that **the UN is capable of reinventing itself.** All twenty-first-century institutions must do this in order to survive the pace and

complexity of change around them. There is no point dreaming that the UN could be rebuilt from the ground up. But we can intelligently reexamine the UN's functions, structure, and allocation of resources to make it better equipped to meet the challenges of the future. To do this:

1. We need a UN **whose inherent legitimacy and universality is reaffirmed by a formal political recommitment to the fundamental principles of multilateralism by member states**, underscoring the critical advantages the multilateral system delivers to individual states rather than entrenching an emerging view that the multilateral system is simply a burden to be borne.

2. We need a UN that **structurally integrates its peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights agendas as a strategic continuum**, rather than leaving them as the self-contained, institutional silos of the past. This can be done in a manner that also maximizes the prospects for a distinct, operational space for humanitarian work in the event of crises, while also recognizing that such operational space can never be secured without addressing the security and development realities that surround it.

3. We need a UN that **helps build bridges between the great powers**, particularly at a time of rising great-power tensions.

4. We need a UN with **a robust policy-planning capability**, looking into the future several years out, not just at the crises of the day.

5. We need a UN that embraces **a comprehensive doctrine of prevention**, rather than just reaction, that is directly reflected in the organization's leadership structure, culture, and resources.

6. We need **a Team UN in the field that finally resolves the problem of its rigid institutional silos** by moving increasingly to integrated, multidisciplinary teams to deal with specific challenges on the ground.

7. We need a UN **driven by the measurement of results**, not just the elegance of its processes.

8. We need a UN **where women are at the center of the totality of its agenda**, not just parts of it, so that their full human potential can be realized as a matter of social justice, and because to fail to do so will further undermine peace and security, development, and human rights. We also need a UN **where the youth of the world have their voices heard at the center of the UN's councils**, not simply as a paternalistic afterthought, so that youth can help shape a future of genuine hope for the more than 3 billion people today aged under twenty-five.

9. We need a UN that is **relevant to the new, emerging, critical global policy agendas of the future, not just those of the past**, including effectively countering terrorism and violent extremism, enhancing cybersecurity, constraining lethal autonomous weapons systems, dealing with the inadequate enforcement of international humanitarian law for the wars of the future, and developing a comprehensive approach to planetary boundaries beyond climate change, particularly for our oceans.

10. We need a UN that can efficiently, effectively, and flexibly act within the **reality imposed by ongoing budgetary constraints**, rather than just hoping that the fiscal heavens will one day magically reopen, because they won't.

Finally, the report argues that **there is no such thing as "one-off" reform. For the UN to have a robust future in delivering results that are directly relevant to the challenges of the international community, we must actively engage in a process of continually reinventing the institution**. There is an argument that the institutions of international relations inherently tend toward entropy—that, as institutions are formed, the processes of long-term decay already begin to set in. If this argument is valid, as I fear it might be, the only antidote is to have a conscious, continuing program of active reinvention—to remind the institution of its core and continuing values, to refresh its institutional culture, and, where necessary, to reprogram some of its functions. This is all to ensure that the UN is effectively responding to the real policy challenges of our time, rather than mechanically reproducing the responses of the past, thereby retaining its relevance for the future.

The report is entitled *UN 2030: Rebuilding Order in a Fragmenting World*. Some might argue that the whole notion of "order" is itself an intellectual illusion. I disagree, if only because those of us who have an interest in the history of international relations have some idea of what chaos actually looks like. Therefore, the idea of "rebuilding order" is not a flight of fancy. The forces of disorder are there for all to see. The challenge is one of conceptual clarity, institutional capacity, and political will.

The timeline of 2030 has been deliberately. The UN has just reached new, path-breaking agreements that have 2030 as their implementation timeframe: first, the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and second, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the post-Kyoto commitment period contained within it, which also reaches out to 2030. This report argues below that these two new major missions for the United Nations should also be accompanied by a third: a new Sustainable Peace and Security Agenda, with a new, substantive doctrine of prevention at its heart, which could be developed over the next several years and also have 2030 as its timeframe.

With or without the latter, these new, ambitious agendas for positive global change inevitably bring us to the question of whether the UN, as an institution in itself, is sufficiently "fit for purpose" to actually implement these agendas over the next fifteen years. And if not, what must change in the

UN's functions, structure, and resources to translate these deeply transformative policy agendas into reality? Furthermore, 2030 is not so remote in time as to be meaningless. It is near enough to be real, while still leaving sufficient time for planning, operationalizing, and evaluating.

I have written this report as someone with a life-long commitment to the historical mission of the United Nations, as expressed in the high ideals of its charter. The report is mindful of both the UN's successes and failures over the last seventy years. It deeply respects the reforms of previous secretaries-general, in particular the current secretary-general, which will be detailed in the final ICM report. This report openly builds on the work of others, rather than seeking to reinvent the wheel. All of us recognize that the UN is a difficult beast to change. But all friends of the UN are also driven by a deep concern for its future—so much so that many of us now question whether this "parliament of man," as it was called by its founders, will survive as an effective, functioning institution to celebrate its centenary in 2045.

When the peoples of the world see growing disagreement among the great powers, the reemergence of old inter-state tensions and conflicts, terrorists on their streets, chaos in their markets, and jobs disappearing with nothing to replace them, they are increasingly asking: "Is anybody in control anymore?" This is not an unreasonable question. In other words, are we beginning to see

Closing ceremony of the UN Climate Change Conference, Paris, December 12, 2015. UN Photo.

the beginning of a deeper crisis in the foundations of the overall UN postwar order itself?

This report, therefore, is animated by one core question: What can be done? How can we breathe new life into an old institution so that the UN can perform its central role of preserving a peaceful and just global order? And can we begin to imagine a UN for the twenty-first century that responds to a growing *demand* for *effective* global governance in an age of ever-diminishing *supply* and when the governance "deficit" seems, in fact, to be widening? These are the questions that inform the recommendations presented in this report.

I remain deeply optimistic about the UN's future. While the challenges are real, we should not succumb to a fashionable pessimism, or a type of "learned helplessness" on the part of the multilateral community, that substantive change is just all too hard. The truth is that the answers really do lie within our grasp—if we can deploy the collective political will to make change happen.

Does the UN Still Matter?

> *"The one common undertaking and universal instrument of the great majority of the human race is the United Nations. A patient, constructive, long-term use of its potentialities can bring a real and secure peace to the world."*
>
> *Trygve Lie*
> *UN secretary-general (1946–1952)*

The answer to this question—does the UN still matter?—is unequivocally yes. This is because the question of the future of the United Nations is, in large part, a question about the future of the global order. The United Nations cannot be equated with the totality of the global order. But it does lie at its heart.

THE UN IS STILL A CORNERSTONE OF THE POSTWAR GLOBAL ORDER

The UN matters because it is a foundation stone of the global order. The current global geopolitical order is broadly made up of three parts:

- First, the geopolitical relationships among the great powers themselves, as well as diplomatic, military, and alliance relationships that have developed between the great powers and other states;

- Second, the horizontal relationships between all states, irrespective of whether they happen to be aligned with the great powers or not, including those that have consistently chosen to be neutral or nonaligned; and

- Third, the global and regional institutions that use multilateral means to manage differences and maximize peaceful cooperation between states, based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all states.

This latter principle is particularly important for smaller and middle powers in the international system, which historically have often become the casualties of great-power politics gone wrong. And it is here that the UN plays the central role.

There is no neat, systemic relationship among these various parts of the global order. Variations of the concept of a "balance of power" often guide the first and, to a more limited extent, the second elements listed above. The function of the third element—mindful of the spectacular failure of balances of power to guarantee strategic stability in the past—is to arbitrate, or at least mitigate, the collisions that periodically arise in the exercise of great-power politics.

These different elements of the current order are also the product of different, some would say conflicting, concepts of the natural behavior of states. At one extreme is the deep "realism" of "nation-state against nation-state" based on irreconcilable national interests, the absence of trust, and ever-present "security dilemmas." In contrast to this almost Clausewitzian view of interstate relations, there is what is often described, and sometimes derided, as the high idealism of neoliberal institutionalism, premised on concepts of common security, shared interests, and international cooperation. Our current global order is an untidy amalgam of both.

Yet in the increasingly "postmodern" politics of the twenty-first century, it is often forgotten that "order" in international relations remains fundamental. We seem to have forgotten what "disorder" actually looks like, even though we saw the full horror of this on display less than one lifetime ago. The great powers in 1945, mindful of the failures of the post-1919 settlement, deliberately located the United Nations multilateral

system, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, at the center of the new global order. For better or worse, the multilateral system is the collective machinery that member states agreed upon at San Francisco and that all subsequent member states have subscribed to ever since. It is also important to note that the UN's role within the current order does not just refer to the global geopolitical order. The UN also has a role in what we might call the global geoeconomic order, the global humanitarian order, and the emerging global environmental order. And each of these "orders" continues to be inherently fragile, buffeted by the competing nationalisms and mercantilisms of the day.

Therefore, if the UN-based multilateral system, as a cornerstone of the postwar order, is simply allowed to fade away, there would be multiple and, for the most part, unforeseen consequences. New realities are suddenly created when old realities begin to fade away or are rapidly extinguished. We see this in recent times in relation to the debate on the future of the European Union. In many respects, the twenty-first-century international community no longer seems conscious of the international legal and institutional underpinnings of what we now almost breezily refer to as the "postwar order." It seems that this order has simply become "factored in." But to allow this cornerstone to gradually crumble would inherently destabilize the overall structure on which it rests. The effective, if not formal, demise of the UN would create, at minimum, a vacuum in the international relations system. And history teaches us that political and institutional vacuums cannot remain for long before being filled by something else. The international community needs to tend carefully to the foundations of the current order, particularly given the hard circumstances in which they were secured following the implosion of the previous order in 1939.

Moreover, it is important to recall that order in international relations is not naturally self-generating. Even less is it self-perpetuating. Over the last half millennium, there have been four major efforts in Europe to construct order after periods of sustained carnage: in 1648, 1815, 1919, and 1945. The first three of these "orders" have had, at best, patchy records of success. The jury is still out on the fourth. History teaches us that the concerted efforts of states that are party to the creation of an agreed order are required to continue to invest in its future. This particularly applies to an institution such as the United Nations, whose charter does not assume the underlying power of any single hegemon to sustain it over time. This stands in contrast to most previous orders in history, which have been the construct of a single great power (e.g., Rome) or a balance of power among several great powers (e.g., the Concert of Europe).

Furthermore, history teaches us that order in international relations is the exception, rather than the rule. Since the rise of the modern nation-state, both prior to and following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, disorder has been the dominant characteristic of inter-state relations. Any assumption that, in the twenty-first century, we have seen "the end of history" is simply wrongheaded. Not only is it misguided to assume the inevitable onward march of liberal-democratic capitalism *within* states. It is equally wrong to assume that neoliberal globalization will, by definition, usher in a permanent period of peaceful relations *between* states, ultimately seeing the boundaries between states fade away in response to some underlying, unifying, almost mystical market reality. This is a triumph of hope over reason.

Finally, there is a related concept in international relations that holds that the natural trend in any system of inter-state relations is toward entropy.[1] Under this argument, any international order, once established, is immediately subject to the natural processes of decline and decay, ultimately resulting in a return to disorder. If this analysis holds true, it reinforces the core argument of theorists and practitioners alike that preserving the current system of UN multilateralism will require greater and greater conscious efforts over time. Sitting back is not an option—even less a posture of benign neglect.

The UN multilateral system remains a cornerstone of a multidimensional twenty-first-century global order. It is crucial for us all that there be predictable, shared, and, where possible, enforceable norms, rules, and expectations for all states, great and small, in managing their relations with each other. This does not mean that norms, rules, and expectations are frozen in time. They can, of course, evolve. But the key to the continued stability of the order is that, when changes occur, they are commonly and, ideally, universally

supported through the institutions of multilater-alism.

Of course, one of the core failings of such a multilateral order is the lack of universal enforce-ment mechanisms for those who violate its princi-ples. Absent multilateral mediation, great powers have tended to "manage" the behavior of other great powers and that of their diplomatic and military allies with the active threat of retaliatory action, or deterrence. By definition, the multilateral system is of a different nature altogether. For example, it is often difficult to reach agreement on whether a particular state has violated the princi-ples of the order (in the UN's case, the provisions of its charter); and even when such consensus is achieved, there is often disagreement on the forms of enforcement available within the charter.

There also is a wider argument in support of state compliance with multilateral norms arising from the "moral suasion" of international law itself. But while this has an undeniable effect in terms of most states' legitimate concerns for their international reputation, moral suasion itself does not in any sense constitute an enforcement mechanism capable of maintaining the overall integrity of the order. It is, therefore, an important addition to the current order, but by no means its engine room.

Despite these deficiencies of enforcement, the UN multilateral system constitutes that part of the current global order that applies the best potential brake against the escalation of the tensions that arise between the great powers, between great powers and other states, and between smaller states. These will continue to arise in the form of the inevitable disagreements that occur over territorial boundaries, maritime disputes, "trade wars," or other conflicting national interests. Importantly, maintaining this "civilizing" effect of the UN multilateral system on the realist, nation-alist, or mercantilist elements that still find expres-sion within the current order will require an active, continuing, and greater effort by member states to reinforce the authority of multilateral institutions.

The future of the UN, therefore, will require focused, ongoing investment in the integrity and the energy of the overall system as a global "public good" in its own right. This will not be achieved through occasional expressions of passive support. If we want the UN to survive as an effective, rather than symbolic, component of the global order, its member states, as equal shareholders in the system as a whole, must work actively to make this happen.

THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTILATERALISM ITSELF MATTERS

As noted above, the principle of multilateralism is important because it militates against unilater-alism, predatory bilateralism, or a Darwinian view of international relations based on the "survival of the fittest." We have seen these principles at work

The first summit-level meeting of the UN Security Council, New York, January 31, 1992.
UN Photo/John Isaac.

too many times before in the history of international relations.

If our common objective is a peaceful and just global order, there are unique principles alive in the concept of multilateralism itself that are worth sustaining for the future. These are:

1. **Legitimacy:** An unassailable legitimacy arises from a common decision of all states, based in turn on the principle of the equality of all sovereign states. There is something inherently powerful when the international community speaks with a single voice. This cannot be replicated by other plurilateral arrangements, where questions of global legitimacy will inevitably be raised.

2. **Universality:** This is the other side of the "legitimacy" coin. Whereas plurilateral or regional institutions may speak with authority within their policy or geographical domains, they cannot speak universally on behalf of the entire community of states. In the current global order, only the UN multilateral system can do that without challenge.

3. **Norm-setting authority:** Given the UN multilateral system's unique claims to legitimacy and universality, it also has a unique authority in determining global norms. "Norms" is a term used loosely in international relations discourse. But the bottom line is that, properly defined, norms are the construct of treaty law, UN resolutions, multilateral agreements, and the long-standing practices and protocols associated with these processes. Norms must therefore be capable of being traced back to one or the other of these primary multilateral instruments.

4. **Convening power:** Whatever its perceived deficiencies, the UN possesses a unique legitimacy in its ability to convene member states, through formal or informal mechanisms, to deal with a particular challenge to the international community. This convening power, which proceeds from its unique claims to legitimacy, universality, and the underlying norms of the system, is arguably one of the UN's greatest strengths. No other global institution has the unchallenged authority to convene, particularly in the domain of preserving international peace and security.

5. **The power to initiate:** Not only does the UN multilateral system have the power to convene member states in response to a particular challenge, but the UN Charter also explicitly entrusts the UN secretary-general with the power to take initiatives to the UN Security Council under the terms of Article 99. Multilateral action, of course, will most often be initiated by member states themselves through the UN forums most available to them. But the powers of the secretary-general to take initiatives is equally clear in the charter.

6. **The power to take collective security action:** Once again, building on its inherent legitimacy, universality, and capacity to set international norms, the UN multilateral system, under Chapters 6, 7, and 8 of the charter, has the capacity to take action in relation to member states through a range of authorized mechanisms. These include mediation, sanctions, collective military action, peacekeeping, and the engagement of relevant regional organizations to deal with the matter at hand.

7. **The power to deliver economic and social programs:** Chapter 9 of the UN Charter also empowers the UN, through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to commission reports, make recommendations, and establish commissions to deliver relevant economic and social programs to the international community for the betterment of the human family. Importantly, under the original terms of the charter, the UN is also authorized to work with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in delivering such programs. These prescient provisions have empowered the UN to establish a vast array of agencies, funds, and programs to enhance the well-being of the peoples of the world. Seventy years later, these powers have evolved into a comprehensive sustainable development agenda (the 2030 Agenda), itself reflecting the efforts of the UN system to evolve flexibly to meet the challenges of the time.

The unique ability of the system to convene member states, take initiatives, enact decisions, and deliver programs ultimately derives from the inherent legitimacy of the multilateral nature of the

institution. In defending the UN's future, it is critical for the international community to grasp afresh that this legitimacy cannot be replicated by other institutions, let alone through the unilateral action of any particular member state. This inherent strength of the UN multilateral system must be preserved at all cost.

This report routinely uses the term "UN multilateral system." Of course, the UN is the principal institution within that system. But it is not the only institution. The International Monetary Fund (189 member states), the World Bank (189 member states), the World Trade Organization (164 member states, plus observers), and the International Labour Organization (187 member states) are all multilateral institutions in the full sense. All of these institutions contribute to the overall fabric of global multilateralism. Like the UN, however, all are under pressure for reasons not dissimilar to those confronting the UN itself. For example, the establishment of the G20 in 2008 in many respects cut across the multilateral mandate accorded to the International Monetary Fund in 1944, although G20 summits do include representation from the heads of all four multilateral institutions, as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Notwithstanding the rolling problems of policy coordination with institutions beyond the multilateral family, the fundamental challenge of all four institutions is to maximize their policy collaboration among themselves. Given the critical relevance of the global economic, finance, and trade agendas to the future of global peace and security, the need for such collaboration has become even more acute. This is underlined further by the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where intimate collaboration between the UN and the World Bank, in particular, will be required if these goals are to have any real hope of implementation.

Multilateralism also has to contend with both the challenges and opportunities presented by the proliferation of regional institutions. These now include the European Union (EU), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Arab League, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). Importantly, the only continent without a pan-regional institution covering security, economic, and social matters is Asia. Once again, the critical challenge of the multilateral system is to ensure that there are functioning protocols and institutional relationships between the UN and these various regional institutions. These institutions should see themselves in symbiotic, rather than conflicting, relationships with each other—as "force multipliers" of each other, rather than competitors in a "zero-sum game."

To complete this complex picture of the multi-stakeholder environment in which the UN is now required to operate, we must also consider afresh the impact of international civil society, trade unions, and the private sector. In 1945, there were few international NGOs. Today, there are 10 million NGOs worldwide,[2] 4,507 of which have ECOSOC consultative status.[3] While these may not operate in all states, and while they in no sense represent the interests of member states themselves, they have now become significant players in the whole range of multilateral policy debates and in the delivery of economic, social, and humanitarian programs on the ground. In some cases, they have also attained observer status in multilateral institutions.

A future core priority for the UN is to develop effective protocols for fully engaging with this vast array of NGOs, collaborating with them to solve problems, especially when they, rather than UN agencies, take the lead in delivering programs on the ground. At the same time, member states must remain central as the cornerstones of the formal multilateral order. To do otherwise is ultimately to invite international chaos, as non-state institutions claim new forms of legitimacy over that of the states themselves. For all its faults, a functioning inter-state system remains vastly preferable to a loose system of "variable geometries" disconnected from the state system altogether.

Therefore, while the UN multilateral system has unique strengths, it now shares the multilateral policy space with a range of other institutions. It is important that UN member states have a clear conception of this reality. If we took a helicopter view of the current system, it would include the following:

- The individual actions of nation-states themselves, both within and beyond their borders;
- The thirty-three funds, programs, specialized agencies, and related entities that make up the UN system;
- Plurilateral institutions such as the G7 and G20;
- The vast array of regional and subregional governmental institutions; and
- International civil society, trade unions, and the private sector.

This is the actual policy terrain in which the UN is required to operate. To speak and act with one voice, the UN must coordinate its own operations to the greatest extent possible among its thirty-two different funds, programs, and specialized agencies so that they are rowing in the same strategic direction. The UN also needs to have fully developed cooperative protocols with the other principal global and regional intergovernmental institutions, as well as international NGOs. This is a core challenge we face: developing "a new multilateralism" still anchored in UN legitimacy but that also fully cooperates with the many other players—government and nongovernment—in this evolving multi-stakeholder world.

Recognizing this complexity is also important for a further reason: it is irrational to expect the United

Nations to do everything. There is a danger in the international relations discourse that the UN, by virtue of its name, is capable of solving each and every intra- or international problem. This is simply not the case. This overlooks the fundamental requirement of each member state to honor its own obligations under the UN Charter, in both its domestic and its international dealings. It also ignores the fact that the global policy space is already crowded by a multiplicity of government and nongovernment actors. There are also demonstrable limitations to the UN's financial and physical resources.

This places a premium on prioritizing what the UN multilateral system actually does. Within the multilateral system, its role in norm setting is unique. So too are its convening power, its power to take initiatives, and its power to make collective decisions on behalf of the international community. But the delivery of the vast array of economic, social, and environmental programs across the international community today is now, in reality, a responsibility shared by many players. As already noted above, one of the core future challenges for the UN is to agree on flexible patterns of delivery that embrace UN institutions, regional institutions, international NGOs, and the private sector while retaining the integrity of the state-based multilateral system. This is essential if the UN is to deliver the best possible outcomes for the people it serves.

President of the General Assembly Mogens Lykketoft closes the general debate of the seventieth session, New York, October 3, 2015. UN Photo/Cia Pak.

THERE IS NO CREDIBLE SUBSTITUTE FOR THE UN

A further reason the UN matters is that, despite its most ardent critics, the UN cannot readily be replaced. We are reminded of the famous observation of Winston Churchill about the limitations of democracy: "It has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."[4] We could make a similar observation about the United Nations: it is the worst system of international governance except for all the others.

There has only been one serious previous attempt to construct an institution of global governance, albeit an arrangement that excluded the majority of nations, which at that time remained colonized by the West: the short-lived League of Nations. The League was crippled from the outset by the refusal of the United States to join. It achieved some successes during the 1920s. But in the face of repeated acts of inter-state aggression during the course of the 1930s, the League failed the critical tests of its time. In one of the great ironies of international institutional history, the League, with its diminished membership and its shattered reputation, continued to meet for the duration of the Second World War in Geneva. In fact, the Palais des Nations, the physical home of the League, was officially opened during the height of the Munich crisis in 1938. The League continued to function formally, as nothing more than a hollow shell, while Europe, and the world, tore itself apart—a salutary tale of the dangers of institutional irrelevance for the future.

The failed history of the League, however, reminds us that new institutional arrangements invariably come into being as a result of an international crisis. This was the case in 1919, and once again in 1945. The convulsion of global war, in both cases, briefly created circumstances that afforded global leaders temporary political space to forge far-reaching agreements for the future—although in both cases these were agreements made among the victors, and with scant regard for the vanquished. In our current global circumstances, while we face international crises at multiple levels, and across multiple theaters, thankfully we have not reached an inflection point equivalent to that reached in 1919 and 1945. Even with the events of 1991, and the end of the Cold War, there was no

serious effort to redesign or reform the post-1945 institutions of global governance. The truth, therefore, is that the geopolitical opportunity to radically reconstruct the global order, assuming such an order could even be conceptualized, let alone agreed, does not exist. We should be thankful that the extreme circumstances we confronted twice in the first half of last century are not current prospects.

So far, our crises of global governance have not been of sufficient gravity to cause the international community to fundamentally rebuild the institutions we currently share, including the UN. In the absence of another global conflagration, or an equally all-consuming global crisis, we need to summon the international political will necessary to revive the international institutions we have. Put simply, the idea of building a global political institution to replace the UN is absurd, for several reasons:

- It would be impossible in today's geopolitical circumstances to renegotiate the UN Charter.

- Member states would be unlikely to contribute the resources necessary to construct a new institution from the ground up.

- The dissolution of the United Nations would have a chaotic impact on the continuing operation of the UN's thirty-three existing funds, programs, specialized agencies, and related entities, most of which could not sustain such a fundamental institutional disruption. This, in turn, would undermine the continued delivery of critical services to needy people across the world.

- It would also be difficult to sustain the existing body of international treaty law for the long-term future if the UN were no longer around, given that the UN remains the originator of and the repository for the bulk of the laws, rules, and norms that we share today and hosts many institutional forums that monitor respect for them. Overall, there is a grave risk that many of these would simply lapse. And it would be impossible, for example, to once again achieve the consensus necessary to renegotiate the three underlying conventions on human rights, in particular the Universal Declaration of 1948.

- It would even be impossible to reach fresh

President of the General Assembly Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, seated next to UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, New York, September 16, 1953. UN Photo/AF.

agreement about where a new global institution replacing the UN should be headquartered.

This report concludes, therefore, that the only common-sense approach to the future of global governance is to make the best of the institutions we already have. To think otherwise is to construct castles in the air in pursuit of a perfect order that could never exist. We should never succumb to the intellectual temptation of allowing the perfect to get in the way of the good. Our task is to make the existing international infrastructure as functionally effective as possible, given the vast array of new challenges confronting us for the future. That task, in itself, constitutes a formidable body of work.

Is the UN Really in Trouble?

"They [the institutions of the UN] are our tools. We fashioned them. We use them. It is our responsibility to remedy any flaws there may be in them."

Dag Hammarskjöld
UN secretary-general (1953–1961)

There are some in the international community who will dispute a central premise of this report—that the UN is in real trouble. It is important we take these reservations seriously. If there is no case to answer, and instead we have a UN that will still

be able to comfortably "muddle through" for decades to come, then there is little point in reading on. How, therefore, can we credibly make an informed judgment, rather than some sweeping statement, that the UN now faces major challenges that threaten its long-term viability?

THE UN'S RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

The UN has a sound record of achievement. This includes:

1. **Helping avoid another global war:** The UN has helped prevent another global war, despite widespread predictions in 1945 that such a conflagration was inevitable. It would be wrong to argue that the UN has been the sole causative factor. But the institution, its deliberative mechanisms, and the normative provisions of the UN Charter have certainly helped.

2. **Amassing a body of international legal norms:** The UN has amassed a considerable, if not exactly comprehensive, body of international law, rules, and norms, which member states have adopted over the last seventy years. Over 560 international treaties have come into effect since 1945, covering issues ranging from telecommunications to terrorism.[5] This contrasts starkly with the record of the League of Nations, which by

1939 had concluded 33.[6] The inevitable criticism, as noted previously in this report, is that much of international law, other than through the coercive powers available to the Security Council, lacks effective enforcement mechanisms. But the normative impact of treaties and other international legal instruments is nonetheless significant. If this cumulative body of international law, and the norms constructed on it, did not exist, the world today would be an infinitely more problematic and barbaric place than it already is—and this is despite the repeated violations of international law that continue to occur.
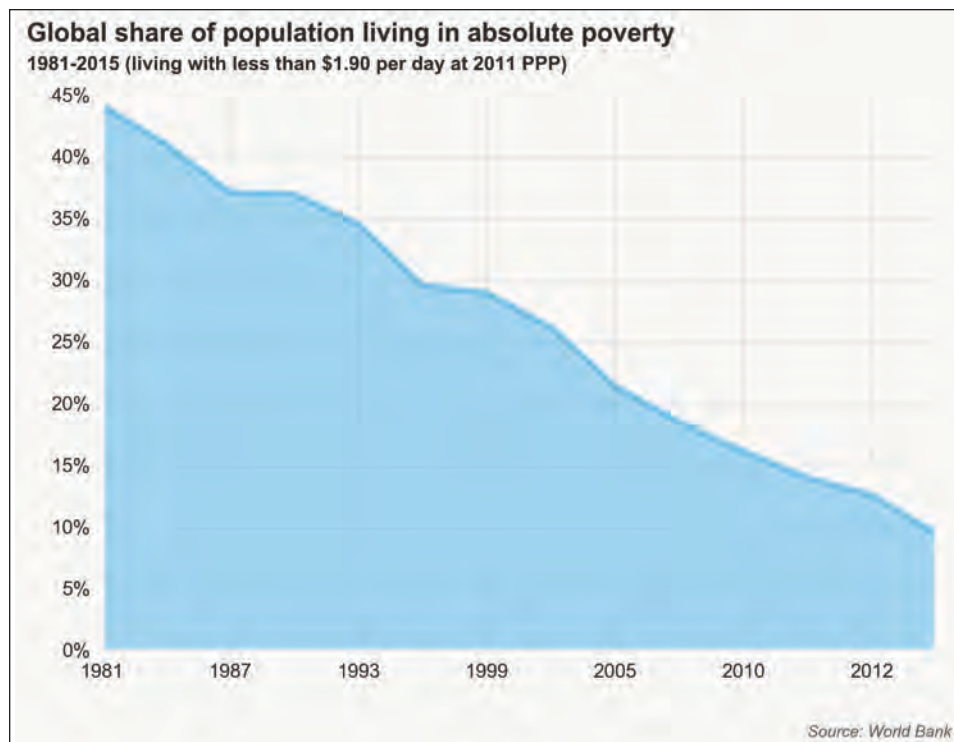
3. **Putting in place a system of international dispute-settlement mechanisms:** The UN-based multilateral system has also seen the evolution of a number of important judicial and arbitral mechanisms to settle international legal disputes. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has presided over 164 cases since 1945.[7] Seventy-two states have now accepted its compulsory jurisdiction. The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) has 168 signatories, and its tribunal has presided over twenty-five cases.[8] Through its dispute settlement mechanisms, the WTO, although technically not a UN body, has arbitrated 509 international trade disputes.[9] Given the long and malignant history of territorial and trade disputes as reliable predictors of international conflict, the fact that these institutions now play an important role in reducing the number and severity of such crises is an important measure of a multilateral system that, while stressed, is not yet broken.

4. **Developing a network of international regulatory institutions:** International legal disputes aside, a large number of international institutions, anchored in the multilateral system as UN specialized agencies, also play a critical role in regulating the more mundane elements of global interaction. For example, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) make daily, vital, and practical contributions to the physical arteries of globalization. This is no small thing, but the international community often accepts these global public goods as a simple "given." When they were first negotiated, they were not.

5. **Managing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD):** In terms of peace and security, the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) perform critical roles in preventing the all-out proliferation of nuclear weapons. We often forget how close the world came to this in the 1960s. There are now 191 states parties to the NPT. The IAEA also monitors nuclear safeguards agreements across 182 states.[10] The Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) also underpin global WMD nonproliferation efforts with some degree of success. For example, the CTBT, supported by the formidable machinery of the CTBT Organization, has established an impressive seismic monitoring system capable of determining and, with the exception of North Korea, discouraging further nuclear testing, notwithstanding the fact that the treaty has yet to come into force. Moreover, the UN conventions on various categories of conventional weapons have also sought to reduce the use of other types of weaponry in an era when there has been an exponential change in weapons technologies. Long-standing UN programs under the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) have also reduced the long-term civilian impact of unexploded ordnance in conflict and post-conflict zones.

6. **Imposing sanctions:** The UN has made use of its sanctions powers on twenty-six occasions, with thirteen ongoing sanctions regimes.[11] Again, the extent to which

sanctions regimes have successfully led to changes in state behavior is debatable. Nonetheless, the imposition of UN arms embargoes against the white minority government in South Africa, for example, contributed to the end of the apartheid regime. None of these measures have been universally successful, but it would be churlish to argue they have not had some impact.

7. **Deploying peacekeeping operations and political missions:** The UN has completed fifty-four peacekeeping missions in its history, with sixteen underway today.[12] The UN has also commissioned thirty-nine special political missions designed to prevent, ameliorate, or conclude international or internal conflicts.[13] Many of these never make the news. While there is an open debate as to how many of these missions have been concluded "successfully," as opposed to how many have seen the recurrence of conflict, on balance the contribution of peacekeeping operations and political missions to the preservation of peace and security has been significant, and is infinitely greater than if there were no such missions at all.

8. **Reducing global poverty:** In terms of poverty elimination, economic development, and environmental sustainability, the UN has also made a significant contribution. Extreme poverty has been reduced globally by 50 percent since 1990.[14] The degree to which this achievement is attributable to the normative and operational efforts of the UN and Bretton Woods institutions is, of course, an open debate. This is particularly the case given the major role played by China's economic development since 1979 in reducing global poverty levels. As a result of changes to China's national policies, 600 million people were liberated from extreme poverty.[15] This has little to do with the UN. Nonetheless, the impact of the Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015) in focusing poverty reduction programs around core, defined targets has produced some significant results. Similarly, the cumulative positive impact of multilateral and bilateral development assistance programs over many decades, as corroborated by various studies, is significant.[16] These are not small achievements:

Global share of population living in absolute poverty
1981-2015 (living with less than $1.90 per day at 2011 PPP)

Source: World Bank

- Small pox has been eliminated.[17]
- Polio has been eliminated from all but a few locations.[18]
- The world is on track to reversing the spread of tuberculosis.[19]
- The estimated incidence of malaria has decreased globally by 37 percent since 2000, and mortality rates have decreased by 60 percent over the same period.[20]
- Access to treatment for people living with HIV has increased worldwide. By June 2014, 13.6 million people were receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV/AIDS—a significant increase from 800,000 in 2003.[21]
- Between 1990 and 2015, 2.6 billion people gained access to improved drinking water sources.[22]
- In 1990, 1.1 billion people living in rural areas lacked access to clean water, whereas this number had fallen to 653 million by 2010.[23]
- Infant deaths (of those under five) fell from more than 12 million annually in 1990 to 7.6 million around the world by 2010.[24]
- Between 1999 and 2010, primary school enrollment rates increased from 58 to 76 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. Globally, youth literacy rates have also improved, reaching 89 percent at the end of 2010.[25]

9. **Agreeing on a new sustainable development agenda:** As for the emerging global sustainable development agenda, the successful negotiation of the SDGs under the 2030 Agenda has produced, for the first time, a new normative framework that has finally reconciled the two competing imperatives of economic development and environmental sustainability. This work has built on the pathbreaking 1987 Brundtland Report on Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, the 1992 Earth Summit, the 2012 UN High-Level Report on Global Sustainability (*Resilient People, Resilient Planet*), and resolutions of the "Rio+20" conference recommending the development of the SDGs.

10. **Providing humanitarian support:** On international humanitarian engagement, the combined efforts of UN institutions such as the World Food Programme (WFP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) have generally improved the international community's ability to respond to natural and man-made disasters compared with the past. For example, the WFP is today feeding 90 million people in eighty different countries.[26] UNHCR has provided direct support to more than 50 million refugees since its inception.[27] Today it is responsible for a total of 16.1 million refugees and is engaged in the protection of 65.3 million displaced persons.[28] UNOCHA has played a major role coordinating humanitarian agencies to improve the coherence of the international response to emergencies around the globe. In previous periods in history, these most vulnerable of the world's people were simply left to die. Now there is at least a functional international infrastructure for dealing with humanitarian crises, where UN institutions, acting in partnership with or alongside other major humanitarian actors, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), are able to act. Despite the conspicuous shortcomings in each humanitarian mission, the existence of these institutions, and their collective ability to deploy rapidly to the field, is infinitely better than the void that preceded it.

11. **Promoting human rights:** As for human rights, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the 1966 International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights are major UN achievements that form the backbone of the international normative framework. Universal periodic reviews by the Human Rights Council provide an important institutional review mechanism for all states, including critical reporting on traditional Western democracies. During the first cycle of universal periodic reviews (2008–2011), reviews were conducted on 192 member

states over the course of twelve sessions.[29] The International Criminal Court (ICC), based on the Rome Statute, also provides a new institutional deterrent against genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. So far, ten investigations are ongoing in the ICC, while preliminary examinations into nine matters have started.[30] It is impossible to assess what collective impact these measures have had on the extent of human rights abuses in the world today. Many are skeptical, as large-scale abuses continue to be documented. But again, we must ask ourselves the counterfactual as to whether such abuses would be more extensive in the absence of the far-from-perfect human rights machinery that has evolved so far.

12. **Expanding the concept of human rights to all:** The same logic applies to UN normative frameworks for persons with disabilities (the 2007 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), the rights of the child (the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child), and the rights of indigenous peoples (the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). In all these cases, the UN has initiated action on behalf of these constituencies in the face of indifference, ineffectiveness, and in some cases open hostility. Sustained normative pressure from the UN system helped bring about changes in national policy positions.

13. **Championing gender equality:** There are also many emerging human rights domains where the UN has nurtured, generated, and in many cases championed new areas of international public policy action. This is particularly the case with the rights of women and girls and the broader gender equality agenda. The first International Women's Conference in 1975, and subsequent conferences in 1980, 1985, and 1995; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979; the adoption in 2000 of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security; and the formation of UN Women in 2010 have collectively underlined the new centrality of women and girls in the international security

and development agendas.

14. **Taking action on climate change:** Since the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992, and later the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 (entering into force in 2005), the UN has been at the center of global efforts to combat human-induced climate change. This has been supported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), established by the UN Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization in 1988, which provides robust scientific analysis of progress and regress on climate change. The 2015 UNFCCC Paris Agreement succeeded in delivering increased commitments from member states on emissions reductions beyond Kyoto levels and out to 2030. Although these reductions represent barely one-third of the levels necessary to keep the average global temperature increase within two degrees Celsius, they represent measurable progress compared with where we were. Further, the IPCC reports that global temperatures continue to rise.[31] Thus, while the global policy framework is now clear, policy action within that framework so far remains insufficient to deliver the global results necessary.

15. **Curbing ozone depletion:** The UN has also been deeply instrumental in the negotiation of the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer. As a result of reasonable levels of compliance by signatory states, ozone depletion has abated. The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration unequivocally attributes the sharp decrease in the level of atmospheric chlorine (which depletes the ozone layer) since 1992 to the Montreal Protocol.[32]

16. **Working to protect biodiversity:** The 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity has provided a legal framework for preserving species across the planet. At a different level, the 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the arms of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) responsible for policing trafficking have also helped preserve endangered species. But once again,

while normative frameworks are reasonable, and many have been incorporated into the domestic laws of member states, 52 percent of the world's biodiversity was lost between 1970 and 2010.[33]

While the UN's record of achievement, by any objective measure, is therefore reasonable, the UN has been spectacularly unsuccessful in effectively promoting these achievements to the international community. Of course, the UN confronts the universal communications problem that, if a global problem is being dealt with effectively it is no longer news in the eyes of international media organizations—good news is no longer "news," only bad news is "news." It is therefore imperative, not just optimal, that the UN communicate more effectively what it is doing in the world, both to sustain its future funding base from member states and the peoples of the world they represent and to enhance its long-term reputational standing as an effective agent in global affairs. The UN, on balance, has had a good story to tell but has not told it well.
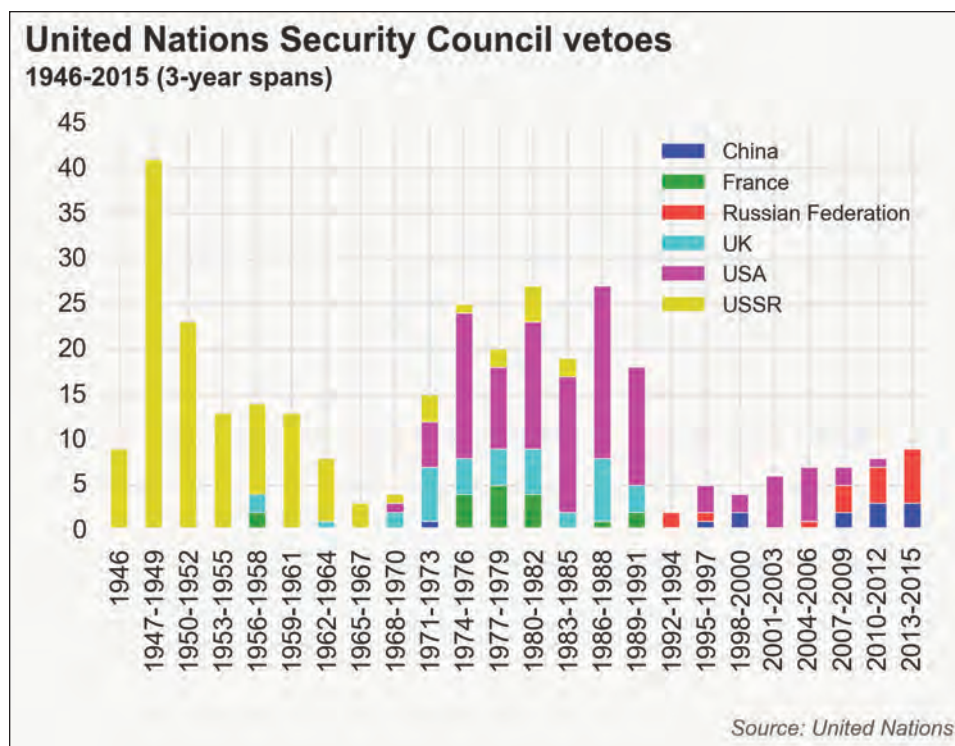
THE UN'S CHALLENGES, PROBLEMS, AND FAILURES

While appropriately recognizing the UN's achievements, we would be foolish not to recognize with equal candor the challenges, problems, and failures of the UN system and the impact these have had on the institution's international standing. These do not in themselves represent existential threats to the system's survival. The real danger is more gradual than that. It comes when a growing number of failings begins to reach a "critical mass" and bring the system's overall credibility into question. It is at this point that the real danger emerges of the UN losing its unique status, in time being seen as "just another NGO." We have not reached that stage yet. But for those who care for the institution's future, there are a number of warning signs, even if some have been overstated:

1. **Perceptions of Security Council impasse:** The veto and the threat of a veto within the UN Security Council have contributed to growing international frustrations with the overall capacity of the UN to act with urgency to deal effectively with international crises. The right of veto granted to the permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US) was the sine qua non for the establishment of the UN in the first place, guaranteeing the participation of the most powerful states in the new world body. It is a privilege enshrined in the UN Charter. Since 1946, the

United Nations Security Council vetoes
1946-2015 (3-year spans)

Source: United Nations

veto has been used 276 times in 230 Security Council resolutions or individual paragraphs of resolutions.[34] It should also be noted that, over the same period, 2,296 Security Council resolutions have been adopted.[35] Since the end of the Cold War in 1991, there have only been thirty-five vetoes (thirteen by Russia, fourteen by the US, and eight by China) on twenty-nine draft resolutions, while over the same period, more than 1,500 Security Council resolutions were passed. While there is a common perception that the Security Council is divided on practically all points, the above suggests otherwise. The Security Council has been divided on a limited number of security crises, albeit each highly significant, most particularly on Iraq, Syria, and Ukraine. In fact, for most of its decisions, the council operates by consensus. Presidential statements must be based on consensus. Press statements must also have the agreement of all fifteen members. And consensus is the governing principle for all sanctions committees and, with very few exceptions, all working groups. And as for resolutions of the council as a whole, the vast majority, as noted above, were also adopted by consensus: 93.5 percent of those adopted from 2000 to December 15, 2013. This is up from 88.9 percent during the 1990s, a period when the Security Council was comparatively more united than the current council, given the more cooperative international dynamics that prevailed in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War.[36] Therefore, while the impact of the veto power on the effectiveness of the Security Council on a number of major crises has been significant, it has not been all-pervasive. Far from it.

2. **Failure to prevent mass atrocities (war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity):** Despite the adoption of the Genocide Convention in 1948, there have been many mass atrocities committed in places such as Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Darfur, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Syria. In most cases, the UN was slow to respond or failed to respond at all. Details continue to emerge about many of these incidents, notably the revelation that the UN had received prior warning detailing

the imminent threat of the Rwandan genocide.[37] Equally troubling has been the increase in civilian deaths in various so-called UN "safe areas" over the years, from Srebrenica to Sri Lanka.[38]

3. **Limited response to global terrorism:** The inability of member states to agree on a comprehensive antiterrorism convention, including a definition of terrorism, has prevented the UN from fully exerting its legitimate role in the preservation of peace and security. After fifteen years, the endless debate about the complex challenges presented by non-state actors has become very tired when measured against the mounting terrorist challenge. The international community is impatient for action. In particular, the UN has been unsuccessful in confronting the question of state-funded terrorist activity, in dealing with the political, economic, and social root causes of terrorism, and in agreeing and promulgating a global narrative on countering violent extremism.

4. **Repercussions from the invasion of Iraq:** The invasion of Iraq delivered a fundamental blow to the notion that only the Security Council could authorize the use of force. Instead, various states acted unilaterally. The implications of this armed intervention continue to reverberate in the region as a whole. Furthermore, the modern precedent it has created has paved the way for other interventions to occur without Security Council backing.

5. **Absence from negotiation on Iranian nuclear agreement:** The UN's absence from the table during the 2015 negotiations on the Iranian nuclear program further undermined the UN's centrality to the global peace and security agenda. This is despite the fact that a UN institution (the IAEA) has a critical role in the implementation of the agreement. Yet no thought was given to including a senior UN official at the table. Though perhaps unintentional, this nonetheless spoke volumes to the international community about the current standing of the UN.

6. **Lack of effective action on Syria crisis:** UN

stasis during the last five years of the Syrian civil war has seen great human suffering. Three mediation efforts have been launched since the start of the conflict; two of these have been unsuccessful, while the third is ongoing. The Syrian civil war has now lasted longer than the First World War and the Spanish Civil War and almost as long as the Second World War. Meanwhile, 400,000 Syrians have died, and half of Syria's prewar population of 22 million has been uprooted.[39] This effectively makes the Syrian civil war the greatest global humanitarian calamity since the Second World War. The continuing failure of the UN to secure a "humanitarian space" to protect and support brutalized Syrian civilians has shocked the world. Despite the UN's best efforts, Syria is a symbol of UN ineffectiveness to the international community.

7. **Lack of involvement in Ukraine crisis:** The UN did not initiate any high-level preventive diplomatic initiatives in the lead-up to the Ukraine crisis in 2013–2014. Nor have there been any substantive UN conflict-resolution proposals since the crisis deteriorated into open armed conflict. The 2014 Minsk Protocol did not involve the UN. The UN might argue that matters relating to Ukraine devolved automatically to the OSCE. The OSCE is an institution with a regional conflict prevention and mediation mandate. Some 700 OSCE staff are currently deployed in Ukraine. But the question remains: Beyond the inevitable Security Council impasse, why is the UN missing in action on one of the most important challenges to peace and security in wider Europe since the Second World War?

8. **Lack of involvement in countering the North Korean nuclear threat:** The North Korean nuclear weapons program represents an emerging major threat to international peace and security. This has been reflected in four separate UN Security Council resolutions. North Korea's nuclear program shows no signs of abating. In fact, it is accelerating. Despite this acceleration, thus far we have not seen a significant UN initiative to engage the North Korean government in negotia-

tions. The UN might argue that this has historically been a responsibility of the Six-Party Talks. But the reality is that these talks have been suspended for seven years. This is not to suggest that any UN initiative has a significant prospect of success. But the problem at present is that there is no diplomatic initiative of any description to deal with a challenge that has the potential to turn into a large-scale crisis. Nor is there a regional institution like the OSCE with a mandate to act.

9. **Inability to handle the 2015–2016 asylum seeker, refugee, and migrant crisis:** The scale and complexity of the current crisis of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants is testing the limits of all multilateral structures. We are facing one of the biggest refugee crises in the history of the United Nations. But there is no global strategy or effective institutional capacity to tackle a crisis of this order of magnitude. Decisions by UN humanitarian agencies to cut daily allowances to asylum seekers living in Jordan and Lebanon in early 2015 helped trigger a mass exodus into Europe.[40] Thousands of people died at sea. Once again, the UN might respond that this was a "European problem." But this is hardly the case, since institutions like UNHCR, WFP, and WHO were created in the first place to manage crises like these. It is an open question how the UN system will be able to handle the next major wave of unauthorized movement of people into Europe from North Africa and the Middle East.

10. **Inconsistent responses to human rights violations:** The UN has suffered over many years for its inconsistencies in handling violations of international human rights law on the part of various member states. This has had the cumulative effect of eating away at the credibility of the UN's moral authority.

11. **Chronic underfunding of humanitarian programs:** Despite the generosity of certain donors, the gap between humanitarian needs and funding has continued to grow. This gap between accessible funding and the expanding needs of the UN's humanitarian agencies is starkly evident. This is creating a

severe financial crisis for a number of UN humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners. In 2015, United Nations coordinated appeals for humanitarian funding totaled $19.9 billion. By December 30th, only 52 percent of that money had been raised.[41] The target of the interagency UN-coordinated appeal for 2016 stands at $21.9 billion. As of August, it is only one-third funded.[42] Some of the most serious humanitarian crises, such as those affecting Syria, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan, are critically underfunded, resulting in major operational gaps in reaching people in need. Moreover, the gap between what is needed and what is being given for humanitarian relief is widening. Over time, this is undermining the capacity of UN agencies and humanitarian workers to simply do their job.

12. **Sexual abuse in peacekeeping operations in CAR, DRC, and other missions:** While the blue helmets of UN peacekeepers should represent safety and security to local populations, that reputation has begun to be tarnished by reports of sexual abuses, including against children, albeit by a relatively small number of peacekeepers. What began as a series of reports during the 1990s of a rise in child prostitution accompanying peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Cambodia, and Mozambique culminated in the more recent rape and sexual abuse scandals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2005) and Central African Republic (2014–2016). Such incidents impact the moral legitimacy and operational effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations more broadly.

13. **Responsibility for cholera outbreak in Haiti:** The world's worst recent outbreak of cholera, which swept through Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, was attributed to a UN peacekeeping force dispatched to the area. Although more than 700,000 were infected and more than 9,000 died, the UN claimed immunity from a subsequent lawsuit. This too has left an enduring and damaging image of a large-scale, high-profile UN operation.

14. **Insufficient warning of and response to the**

Ebola epidemic: An Ebola crisis across three African states from 2014 to 2015, for which the WHO failed to provide effective early warning, and which it subsequently failed to contain, has undermined the reputation of this critical UN agency. At least 11,325 people died during the epidemic.[43] Subsequent formal inquiries have identified a dysfunctional relationship between the WHO regional assembly in Africa and WHO headquarters in Geneva, as well as deficiencies in the latter's crisis-response capabilities. This, in turn, creates a more general crisis of confidence in the UN system to cope with the next major epidemic.

15. **Member states "going around the UN" by diverting funding to private programs and partnerships:** Large-scale private programs, partnerships, and foundations—including, for example, the Gates Foundation, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the Global Education Fund—are now playing bigger roles in the delivery of critical programs on the ground. Many have larger annual budgets than the relevant UN agencies. Some member states also increasingly see them to be less bureaucratic, more responsive to clients, and more efficient than UN agencies charged with mandates and responsibilities in these areas. The international community has begun to march away from the UN with both its funds and its feet in this area of traditional UN delivery. This also creates a problem for the UN corporately, as global "not-for-profits" are seen as shaping the agendas and steering the programs of the UN's own agencies, by virtue of the sheer weight of their funding and the heavy conditionalities attached to individual partnership arrangements.

16. **Reputational impact of previous corruption scandals, including the Oil-for-Food Programme:** Potentially the worst financial scandal in UN history, the Oil-for-Food Programme revealed widespread corruption within the system. According to the 2005 UN Independent Inquiry Committee, mismanagement and unethical conduct on the part

of UN employees plagued the program. Reports state that this scandal resulted in $1.8 billion being siphoned to the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein.[44] This is in addition to the amount misappropriated by UN officials, private individuals, and corporations during the transaction process. Though the current secretary-general has done much positive work in recent years to address the fallout from this scandal, its memory still looms large in the international community.

There will be many disagreements about each of the cases listed above. That is understandable. Nonetheless, we cannot easily walk away from the cumulative impact these have had over time. Most particularly, they point to an increasing tendency for both states and civil society to ignore the formal machinery of multilateralism when there are real problems to be solved. In part, this is because it is seen to be too difficult to achieve multilateral consensus for urgent, necessary action. And even when such consensus can be achieved, international confidence in the efficiency and the effectiveness of UN institutions delivering real results on the ground is under challenge. The result is that, on core security challenges, the UN is often seen as an "afterthought"—a final recourse to "legitimacy"

once substantive deliberations, decisions, and deployments take place elsewhere. On development and humanitarian challenges, the UN is in danger of being seen as just one of a number of major players. Over time, these trends are potentially deeply corrosive to the UN's long-term institutional standing.
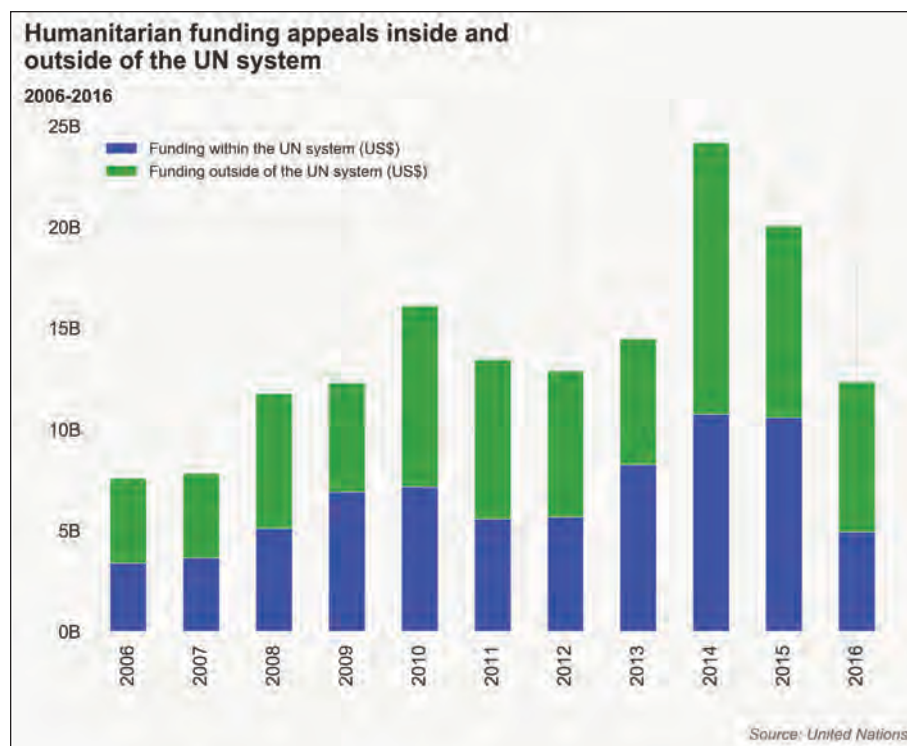
Building a Twenty-First Century UN

"Only stupid people don't change their minds."

Boutros Boutros-Ghali
UN secretary-general (1992–1996)

Mindful of this record of many successes and a number of failures over the decades, we are brought back to two underlying questions on whether the UN remains fit for purpose for the demands of the century ahead. First, are the decision-making bodies of the UN able to act sufficiently decisively to respond to the demands for more effective global governance for the future, given the continuing problems of forging consensus among 193 member states, and given the Byzantine structures of the wider UN system? Second, if so, are the UN Secretariat, and the thirty-

Humanitarian funding appeals inside and outside of the UN system

2006-2016

Funding within the UN system (US$)
Funding outside of the UN system (US$)

Source: United Nations

three different funds, programs, specialized agencies, and related entities that make up the UN's implementation machinery up to the job of effectively and efficiently implementing policy decisions once taken?

We sometimes excessively complicate our analyses of the UN. Ultimately, it boils down to these two basic questions: Can decisions be made by the UN's major deliberative bodies to solve major global problems? And can these decisions be effectively implemented by the UN machinery?

The first of these is primarily, although not exclusively, for member states themselves to answer, as they are the masters of the institution's destiny. But in practice it is not as "cut-and-dried" as this. There is also a clear role for the Secretariat in significantly shaping those policy decisions, given the expert knowledge and policy insights lying uniquely in its possession. Furthermore, significant policy decisions may in fact be devolved to the Secretariat by the UN's decision-making bodies. It can, therefore, be all too convenient to hide behind the traditional mantra that "it's a matter for member states," or "it just can't be done because of the intransigence of member states," or "our hands are tied." Those experienced in public administration understand full well that the making of core policy decisions is more complex than that, and the role of civil service advisers is critical in examining the full range of options on a given question. Moreover, it is entirely within the purview of the Secretariat and the other UN subsidiary institutions to recommend policy initiatives to the member states' deliberative bodies. After all, this is why the authors of the UN Charter included Article 99, which enables the secretary-general to bring forward policy initiatives on her or his own account. In the end, however, it remains the absolute prerogative of the Security Council, the General Assembly and its committees, or ECOSOC to accept, reject, or amend any such initiative.

As for the second question, on the capacity of the UN system effectively to implement policy decisions once taken, there is much to be written. The structure of the UN system was designed in the mid-twentieth century. The same structure, with relatively few fundamental changes since, is now seeking to deal with the challenges of the first half of the twenty-first century. The UN Charter itself has proven to be a remarkably resilient document. When we read it today, it still echoes with clarity across the decades. The same cannot be said, however, of the institutional structure of the UN. To survive, the structure must adapt to the new challenges of a new century. And this is easier said than done.

On the UN's policy-decision-making capabilities, we need a UN Secretariat that has an enhanced policy-planning, policy-development, and policy-advisory capability to deal with the rapidly changing world around us. This is in order to provide the best policy advice to the member states making up the UN's major deliberative bodies. This is further developed in the sections below. It may concern some member states to suggest that we need a greater capacity for policy entrepreneurship across the various institutions that make up the UN machinery, most particularly the Secretariat. But member states would, in all probability, welcome more innovative, and certainly less expensive, policy recommendations for dealing with intractable international problems. They would probably also welcome policy advice on challenges and opportunities lying beyond the horizon, rather than simply reacting to those of yesterday. Ultimately, however, it must be emphasized that it would be a matter for the member states' deliberative bodies to determine whether the policy advice produced by the UN's institutional machinery was worthwhile to shape the major policy decisions of the day.

On implementation, the UN's excessively hierarchical structure is a legacy from an earlier age. The UN now needs a flatter, flexible, effective, and cross-disciplinary structure. It needs clarity in its mandates. It must embrace the full "horizontal" complexity of challenges on the ground, where neat divisions between the traditional pillars of peace and security, development, and human rights no longer exist. We need a UN that is clear about its measurement criteria; one that is fully mindful of how to most efficiently use scarce resources; and one that can deal creatively, laterally, and flexibly with host governments and nongovernment agencies in producing real results on the ground. Of course, all of this is infinitely more complex than it sounds, particularly when we take into account the range of emerging challenges to the overall order itself, as well as the institutional

challenges that are internal to the UN.

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES TO THE GLOBAL ORDER

"My friends, our challenge today is not to save Western civilization—or Eastern, for that matter. All civilization is at stake, and we can save it only if all peoples join together in the task."[45]

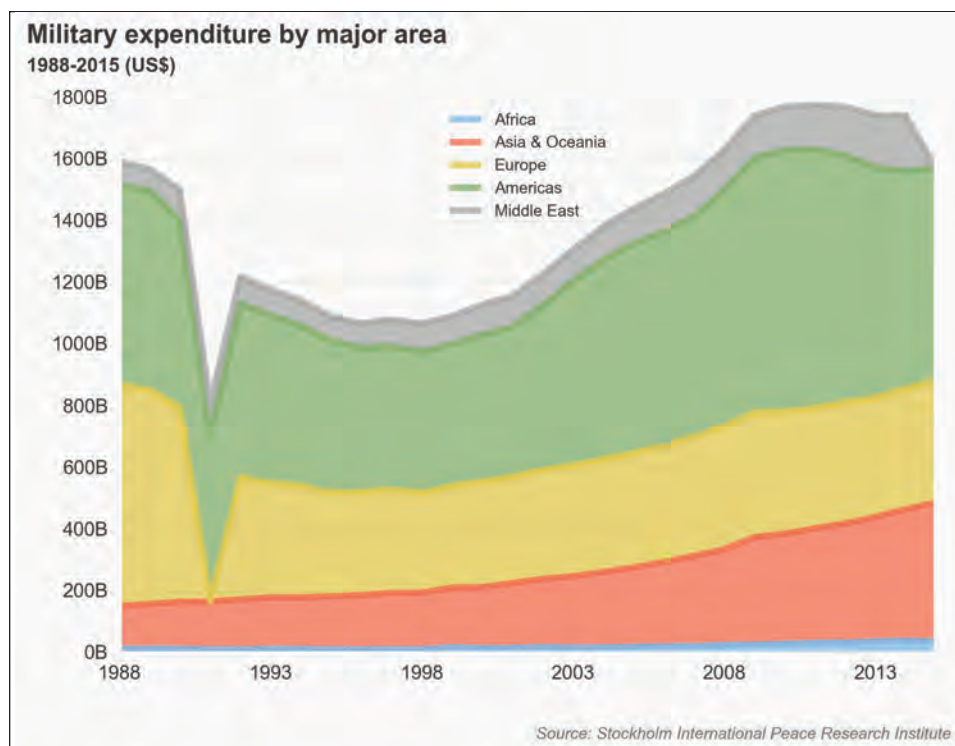*Kofi Annan*
UN secretary-general (1997–2006)

The UN must confront ten major systemic changes that, while exogenous to the system, are nonetheless washing over the totality of the UN's institutional arrangements. The UN must also confront other matters that are endogenous to its own institutional challenges and particular bureaucratic culture. These are dealt with below. The UN must adapt to these changes. Otherwise, in time, perhaps sooner than we think, it will begin to fade into irrelevance.

Global Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Change

We are now living through a period of profound geopolitical and geoeconomic change. When the UN was formed, China was in the midst of a debilitating civil war, following a century of foreign occupation. Depending on the measure, China today is either the second largest or the largest economy in the world. After the United States, China also has the world's second largest military budget. Against current projections, annual Chinese military outlays in quantitative terms may well overtake those of the United States by mid-century. Over the last five years, US-China relations have also become less stable than in any period since 1972 because of rolling political crises over the South China Sea, the East China Sea, and cyberspace.

This last decade has also seen a rapid deterioration in US-Russia relations. This began with the US invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, a series of crises over proposals to expand the membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to include a number of Eastern European states bordering the Russian Federation, and most recently Russian actions in Ukraine. There is, at present, little sign of improvement. Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev's statement at the 2016 Munich Security Conference that Russia and NATO were now on the verge of a "new Cold War" reminds us of the dangers of a repeat of the forty

Military expenditure by major area
1988-2015 (US$)

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

years of Security Council dysfunctionality during the first Cold War.[46]

Moreover, a new strategic partnership has emerged over the last several years between Russia and China, covering multiple areas of cooperation ranging from security policy to foreign policy and energy supply. Global great-power relations are now in a greater state of flux than they have been since 1991. There is also an uncertain trajectory for the future. Stability of great-power relations is a critical factor underpinning the stability of the wider global order. It reduces the risks of the polarization we have seen, in previous decades, of regional disputes.

Beyond this, we are beginning to see strategic nuclear stability reemerge as a tension between these three great powers. In part, this has been triggered by critical questions arising from North Korea's nuclear weapons program, the deployment of US and allied ballistic missile defense systems, and the possibility of retaliatory escalation on the part of both Chinese and Russian nuclear forces in response to allied terminal high-altitude area defense (THAAD) deployments.

This means that the UN is operating in a strategic environment radically different than that faced by Secretaries-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and Kofi Annan, as well as by Ban Ki-moon during much of his first term. The UN now finds itself in increasingly difficult and dangerous times, given the range of new strategic tensions between the US, China, and Russia. Strategic stability in great-power relations is key to the ability of the UN multilateral machinery to operate effectively.

The Globalization of Everything

The United Nations system is simultaneously confronting new dynamics created by the "globalization of everything." The impact of the ongoing technological revolution is being felt in all policy domains, as demonstrated, for example, by Moore's Law, which has correctly predicted for decades that computers' processing power would double every two years.[47] The information technology revolution, in particular, has rapidly accelerated the capacity to transfer finance, information, and ideas to all four quarters of the Earth with a rapidity and density unprecedented in

human history. In essence, globalization represents a radical contraction in time and space for transactions among people, corporations, institutions, and governments, compounded by unprecedented technological innovation in all domains. Its core dynamics therefore challenge the capacity of traditional politics and traditional forms of diplomacy to cope.

The consequence of this globalization for the practice of international relations has been the collapse of what theorists have historically called "the great divide" between the national and the international; the foreign and the domestic; and the external and the internal. Until recent decades, these were relatively discrete policy domains. That is no longer the case. Instead, we see the globalization of security, the economy, the environment, the labor force, unauthorized movement of people, and communicable diseases.

Globalization has also had a profound effect on the effective capacities of individual nation-states, as well as the international institutions they created in the pre-globalization age. The globalization of everything means that individual states are no longer capable of dealing effectively with many of the policy challenges they face where the levers of control no longer lie exclusively, or even predominantly, within the powers of national governments. At the same time, nation-states have generally refused to cede to supranational, intergovernmental, or multilateral institutions the powers necessary to deal substantively with these policy challenges on a truly global scale. As a consequence, effective governance, both national and international, seems to be "falling between two stools." This, in turn, places unprecedented pressure on the credibility of national and international political institutions in the eyes of their people, who are in search of real solutions for the real problems they experience in their daily lives.

Crisis of the Nation-State

Consistent with the above, the forces of globalization are beginning to slowly erode the long-term legitimacy of the nation-state itself. This is because national political leaders are no longer, in substance, capable of delivering self-contained, national solutions to the problems faced by their people, as the policy levers available increasingly

slip beyond their grasp. This, in turn, contributes to a related crisis of legitimacy for the international institutions nation-states have constructed. These dynamics are reinforced by the unrelenting rapidity and intensity of change being delivered by the processes of globalization described above, leaving little time for national governments to even catch their breath. Most national leaders today are simply struggling to stay politically afloat, given the daunting challenges erupting around them and the increasingly fractured nature of the political systems through which they are required to operate.

In many states, local communities are demanding protection against unwelcome local changes being generated by the dynamics of globalization, irrespective of whether they are brought about by technology, trade, investment, migration flows, or a growing fear of terrorism. Such local communities tend to be from poorer, non-metropolitan areas where the benefits flowing from the globalization process are less evident, or nonexistent, compared with their metropolitan cousins. Whatever national governments may say about their ability to "stop" the pressures impacting their local communities, in the globalizing world of the twenty-first century these words sound increasingly hollow. The best these governments can do is slow the process of change, or moderate its impact.

As a result, national populations increasingly find themselves split between "globalists" and "localists"—the former urging the further weakening of national boundaries; the latter urging a withdrawal from existing supranational agreements in the hope that their lifestyles, communities, and traditional industries can somehow be preserved or, even better, be returned to an earlier, less threatening age. This dynamic is not just alive in the West. In various forms, and to various degrees, it is alive across all societies. This, in turn, is beginning to create a fertile political space for more extreme political movements, either of the far left or the far right, driven by populist protest against the broad, globalizing consensus of the mainstream political center that has by and large prevailed over the last few decades.

Protectionist sympathies are therefore on the rise, as are xenophobic approaches to migration and, more broadly, a political impetus to "throw up the walls" against the forces of continuing global-ization. This, in turn, is breeding new nationalist and mercantilist movements, which vilify not only their own governments, but also the regional and global institutions of which their governments are members and to which too much sovereignty, in their view, has already been ceded.

The net result is a fracturing and failure of national politics. We are seeing weakening national support for regional institutions such as the European Union. Global institutions such as the UN are seen as even more remote from local concerns. Therefore, any international efforts to sustain the legitimacy of the traditional UN multilateral system must be mindful of these new political and economic forces that have been unleashed. Globalization, once a natural friend of the multilateral process, is in danger of becoming a lethal enemy because of the dangerous new political forces it is unleashing and the absence of effective policy responses to ease the transition process for those least able to adapt.

Crisis of the Global Economy

The future of UN multilateralism, and multilateralism more generally, has also been buffeted by chronically low economic growth since the beginning of the global financial crisis almost a decade ago. The uncomfortable truth is that many national economies remain stuck on lower growth trajectories compared with pre-crisis levels. According to the UN, four-fifths of countries saw lower average growth from 2011–2014 than from 2004–2007.[48] A number of economies are still smaller in size than they were in 2008, or barely bigger. Living standards have improved little. And global unemployment remains stubbornly high in various regions. The traditional drivers of long-term growth are failing. Global trade growth is no longer leading overall economic growth rates, but instead lagging. There continues to be a global private investment drought, as investors retreat to safety.

As a consequence, global economic growth is no longer able to continue to provide a political and social buffer against the disruptive dynamics of the globalization process in industry and unemployment. A poorly performing global economy also bears down on the ability of the global multilateral system to continue to function effectively. Global institutions are deprived of the levels of funding

growth they need to sustain their global operations, as governments trim their financial sails to cope with limited revenue growth. This continued global economic downturn also fundamentally impairs the ability of the global multilateral system (both the UN and the World Bank) to see the level of growth necessary to deliver real results for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This, in turn, will begin to create a further crisis of credibility for the multilateral system, given the ambitious content of the goals announced in 2015, for realization by 2030.

Chronic Unemployment

Nearly a decade of below-trend growth has also had a profound impact on employment levels, both in developed and developing economies. In addition, deeply disruptive technologies are structurally impacting the ability of economies to create more and better jobs to replace those lost through the decline of traditional industries. This is a new phenomenon in economic history. It has been the subject of a number of recent academic papers demonstrating that the substitution effect of introducing new technologies to old industries is resulting in an increasing proportion of the overall workforce becoming effectively unemployable.[49] The mass introduction of advanced robotics to both developed and developing economies is only just beginning.

If we add to these trends the impact of major demographic change and continued rapid global population growth, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, we then begin to see the ingredients for a long period of profound social and economic instability. This, in turn, will have profound political consequences. Combating the violent extremism of the future begins here, where national governments, and our multilateral institutions, have so far been least able to help.

Rising Violent Extremism

As noted above, structural economic change and rising global unemployment levels create fertile grounds for violent extremism. Put simply, if young people no longer have economic hope and are unable to fulfill their most basic human aspirations of being able to start a family and provide them with shelter and a better standard of living than they inherited from their own parents, then the future looks very bleak indeed. This, in turn,

provides a fertile environment for extremist ideological and theological movements that may offer messianic alternatives to those suffering from various forms of social and economic alienation in the real world today. Put starkly, if "the system" no longer offers hope for the future, young people are more likely to search for alternative futures outside of it.

Furthermore, such fertile breeding grounds for violent extremism, when matched with the new technologies available for terrorist recruitment, training, and attacks, create a potent cocktail of challenges for the international community. Technological innovations in communications, financial transfers, terrorist franchising, and future access to weapons of mass destruction create a vast new set of threats to the existing political order.

The Changing Nature of Armed Conflict

A further challenge affecting the future operations of the United Nations is the changing nature of armed conflict itself. The prevention of war lies at the center of the UN Charter. And if we take a long view of history, the world is less war-torn than in previous centuries. This trend has been particularly evident in the immediate post–Cold War period. Between 1992 and 2005, the number of armed conflicts around the world dropped by 40 percent.[50] Yet this historic decline in armed conflict notwithstanding, we have begun to see the reversal of this trend of declining lethality over the last decade. While the number of armed conflicts may still be declining, the number of conflict-related deaths has risen dramatically—from 56,000 fatalities in sixty-three active conflicts in 2008 to 180,000 fatalities in forty-two active conflicts in 2014.[51]

Furthermore, since 2007, the number of high-intensity and long-lasting conflicts has in fact increased.[52] These include the conflicts in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine. These conflicts have resulted in a growing number of people killed and a vast expansion of the number of people displaced by conflict. There are now more refugees and internally displaced persons in the world than at any time since World War Two.

However, the risk of inter-state conflict has by no means disappeared. The number and complexity of

disputed maritime and territorial boundaries around the world provide fertile grounds for future crises and even conflict. In addition, the possible trajectory of inter-state conflicts is also changing, given the proliferation of new military technologies, the militarization of space, the danger of cyberwarfare, the "robotization" of warfare, including the dangerous potential of artificial intelligence being deployed for military purposes.[53] For example:

- States can be militarily "blinded" through a range of anti-satellite activity, which is inherently destabilizing in a continuing era of strategic nuclear deterrence.

- Cyberwarfare can be used by one state to disable vital parts of the economic infrastructure of another state.

- In 2015 over 3,000 prominent scientists and robotics researchers called on the international community to prevent an "artificial intelligence arms race" by signing a treaty to ban lethal autonomous weapons beyond human control.[54] This follows a decision by the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in 2013 to convene a meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems.

The technological revolution in military affairs is so rapidly and radically rewriting the landscape of modern warfare that it is difficult to conceptualize what precise impacts it will have on the traditional institutions of diplomacy, above all the UN, tasked with preventing armed conflict.

An equally significant development in the evolving nature of armed conflict is that the majority of wars are now no longer being fought between states but within states. Colonial and inter-state conflicts, which accounted for half of all armed conflict between 1946 and 1958, have decreased significantly. The most predominant form of conflict in today's world is internal to the state. And an increasing proportion of these emerging forms of armed conflict are conducted primarily in close, urban settings, rather than in open-field operations, which have traditionally been removed from the largest concentrations of civilians. The number of civil conflicts peaked in 1991 with fifty-two armed conflicts. This figure dropped to thirty-two by 2003. Since then, the number has oscillated between thirty and forty-two.[55]

Given the state-centric nature of the multilateral system, armed non-state actors present new conceptual, operational, and international legal dilemmas for states and inter-state institutions responding to them. There is also now a considerable literature on the expanding role of organized crime, narco-crime, and human trafficking in destabilizing the normal operations of states and inter-state relations. Such non-state actors perform an increasing role in funding global terrorist organizations. The demands of these various non-state actors in intra-state conflicts vastly complicate peacemaking efforts and push the boundaries of the existing UN peacemaking and peacebuilding architecture beyond traditional limits. The UN must continue to rethink the flexibility and effectiveness of its institutional responses to these challenges.

Between classical inter-state and intra-state conflict lies the increasingly complex domain of hybrid warfare. Hybrid conflicts involve a combination of inter-state and intra-state actors. They also increasingly involve the armed forces of nation-states acting in formal or informal coalition with non-state actors, including terrorist organizations.

Beyond all the above, terrorism is beginning to tear at the fabric of nation-states. It is no longer quarantined to particular regions of the world. Terrorist attacks, either planned and executed by terrorist networks or delivered by individual attackers disconnected from any organizational networks but nonetheless inspired by a common ideology, are becoming increasingly commonplace in a number of parts of the world. The future of terrorism, and how most effectively to respond to it, is emerging as a major international policy challenge of our age. People now live in fear in countries across the world. Unless the UN is directly relevant to a global response to global terrorism, it runs the risk of becoming progressively marginalized from the most fundamental security-policy priorities of many member states and their people.

The changing forms of armed conflict described in the preceding paragraphs pose significant challenges both for the respect of international humanitarian law and for the design and delivery of meaningful action to respond to humanitarian

needs. The development of new technologies and the conduct of new forms of warfare, including cyberwarfare, while not occurring in a legal vacuum, poses important policy, legal, and ethical challenges and dilemmas. Other challenges arise from the increased involvement of terrorist groups that reject any legal or moral restraint in the conduct of their operations. The UN system will be required to think urgently, creatively, and constructively about these complex new policy and ethical domains where innovation in military technology runs the risk of becoming an utterly amoral driver of policy change by state and non-state actors.
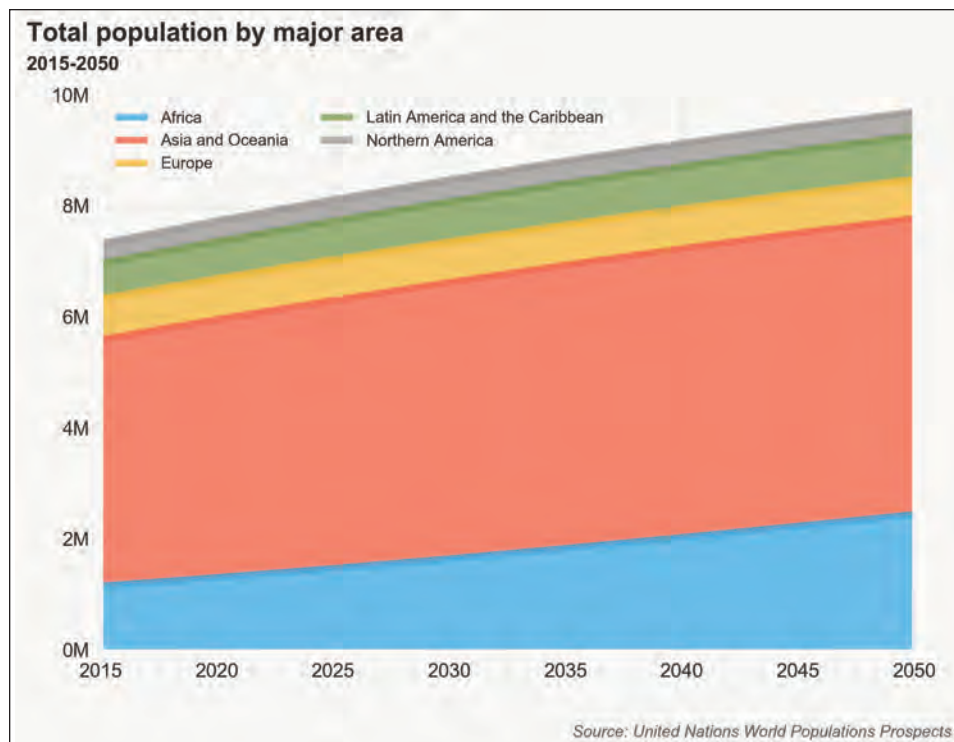
Demographic Change and Rapidly Increasing Global Movement of People

Two hundred years ago, only 1 billion humans lived on the earth. Today, there are over 7 billion. The exponential growth of the human population, following centuries of much lower growth, has recently begun to slow. The annual world population growth rate peaked at 2.1 percent in 1962.[56] Nevertheless, the slowing rate of population growth should not blind us to the fact that it will take another hundred years or so for the population growth rate to descend to 0.06 percent per

annum and for the world's population to peak. In short, we have passed the crest of population growth, but we have a long way to go before the global population reaches its crest. It is estimated that the world's population will reach 9.7 billion by 2050 and 11.2 billion by 2100.[57] We should also treat these projections with caution. For the past two decades, prior to recent research, it was demographic orthodoxy that the world's population would peak at 2050 with 9 billion people.[58] Recent research overturned this scientific consensus.

These demographic trends will impact every area of the UN's work, especially peace and security, development, and climate change. It is worth noting that sub-Saharan Africa is the fastest growing region in the world, projected to grow from 1 billion people today to between 3.5 and 5 billion in 2100.[59] This underlines the absolute centrality of Africa to the UN's overall mission.

The peoples of the world are also now more globally mobile than at any time in history. More than 1 billion people are migrants. This number is made up of approximately 244 million international migrants per year and 740 million internal migrants.[60] This creates new economic, social, and lifestyle risks for all people. At the same time, the

Total population by major area
2015-2050

Legend: Africa, Asia and Oceania, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America

Source: United Nations World Populations Prospects

scale of these temporary or long-term migrations of people creates new opportunities for globally communicable diseases, organized crime, and terrorism.
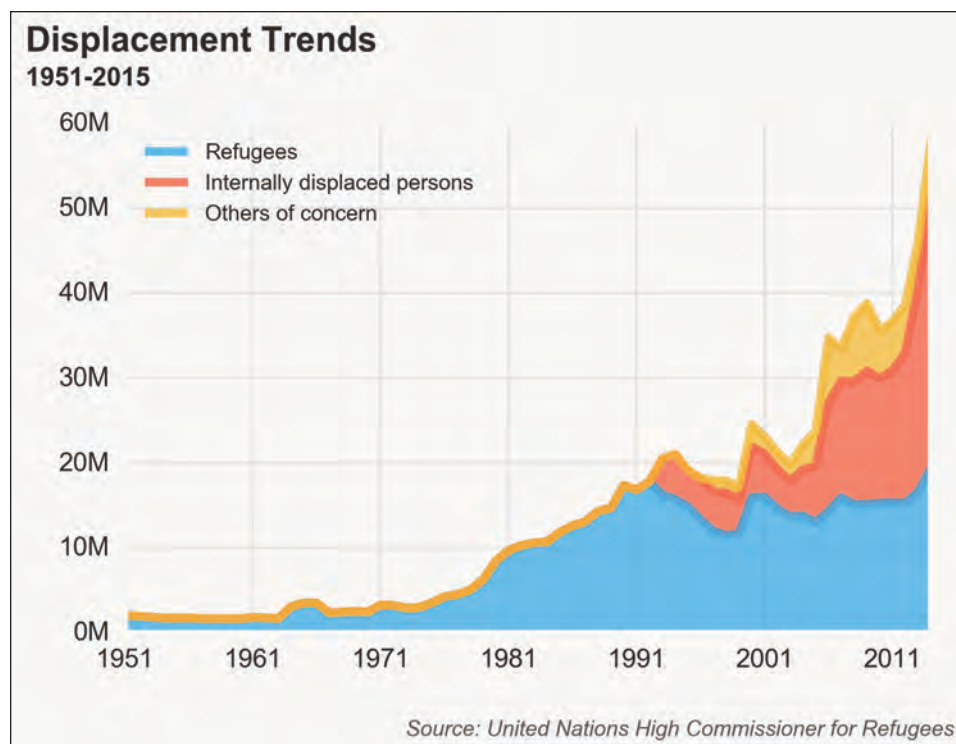
Similarly, the number of internally and internationally displaced persons has reached unprecedented proportions. In 2015, the former UN humanitarian envoy, Jan Egeland, publicly described the UN system for managing displaced persons as "totally broken."[61] Several factors reflect this:

- The destabilization of "source countries" by armed conflict continues to create push factors across much of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as other regions of the world. This trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

- The burden this, in turn, places on neighboring countries, which effectively become the countries of first asylum for internationally displaced persons, will increase accordingly. There comes a time when this reaches breaking point. Recent developments in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey underline this reality.

- The absence of a regional, let alone global, network of transit country facilities and support services for internationally displaced

persons on the move, compounds the crisis, resulting in continuing humanitarian disasters of the type we have recently seen across the Mediterranean.

- The absence of any broader common global agreement on the long-term resettlement of internationally displaced persons, if and when their refugee status has been determined, creates domestic political powder kegs in a number of "destination" countries that have become the countries of choice for people in desperate circumstances who have no guarantees of being settled elsewhere.

These elements point to the need for a radical reform of the system to handle global movements of people, internationally displaced persons, and particularly those with refugee status—and all at scale. The current system was designed to deal with the exigencies of the 1950s. It has failed to effectively modernize itself in the face of the fragmentation of a number of modern nation-states over the last decade. New telecommunications technologies, their near universal availability, and unprecedented opportunities for greater physical mobility are compounding the problem. This has become an area of urgent reform for the UN multilateral system, including the interrela-

Displacement Trends
1951-2015

- Refugees
- Internally displaced persons
- Others of concern

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The Increasing Threat of Globally Communicable Diseases

The threat of epidemics and pandemics remains a challenge for the international community. This threat is compounded by the continued rapid increase in the world's population by an additional 83 million people annually and unprecedented global movements.[62] But while the danger of globally communicable diseases is also increasing, the capacity of national and global public health systems to detect, prevent, and treat these diseases is under increasing challenge because of the limitations of public finance.

The problem of globally communicable diseases relates to a range of factors: the adequacy of domestic healthcare systems; the adequacy of nutrition levels (according to the Food and Agriculture Organization, 795 million people suffer from chronic undernourishment[63]); the availability of maternal and child healthcare systems; water scarcity; the impact of natural disasters; deforestation; and changing microclimates and desertification. All these factors are made more complex by armed conflict, in which far more people are killed, injured, or disabled by nonviolent causes (including disease) than violent ones. For example, in Darfur, 80 percent of civilian deaths between 2003 and 2008 were caused by disease.[64]

The failure of the WHO to respond effectively to the Ebola crisis in West Africa in 2013–2014 highlighted concerns about the capacity of the UN system to deal effectively with similar epidemics in the future. Of all of the potentially lethal infectious diseases the international community is required to deal with, influenza, in all its variants, remains one of the most lethal.[65] The World Health Assembly in 2007 adopted the landmark Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework, which brings together member states, industry, and the WHO to implement a global approach to influenza preparedness and response. However, there remains considerable skepticism of the UN's ability to respond effectively to a large global outbreak.

Parallel to these threats, the crisis in global antibiotic research and the problem of global antibiotic resistance across the world through over-prescription and overuse looms as one of the greatest structural challenges the international health community faces for the future. According to research by various UN agencies, antimicrobial resistance is a global public health threat that could kill millions of people every year, overturn the public health successes of the Millennium Development Goals, threaten the SDGs, and, by 2050, cause a 3.5 percent drop in global gross domestic product.[66]

Finally, the limited capacity of national health services and international health professionals and facilities to be effectively deployed to crises around the world represents a growing logistical problem. The inability to deploy resources rapidly, effectively, and efficiently to West Africa during the Ebola crisis is a major case in point. MSF and other agencies have expressed profound concerns about the UN's operational capacity to safely deploy personnel to such crises when they erupt. Furthermore, if rapid deployments do not occur, disease outbreaks spread rapidly across inter-state boundaries.

The future of global public health, including the capacity to contain globally communicable diseases, represents a core challenge to the future credibility of the UN multilateral system as a whole. It touches the core question of people's sense of physical security. It is absolutely basic. We should never forget that more people were killed by the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918–1920 (50 million) than in World War One itself. More than one-third of the world's population at the time contracted the Spanish flu.[67] The effective management of future outbreaks of globally communicable diseases, with the involvement of all relevant global stakeholders, therefore represents an area for urgent, fundamental reform—before it's too late.

The Accelerating and Compounding Impact of Climate Change

Climate change, and its impact on extreme weather events, water and food scarcity, coastal inundation, the changing patterns of globally infectious diseases, and international movement of people, runs the risk of exceeding the capacity of national and international policymakers to respond in sufficient time and at a sufficient scale. As one

recent scientific report warned, "pushing global temperatures past certain thresholds could trigger abrupt, unpredictable, and potentially irreversible changes that have massively disruptive and large-scale impacts."[68]

The climate "threshold" beyond which dangerous and possibly irreversible changes to the biosphere occur, agreed by scientists and member states, is an increase in global average temperature beyond 1.5–2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.[69] The longer it takes emissions to peak, the more difficult it will be to hold the temperature increase below this level. And the reality is that carbon commitments made in Paris, if implemented, will only deliver one-third of the emissions reductions necessary. There are already a number of warning signals:
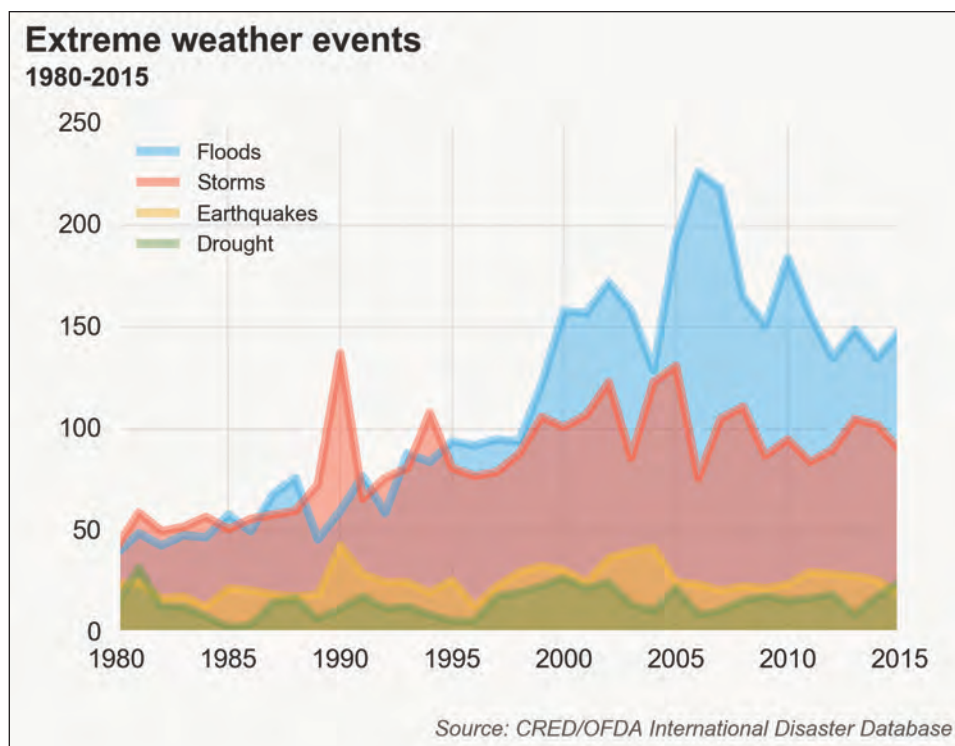
- The earth has warmed an average of 1.02 degrees Celsius since the Industrial Revolution.[70] If global temperatures rise two or three degrees above average, then we would be living in a "climate casino." We would not know what to expect, because it would be outside the range of observations going back 100,000 years.[71]

- Another impact of climate change is that extreme weather events have become more frequent and more severe. These are already reflected in significant increases in global insurance premiums. The human and economic costs of extreme weather events (e.g., cyclones, heat waves, floods, forest fires) are growing.

- Despite rising temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events, global population growth alone will create the need for at least 30 percent more water, 50 percent more food, and 45 percent more energy by 2030. The possibility of armed conflict arising as a result of food, water, and energy security crises will also begin to rise.

The 2014 Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC recognizes that climate change exacerbates a range of existing threats to human beings. Climate change threatens human security, because it can worsen resource scarcities, undermine livelihoods, increase pressures for migration, and weaken the ability of states to provide the conditions necessary for human security. It makes delivering on the sustainable development agenda even more difficult and can reverse positive trends, introduce new uncertainties, and increase the costs of building resilience.[72]

Climate change has the potential to affect every

Extreme weather events 1980-2015

Source: CRED/OFDA International Disaster Database

part of the globe. But its impact can be particularly severe for vulnerable people and those who experience low levels of human development. This adds to social and political tensions and can increase the possibility of armed conflicts.[73] For small island developing states (SIDS), climate change is an existential threat that needs to be urgently and effectively addressed.
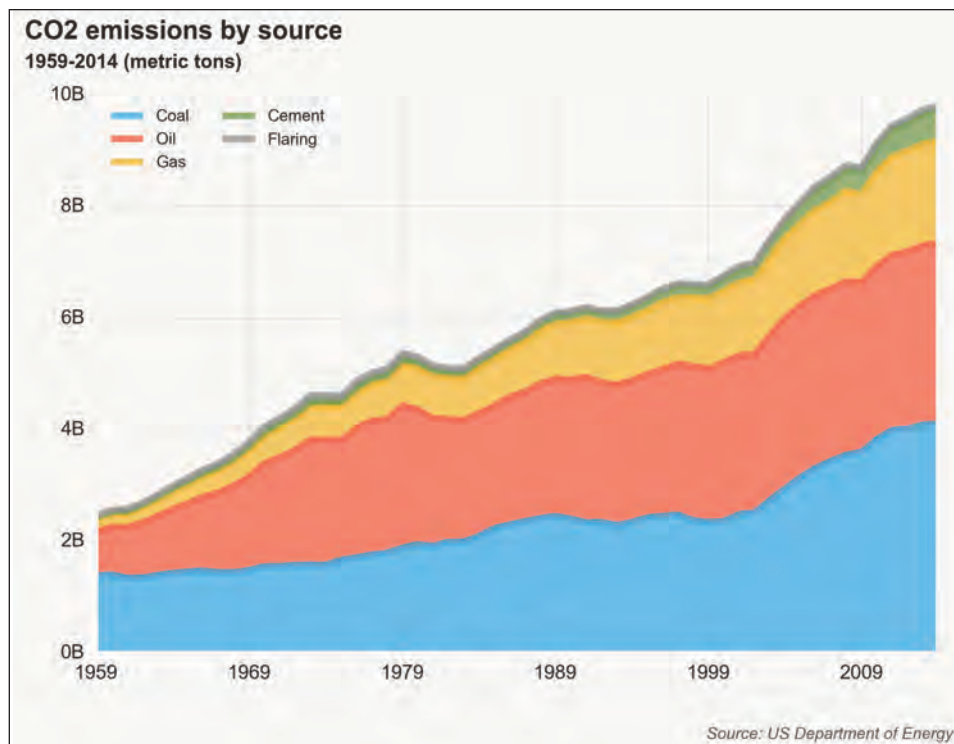
The UN is infatuated with the term "cross-cutting." If ever there was a substantively "cross-cutting" challenge for the system, it is the multi-dimensional impact of climate change. These impacts cover the full scope of the UN's peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights pillars. However, the core instrumental question for the future is whether our current UN machinery, anchored in the UNFCCC and the associated Conference of the Parties, is equipped to deal with the speed of policy change necessary to avoid dangerous, irreversible climate change. If the international community fails to cut emissions radically, a range of even more radical mitigation measures becomes necessary for various countries, regions, and industries across the world—particularly for those small island developing states whose very existence is threatened by climate change.

All this is before we take fully into account

humans breaching a range of other "planetary boundaries" beyond climate, as identified by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, including:[74]

- Stratospheric ozone depletion;
- Biodiversity loss and extinction;
- Chemical pollution;
- Ocean acidification;
- Freshwater consumption;
- The global hydrological cycle; and
- Land system change.

In particular, the international community must address the long-term environmental integrity of our oceans, which cover 70 percent of the earth's surface. Oceans profoundly affect climate change and weather patterns. They are also a critical source of global protein. However, the management of our oceans by and large remains an institutional orphan within the UN's overall environmental architecture. National governments are not responsible. Nor is there an agreed international governance mechanism for the comprehensive management of oceanic ecosystems. The governance of our oceans remains effectively in no-man's-land.

CO2 emissions by source
1959-2014 (metric tons)

Source: US Department of Energy

CHALLENGES INTERNAL TO THE UN SYSTEM

> *"It is when we all play safe that we create a world of utmost insecurity."*
>
> *Dag Hammarskjöld*
> *UN secretary-general (1953–1961)*

The mega-changes and mega-challenges listed above will radically change the global policy terrain in which both national and multilateral institutions will have to operate in the future. Collectively, they will significantly test the UN's capacity to adapt to new twenty-first-century realities, rather than clinging to more comfortable and familiar twentieth-century approaches to global problem solving. Beyond these "exogenous" challenges, however, are a number of challenges that are endogenous to the UN system itself, which will also need to be dealt with.

A Reactive versus a Proactive Culture

Understandably, the UN has evolved as an institution reacting to the comprehensive destruction of the Second World War. As a result, over seventy years, it has reacted to crises once they have erupted, sometimes effectively, other times less so. But upon close examination of the terms of the UN Charter, it is important to remind ourselves that we are called upon once again to avoid the scourge of war. It is this core charter provision on prevention that should focus our efforts afresh on a more comprehensive preventive agenda for the UN as a whole. As a matter of logic, this includes:

- Preventing political crises from becoming armed conflict;
- Preventing inter-state disputes from escalating to war;
- Preventing humanitarian disasters of the type we have seen unfold in the refugee crisis of the last several years;
- Preventing the further escalation of youth unemployment from fueling the next generation of political alienation, and a whole new wave of violent extremism;
- Preventing local outbreaks of communicable disease from becoming full-blown global pandemics;
- Preventing mass atrocities through early and

effective action; and
- Preventing irreversible climate change.

Prevention should become the new leitmotif of all UN operations. Taken seriously, this becomes a question of institutional culture, structure, and resource allocation across the UN system.

A Culture of Independent Silos rather than of Integrated Leadership

The United Nations is made up of eleven funds and programs, fifteen specialized agencies, four related organizations, and three other entities—a total of thirty-three institutions, listed in Annex 3. This, of course, is in addition to the internal structure of the UN Secretariat itself, which comprises 41,081 staff.[75] There have been thousands of calls across the UN over the decades for the dismantling of the multiple institutional "silos" that permeate the system. The rhetorical antidote to silo busting within the UN system is the repeated call for a "cross-cutting" approach.

We are still left, however, with real uncertainty as to how this has actually been translated into institutional practice. It is fully recognized that the current governance structures, mandates, and resources allocations of the various funds, programs, and specialized agencies, as well as the specific operations of the Secretariat itself, militate in favor of fragmentation. Therefore, overturning this historical predisposition toward independent "silos" will be a formidable task requiring the intensive engagement of the UN's leadership structures and all of its stakeholders over an extended period of time. Nonetheless, at a functional level it will mean the following:

- It should mean integrated decision making at the top of the UN system, whereby the UN's executive management brings together, in its daily deliberative activities, both policy and operational decisions that incorporate the combined elements of the security, development, and human rights mission at hand.
- Furthermore, effective "silo busting" should ensure that such integrated decision-making processes are then reflected in the Secretariat's guidance for given UN operations on the ground.
- Finally, we will know that "silos" are busted when resident coordinators on the ground are

empowered to move personnel and resources within and between UN agencies based on changing needs in the field.

In short, "silo busting" is about how decisions are made, communicated, and implemented.

A Culture of Report Writing rather than Implementation

The UN has evolved a culture that tends to reward the writing of reports, rather than the implementation of decisions and the delivery of measurable results. One of the most searing, all-pervasive critiques of the UN system is that it has degenerated into a world of words rather than a field of action. There is a deep preoccupation in the system with ensuring that "we get the language right" as we refine our analysis of a particular global problem. Less attention is directed to what we can, should, and need to actually do to solve the problem on the ground. This must change.

A Culture of Diffuse rather than Clearly Defined Accountability

The UN system has evolved in a manner that makes it almost impossible to hold a single person or institution accountable for anything. It almost seems to be designed that way. Because all of the challenges on the UN's agenda appear to be "crosscutting," both everybody and nobody is held responsible for the institution's performance. Nobody has on their desk a copy of Harry Truman's famous sign: "The buck stops here." The core problem is that, if individuals are not held accountable for individual elements of the UN's overall performance, then the aggregate effectiveness of the system is degraded.

A Culture of Centralization rather than Delegation

The UN operates a deeply hierarchical structure. It needs to be much flatter. There are far too many levels and lines of "management." In an institution as large, diverse, and global as the UN, it cannot physically be managed hierarchically. Within the framework of strategic policy guidance, there must be clear lines of operational delegation. Furthermore, this relates directly to the previous discussion of accountability. If powers are clearly delegated, for example, to the manager of a field operation, then that is where

accountability should lie.

A Culture of the Center rather than a Culture That Prioritizes Field Operations

Almost half of the UN Secretariat's more than 41,000 staff are located in headquarters.[76] Given that the UN's ultimate effectiveness is judged not by the elegance of its policy papers, but by the effectiveness with which it executes mandates on the ground, there need to be more UN field staff and fewer at the center. Field staff also need to be better rewarded. We need to encourage a culture of a long-term professional field service, so that the UN's best practitioners on the ground are encouraged, rewarded, and promoted for continuing to serve in the field, rather than simply returning to the head office in order to get ahead in their careers.

The Absence of Integrated Field Operations

The effective delivery of services to host states and host communities requires integrated field operations. This, of course, reflects the broader debate on how to manage functional and geographical responsibilities within international policy institutions more generally—whether they happen to be national foreign ministries or multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. This is the classic institutional design problem of the organizational matrix whether to prioritize the specialized function or the geographical area.

However, if the UN takes seriously the proposition that we are now in the business of prosecuting an integrated peace and security, development, and human rights agenda across the international community, it follows that we should have fully integrated field teams capable of executing an integrated mandate on the ground. More importantly, this is more likely to make sense to the governments that host UN operations around the world. After all, our primary responsibility is not to maintain the integrity of individual "silos" within the overall system. Rather, it is to deliver coordinated programs through integrated teams under fully empowered resident coordinators. This is much more likely to deliver the most efficient, effective, and measurable results. Furthermore, the proper integration of UN field teams can be done in a manner that maximizes the distinct

operational space for humanitarian work in the event of crises, while also recognizing that such operational space can never be secured without addressing the security and development realities that surround it.

Detailed Cooperation Protocols between the UN and Regional Organizations

The UN has important institutional relationships with many regional organizations, although many lack clear protocols to define the common purposes and operational interrelationships between them. Beyond the operational utility of better coordination arrangements, Chapter 8 of the UN Charter also formally stipulates the importance of regional institutions in enhancing the overall work of the UN. This is not a marginal concern. The institutional and budgetary capacity of many regional organizations, such as the European Union and the African Union, to be significant international actors in their own right is formidable. This points to the urgent need for more effective cooperative arrangements and defined protocols between the UN and the full range of regional institutions. At present, these relationships work more on the basis of personal and institutional goodwill, rather than more defined inter-organizational relationships.

In terms of peace and security, for example, there remains a lack of clarity between the powers of the AU under Article 4 of its Constitutive Act, concerning AU intervention in other member states under "grave circumstances," and the powers available to the UN Security Council as outlined in the UN Charter, particularly under Chapter 8. This chapter defines the security relationship between the Security Council and regional organizations, or what the charter more broadly calls "regional arrangements." Again, the operational relationship between the two institutions is reasonable, although it needs to be significantly improved on the question of AU and UN peacekeeping operations, particularly in finding effective funding formulas for the former. The burden on these operations is proving too great for the collective budgetary capacities of a number of African states.

To some extent, peace and security relationships between the UN and the AU have been improved through the Joint UN-AU Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. But this joint framework needs to be expanded to incorporate cooperation arrangements across the full range of AU Commission operations. For example, more formal institutional relationships on "development and governance" under the joint framework would be useful. Effective joint arrangements can become a force multiplier for both institutions. It is this concept of a "force multiplier" that the UN needs to advance with all major regional organizations across the various international policy domains. This becomes even more critical when the crunch on global public revenue is becoming tighter, national contributions to regional and multilateral institutions are becoming more difficult, and some member states are funding both sets of institutions.

Partnership Frameworks with NGOs and the Private Sector

As noted above, coordination protocols between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, regional organizations, international NGOs, and the private sector are currently not well structured. Agreed operating protocols, together with flexible consultative arrangements consistent with those protocols, are becoming increasingly necessary. To some extent, this started to happen naturally between the UN and World Bank, through the SDGs negotiating process, which ultimately produced the 2030 Agenda. If the 2030 Agenda is to be adequately funded and delivered, this cooperative framework will need to be intensified for the future. The same applies to the UN's structural relationship with international NGOs. International NGOs are loud in their complaints that the mechanism for engaging the UN system is largely formulaic—a relatively minor office within the ECOSOC machinery. The development of the UN Global Compact with the private sector by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has proven to be a more effective framework than that for NGOs. It worked well during the recent negotiations of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. More work, however, needs to be done on both.

In summary, the state-based structure of the multilateral system remains fundamental. But if it is to remain fundamental, the system must effectively engage, cooperate, and coordinate with the growing number of nongovernment players in

the global policy space. The truth is, we live simultaneously in a multilateral and a multi-stakeholder environment. Making the relationship work between these two realities will be a critical test of effective UN reform for the future.
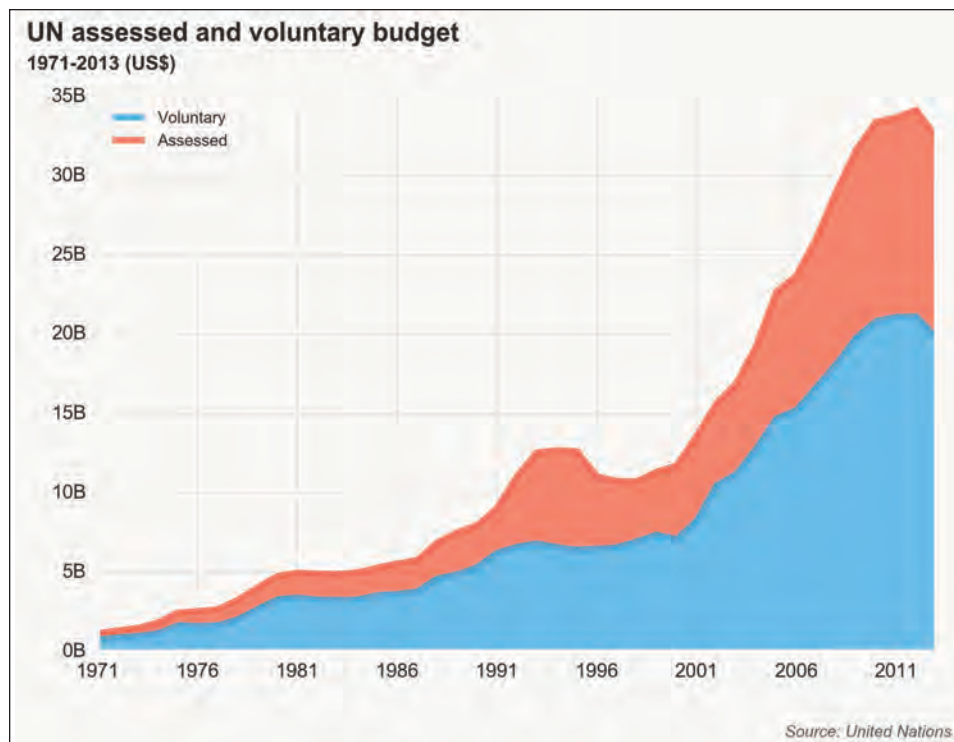
A Rigid Staffing Structure

If anything epitomizes the fact that we still have a mid-twentieth-century UN institution seeking to address twenty-first-century realities, it is the nature of the UN personnel management system, which has been handed down from time immemorial. Despite the rapidly increasing number and changing nature of crises with which the UN must contend, it can take up to twelve months to recruit a person to a UN post.[77] This is simply untenable in any modern organization.

Furthermore, the inability of UN managers to easily move people within agencies, let alone between agencies, impedes the institution's ability to respond effectively to rapidly unfolding events. For example, under current arrangements, the secretary-general has no authority to move resources and staff across departments within the UN Secretariat proper, let alone between the Secretariat and funds, programs, and specialized agencies, which have discrete funding and separate

governing arrangements. Moreover, it has now become the stuff of urban legend that it is virtually impossible to fire anybody who has attained a permanent position in the UN system, irrespective of the number of reviews and performance management protocols that have been applied to that person.

Finally, there has been a slow and steady demise of the notion of a permanent, professional, international public service. Political appointments can be important to add high-level experience to the management of high-level institutions. But the ability of long-standing, highly-experienced, professional staff within the UN civil service to rise to senior management positions has become the exception rather than the rule.

There is a strong need for the UN system to draw upon a continuing "cadre" of institutional expertise as it relates to both the Secretariat and the UN's major funds, programs, and specialized agencies. Flexibility must be retained for external appointments wherever necessary. But this should not be at the expense of extinguishing the very idea of a permanent international career service. That is what is in danger of happening. Deep reforms of the UN management system are necessary if the UN is to be able to perform the expanding range of

UN assessed and voluntary budget
1971-2013 (US$)

Source: United Nations

functions that member states have set for it for the decades ahead. In many respects, they are the key.

External Budgetary Constraints and Internal Budgetary Inflexibility

The least debated but arguably most decisive aspect of the UN's operations is its budget. It is important to put the UN budget into context. In 2013, the UN annual budget was $32.4 billion, comprised of $12.6 billion in assessed contributions and $19.8 billion in voluntary contributions from member states.[78] The UN, therefore, has the fiscal capacity of a state the size of Slovakia, or equivalent to the aid budget of the UK's Department for International Development.

Assessed contributions to the UN by member states (based on a fixed formula calculated as a state's proportion of global gross domestic product) over the last twenty-five years have grown at a modest level. Voluntary contributions to the UN, by their nature, have fluctuated more widely depending on the capacity of states to pay (depending on national economic circumstances) and the intensity of the challenges and crises faced by UN funds, programs, and specialized agencies in a particular year.

The UN, like any institution, must live within its means. The problem with UN core funding is not inherently the amount of funding. It lies in its internal distribution, reflecting in part the inflexibilities of the personnel management system referred to in the previous paragraphs. There is also the related problem of particular UN mandates that have effectively expired but whose staff remain on the UN's books at considerable cost to the budget. There is significant room for efficiencies in these areas.

As noted previously, however, there is also a problem in the growing funding gap between UN special humanitarian appeals, on the one hand, and the amount contributed to those appeals, on the other. This gap is growing. It partly reflects the public revenue crises experienced by a number of donor states since the global financial crisis. It may also reflect a different type of "donor fatigue" concerning the perceived effectiveness of some of these UN programs as donors turn to international NGOs instead. This will require a careful approach to future reform.

A core element of reform for the future budgetary process of the UN itself lies in the intensely bureaucratized system for the determination and confirmation of UN budgets. Unlike any other corporate institution in the world, the UN budget planning process for a particular year begins two years and three months before the beginning of that year. It involves an eight-stage decision-making process. In fact, it involves an eleven-stage process, if we include those associated with financial auditing, performance auditing, and probity oversight. The final report presented to the UN Fifth Committee for decisions on the budget has now grown to number 8,000 pages. While preserving the General Assembly's ultimate control over the UN budget through the Fifth Committee, there is a strong argument for large-scale streamlining, both for greater transparency for member states and for greater operational efficiency for the organization. The complexity of the current process is itself a license for institutional inefficiency.

Organizing Principles for a More Effective UN

Given the speed, depth, and complexity of the changes unfolding in the strategic environment in which the UN is required to operate in the twenty-first century, and given some of the rigidities of the UN's current institutional structure and culture, what are the basic principles that should guide us in our efforts to make the UN more "fit for purpose" for the future? Beyond the usual meaningless management clichés, it is important to be conceptually clear as to the strategic direction in which the institution should now head. These basic principles are the basis for a limited number of more specific recommendations for change.

1. **The formal reaffirmation by member states of the principle of UN multilateralism as central to the future of the global order. This should be done at a Second San Francisco conference in 2020, to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the UN:** This would also provide a unique opportunity for member states at the summit level to formally reflect on the UN's origins, its historical performance, and whether member states are committed to guaranteeing the institu-

tion's centenary. To some, this may seem formulaic. In fact, it has become necessary, both politically and operationally. At present, the uncomfortable truth is that multilateralism is beginning to move from the center to the margins of the international policy priorities of a growing number of states. This becomes dangerous if it begins to reach a critical mass. Indifference tends to breed even more indifference, as states observe one another walking away from the multilateral system they collectively embraced seventy years ago. The time has come for member states, at the summit level, to publicly reaffirm their political commitment to the core principles of multilateralism—not as some sort of ideological dogma, but underlining afresh the core foreign policy logic for member states of the advantages they derive from the multilateral system, as opposed to the "burden" they must carry as a result of that system. We need to draw a line in the sand on any further erosion of the system. And this must begin at the level of high politics.

2. **The development of a new integrated Agenda for Sustainable Peace, Security and Development (SPSD) for 2030:** This agenda would synchronize the peace and security operations of the United Nations with the already agreed 2030 global agendas for sustainable development and climate change. These issues are intertwined in reality and should be so in the UN apparatuses that address them. If the UN is serious about a long-term preventive security agenda, the full integration of underlying economic, social, and governance factors is fundamental to success. This would also constitute a fundamental effort at "silo busting" at the conceptual, policy, and operational levels and across the historical divisions of UN policy and programs. The core organizing principle across all three 2030 agendas (i.e., the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change, and those proposed here for peace and security) is sustainability. This in turn goes to the unifying principles of all three agendas—namely anticipation, planning, and prevention, rather than a culture of simple reaction, "band-aid" solutions, and fingers
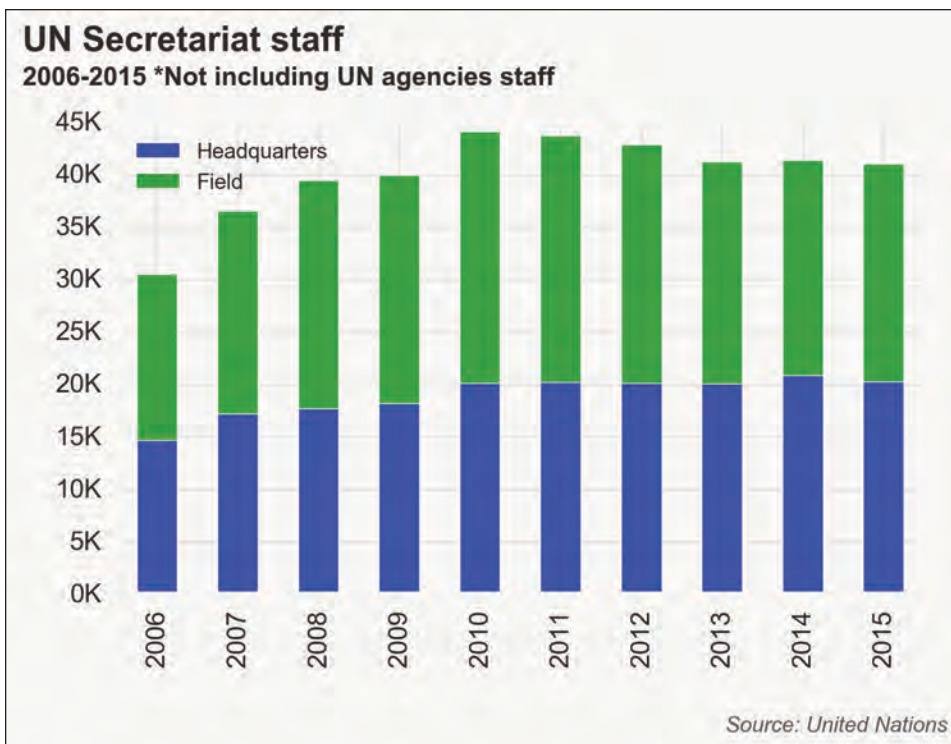
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3. **The development of a comprehensive UN doctrine of prevention:** Prevention has been discussed, debated, and agreed in multiple UN reform documents over many decades. But it has yet to be fully integrated into the policy, structure, and culture of the UN's combined operations. Prevention is fundamental for many reasons:

   - It saves lives.
   - It reduces the destruction of a nation's infrastructure when crises erupt into war.
   - It is more effective in the long term in preventing a recurrence of political violence or the exacerbation of economic fragility.
   - It saves UN budgetary resources.
   - It is also key to any new integrated agenda on sustainable peace, security, and development in the country concerned.

4. **A commitment to the discipline of policy planning:** Policy-planning staff are a key part of the major foreign ministries of the world. Their purpose is to look beyond today, with a policy-planning horizon of one to five years, to identify major new strategic risks and opportunities for the future. By and large, this does not happen systematically in the UN. That is not to say that we can fully plan for the future. We must have systems that can respond to the unexpected with flexible, adaptive, and effective action. But it is equally true that, with a dedicated planning capacity, the UN can analyze major, emerging trends that will require international institutional action in the years ahead. It makes for a less costly, more effective response in the long term. Policy planning is therefore the engine room of any effective, integrated effort at UN preventive diplomacy. The focus of the UN's policy-planning machinery should include:

   - Future geographical concentrations and operational patterns of terrorist activity across the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond, and what to do to prevent it;
   - Unfolding demographic impacts on state stability and fragility, and what to do about them;
   - Employment and unemployment across

economies as a potential source of social exclusion and violent extremism, and what to do about it;

- The impact of technological innovation, including its positive and negative applications to security (e.g., the artificial intelligence revolution in military affairs); sustainable development (e.g., solar storage and energy efficiency); and the greater predictability of certain categories of natural disasters;

- Quantum shifts in climate change, including impacts beyond current projections and on small island and developing states, and how best to mitigate these; and

- New threats of WMD proliferation, and what to do to reduce those threats.

5. **Commitment to the core management disciplines of mission definition, delegation, integrated teams, implementation, measurement, accountability, and review across all UN operations:** These apply to the structure and culture of all complex international organizations dealing with a rapidly changing global environment. The strategic objectives, goals, and missions of the UN are set by the member states through the Security Council and the General Assembly. Giving effect to these is the responsibility of the Secretariat, peacekeeping forces, and UN funds, programs, and specialized agencies. Consistent with different board structures, these basic management principles must be applied to the "flattest" possible administrative structures with an overwhelming strategic bias toward results. The days of classically vertical institutional structures based on rigid, silo-based hierarchies, are over in other major, successful global institutions. So too should they be for the UN.

6. **A priority of field operations over head office:** The UN should be judged by its success in the field, the lives it saves, and the opportunities it provides. The UN's performance will not be judged by the number of reports it produces. In fact, it writes too many. As noted above, the system seems obsessed with "getting its thinking right" as opposed to "what can be done on the ground." The system seems to assume that, once the report is written, the resolution is adopted, and we've "got our words in order," the job is basically done. That, of course, is where the job barely

begins. Therefore, the UN must always bias itself in the direction of the field. It is there that lives are changed. We should develop a ratio of headquarters to field staff that caps how much headquarters staff can expand as a proportion of the total. The current secretary-general has made progress in this area. But the current ratio is arguably still too generous to headquarters.

7. **A general principle of a "Team UN" with fully integrated, results-driven teams, both in the center and in the field:** As noted above, this applies to the specific policy functions of the Secretariat "across the silos." It also applies, most critically, to fully integrated UN teams in the field. Each team leader should be chosen from the UN agency that has the greatest stake in a particular partner country. As noted in the body of the report, UN resident coordinators have severe limitations in their powers of management in relation to other UN agencies. Each UN agency currently has its own defined mandate for its own operations in a particular country. These should remain. But they should also be required to agree to an integrated UN mandate incorporating the combined missions of all UN agencies. This should not be a mechanical exercise. It should be real and reflect the concrete nature of the mission and the complex circumstances in which the UN must work to realize its mission. Resident coordinators should be the most senior, experienced, results-oriented career professionals with high levels of achievement on the ground. They should also have high levels of seniority in the UN system and be professionally rewarded and promoted for remaining in field service. More controversially, resident coordinators should be empowered to move personnel and resources between posts and agencies within the country when evolving local conditions demand this. This is necessary if the resident coordinators are to be held accountable for the totality of the UN's results against the objectives and measurements outlined in the agreed mandate for that country. This, in turn, will bring into focus the need for the current number of UN regional offices. In other words, the UN's field

structure, as well as its headquarters structure, should be flattened.

8. **A new priority of "we the peoples," including global partnerships with civil society, organized labor, and the private sector:** The UN has embarked on an approach of gradually developing its formal partnerships with these sectors. It must now advance at pace. Otherwise, we will fail in the delivery of the SDGs under the 2030 Agenda. This new partnership philosophy must also be integrated at the highest levels of UN management and, once again, across the traditional silos. This can be done while maintaining the centrality of the UN as an institution of member states and without the priorities of member states being taken out of their hands by other players. In fact, by better engaging civil society, labor, and business, and within a consistent partnership framework, it is the member states that can more strongly influence the priorities of these new players than the reverse.

9. **Women and girls are half of the world. At present they receive much less than half of the resources and opportunities of the world. The mission of the UN must be to change that:** This means a central priority for women and girls across UN management, structures, programs, and operations. The UN has made much progress in this area. However, more needs to be done in mainstreaming gender equality across the entire system. As for programs, women and girls are the principle victims of armed conflict, poverty, and humanitarian crises. Therefore, women and girls should be a central, integrated priority in all UN areas of work, including peacekeeping, security, sustainable development, governance, human rights, and justice, as well as in each individual UN agency and program.

10. **A new priority for global youth—education, enterprise and employment:** In 2015, there were 1.2 billion youth aged 14–24. By 2030, that number will increase by 7 percent, reaching 1.3 billion.[79] At the same time, the rate of global unemployment in 2015 reached 197.1 million people and is expected to increase by 2.3 million by the end of 2016.This trend is getting worse. By 2017, it is projected

that there will be an additional 1.1 million jobless people.[80] We are therefore facing a major global challenge as hundreds of millions of the next generation have no prospect of finding a job or starting a small or micro-business. As noted above, we are therefore confronted with the core ingredients of long-term political strife and potentially violent extremism as the global "social contract" of the past fails to deliver for the generation of tomorrow. Youth education, employment, and enterprise must therefore occupy a new central place in UN structures and priorities.

"It is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half the human race. As study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women."

Kofi Annan
UN secretary-general (1997–2006)

PEACE AND SECURITY

These specific recommendations for the future of the UN's peace and security operations are particularly mindful of the recent work done by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO), chaired by HE José Ramos-Horta;[81] the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, entitled The Challenge of Sustaining Peace (the "Rosenthal report"), chaired by HE Gert Rosenthal;[82] and the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions (2282 and 70/262) of April 2016, containing their response to the Rosenthal report.[83] These are thorough reports with many important recommendations for a better integrated, properly funded, effective UN peace-building architecture. The following recommendations both draw from and build on these reports.

A new integrated agenda on sustainable peace, security, and development should be negotiated. This report recommends that member states should commission a negotiating process to develop such an agreed agenda during the 2017–2020 period. To make this exercise real, this new agenda document should take 2030 as its target year, consistent with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. This will be a major piece of work. It could

result in the agreement of a new set of Sustainable Peace Goals (SPGs). These could, over time, be integrated more comprehensively into the existing SDG framework, depending on the position of member states.

Of course, the SDGs already make reference to peace and security, but not in sufficient breadth and depth for the purposes outlined in this report, and those outlined in the various reports referred to above. The core objectives of an agreed agenda for peace, security, and development would be:

- First, to establish a common conceptual framework on the peace and security agenda paralleling that already achieved on development through the 2030 Agenda;

- Second, to turn the peace and security agenda, including its associated institutional architecture within the UN system, into an increasingly preventive, rather than reactive approach, and one which therefore deals with the underlying social, economic, and governance-related causes of crisis and conflict across the world;

- Third, to incorporate the full spectrum of sustainable peace operations into a systemic agenda that includes the following:
  - Policy planning
  - Crisis anticipation
  - Preventive action
  - Active mediation
  - Peace enforcement
  - Peacekeeping
  - Post-conflict recovery
  - Reconstruction

- Fourth, to underline the need for rapid response capabilities for the UN, if and when political crises or armed conflicts arise without warning, as is often the case.

In other words, given the nature of the real challenges that the UN faces on the ground today, this new peace and security agenda would fully embrace both long-term preventive and short-term reactive capabilities. In many respects, therefore, a preventive peace and security agenda may evolve in a similar direction as the sustainable development agenda, in that the latter lays the long-term foundations for sustainable economic growth, environmental protection, and social cohesion. A new

peace and security agenda would also focus on the long-term drivers of sustainable peace, security, and stability by dealing with what are usually referred to as the "root causes" of conflict. At the same time, the UN must also be prepared to react rapidly to unanticipated crises when they arise. Both are needed in the UN's overall toolkit.

A UN deputy secretary-general responsible for preventive diplomacy should be appointed. If we are serious about a comprehensive doctrine of preventive diplomacy as part of this new agenda for sustainable peace, security, and development, it must deal with the full spectrum of emerging threats to peace and security (including social injustice, economic fragility, political exclusion, failures of governance, and rapid environmental change). Effective preventive diplomacy therefore must be anchored in an institutional fulcrum in the UN system that carries real clout. Otherwise, it becomes little more than a paper exercise. The uncomfortable truth is that the success or failure of preventive diplomacy, as with the SDGs, will be measured by real data on what actually happens on the ground. It will not be measured by the intellectual elegance of our analytical approaches, nor by the number of high-level panels we appoint, nor by the number of UN conferences we hold.

Analytical and policy inputs across the UN system on emerging real threats to security need to land on the desk of somebody with a capacity for executive action. This can only be effectively done at the level of a UN deputy secretary-general. Such a person must be sufficiently empowered to coordinate the full spectrum of capabilities for deployment across the UN system. This would not only be a headquarters function. Most critically, it would take the form of fully integrated country teams with team leadership empowered to do the job on the ground, rather than arbitrating between "the warring states" of different UN agencies competing for position and resources.

Such a deputy secretary-general should, in cooperation with the Security Council and General Assembly, also be empowered to supervise the "transition" of the agreed mandate for a particular country in which the UN is engaged, from one stage of peace, security, and development operations to the next, as outlined in the Rosenthal report. Furthermore, such a person should ensure, in her or his dealings with the rest of the UN machinery, that peacebuilding "compacts" should be negotiated with the national authorities of any conflict-affected area that would govern the timing of specific mission transitions. This draws specifically upon recommendation 134 of the Rosenthal report.[84] Of course, specific decision-making processes relating to individual peace operations can only be undertaken in full coordination with member states through their relevant deliberative bodies—in particular the Security Council.
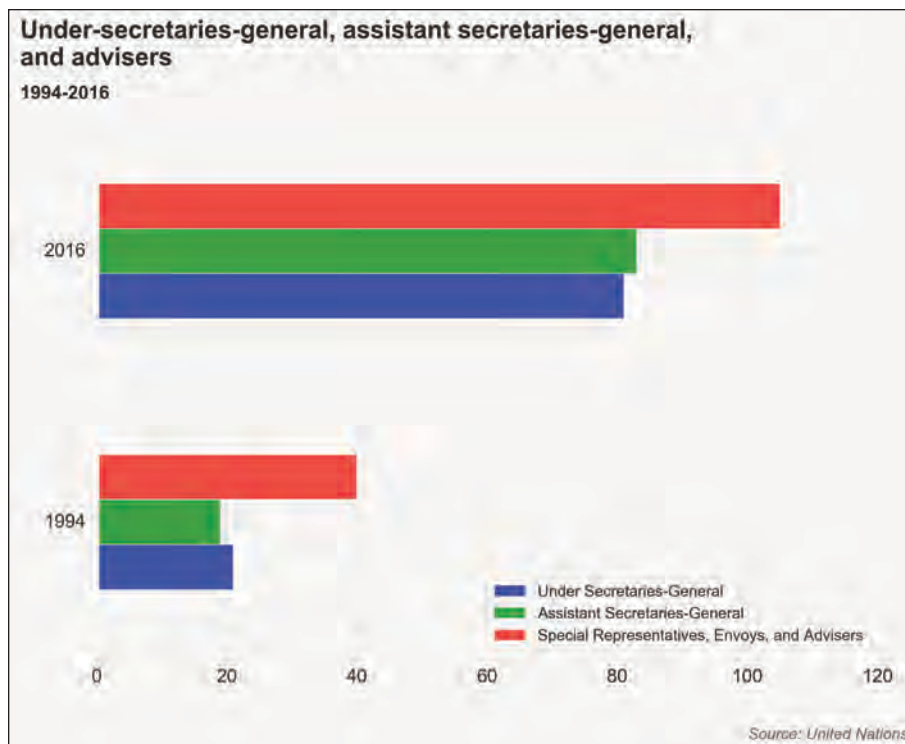

Malaysian women peacekeepers of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Kawkaba, Lebanon, January 11, 2012. UN Photo/Pasqual Gorriz.

UN peace and security operations in the field should be led by a senior UN civilian entitled the UN director of operations (UNDO). The UNDO should be empowered to direct fully integrated peace and security operations in the country concerned and be held accountable for the success or failure of those operations. The UN has inadvertently perfected the art of blurred lines of accountability. In the critical area of field operations, this must stop. Where formal peacekeeping operations are underway involving military units authorized by the Security Council, these operations should also be supported by a small strategic analysis capacity of several personnel charged with monitoring progress or regress in the mission against its agreed mandate. This should be led by an empowered senior leader (such as the UNDO) reporting directly through the secretary-general or the deputy secretary-general to the Security Council.[85] There should be a clear delineation of responsibilities allowing tactical autonomy to the force commander. But military operations must be subject to the overall peace and security mission, which will include the full range of other UN operations. And these must, in turn, be fully consistent with the country compact referred to above. Finally, if the UNDO is not a woman, he must have a woman as his deputy given the

absolute centrality of women and girls to the entire peace and security agenda, as outlined in Security Council Resolution 1325.

The UN should develop a formalized panel of prospective UN special envoys, special representatives of the secretary-general (SRSGs) or other special appointments by the secretary-general. Such a panel would create a pool of high-level personnel to be deployed in specific mediation or related exercises within assigned peace operations, or in other operations as necessary. The number of such appointments, including special representatives and their deputies, has grown rapidly over the last two decades, from 40 to approximately 103 as of August 2016. Many of these appointments are assessed as being highly effective. The current selection and appointment processes are ad hoc, to a certain degree. This is understandable when an unexpected crisis erupts, or where the crisis in question demands unique skills. As a general management principle, nonetheless, it would be better to have a consistent process for appointing people to a panel from which the secretary-general should draw for particular missions as they arise. Panel members should have an operational familiarity with the UN system. And between them, they should cover the range of functional, geographic, cultural, and linguistic specializations

Under-secretaries-general, assistant secretaries-general, and advisers
1994-2016

Legend: Under Secretaries-General; Assistant Secretaries-General; Special Representatives, Envoys, and Advisers

Source: United Nations

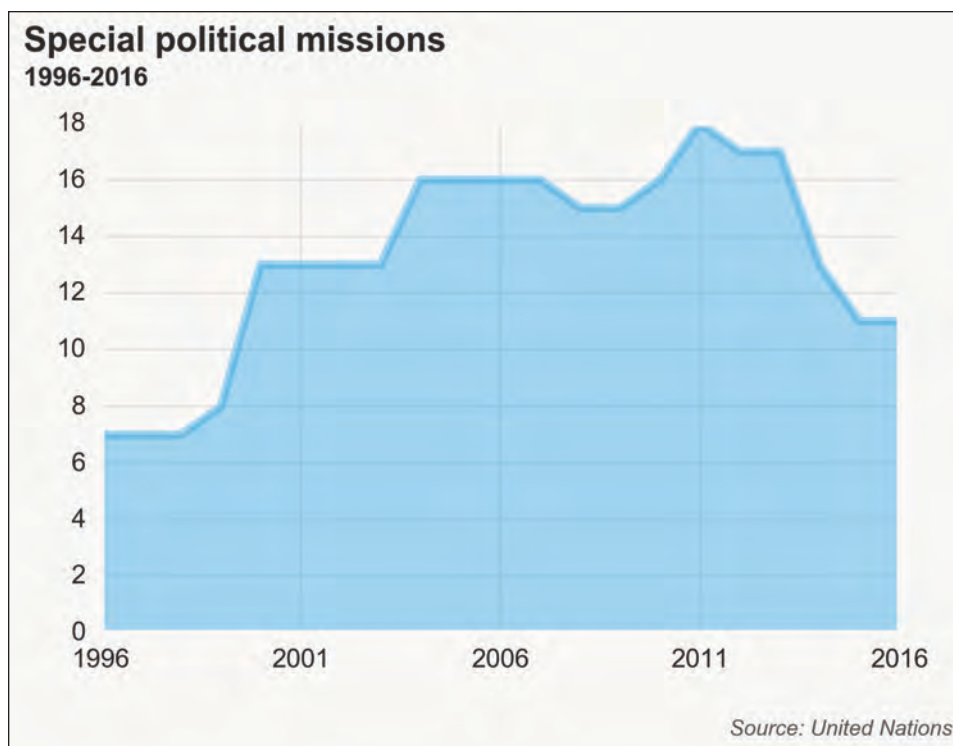the system will need. The panel should also reflect genuine gender equality.

The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) should have significantly expanded resources to support the work of UN political missions in the future. Again, this lies at the heart of the UN's real capacity for preventive diplomacy. The whole point of a political mission is to defuse a crisis before it degenerates into armed conflict and to create a political framework for sustainable peace. Political missions, furthermore, are much less expensive than peacekeeping missions. In 2015, DPA's total annual budget for political missions was $18.1 million.[86] The annual UN peacekeeping budget is more than $8 billion dollars.[87] Preventing war, on average, is sixty times cheaper than fighting it. But the world collectively spends one dollar on conflict prevention for every $1,885 it spends on military budgets.[88] Prevention is much cheaper than the cure.

The role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) should be strengthened. The PBC is not an instrument of the Secretariat. It is an independent commission composed of UN member states. The groundbreaking joint resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council on "sustaining peace" provide a new framework for the work of the PBC. Its role, however, should be further

strengthened, including as an unparalleled center of international expertise on the conduct of peace operations; on lessons learned from previous operations; on recommending to other UN bodies (the Security Council, General Assembly, and Secretariat) where peace operations might need to be deployed, given developing circumstances; and on externally monitoring the evolution of each peace operation from beginning to end. This recommendation is also entirely consistent with the recommendations of the Rosenthal report. The PBC could also serve as a deeply informed research secretariat to assist in developing the above recommendations for a new integrated Agenda on Sustainable Peace, Security and Development.

A dedicated Policy Planning Staff should be established. At present, as noted above, there is no real capacity in this regard. Its remit would extend beyond the classical definitions of "peace and security." As recommended above, its mandate would cover the full integrated spectrum of security, development, and sustainability. The UN needs a dedicated, full-time, multidisciplinary, multinational planning staff. If the UN does not have such a capability, its related institutional capacity to engage in real preventive diplomacy will continue to be severely limited.

A UN deputy-secretary-general (peace and

Special political missions
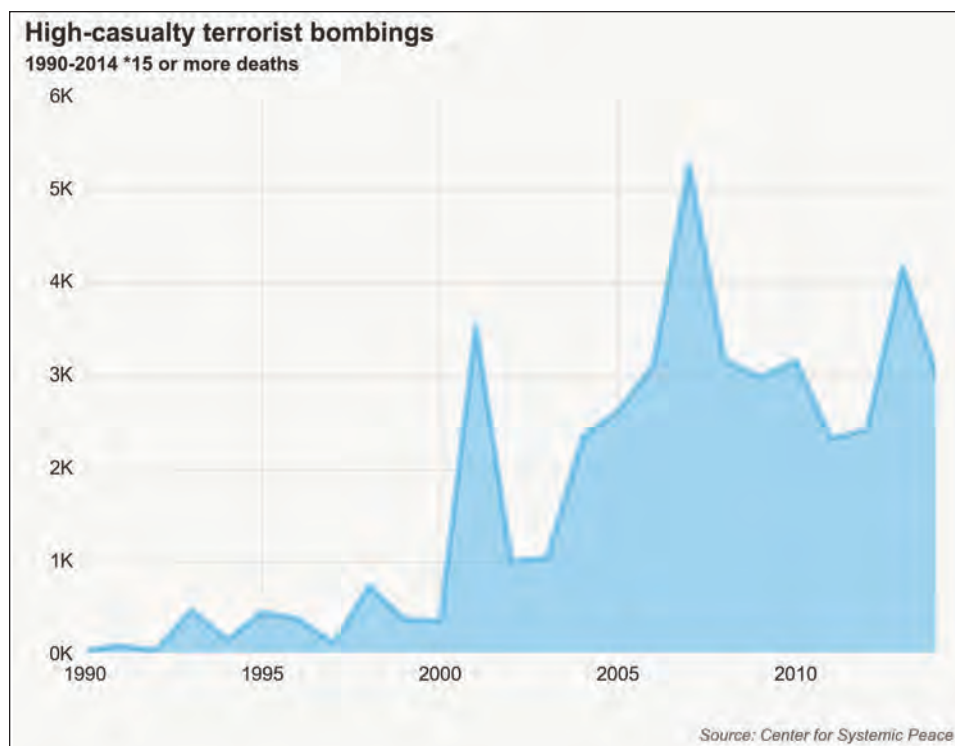1996-2016

Source: United Nations

security) should be appointed as the UN's single coordination point for counterterrorism operations. This position could be designated as deputy secretary-general (peace and security) and be supported by a full-time under-secretary-general. The position should coordinate the UN's active operational engagement with member states (for example on terrorist financing), as well as the UN's wider engagement in preventive diplomacy. The latter should also include UN action in countering violent extremism. This report is deeply mindful of the discrete but interrelated debates between these two aspects of the UN's operations: counterterrorism and countering violent extremism. It makes operational sense to colocate responsibility within the system in this position. Otherwise, we end up with blurred responsibilities. On issues as critical as counterterrorism and countering violent extremism, this must not be the case. These missions are too important to the people of the world.

The UN, at present, is largely missing in action in the global counterterrorism debate and in counterterrorism operations. We cannot afford for this to continue. It will render the UN increasingly irrelevant to the core security concerns of an increasing number of member states. Furthermore, the threat of terrorism is a long-term, not a short-

term, threat. It is structural, not simply episodic. Therefore, the UN must not waste further effort in a fifteen-year-long effort trying to agree on a common definition of terrorism as a precondition for finally negotiating a comprehensive counterterrorism convention. The world sees this debate as absurd, given the attacks occurring now across the globe.

Instead, we should take the existing sixteen international treaties that deal with terrorist acts and build the UN's institutional capacity around these. This should be done at four levels where the UN already has related capabilities:

- Closing sources of terrorist financing;
- Becoming the unchallenged global center for an agreed global narrative aimed at countering both violent extremism and terrorism;
- Also becoming the global convening power for harnessing international social, economic, and governance initiatives aimed at removing or reducing the long-term root causes of violent extremism and terrorism; and
- Mobilizing the UN's arms control, disarmament, and WMD non-proliferation capabilities to prevent WMD from falling into the hands of terrorists.

High-casualty terrorist bombings
1990-2014 *15 or more deaths

Source: Center for Systemic Peace

The UN must, as a matter of urgency, enhance its arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation, and related operations to deal with the emergence of a new generation of threats to security on a mass scale. The rolling technology revolution, combined with the new capacities it potentially delivers to state and non-state actors, is now radically changing the policy landscape. By and large, UN structures have not kept pace with these developments. This must also change. The UN must enhance its capacity in five particular areas:

- *The establishment of a new department under the deputy secretary-general (peace and security) with responsibility for WMD non-proliferation, cyberwarfare, and new military technologies, including the military deployment of artificial intelligence technologies:* There is a new urgency to these agendas.

- *Action to conclude the ratification and entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty before new breakouts occur:* New pressures are emerging for force modernization by the existing nuclear-weapon states. There are also growing pressures from other states on the verge of acquiring nuclear capability.

- *The development of a UN diplomatic initiative on the North Korean nuclear program:* As noted above, this will loom as a major threat to international peace and security over the term of the next secretary-general. There is an impasse in the rest of the international system. The UN cannot afford to be on the back foot on this. And it needs the policy capacity to develop, advance, and, if supported by the member states, prosecute such an initiative.

- *The development of a UN convention on lethal autonomous weapons systems:* This too is becoming urgent. The pace of technological innovation in the military sphere is challenging existing ethical, legal, and traditional security frameworks. The core question at issue is the capacity for weapons systems to make tactical life-and-death decisions in the absence of direct human intervention.[89] New drone applications, robotic tanks, and even robotic "troops" are no longer the stuff of science fiction. They are already in, or on the threshold of entering, the training manuals of a number

of militaries. It is important that their design and use fully conforms to the basic tenets of international humanitarian law.

- *The development of an international convention on cyberwarfare.* There are various bilateral and regional dialogues underway around the world. But there has been virtually no progress on this at the multilateral level. The capacity of non-state actors or state actors to wage asymmetric cyberwarfare is also growing. The potential impact on civilian populations through the disabling of basic economic and social infrastructure is already significant. While the existing rules of international humanitarian law also apply to cyberwarfare, the international rules of the road must be further clarified, as must compliance regimes, including sanctions for noncompliance, as a matter of urgency.

Under the UN Charter, the paramount body on questions of peace and security is the Security Council, whose powers are outlined in Articles 23–32. The last time the Security Council was reformed was in 1963, when the number of nonpermanent members was increased from six to ten, out of a total council membership of fifteen. There have been multiple proposals for Security Council reform since then, as various member states have argued that the composition of the permanent membership no longer reflects geoeconomic, geopolitical, or geostrategic realities more than half a century later. Furthermore, member states have expressed concerns about both the continued existence of a veto power and the conditions under which the veto might be exercised. Specific reform proposals have dealt with the:

- Expansion of permanent members of the council;

- Expansion of nonpermanent members of the council;

- Creation of a new category of semipermanent members of varying durations and varying provisions for re-election;

- Question of whether additional permanent or semipermanent members should be accorded a veto power;

- Question of whether the veto power should be removed altogether;

- Recent proposals by France and Mexico requesting permanent members to abstain from using the veto in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes unless a "vital interest" of a permanent member state is at stake; and

- The "ACT" code of conduct requiring Security Council members not to use the veto on "credible" resolutions that could stop a genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes, or the "Elders" proposal requesting Security Council members to pledge "not to use or threaten to use their veto in such crises without explaining clearly, and in public, what alternative course of action they would propose as a credible and efficient way to protect populations in question."[90]

Details of these various alternative reform options have now been circulated by the former president of the General Assembly on July 31, 2015, as an annex to General Assembly Decision 62/557 on "the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters." The General Assembly also decided to establish an Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Security Council Reform, which continues to meet.

The rationale for UN Security Council reform is clear, particularly given the quadrupling of the number of member states since 1945 and the radical geopolitical, geoeconomic, and geostrategic shifts since then. Nonetheless, it is fully recognized that the form and shape of Security Council reform is exclusively a matter for the member states themselves to resolve, given the divergent views that exist on how many additional members should be added; who those members should be; what terms they should serve before facing re-election, if any; and the future right to a veto power, and the conditions under which it might be used. *The Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Security Council Reform should continue its work to achieve a balanced consensus among member states on this most intractable of reforms.*

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"As we watch the sun go down, evening after evening, through the smog across the poisoned waters of our native earth, we must ask ourselves seriously whether we really wish some future universal historian on another planet to say about us: 'With all their genius and with all their skill, they ran out of foresight and air and food and water and ideas,' or, 'They went on playing politics until their world collapsed around them.'"

U Thant
UN secretary-general (1961–1971)

Projections on SDGs and seventieth anniversary of the UN, New York, September 22, 2015. UN Photo/Cia Pak.

The UN policy framework for sustainable development has been set through the 2030 Agenda—including its ambitious seventeen SDGs and 169 subsidiary targets. This is a formidable body of work. It is also a great conceptual achievement for the UN system in setting a comprehensive normative framework for all. As the 2030 Agenda document itself proclaims, it is "a charter for people and planet in the 21st century."[91] It integrates the three traditional development pillars of poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability, and social justice.

What it does not do is propose an implementation mechanism, in particular the finance necessary to deliver these goals on the ground. The UN now argues this it is principally a matter for member states to implement. That is true insofar as only member states have the potential domestic capacity at their disposal to make a major difference in the range of social, economic, and particularly infrastructure programs that will be essential to bring about real progress. But many states will not have sufficient capacity to do this alone. This was the whole point of the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda agreed at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The World Bank and IMF have said that, to implement the 2030 Agenda, financing will need to move from "billions" into "trillions" in investment in development projects.[92] These are now the two core questions for the international community on the implementation of the SDGs:

- How is the financing to be done to turn the SDGs into reality?
- Who within the multilateral system will take responsibility for implementation?

There is also some uncertainty concerning the measurement system that will be necessary to determine whether progress or regress is actually occurring against the goals that have been set. The first annual review was released in July 2016.[93] This was understandably an initial effort at benchmarking where the various goals stood at the commencement of the period. There is, however, a real danger for the credibility of the UN system as a whole if, as we begin to approach each of the major review points leading up to 2030, the evaluation methodology looks weak or the actual report card starts to look thin. If this happens, the UN will once again run the risk of being seen as a talking shop disconnected from delivering results to the real world.

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) should assume primary political responsibility on behalf of member states for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. It is acknowledged that the General Assembly has already decided that the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is mandated to follow up implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The uncomfortable reality is that this is unlikely to have significant practical effect. Furthermore, when the mandate for overseeing the implementation of such a critical UN agenda as the 2030 Agenda is blurred between two institutions (i.e., the HLPF and ECOSOC), then the usual result is that each assumes that primary responsibility lies with the other. ECOSOC has been much criticized over the decades for not having realized the potential conceived for it by the authors of the UN Charter seventy years ago. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda provides the best opportunity for ECOSOC to fulfill its historical mandate. ECOSOC was originally conceived as the development counterpart of the Security Council. In many respects, however, it has also come to be seen as the poor cousin of the UN system. That can change fundamentally—if the member states so choose. ECOSOC could provide the UN system with the continuing political oversight, strategic direction, and periodic reviews of progress and serve as the ultimate point of political accountability for the 2030 Agenda. The buck needs to stop somewhere in the governing machinery of the member states for the delivery of the SDGs. And it would be an indictment of ECOSOC if member states were to simply walk around it, given its clear-cut mandate under the charter. Under this arrangement, ECOSOC also assumes an effective mandate as the UN political body dealing with the underlying economic and social "root causes" of the rolling peace and security challenges faced by the UN system as a whole. Of course, sustainable development has a significance in itself, above and beyond the peace and security agenda. But its direct relevance to the peace and security agenda is also clear—particularly if member states were to respond positively to the concept of developing a new integrated agenda on sustainable peace,

security, and development, as recommended above.

A deputy secretary-general (sustainable development) should be appointed as the senior person within the UN Secretariat with responsibility for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. At present, responsibility and accountability are too diffuse within the UN system. There must be a senior official with a continuing mandate empowering her or him to make executive decisions on the delivery of the SDGs, to deploy resources, and to be accountable at a bureaucratic level for outcomes on the ground. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the UN Development Programme, and the other UN development agencies should be answerable to this senior appointment. If the "silos" are to be busted in the UN's development agenda, and if there is to be a genuine "Team UN" approach to policy and delivery on the ground, there is no alternative to having a person with sufficient clout within the system to make this happen. This is analogous to the discussion outlined above concerning a deputy secretary-general responsible for the various entities currently working within the peace and security apparatus of the UN. This deputy secretary-general (sustainable development) would also be responsible for regular reporting to ECOSOC on progress or regress in the delivery of the SDGs on the ground.

This deputy secretary-general (sustainable development) should also be charged with working with all relevant member states to produce national action plans for the implementation of the SDGs within that state. Such an approach fully recognizes the sovereignty of member states. It also recognizes that the bulk of the policy and financial levers for delivering on the SDGs are domestic. A core reason for such plans is to clearly define the remaining role for international partners, including international public and private finance. This in turn is fundamental to the UN's regular reporting and accountability processes. The UN should not be held responsible for agreed domestic responsibilities, only for what it has contracted to do with the member states in question in support of delivering the goals.

The deputy secretary-general (sustainable development) should also have the authority to appoint the most qualified, experienced, and *capable people as fully empowered directors of UN operations in charge of UN country teams.* This has been discussed above in relation to UN peace and security operations, where the development, human rights, and peace and security elements of an operation must be fully integrated on the ground. For missions with a peace and security mandate, these appointments must be the joint recommendations of both the relevant deputy secretaries-general (peace and security, and sustainable development). Where there is no peace and security component of the mandate for a particular country, this appointment should revert to the deputy secretary-general (sustainable development). The key, however, is to ensure that the director of UN operations in a particular country also has the authority to direct resources to meet the UN's part of the agreed national SDG action plan for the country in question. Such powers are not available to resident coordinators in relation to their UN country teams at present, notwithstanding the "One UN" reforms. Unless the UN "silos" are also busted at the implementation level in the field, UN reform in this area will remain a paper tiger. Critically, under the arrangements proposed here, each director of UN operations would be both empowered and accountable for the results of the UN efforts in her or his partner country to deliver on each of the SDG goals and targets. The whole point of a normative framework such as the 2030 Agenda is to provide an agreed mission statement for implementation in the field.

The deputy secretary-general (sustainable development) should also have responsibility within the UN system for the negotiation and agreement of the relevant integrated UN mandates for each relevant country. This process involves all UN funds, programs, and specialized agencies. Some of these bodies have governing structures independent of the UN Secretariat that must be respected. This will therefore involve a process of genuine negotiation. But this must not impede the strategic objective of reaching, with each country, an integrated national SDG action plan, an integrated UN mandate, and a properly empowered and accountable director of UN operations. Unless there is an agreed integrated mandate, bureaucratic "turf fights" will continue on the ground, where they can be afforded least.

The secretary-general and the president of the

World Bank Group should establish a Joint UN–World Bank Task Force on SDG finance and delivery. This institutionalized taskforce would build on both institutions' strong working relations on a range of shared projects and agenda items in this area and on related agenda items, including climate change mitigation, fragile and conflict-affected situations, and gender.[94] This is arguably one of the most important structural reforms for the future success of the SDGs. It is critical that these two "mega-silos" be brought together, given the global responsibilities, remits, and reach of each institution. The core focus of this Joint Task Force must be the mobilization of finance. There should be no illusion that the World Bank has sufficient space on its own balance sheet to somehow raise the finance necessary for implementing the SDGs. It does not. However, this could change through a combination of its own balance sheet and that of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), the regional development banks belonging to the World Bank Group, and other public development banks such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, as well as, most critically, the World Bank's relationship with domestic and international private finance. This will involve a country-by-country, project-by-project, financial-institution-by-financial-institution approach. But it will need to be driven centrally. Such a Joint Task Force would be led by the secretary-general and the president of the World Bank Group and operationalized by the deputy secretary-general (sustainable development) and her or his World Bank counterpart. This Joint Task Force must meet at an operational level on a monthly basis and be project-focused.

The Joint Task Force should negotiate a Global Financial Compact with global private financial institutions. This is narrower in focus than the existing Global Compact with the private sector, which includes the full range of private corporations, including many beyond the finance sector, currently engaged in the 2030 Agenda. The current compact focuses on how to align corporate global strategies with the SDG framework. A Global Financial Compact is exclusively about financing

for development. The critical role of private finance is acknowledged in paragraphs 35–49 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, which has been agreed to by all states.[95] This is based on the stark recognition that global public finance (domestic or international) will not be able to fill in any major way the total investment gap necessary to realize the SDGs on the ground. Global private finance (both domestic and international) alone has the capacity to make the difference. These projects may be small or large, local or national, and they may draw on local financial resources or those that come from the major global investment banks. The full range of public-private partnership frameworks will need to be explored. When it involves the latter, the calibration of country risk, the reduction of risk necessary to make a project work financially, and the role of public financial institutions in facilitating that risk reduction, will represent much of the core work under this compact. Without it, sufficient finance will not flow to make the SDGs work.

The Joint Task Force should also negotiate a Global Philanthropic Compact with the growing number of participants in this field who are dedicated to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is important that the enthusiasm, energy, and capital of this movement be fully harnessed. It is equally important that this movement be synchronized with the SDG priorities of each country and their UN and World Bank partners.

The Joint Task Force should also develop a Global Civil Society Compact with the growing number of international NGOs committed to the SDGs. This compact is also critical. And it is equally important that their efforts be fully harnessed in a manner maximally compatible with national action plans and national partnerships with the UN and the World Bank. Civil society is also important in developing social movements behind particular goals agreed with the relevant member state, which also assist in galvanizing local support for local projects. The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement is a case in point of this "ground-up" approach to the development challenge.

Planet 50-50: Women, Peace, Security, and Development

> *"Countries with more gender equality have better economic growth. Companies with more women leaders perform better. Peace agreements that include women are more durable. Parliaments with more women enact more legislation on key social issues such as health, education, anti-discrimination and child support. The evidence is clear: equality for women means progress for all."*
>
> *Ban Ki-moon*
> *UN secretary-general (2007–2016)*

The UN system has made great progress in recent years in establishing a comprehensive normative framework on the role of women and girls, gender equality, and eliminating violence against women. This builds on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1992; the landmark Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995; UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security of 2000; six subsequent Security Council resolutions; and a series of General Assembly resolutions over the last twenty-five years. This normative framework is reflected and built upon in the 2030 Agenda, which includes specific gender targets within SDG 5 on gender equality and mainstreams gender equality across eleven of the other seventeen SDGs. Specifically, SDG 5 contains two core commitments:

- To end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; and
- To eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

Critically, this is the first, definitive statement by the UN system that sets a formal target date to eliminate gender inequality (i.e., by 2030). This should command fundamental attention from across the entire UN system.

Under the leadership of UN Women, the challenge now for the UN system is to deliver results on the ground. This goes to the heart of national action plans on Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security; the implementation of individual national commit-

ments to "Step It Up" on gender equality; and the role of gender equality within each of the national plans developed by member states to implement the 2030 Agenda. These are the three sets of mechanisms designed to give practical effect to the gender equality agenda—or, as noted in one recent publication, to move "from clause to effect."[96] As UN Women has noted, these should apply in the following practical areas:[97]

- Gender parity in politics through political, legal, and constitutional reform;
- The economic empowerment of women through laws guaranteeing access to property, finance, and inheritance;
- Ending violence against women and girls through legislative reform, effective police enforcement, and proper protection for women and girls as asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants;
- The comprehensive integration of women across the full spectrum of peace operations, including effective mediation, and in countering violent extremism on the ground; and
- The encouragement of male champions of equality through UN Women's highly successful "HeForShe" campaign.

While these represent positive strategic directions, they should be supplemented by the following measures:

- *Women should occupy a minimum of 50 percent of executive positions within UN headquarters in New York, Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi. At present, women occupy less than 30 percent of these positions.*[98] *Credible sub-targets should be agreed for 2020, 2025, and 2030. Unless the UN system itself leads by example, the rest of the world will not follow.*
- *Women should either be the leaders or deputy leaders of UN operations in the field, irrespective of whether these are peacekeeping operations, combined military and civilian operations, or exclusively civilian operations.*
- *All UN operations, either in headquarters or in the field, should adopt an enforceable policy of "zero tolerance," under any circumstances, of violence or the threat of violence, including sexual violence, against women and girls.*

- *UN Women's allocation from UN core funding should be signicantly increased.* UN Women cannot credibly fulfill its obligations to negotiate sixty-four "system-wide action plans" on gender equality across the UN system and give effect to the multiple mandates now coming its way under the 2030 Agenda and Security Council Resolution 1325 with limited core funding. To do so is to impose a "financial glass ceiling" on the UN's gender equality agenda. This must change.

- *A separate trust fund for women's economic empowerment should be established to support a new range of local initiatives to encourage women to develop their own small businesses.* This would also encourage the development of social movements in broad, ground-up initiatives to support the economic empowerment of women. Achieving gender equality in the workplace and equitable wages and salaries, as well as unleashing the economic potential of women in business through equitable access to finance, represent a radical new agenda to drive global economic growth.

Unless the UN has the financial capacity to deliver gender equality programs on the ground, all the normative efforts in the world will come to naught. The two existing UN Women funds are financially modest. Unless these funds, and the two new ones recommended, are taken seriously by member states, they will be legitimately accused of

"micro-financing" the entire gender equality agenda.

UN Youth

A new subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly called UN Youth should be established. This entity should be headed by an executive director and supported by a modest secretariat. All staff within UN Youth, including the executive director, should be under the age of thirty-nine. As previously noted, the global concerns of youth in education, employment, environmental sustainability, and social and political inclusion are long-standing. Existing advisory structures within the UN system aimed at mainstreaming the concerns of youth within other UN operations have not been successful. This is particularly the case in terms of unemployment levels among a global youth (under twenty-five) demographic that makes up 43 percent of the world's total population. The international community is sitting on an increasingly combustible political cocktail with unforeseen consequences. The primary responsibility in this domain lies with national governments. But this is the case across the range of social and economic programs currently administrated by the United Nations system. Therefore, there must be a central platform for global youth advocacy within the heart of the UN system itself. UN Youth should not deliver programs. The particular priority for UN Youth in its first period of operation should be

Secretary-general visits development project site, Antananarivo, Madagascar, May 11, 2016. UN Photo/Mark Garten.

the recommendation of sustainable education, training, and employment programs to reduce global youth unemployment.

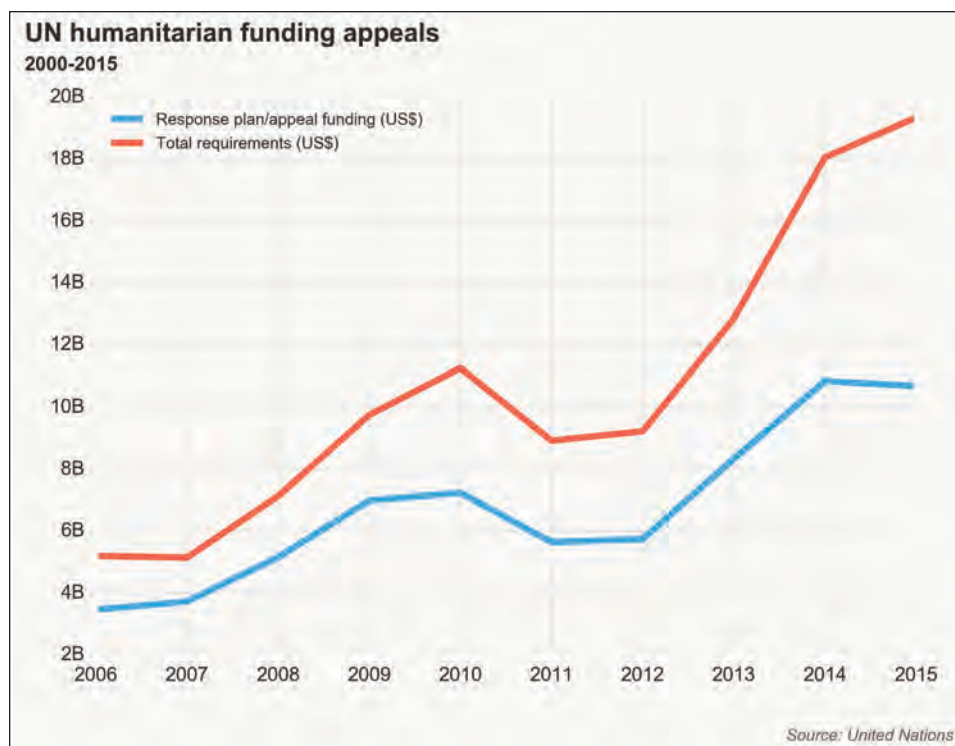## Climate Change, Planetary Boundaries, and a Sustainable Biosphere

On climate change, global policy settings have recently been confirmed under the Paris Agreement of December 2015. These are sound settings. The challenge will be for member states to comply with the disciplines contained within them—most particularly to increase their emissions reduction targets and deliver on them within the timeframes necessary to avoid irreversible and destructive climate change. In addition, the UN must lead by example and continue its effort to become climate neutral, as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon proposed in 2007.[99] Achieving carbon neutrality would speak with additional credibility to the world at large.

In addition to these commitments on climate change, and in parallel to the IPCC, consideration should be given to the establishment of an International Panel on Planetary Boundaries (IPPB), to produce forward projections on the impact of the expanding human footprint on the full range of environmental domains. The mandate of such an IPPB should include other planetary boundaries beyond climate change.

At this stage, this should be a scientific exercise rather than a policy exercise. Nonetheless, scientific conclusions on behalf of the international community are critical, given emerging concerns on the interaction between any radical disruption of one set of planetary boundaries on others and their collective impact on the sustainability of human life over time. We therefore need an agreed global science on planetary boundaries for the future.

In particular, the UN should give consideration to creating a United Nations Oceans Commission (UNOC) in order to provide both scientific and policy advice to the decision-making organs of the UN system on the long-term health of the oceans, their ability to sustain marine life, their complex interrelationship with climate futures and associated weather patterns, and their future as a reliable source of global protein requirements. Much of the UN debate on global oceans policy has been uncoordinated. The research scope of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) current Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission is too narrow and of insufficient institutional stature to command political and

UN humanitarian funding appeals
2000-2015

— Response plan/appeal funding (US$)
— Total requirements (US$)

Source: United Nations

policy attention. There is therefore no agreed, prominent institutional mechanism within the UN system that brings together both scientific research and future policy options for sustaining our global oceans.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN ENGAGEMENT

International humanitarian values are anchored in the UN Charter. They are not culture-bound. They are universal. They are also further reflected in the international machinery established under Chapters 9 and 10 of the charter to give effect to the social and economic needs of humankind. They are further underlined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The preservation of human dignity is also the main purpose underlying international humanitarian law.

The dimensions of current humanitarian needs are significant and rapidly expanding. As of 2015, 125 million people in the world were living in areas devastated by either armed conflict or natural disasters and were receiving life-saving assistance from humanitarian agencies. This amounted to an annual bill of $25 billion. To put this into recent historical context, this also represents an increase of more than 1,000 percent since the year 2000, when the total humanitarian budget stood at only $2 billion. The UN High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing has also calculated that the 2015 allocation represents an annual shortfall of $15 billion in terms of those needing humanitarian assistance but receiving none or too little.[100]

A horrific illustration of the impact of this funding shortfall for humanitarian need is Syria. In 2015, 1.6 million Syrian refugees had their food rations cut, and 750,000 refugee children could not attend school.[101] We are now fully familiar with the consequences of these extraordinary conditions—a mass exodus of families from Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria to Europe as desperate people concluded this was their only hope. In Iraq, healthcare services across many parts of the country were cut, leaving millions of internally displaced persons without medical attention. Once again, this became a major push factor for people seeking protection elsewhere.

Ninety percent of those receiving humanitarian assistance live in conflict-affected fragile states. Historically, humanitarian assistance was based on the assumption that most armed conflicts would be between states. As noted above, that is no longer the case. The overwhelming majority of humanitarian assistance is now delivered to people affected by intra- rather than inter-state conflict. Moreover, contemporary conflicts also see widespread and blatant violations of international humanitarian law that far too often go unpunished. Failure to respect the law—including rules on the protection of humanitarian relief—has dramatic humanitarian consequences for people affected by armed conflicts and also places humanitarian workers at unprecedented risk. In 2015 alone, 287 humanitarian workers were killed, kidnapped, or wounded while delivering services to the most vulnerable people in the world.[102]

Not only is the nature of conflict changing, but the numbers needing humanitarian assistance are growing rapidly. As noted above, the number of armed conflicts has actually decreased. But the total number of those affected by these conflicts has risen exponentially. This is partly because many conflicts have become chronic. Seventy percent of those countries where humanitarian assistance is delivered today have been receiving such assistance for a decade or more.

In addition to the increasing length and lethality of armed conflicts threatening the lives of civilians, the international community is rightly concerned about the increase in frequency and intensity of natural disasters. One of the hallmarks of climate change is the increasing occurrence of extreme weather events. This is already reflected in rapid increases in global insurance premiums.

In summary, the international community is facing growing numbers of people suffering from humanitarian crises arising from longer-term, intra-state conflicts and from increasingly frequent and intense natural disasters. The trajectory is for more to come. And while in 2015 the world spent a record amount on humanitarian assistance, we also witnessed a record gap between those needing assistance and the amount of funds supplied. The High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing advises that just 62 percent of the total needs identified by the UN's annual appeals process were met in 2014.[103] This is a large and growing gap.

The international community has done much high-quality work on this dilemma. In particular, the rolling analysis of the Active Learning Network

for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) on *The State of the Humanitarian System*, UNOCHA's "Global Humanitarian Overview," and, most particularly, the report of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing published in January 2016.[104] These preceded the World Humanitarian Summit in April 2016. This summit was not an intergovernmental conference. And we do not yet know what recommendations the secretary-general may take from it in his report to the General Assembly in September 2016. Nor do we know what might or might not be adopted by member states and what implementation machinery may be agreed to implement any such recommendations.

This report builds on, reinforces, and, where necessary, adds to the recommendations of these earlier reports. These have all pointed to dilemmas currently faced by the international humanitarian sector. The president of the International Rescue Committee, David Miliband, in his presentation to the ICM explained the core dilemma facing the sector in the following terms:

> One version of the mismatch between need and provision is that the system is simply broke (short of money), which arises from the multiple and growing number of crises, while UN appeals are decreasingly well-funded…and that if we bridge the funding gap there would no longer be a problem. There is, however, an alternative narrative about the mismatch between need and provision, which argues that the system is broken, not just broke. So is the system broken as well as broke? Because a broken humanitarian system makes it a much more difficult issue for the multilateral system to address.[105]

Focusing on refugees, Miliband also itemized what he identified as core elements of this dilemma:

- The current system is designed for short-term aid, but wars are lasting longer.
- The system is designed for camp-based services, whereas now the majority of refugees are in urban areas, not in refugee camps.
- The humanitarian sector is to a large extent designed around aid delivery in poor countries, but most displaced people, while poor themselves, now find themselves in fragile but non-poor countries, which creates categorization difficulties for the international aid

community as to what forms of assistance might be possible.

- There is a difference between the international humanitarian system, on the one hand, and the long-defined international development system, on the other. However, given the evolving nature of long-term conflict, people now find themselves in need of humanitarian assistance for long periods of time. This blurs the classic division of labor between the work of humanitarian and development agencies.
- Finally, there is no agreement within the humanitarian sector itself as to whether it conceives of itself as a "system." Some in the sector cry for more coordination but are unready to yield any of their traditional autonomy, least of all to the UN. Others argue that there is not a "system" but what can best be described as an "ecosystem." This begs the question as to whether the sector is ultimately capable of coherence at all—whether its actors share common agreed goals and targets; whether organizational interoperability is ultimately possible; and whether it might equally be possible to have common administrative and accountability systems, given that 90 percent of all humanitarian funding ultimately derives from governments.[106]

A new position of deputy secretary-general (humanitarian support) should be established within the UN Secretariat. This would mean elevating the existing position of under-secretary-general of UNOCHA one level. This is important, given the overall policy leadership structure being recommended by this report: a troika of deputy secretaries-generals respectively responsible for peace and security, sustainable development, and now humanitarian support. It also reflects the quantum of financial resources now dedicated to the UN's overall humanitarian mission. Furthermore, if we are to have any real hope of "busting the silos," both at a policy level and at a delivery level within the UN system, this must begin at the top of the system. Commonly agreed, integrated approaches to "joined-up mandates" that integrate the security, development, and other components of a given mission are essential. Subject to the approval of the member-state organs of the UN system, these integrated mandates could then be delivered to the field. And it is there that

properly integrated local teams would be deployed to effectively implement these mandates on the ground. Finally, a deputy secretary-general responsible for humanitarian support would also underline the priority the UN attaches to its humanitarian mission in its dealings with the rapidly expanding international NGO community, a number of which are large-scale players in the field.

The deputy secretary-general (humanitarian support) should engage in consultations with both member states and international civil society on commonly agreed goals and targets for the international humanitarian sector. There appear to be no such commonly agreed "global humanitarian goals" at present, which creates a conceptual problem from the outset if future reforms are to be measured against common evaluation frameworks. As an example, the president of the IRC has sought to define what it means to engage in so-called life-changing and life-saving interventions by articulating five goals for his organization: survival, health, education, income, and the autonomous power of the beneficiary to subsequently become self-reliant.

The deputy secretary-general (humanitarian support) should begin negotiations with the international NGO sector to define common protocols for cooperation between UN and non-UN humanitarian agencies. These would:

- Reflect commonly agreed goals and targets, both generically and for particular field operations involving multiple participating agencies;

- Common measurement standards to determine "value for money" in the delivery of humanitarian aid levels to agencies, including the UN agencies;

- A commonly agreed evaluation framework to determine the effectiveness of the operations of each agency within a particular mission;

- Commonly agreed mechanisms for assessing beneficiary satisfaction with the efficiency and effectiveness with which humanitarian aid is delivered; and

- Common transparency measures to ensure that all members of the international donor community, as well as aid beneficiaries, can have a clear idea of how aid dollars are actually spent by "following the money trail" and making clear the ratio between overheads and aid delivery.

The deputy secretary-general (humanitarian support) should also reach agreement with the international humanitarian sector on protocols for joint needs assessments following particular humanitarian disasters. This seeks to deal with the problem of multiple and conflicting assessments by different agencies. It also seeks to respond to

The World Food Programme delivery food to camps for internally displaced persons in North Darfur, Shangil Tobaya, Sudan, February 11, 2014. UN Photo/Albert González Farran.

concerns that needs assessments may be skewed by the particular operational needs of an individual agency, rather than the objective humanitarian needs of the target community or country. This would necessarily involve an agreed methodology for making such assessments.

The deputy secretary-general (humanitarian support) should reach agreement with the range of public and private humanitarian agencies on whether they wish to be regarded as a collective international humanitarian sector, community, system, "ecosystem," or network. This is not simply an academic exercise. It affects how the agencies actually work together. As noted above, this is critical, given that 90 percent of funding for these agencies comes from governments, and governments have a legitimate expectation that their funds are being deployed effectively. Questions of nomenclature on this matter are therefore important. The international donor community, in increasingly financially difficult circumstances, has limited patience for duplication and has a legitimate expectation that international humanitarian agencies can and will work to a commonly agreed field plan. Furthermore, the UN continues to have a unique convening power to bring the various government and nongovernment agencies around a table. By this means, coherence can be achieved in the absence of direction, which appears to be what many international NGOs in particular fear. An effective balance can be struck between coherence, on the one hand, and operational division of labor, on the other, so as to maximize flexibility and effectiveness while maintaining institutional autonomy.

The deputy secretary-general (humanitarian support) should develop an agreed protocol between UN humanitarian agencies, UN development agencies, and international financial institutions, international NGOs, and member states on the operational interrelationship between humanitarian crises and normal development assistance programs. At present, these are conceived as separate worlds. This separation is clearly reflected in the fact that the SDGs do not incorporate any specific sub-targets relevant to humanitarian disaster relief. This is understandable in terms of the SDGs' legitimate emphasis on long-term resilience. This report previously addressed the question of a UN mission's continuum within a

particular partner country—from conflict prevention through to post-conflict reconstruction. This represented an effort to integrate the peace and security and development dimensions within an integrated mission statement, including decision-making mechanisms to formally shift gears from one stage of a mission to the next, as circumstances evolve.

Beyond these administrative measures, the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing has made other recommendations in its report at three levels:

- How to prevent or reduce the impact of humanitarian crises (the prevention agenda);
- How to close the funding gap between needs assessment and funding delivered for humanitarian appeals; and
- How to increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which scarce funds are deployed in the field.[107]

There is no point in reinventing the wheel on the range of practical recommendations made by the panel in each of these areas. Instead, this report simply endorses them.

Asylum Seekers, Refugees, and Migration

UNHCR played a frontline role in responding to the 2015–2016 European refugee crisis, which saw the largest number of people flee conflict and oppression since the Second World War. In 2015, more than 1 million people applied for asylum in Europe, in comparison to 656,000 applicants in 2014. At least 3,700 adults and children died attempting the sea crossing.[108] We will never know the final number. UNHCR, as the lead UN agency on the ground, has operated in extremely difficult circumstances, with its humanitarian funding appeals chronically not met. Under these trying circumstances, UNHCR staff have performed with great dedication and distinction.

The precise causes of the 2015–2016 exodus, and the role of UN agencies in particular, has yet to be fully examined through an independent inquiry. Overall, UNHCR funding for 2015 was reportedly 10 percent lower than for the previous year.[109] World Food Program funding for Syrian refugees in neighboring countries was nearly 20 percent less for 2015 than for 2014. Furthermore, WFP's emergency relief fund for Syria for 2015 was 63
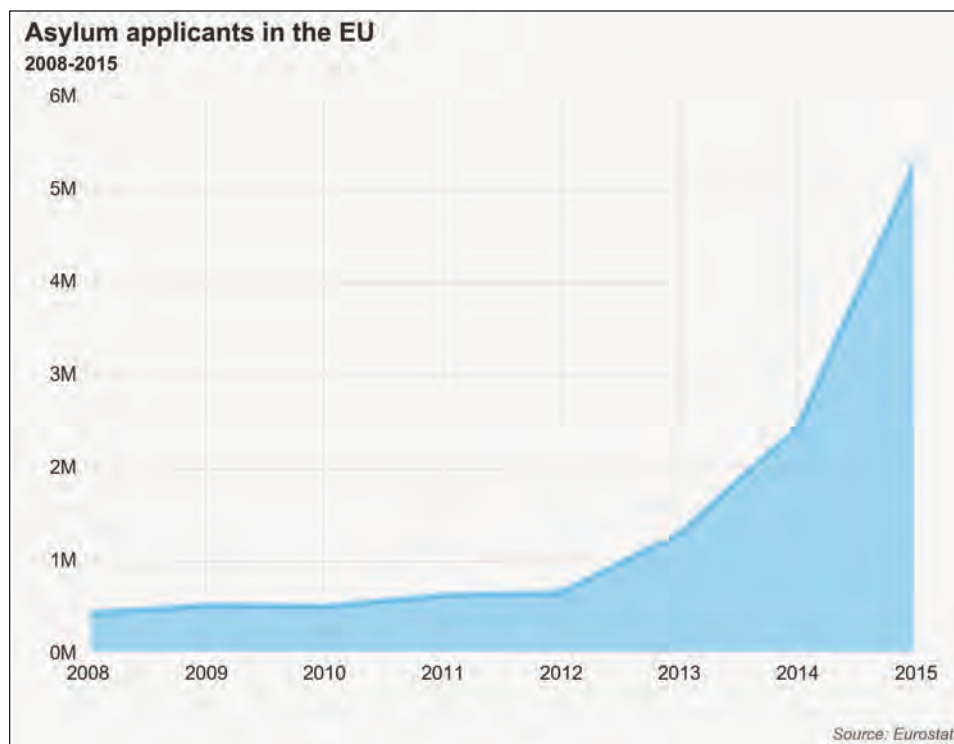
percent underfunded.[110] This, in turn, led the WFP to cut the eligibility for food vouchers from 2.1 million people to 1.4 million and to cut the value of food vouchers.[111] Meanwhile, funding shortfalls for the World Health Organization in Iraq in 2015 led to the closure of 184 health clinics in ten of the country's eighteen districts.[112] The massive cutbacks by these agencies to refugees on the ground were major "push factors" in causing refugees to move, primarily to Europe. This has been a major failure of the UN system and of the financial support provided by member states, with dire humanitarian and political consequences.

The refugee crisis of 2015–2016 has placed the future management of asylum seekers and refugees in the global spotlight. Prior to this most recent crisis, UNHCR's own Policy Development and Evaluation Service outsourced an evaluation of the agency's earlier response to the refugee influx in Lebanon and Jordan to an independent third party. The review noted that, due to a lack of a coherent strategy by the UNHCR, the organization found itself being "reactive and trying to do everything instead of prioritizing and linking different actors given their competencies."[113] The report outlined a range of problems in UNHCR's response to the refugee crises, including in its links with development agencies, legal protection, coordination with

other actors, and the efficiency of its delivery of services. It is always easy to criticize after the event. UNHCR workers were undoubtedly doing the best they could in trying circumstances on the ground. At the same time, lessons must be learned.

In a further evaluation of UNHCR performance during the most recent refugee crisis, the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services made a number of substantive recommendations for the future, including that UNHCR should:

- Implement a multi-year planning cycle for solutions-related activities and pursue multi-year funding;
- Develop advocacy strategies for solutions at the global, regional, and operational levels;
- Develop a schedule to ensure the conduct of regular, targeted meetings with development actors around a solution/transition partnership model;
- Develop a staff development strategy to strengthen skills for creating, implementing, and assessing solutions;
- Review existing internal solutions structures to assess whether restructuring could improve effectiveness in programming; and
- Create an evidence-based portfolio to be used

Asylum applicants in the EU
2008-2015

Source: Eurostat

for strengthening and advocating solutions.[114]

This review, however, does not appear to have systematically dealt with a core reason for the sudden exodus of people from Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey starting in early 2015. The absence of a UN emergency contingency fund to draw upon, and the inability of UN leadership to obtain these funds from an emergency appeal, appears to have been the principal cause. *Given the dimensions of the impact these events have had on millions of people and on the governments of Europe and the Middle East, an independent institution should immediately conduct an exercise on "lessons learned" from this crisis for the future.*

Beyond this most recent crisis, it is plain that the global system for handling the current scale of unauthorized movement of global people is either "broke" or "broken." Either way, the proposed 2016 Summit for Refugees and Migrants is at least half a decade late, given the massive displacement of people that began in Syria in 2011. It also regrettably conflates two sets of challenges: migration, on the one hand, and the separate question of asylum seekers and refugees, on the other. Nonetheless, based on the deliberations in New York in September 2016, and the summit document that emerges from it, *a new global action plan should be prepared for the 2017 General Assembly that incorporates a complete overhaul of the entire global system for the protection of and humanitarian support for asylum seekers and refugees.* This overhaul must address the underlying political, economic, and social fragility of source countries; the support necessary for neighboring countries; the network of transitional facilities and services needed in transit countries; a global system of better burden sharing for destination countries; and a sustainable system for financing such humanitarian emergencies, including the possibilities outlined above.

The growing crisis in our global capacity to manage increasing flows of asylum seekers and refugees represents one part of a much broader policy challenge of the management, regulation, and protection of global migrants in general. The time has come to consider how this too is best handled within the UN system. In the current debate, the challenges of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants are increasingly and unhelpfully conflated. Global human mobility is now of

unprecedented proportions, with nearly one-seventh of the world's population on the move last year alone. This is a mega-change of our time. Such mass movements and, within them, mass migration (formal and informal) of some 230 million people each year bring both great benefits to the world and a vast new set of challenges. And then we have the unique needs of more than 65 million forcibly displaced persons.[115]

The UN system has no agreed institutional capacity to deal with international migration policy. Historically, this has been an exclusively national responsibility or the subject of specific bilateral or regional intergovernmental arrangements. While that will continue to be the case, the common migration policy challenges of states, combined with the need expressed by states for greater levels of global cooperation, make new forms of institutional cooperation necessary. This includes the proper protection of the legal rights of migrants. This may now change with the resolution of the member states of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in June 2016 to seek formal affiliation with the UN.

The UN should assign responsibility for global cooperation on migration policy and programs to the IOM. This would obviate the need to create any new institution within the UN system. The IOM already has a long institutional knowledge of this complex policy domain, including its intersection with the global asylum seeker/refugees system with which it has worked for more than half a century. This would mean enhancing the formal policy capacity of the IOM (particularly in the area of migrant rights), while retaining its critical operational role as the first port of call for the international community when it comes to moving large numbers of people safely and humanely in dangerous security environments.

Global Pandemics

As discussed above, the WHO has come under increasing external and internal scrutiny for its slow and ineffective response to the Ebola crisis. The report of the Ebola Interim Assessment Panel, chaired by Dame Barbara Stocking, noted a "strong, if not complete, consensus that WHO does not have a robust emergency operations capacity or culture."[116] Institutional and policy recommendations from this review aimed at lifting the WHO's

performance include:

- Developing an organizational culture that accepts its role in emergency preparedness and response;
- Establishing a WHO Center for Emergency Preparedness and Response;
- Establishing an independent board to guide the development of the new center and report on its progress to the Executive Board of the World Health Assembly and the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee;
- Requiring the chair of this board to provide an annual report on global health security to the Executive Board of the World Health Assembly and the UN General Assembly;
- Adopting a new approach to staffing in country offices, ensuring the highest level of capacity for the most vulnerable countries;
- Ensuring that, at a country level, the WHO representative has an independent voice and the full support of the WHO regional director and the director-general if challenged by local governments; and
- Reestablishing itself as the authoritative body communicating on health emergencies by rapidly, fully, and accurately informing governments and publics across the world about the extent and severity of any future outbreak.[117]

This Stockton Review has been supplemented by the Harvard-LSHTM Independent Panel on the Global Response to Ebola (the "Lancet Report"), which has also recommended the following:

- Developing a global strategy to invest in, monitor, and sustain national core capacities;
- Strengthening incentives for early reporting of outbreaks and science-based justifications for trade and travel restrictions;
- Broadening responsibility for emergency declarations to a transparent, politically protected Standing Emergency Committee;
- Institutionalizing accountability through an independent commission for disease outbreak prevention and response;
- Establishing a global fund to finance, accelerate, and prioritize research and development in the area of pandemics;

- Sustaining high-level political attention through a Global Health Committee of the Security Council; and
- Promoting good governance of WHO through decisive, well-financed, time-bound reform and assertive leadership.[118]

A range of third-party reform proposals have also suggested:

- Establishing an international reserve of first responders who could mobilize swiftly against a dangerous epidemic;
- Clarifying command structures so that the WHO could lead in an international pandemic crisis response without becoming mired in internal deliberations and intra-institutional disputes about where responsibility lies;
- Establishing a contingency fund to pay for future emergency responses; and
- Redrawing the director-general's mandate. At present, the director general is a manager, not a leader, of the WHO. An empowered director general must have moral legitimacy and institutional authority as the voice of the UN system responsible for acting preventively to save lives from the outbreak of pandemics.[119]

There is little point in reinventing the wheel in relation to such a large array of recently completed review processes. *Given the importance of these reforms to such a fundamental dimension of global human security, their implementation should be completed by January 1, 2017, and the director general of the WHO and the Executive Board of the World Health Assembly should present a combined report on implementation to the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the Security Council by the end of January 2017.*

Human Rights

Human rights is a core pillar of the UN system. This is reflected in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and an elaborate body of treaty law. The reality, however, is that human rights has long been a political, ideological, and national sovereignty–related battleground between states, within states, and with international civil society. This continues to play out in the deliberations of the Human Rights Council and rolling controversies over the interpretation, application, and compliance or noncompliance

with the universal norms outlined in the relevant treaties. This is likely to continue into the future. Progress is therefore likely to be, at best, incremental.

The Human Rights Council should develop a coordinated strategy on the use of universal periodic reviews to advance global human rights. UPRs have become a useful instrument of self-reporting and soft pressure on states to act on the Human Rights Council's (HRC) recommendations. The HRC, despite frequent criticisms, has some prominent success stories. Yet the strategic coordination of UN efforts around UPRs is piecemeal, relying on the interest, leadership, and determination of UN field leadership.

The Human Rights Council should continue its efforts to define cases of "persistent noncooperation." According to Resolution 5/1 of the Human Rights Council, "After exhausting all efforts to encourage a State to cooperate with the universal periodic review mechanism, the Council will address, as appropriate, cases of persistent non-cooperation with the mechanism."[120] Exactly what constitutes persistent noncooperation has led to gridlock in the human rights debates in the HRC. A well-defined, universally agreed concept would enable the HRC to more effectively fulfill its mandate.

The HRC should establish a human rights–focused early-warning support capability to allow it to play an active role in future crises and UN conflict prevention. Once called the "leper of the UN system," the Human Rights Council rose to the occasion during a number of recent crises, playing a critical and often leading role in isolating human rights abusers. Building on this precedent, the HRC can play the role of a useful human rights watchdog, which would allow it to effectively adopt a conflict prevention role.

The UN should further entrench the Human Rights Up Front (HRUF) initiative launched by Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson in 2013. This initiative seeks to deal with the siloed approach that currently prevails, with human rights seen as being the exclusive responsibility of the HRC in Geneva. HRUF, by contrast, calls for integrated reports of human rights challenges in countries drawn from the reporting of all UN agencies in the field. Second, it is driven by long field experience that serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are likely precursors to deeper crises, often culminating in open armed conflict that could, in turn, degenerate into mass atrocities. Third, HRUF then seeks to engage with host governments based on the integrated reporting of UN field officers from multiple agencies in order to secure host-government intervention and, failing that, to bring these concerns directly to the attention of a deputy secretary-general (humanitarian support). At its best, HRUF can become an effective tool of preventive diplomacy. *To be fully effective, UN leadership at the headquarters level will need to stipulate that full participation in the Human Rights Up Front initiative will be required by local UN leadership in the field as a formal part of the latter's field mandate.* In other words, if it is not in the mandate, it is seen as optional and, therefore, will simply not happen.

The UN should fully implement the Dublin Process for increasing the visibility and support of the UN human rights treaty bodies. The UN General Assembly strengthened the UN human rights treaty bodies in 2014 in a much-needed reform of the working conditions of volunteer, unpaid international legal experts who form these committees. The General Assembly reform package was a timely boost to the treaty bodies, giving them more meeting time and resources to do their demanding work. However, much remains to be done to fully utilize their potential.

The UN should partner with regional organizations, including the OSCE, AU, OAS, and ASEAN, to strengthen their collective human rights commitments and implementation mechanisms. The UN's present human rights role is often limited to that of pleading with or excoriating member states. Without abandoning its human rights monitoring role, the UN can also effect change by focusing on technical assistance. This can be done in partnership with regional organizations. Some have suggested, for example, that the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, rather than simply assisting states in drafting laws on human trafficking, should provide technical resources to enhance the rights protection framework within states from which such laws would flow.
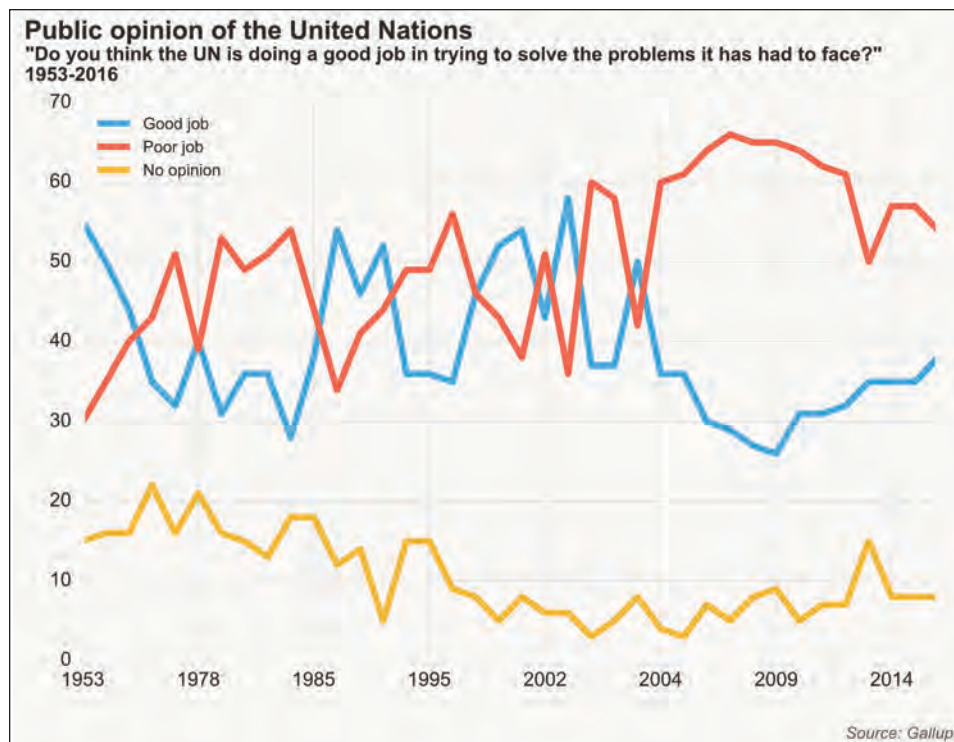
BUDGET, PERSONNEL, MANAGEMENT, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Consistent with the above recommendations, the new secretary-general should request the General Assembly, through the Fifth Committee, to undertake a six-month review of the current system of budget and personnel management. The object of this review should be to provide the new secretary-general, as the chief administrative officer of the UN as stipulated in Chapter 15 of the charter, with maximum operational flexibility to allocate financial and budgetary resources as efficiently as possible to achieve the policy priorities determined by UN member states. Failure to do so will undermine the capacity of the secretary-general effectively and efficiently to deliver UN programs. The secretary-general, and her or his executive management team, should be held accountable for the results they deliver for member states, rather than for the detailed prescription of how individual financial inputs should be deployed. This should be the prerogative of management in any large organization.

The new secretary-general should commission an external performance audit of UN operations during her or his first year of office to help identify areas of duplication, overlap, and waste, and to assist the secretary-general to redeploy these financial savings to other priorities across the UN system. This performance audit should extend to the Secretariat and those UN funds, programs, and specialized agencies that fall within the line of administrative control of the Secretariat.

- Particular focus should be directed on whether the UN structure is too vertical, with too many layers of management between policy decisions being taken and implementation on the ground. This applies to the question of the real, added value of the large number of regional offices across the global system. The structure should be as flat as possible.

- Focus should also be directed on whether the UN has finally achieved common information technology systems, personnel management systems, and accounting systems across all thirty-three UN funds, programs, specialized agencies, and related entities. If this has not been achieved after more than a decade of effort, an information technology strategy that achieves this in the first term of the next secretary-general's appointment needs to be adopted. The absence of such common systems is a fundamental source of structural inefficiencies in the system, as well as impeding full

Public opinion of the United Nations
"Do you think the UN is doing a good job in trying to solve the problems it has had to face?"
1953-2016

Good job / Poor job / No opinion

Source: Gallup

transparency of UN operations at any time.

- Furthermore, universal, reliable, high-quality video-conferencing systems must be in place across the entire UN system. These should be fully deployed to save time and expense involved in unnecessary travel by UN staff. The systems now exist to do this, and at a significant financial saving to the UN.

- Savings from the results of this audit would fund in full the range of administrative reforms recommended in this report. The UN must live within its annual budget.

The senior management structure of the UN needs to be reformed to make it less centralized and based more on regular, weekly meetings to enable collaborative decision-making processes by a senior executive team. At present, there appear to be semi-monthly meetings of what is called the Senior Management Group, made up of forty-one senior personnel. These are listed in Annex 2 to of this report. These are useful collective briefing sessions on what each agency is doing. That is why the Senior Management Group should continue to meet. But the reality is that this is not a collective decision-making body. This function tends to devolve to the private office of the secretary-general, his chef de cabinet, a small number of personal staff, and whatever ad hoc consultation arrangements are then deemed necessary. It is recommended that this be broadened to a ten-member Secretariat Leadership Team made up of:

- The secretary-general;

- Three deputy secretaries-general responsible for UN policy and programs (peace and security; sustainable development; and humanitarian support);

- The chief financial officer;

- A chief operating officer, because at present there is no one so-designated;

- A new chief communications officer;

- The UN legal counsel to cover international legal and other legal and probity questions;

- The chef de cabinet responsible for daily political liaison with member states; and

- The executive director of UN Women to mainstream the gender equality agenda and elimination of all forms of violence against women across the full spectrum of the UN's

core decision-making processes.

As argued consistently in this report, if the UN is to break down its institutional silos and instead produce integrated team leadership, both at headquarters and in the field, this must begin with the decision-making processes at the top of the system. Similarly, only with this approach will it be possible for the UN to integrate the peace and security, development, and human rights dimensions of its work into properly integrated mandates for the field. Other than that, silo busting will remain an aspiration rather than a lived reality. Finally, any executive management team that is greater than ten will not be functional. It is impossible to have more people than that report to a single person in any large organization.

The next secretary-general should take practical measures to rebuild an independent, professional international civil service. Consistent with the arguments outlined above, the UN of the future will need a cadre of continuing expertise in all the core disciplines of the system. A clear career structure should be made available to professional staff, as in any nation's foreign service, development agencies, and wider civil services. This is important for morale, for institutional memory, and to nurture core competencies that cannot readily be located elsewhere. This does not preclude external appointments. But the latter cannot be allowed to overwhelm the former.

A chief communications officer should be appointed to overhaul the UN's communications structure and strategy in order to effectively communicate its message to member states, the general public, the media, and the rest of the UN system. This position is critical to the overall success of the UN's global mission. The UN has a good story to tell, but it is not telling it effectively. This must change as a matter of urgency. The chief communications officer should undertake an immediate review in order to develop a new communications strategy that fully deploys all media platforms in multiple languages, and in each using plain language that avoids the impenetrability of UN dialect, which is incomprehensible to the rest of the world. Critically, this must reflect a fully integrated "Team UN" message. This would not be a substitute for the individual communications efforts of each UN agency. But enhancing the integrity of "brand UN" is the absolute priority.

Conclusion

This report is addressed to all women and men of good will around the world who want the UN to succeed—not as an end in itself, but as the principal hope of humankind for maximizing global cooperation in response to the mounting challenges to a peaceful and just global order. It is addressed to member states, the Secretariat, the vast array of UN funds, programs, and specialized agencies, global civil society, the private sector, and other major regional institutions that have a structural relationship with the UN. It is entirely up to these institutions as to what use they make of this report, if any.

This report does not claim to be comprehensive. Many who criticize it will ask why a particular UN policy, function, or agency was not dealt with. This represents the irreducible tension between readability, on the one hand (and that includes length), and exhaustiveness on the other.

Nor does the report claim that all its recommendations are new. The report is conscious of the work done diligently over many decades and under the stewardship of many secretaries-general. It would be arrogant to ignore this body of work.

What this report does seek to do is to underscore something that is new—the growing body of evidence that there is an emerging sense of crisis about the future credibility of the UN in dealing with the great challenges of our time. A decade ago, in perhaps happier geopolitical and geoeconomic times, such concerns lay at the margins of the international discourse. Now they lie much more at the center as nation-states start moving elsewhere to find substantive solutions to major international challenges, bypassing the UN both with their funds and with their feet.

Second, based on this growing sense of structural urgency, the report has sought to put forward a range of fresh proposals, practical rather than revolutionary, to deal with this emerging deficit in effective global governance. These have been organized around the core concept of "delivering effective results" on the ground for we, the peoples of the world. In summary:

1. The report recommends that member states formally recommit themselves, at the summit level, to the principle of multilateralism as an essential element of the current global order, rather than allow the current process of strategic drift to continue as multilateralism is replaced by other plurilateral or even unilateral decision making.

2. The report assumes and accepts that the policy objectives of the UN at any given time will be set by member states, with the Secretariat playing a policy advisory role, in addition to an implementation role.

3. The report argues that the Secretariat can better advise the Security Council on the complex matters before the council by providing better policy capacity, including in policy planning.

4. The report argues for an enhanced role for ECOSOC in assuming political responsibility for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

5. The report argues that the UN General Assembly might consider streamlining the processes of the Fifth Committee to increase administrative efficiency and provide better transparency of financial data for member states on the core question of the allocation of the UN's overall budget. The UN General Assembly has also embraced its own ambitious program of reform to increase the transparency of the selection process for UN secretaries-general.

6. In order to effectively and efficiently deliver on the policy decisions of the UN's deliberative bodies, the UN also needs to change some of the functions, structures, and ways resources are allocated in its existing machinery. In particular, the UN needs a flatter structure all around, with priority always placed on field operations.

7. The UN must add specific capabilities to its repertoire to make a doctrine of preventive (as opposed to reactive) diplomacy an operational reality, rather than just an attractive intellectual nostrum. This should include an effective policy-planning capability, a dedicated deputy secretary-general (preventive diplomacy), an enhanced Department of Political Affairs, a cadre of professional special envoys, and an integrated conceptual and operational approach to security, development, and human rights mandates to produce a

capacity to deal with the root causes of conflicts, as well as a capacity to act immediately in response to unanticipated crises.

8. The UN should appoint a deputy secretary-general (sustainable development) to take final responsibility, with the World Bank, on the actual delivery of the 2030 Agenda. It should also devise new, comprehensive protocols with the World Bank, other international development banks, and civil society for the delivery of the SDGs. And it must do the same with the private sector, and private capital in particular, to fill the global financial gap to implement the 2030 Agenda.

9. The UN should appoint a deputy secretary-general (humanitarian support) to develop more efficient and effective compacts with the international NGO sector to increase the combined impact of these UN and non-UN agencies on the ground.

10. The UN should use this higher-level executive management team to "bust" traditional silos at the center of the system by bringing the peace and security and the sustainable development agendas together into properly integrated mandates and mission statements for UN staff on the ground.

11. The UN must also create "Team UN" by making all funds, programs, and specialized agencies on the ground operationally answerable to a single director of UN operations for each mission—whether these are primarily peacekeeping, joint military-civilian, or exclusively civilian operations.

12. The UN must fully mainstream gender equality into its executive management, with gender parity achieved for all management positions at headquarters and for the directors of UN operations in the field (or their deputies).

13. The UN must also mainstream the global youth agenda within UN management by establishing UN Youth, given that youth constitute almost half (42 percent) of the global population and 60 percent of the population of developing countries[121] and that there is now a chronic global youth unemployment challenge.

14. The UN must develop comprehensive protocols and compacts with regional organizations to define agreed norms, functional overlaps, and, where possible, common funding to maximize measurable performance on the ground.

15. The UN must learn to live within the reality of a highly constrained budget, while deploying its budget and staffing resources more efficiently, effectively, and flexibly than at present.

Third, beyond these generic reform proposals, there are a limited number of other specific recommendations dealing with individual functional areas where the UN needs to focus its future efforts, including counterterrorism, cyberwarfare, protection of "planetary boundaries" from irreversible climate change, management of our oceans, and policy-planning across the full spectrum of the UN's global operations. These recommendations will hopefully be useful to those given the task of evolving the UN's institutions in the future.

Earlier in this report, I commented that we sometimes overcomplicate our diagnostics of the UN and our varying prescriptions for its future. I emphasized that, in the end, it all boils down to two basic questions: Are the decision-making bodies of the UN multilateral system capable of making the decisions necessary to deal with the systemic challenges of our age? And if they are, is the institutional machinery of the UN capable of implementing these decisions? The first third of the conclusions outlined above go to the question of the capacity of the UN's decision-making bodies. The report is naturally silent on the question of major policy disagreements between member states within these bodies. That, of course, is the nature of politics, including international politics. The key question here, however, is the extent to which the UN's three principal deliberative bodies are properly supported in their decision-making functions.

The remaining two-thirds of the conclusions outlined above deal with the complex question of the UN's administrative machinery. The consideration of these questions has occupied the bulk of this report's attention. Will the various recommendations made in this report to enhance the UN's

implementation machinery result in a perfectly humming machine? That, of course, will never be the case. My task here is simply to make recommendations to improve the machinery the UN has at its disposal, because if we fail to continue to fine-tune the machinery, ultimately it starts to rust. And if that happens, even the best policy decisions in the world will fall short because they have not been effectively implemented.

Finally, the single most inspiring element of any UN reform exercise is the tens of thousands of UN personnel in the field, who represent the absolute best of our common humanity. And it is to them, and to their future contribution to the peoples of the world, that this small volume is dedicated.

Annex 1: ICM Issue Areas

The Independent Commission on Multilateralism analyzed the multilateral system through the lens of the following sixteen issue areas:

1. New Threats, Challenges, and Opportunities for the Multilateral System
2. Social Inclusion, Political Participation, and Effective Governance in Challenging Environments
3. Terrorism, including issues Related to Ideology, Identity Politics, and Organized Crime
4. Fragile States and Fragile Cities
5. Women, Peace, and Security
6. Forced Displacement, Refugees, and Migration
7. The Impact of New Technologies on Peace, Security, and Development
8. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Addressing Climate Change
9. The Relationship between the UN and Regional Organizations, Civil Society, NGOs and the Private Sector
10. Justice, Human Rights, and the International Legal System
11. Humanitarian Engagements
12. Weapons of Mass Destruction, Non-proliferation, and Disarmament
13. Global Pandemics and Global Public Health
14. Engaging, Supporting, and Empowering Global Youth
15. Communication Strategy for the UN Multilateral System
16. Armed Conflict: Mediation, Conciliation, and Peacekeeping

Annex 2: Membership of UN Senior Management Group

The Senior Management Group is chaired by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and includes the following members:[122]

Jan Eliasson
Deputy Secretary-General

Edmond Mulet
Chef de Cabinet

Maged Abdelaziz
Special Adviser on Africa

Gyan Chandra Acharya
Least Developed Countries, Landlocked
Developing Countries & Small Island Developing
States

Shamshad Akhtar
Economic & Social Commission for Asia & Pacific

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
Human Rights

Christian Friis Bach
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Zainab Hawa Bangura
Sexual Violence in Conflict

Alicia Bárcena Ibarra
Economic Commission for Latin America and the
Caribbean

Helen Clark
UN Development Programme

Joan Clos
Human Settlements

Ertharin Cousin
World Food Programme

Miguel de Serpa Soares
Legal Affairs

Adama Dieng
Special Adviser on Prevention of Genocide

Peter Thomas Drennan
Safety and Security

Grete Faremo
UN Office for Project Services

Yury Fedotov
UN Office at Vienna, Drugs & Crime

Jeffrey Feltman
Political Affairs

Oscar Fernandez-Taranco
Peacebuilding Support

Cristina Gallach
Public Information

Robert Glasser
Disaster Risk Reduction

Filippo Grandi
UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Rima Khalaf
Economic & Social Commission for Western Asia

Atul Khare
Field Support

Kim Won-soo
Disarmament

Mukhisa Kituyi
UN Conference on Trade and Development

Hervé Ladsous
Peacekeeping Operations

Anthony Lake
UN Children's Fund

Carlos Lopes
Economic Commission for Africa

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

Michael Møller
UN Office at Geneva

Vijay Nambiar
Special Adviser on Myanmar

Stephen O'Brien
Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief
Coordinator

Babatunde Osotimehin
UN Population Fund

Catherine Pollard
General Assembly Affairs & Conference
Management

Erik Solheim
UN Environment Programme

Yukio Takasu
Management

Wu Hongbo
Economic and Social Affairs

Leila Zerrougui
Children and Armed Conflict

Sahle-Work Zewde
UN Office at Nairobi

Heidi Mendoza
Observer Internal Oversight Services (reports to
the General Assembly through the secretary-
general)

Annex 3: UN Funds, Programs, Specialized Agencies, Other Entities, and Related Organizations

Funds and Programs

1. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
2. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
3. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
4. World Food Programme (WFP)
5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
6. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
7. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
8. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
9. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
10. UN Women
11. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

UN Specialized Agencies

12. World Bank Group
13. International Monetary Fund (IMF)
14. World Health Organization (WHO)
15. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
16. International Labour Organization (ILO)
17. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
18. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
19. International Maritime Organization (IMO)
20. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
21. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
22. International Civilian Aviation Organization (ICAO)
23. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
24. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
25. Universal Postal Union (UPU)
26. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Other Entities

27. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
28. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
29. United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Related Organizations

30. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
31. World Trade Organization (WTO)
32. Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)
33. Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

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