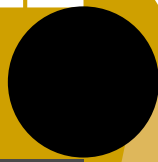


RENEWING



the

UNITED

Nations

The United Nations alone can meet none of the challenges I have described. They affect the entire international community, and they require all of us to do our part. But without a strong and effective Organization, the peoples of the world will find meeting these challenges immeasurably more difficult.

Whether the world's peoples have such an organization at their disposal depends ultimately, now as in the past, on the commitment of their governments to it. Now, as then, the Member States are the very foundation of the United Nations.

As we prepare for the Millennium Summit, we must reaffirm our founding purposes. But we must also think imaginatively how to strengthen the United Nations so that it can better serve states and people alike in the new era.

***The
United Nations
is unique in
world affairs***

Today, global affairs are no longer the exclusive province of foreign ministries, nor are states the sole source of solutions for our small planet's many problems. Many diverse and increasingly influential non-state actors have joined with national decision makers to improvise new forms of global governance. The more complex the problem at hand—whether negotiating a ban on landmines, setting limits to emissions that contribute to global warming, or creating an International Criminal Court—the more likely we are to find non-governmental organizations, private sector institutions and multi-lateral agencies working with sovereign states to find consensus solutions.

I believe two strategies will be essential to realize the potential of our Organization in the years ahead.

First, while our own resources as an organization are tightly constrained, those of the communities we serve are much greater. We must strive, not to usurp the role of other actors on the world stage, but to become a more effective catalyst for change and coordination among them. Our most vital role will be to stimulate collective action at the global level.

Second, the United Nations—like all other institutions in the world today—must fully exploit the great promise of the Information Age. The digital revolution has unleashed an unprecedented wave of technological change. Used responsibly, it can greatly improve our chances of defeating poverty and better meeting our other priority objectives. If this is to happen, we in the United Nations need to embrace the new technologies more wholeheartedly than we have in the past.

Identifying our core strengths

When it was created more than half a century ago, in the convulsive aftermath of world war, the United Nations reflected humanity's greatest hopes for a just and peaceful global community. It still embodies that dream. We remain the only global institu-

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tion with the legitimacy and scope that derive from universal membership, and a mandate that encompasses development, security and human rights as well as the environment. In this sense, the United Nations is unique in world affairs.

We are an organization without independent military capability, and we dispose of relatively modest resources in the economic realm. Yet our influence and impact on the world is far greater than many believe to be the case—and often more than we ourselves realize. This influence derives not from any exercise of power, but from the force of the values we represent; our role in helping to establish and sustain global norms; our ability to stimulate global concern and action; and the trust we enjoy for the practical work we do on the ground to improve people's lives.

The importance of principles and norms is easily underestimated; but in the decades since the United Nations was created, the spreading acceptance of new norms has profoundly affected the lives of many millions of people. War was once a normal instrument of statecraft; it is now universally proscribed, except in very specific circumstances. Democracy, once challenged by authoritarianism in various guises, has not only prevailed in much of the world, but is now generally seen as the most legitimate and desirable form of government. The protection of fundamental human rights, once considered the province of sovereign states alone, is now a universal concern transcending both governments and borders.

The United Nations conferences of the 1990s were sometimes marked by discord, but they have played a central role in forging normative consensus and spelling out practical solutions on the great issues of the day. Nowhere else has it been possible for the international community as a whole to sketch out responses to the dawning challenge of globalization on which all, or almost all, could agree. Indeed, it is on those responses that this report seeks to build.

More recently we have seen an upsurge of transnational single-issue campaigns to strengthen norms and build legal regimes, leading for instance to the convention banning landmines or to last year's agreement on enhanced debt relief for the most heavily indebted poor countries. These campaigns, often conducted in concert with the United Nations, have helped to raise—and alter—the consciousness of the international community and to change the behaviour of states on many critical global issues.

The United Nations plays an equally important, but largely unsung, role in creating and sustaining the global rules without which modern societies simply could not function. The World Health Organization, for example, sets quality criteria for the pharmaceutical industry worldwide. The World Meteorological Office collates weather data from individual states and redistributes it, which in turn improves global weather forecasting. The World Intellectual Property Organization protects trademarks and patents outside their country of origin. The rights for commercial airlines to fly over borders derive from agreements negotiated by the International Civil Aviation Organization. The United Nations Statistical Commission helps secure uniformity in accounting standards.

Indeed, it is impossible to imagine our globalized world without the principles and practice of multilateralism to underpin it. An open world economy, in the place of mer-

cantilism; a gradual decrease in the importance of competitive military alliances coupled with a Security Council more often able to reach decisions; the General Assembly or great gatherings of states and civil society organizations addressing humanity's common concerns—these are some of the signs, partial and halting though they may be, of an indispensable multilateral system in action.

Taking a long-term view, the expansion of the rule of law has been the foundation of much of the social progress achieved in the last millennium. Of course, this remains an unfinished project, especially at the international level, and our efforts to deepen it continue. Support for the rule of law would be enhanced if countries signed and ratified international treaties and conventions. Some decline to do so for reasons of substance, but a far greater number simply lack the necessary expertise and resources, especially when national legislation is needed to give force to international instruments.

Therefore, I am asking all relevant United Nations entities to provide the necessary technical assistance that will make it possible for every willing state to participate fully in the emerging global legal order.

We will provide special facilities at the Millennium Summit for Heads of State or Government to add their signatures to any treaty or convention of which the Secretary-General is the depositary.

As global norms evolve, institutions have evolved with them. In recent years, for example, we have witnessed the creation of ad hoc tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, in response to the international community's growing concern about gross violations of human rights and its determination to end the "culture of impunity".

I strongly urge all countries to sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, so as to consolidate and extend the gains we have achieved in bringing to justice those responsible for crimes against humanity.

The United Nations must also adapt itself to the changing times. One critical area, to which I have already referred, is reform of the Security Council. The Council must work effectively, but it must also enjoy unquestioned legitimacy. Those two criteria define the space within which a solution must be found. **I urge Member States to tackle this challenge without delay.**

We also need to adapt our deliberative work so that it can benefit fully from the contributions of civil society. Already, civil society organizations have made an important contribution to articulating and defending global norms. (For the number of non-governmental organizations, see figure 13.) It is clear that the United Nations and the world's people have much to gain from opening the Organization further to this vital source of energy and expertise—just as we have gained from closer institutional links and practical cooperation with national parliaments.

I would ask the General Assembly, therefore, to explore ways of improving these relationships. As a first step, an expert group, including representatives of civil society organizations, might be asked to prepare a study of innovative "best practices" in how those organizations con-

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tribute to the work of the United Nations in all its aspects. Such a study could form the basis for adopting new ways of involving civil society more fully in our common endeavours.

Partnerships with the private sector and foundations have also become extremely important to our recent successes, as I have noted in several instances in this report.

Networking for change

The rapid pace of change today frequently exceeds the capacity of national and international institutions to adapt. So many things are changing at once that no organization on its own can keep track of them all—especially as the changes generally cut across traditional boundaries between academic disciplines and professional fields of expertise.

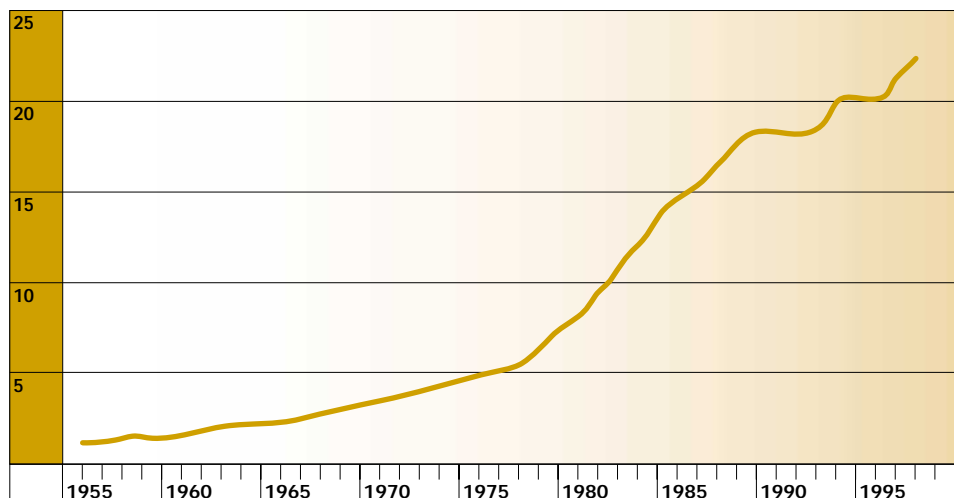
Part of the solution may be found in the emergence of “global policy networks”. These networks—or coalitions for change—bring together international institutions, civil society and private sector organizations, and national governments, in pursuit of common goals.

Sometimes international organizations are in the lead—the World Health Organization, for example, in the Roll Back Malaria campaign, or my own office in the case of the Global Compact with the private sector.

In other instances a few national governments and non-governmental organizations are the driving force, as was the case with the campaign to ban landmines. In the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization the private sector and philanthropic foundations are the major players. In every case, these loose creative coalitions give new meaning to the phrase “we the peoples”, by showing that global governance is not a zero-sum game. All the partners in such a network see their influence increase.

Figure 13
Number of
international
non-governmental
organizations
(Thousands)

Source: Union of International Organizations and Worldwatch Institute, 1996–1999.



States, in particular, gain from joining global policy networks because they can achieve cooperatively what is impossible unilaterally.

Though they can take many different forms, global policy networks share a number of characteristics. They are non-hierarchical and give voice to civil society. They help set global policy agendas, frame debates and raise public consciousness. They develop and disseminate knowledge, making extensive use of the Internet. They make it easier to reach consensus and negotiate agreements on new global standards, as well as to create new kinds of mechanisms for implementing and monitoring those agreements.

Our involvement with global policy networks has been extensive but largely unplanned. We need a more focused and systematic approach. We need to determine how best to help governments, civil society and the private sector to work together to ensure that policy networks succeed in achieving their—and our—goals.

Making digital connections

Earlier in this report, I discussed the vital importance of bridging the global digital divide. Here, I want to suggest how the Information Revolution can and must benefit the United Nations itself.

Ten years ago getting information from—or to—the developing world was costly and time-consuming. But today the World Wide Web is changing that. We can now read newspapers on-line from every corner of the world within seconds of their publication. We can find and download information from national government departments, leading overseas research institutions and key non-governmental organizations just as quickly.

This is not all. Increased global connectivity also means that every year the vast electronic treasure house of information available on the United Nations web site becomes accessible at no cost to millions more people. The popularity of our web site is extraordinary—it received more than 100 million “hits” last year.

The Internet also makes it possible for us to hold interactive global electronic conferences, which not only save airfares, hotel bills and conference costs, but can as easily and cheaply host 10,000 participants as 10. Within the Secretariat, we can substitute electronic “meetings” for many face-to-face ones, thereby making far more efficient use of staff time. This is increasingly the practice in modern organizations that have embraced the Information Revolution.

Finally, the Information Revolution has the potential to radically improve the efficiency of our field operations. Wireless communications work even under the worst conditions, including natural disasters and emergencies.

I am pleased to announce the launch of a new disaster response programme, which will provide and maintain mobile and satellite telephones as well as microwave links for humanitarian relief workers.

This initiative will be led by Ericsson, in partnership with United Nations entities and the International Federation of Red Cross and RedCrescent Societies (see box 11).

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Logistical planning and operations in complex emergencies can also benefit from better use of available technology. In Kosovo, for example, the International Rescue Committee created a shared satellite/wireless Internet network in Pristina. Every United Nations agency, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, several national missions and the majority of non-governmental organizations are connected via the network around the clock.

Up to now, however, the United Nations has scarcely tapped the potential of the Information Revolution. We remain handicapped by a change-resistant culture, inadequate information technology infrastructure, lack of training and, above all, failure to understand the great benefits that information technology can provide when used creatively. We need to update and upgrade our internal information technology capacity. There is enormous scope for the entire United Nations system to become better integrated, on-line, providing the world's people with information and data of concern to them.

In cooperation with other members of the United Nations family, I shall pursue these objectives with great vigour. I will also be appealing to the information technology industry for assistance in rebuilding the United Nations information technology infrastructure and capacity.

Advancing the quiet revolution

If the international community were to create a new United Nations tomorrow, its make-up would surely be different from the one we have. In 2000, our structure reflects

**Box 11
First on the Ground:
Communications in
disaster relief
operations**

The dramatic growth in the scope and severity of natural disasters over the past three decades has placed ever-increasing demands on disaster relief organizations. To meet these demands, disaster relief operations have become larger and more complex, involving increasing numbers of players. This in turn has increased demand for more effective communications in the field.

Local communication systems are often extensively damaged in disasters. Unfortunately the communication systems used by different agencies and non-governmental organizations vary widely in quality and often suffer compatibility problems. The need for improvement is widely recognized, but for many agencies and non-governmental organizations acquisition of more effective systems has simply been too costly.

Responding to this challenge the Ericsson corporation has launched a major Disaster Response Programme that, among other initiatives, will provide and maintain mobile and satellite phones to agency and local humanitarian relief workers. The company will help install microwave links and other measures to improve existing communication networks—or it will build new ones where none exists. The Disaster Response Programme will rely heavily on support from Ericsson's offices in more than 140 countries worldwide and will focus on disaster preparation as well as response.

This generous exercise in global corporate citizenship and private-public cooperation will greatly benefit United Nations agencies and their partners and help improve the provision of services to disaster victims everywhere.

decades of mandates conferred by Member States and, in some cases, the legacy of deep political disagreements. While there is widespread consensus on the need to make the United Nations a more modern and flexible organization, unless Member States are willing to contemplate **real structural reform**, there will continue to be severe limits to what we can achieve.

When the scope of our responsibilities and the hopes invested in us are measured against our resources, we confront a sobering truth. The budget for our core functions—the Secretariat operations in New York, Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna and five regional commissions—is just \$1.25 billion a year. That is about 4 per cent of New York City's annual budget—and nearly a billion dollars less than the annual cost of running Tokyo's Fire Department. Our resources simply are not commensurate with our global tasks.

Our difficulties in coping with stagnant budgets and non-payment of dues are well known. Less well understood are the strains that Member States impose on us by adding new mandates without adding new resources. We can do more with less, but only up to a point. Sooner or later the quality of our work must suffer.

The constraints are not only financial. In many areas we cannot do our job because disagreements among Member States preclude the consensus needed for effective action. This is perhaps most obvious with respect to peace operations, but it affects other areas as well. Moreover, the highly intrusive and excessively detailed mode of oversight that Member States exercise over our programme activities makes it very difficult for us to maximize efficiency or effectiveness.

The “quiet revolution” I launched in 1997 was designed to make the United Nations a leaner and more effective organization. Since then we have streamlined management procedures, shifted resources from administration to development work, introduced cabinet-style management and greatly improved coordination among the far-flung members of the United Nations family.

To reduce the built-in bias towards institutional inertia that has afflicted our work, and to facilitate the strategic redeployment of resources, I have proposed **time limits or “sunset provisions”** for initiatives involving new organizational structures or major commitments of funds. The General Assembly has not yet accepted this proposal; **I urge it to do so.**

Furthermore, a more people-oriented United Nations must be a more **results-based organization**, both in its staffing and its allocation of resources. We are making slow progress in the direction of a results-based budgeting system, one focused on outcomes rather than inputs and processes. When fully implemented this will encourage greater efficiency and flexibility, while at the same time enhancing transparency and the Secretariat's accountability to Member States. **Here, too, the General Assembly's support is necessary.**

To sum up, the United Nations of the twenty-first century must continue to be guided by its founding principles. It must remain an Organization dedicated to the interests of its Member States and of their peoples. Our objectives will not change: peace,

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***We must
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effective,
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accessible***

prosperity, social justice and a sustainable future. But the means we use to achieve those ends must be adapted to the challenges of the new era.

In future, the United Nations must increasingly serve as a catalyst for collective action, both among its Member States and between them and the vibrant constellation of new non-state actors. We must continue to be the place where new standards of international conduct are hammered out, and broad consensus on them is established. We must harness the power of technology to improve the fortunes of developing countries. Finally, we ourselves, as an organization, must become more effective, efficient, and accessible to the world's peoples. When we fail, we must be our own most demanding critics.

Only by these means can we become a global public trust for all the world's peoples.

