

The Stanley Foundation's  
Thirty-Fourth United Nations  
of the Next Decade  
Conference

Global Governance:  
Defining the United Nations'  
Leadership Role

[Adare Manor](#)

Adare, County Limerick, Ireland  
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**D**efining the United Nations' leadership role in the emerging system of global governance remains challenging. A multiplicity of new international actors—states, multilateral institutions, businesses, nongovernmental organizations—complicate the United Nations' search for a fitting role in a new era of globalization. Global governance—humanity's struggle to bring some sort of order to an evermore interdependent, but still very chaotic world—seems impossible without an active role by the world's premier international organization. Yet the nature of such a UN role and the degree to which it will comprise elements of leadership—vision wedded to the ability to coordinate a coalition of interests—are by no means clear.

In recognition of this, the Stanley Foundation convened its thirty-fourth annual conference on the United Nations of the Next Decade in Adare, Ireland. Participants were asked, first, to sketch out the emerging climate for global governance; second, to turn their attention to the tasks of global governance and where the United Nations might exercise leadership; and third, to draw a number of conclusions about the actions and initiatives that must be taken to help the United Nations fulfill its leadership roles. The challenge posed to the United Nations by the United States was also an underlying theme of the entire conference.

### **The Current and Future Climate for Global Governance**

Adare conference participants defined a profoundly changed climate for global governance at the end of the twentieth century,

characterized by globalization and a new equation of influence in the triad of governments and intergovernmental institutions, international business, and an emerging civil society. The dramatic proliferation of political actors, argued many in the group, brings with it the need for new patterns of political leadership and coalition-building. The group was also in agreement that a deep resistance to change among international institutions contrasts markedly to the agility of most international business and nongovernmental organizations.

### **The Tasks of Global Governance and the UN Role**

The tasks of global governance have grown more varied and complex in this age of globalization. While problems of war and peace remain front and center, the group underlined the need to address the many causes of insecurity in a more holistic fashion. The growing gap between the world's rich and poor, the ongoing destruction of the environment, and the continuing violation of human rights all pose moral challenges in and of themselves, but they are also now very much linked to international peace and security.

The Adare conference examined various functional areas of activity by international organizations. In each, participants sought to identify which problems were of particular priority, what role the United Nations should have, and what its relationship to other organizations and actors should be.

On international peace and security, participants focused on the challenge of intrastate

conflict. They underlined the United Nations' unique role in post-conflict rebuilding (including peacekeeping and democratization) and emphasized that the United Nations should provide both the collective use of force (by organizations like NATO) with legitimacy and coordinate humanitarian assistance, including refugee relief.

On economics and development, participants concentrated on the problems of globalization, both in terms of managing an evermore open world economy and in contending with growing income gaps between the world's rich and poor. They urged the United Nations to concentrate on democratization as a necessary part of economic development, while setting norms and standards for reducing global poverty. Participants suggested that managing the global economy should remain in the hands of the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions.

On sustainability, the group saw a particular challenge in getting businesses and NGOs to work closer together. The United Nations' role in convening conferences like Rio<sup>1</sup> found support, and many argued that the United Nations should play a more active role in implementing the standards established by such conferences.

On protecting human rights and dignity, participants expressed particular concern about the difficulty of reconciling human rights and human security with traditional notions of national sovereignty. They emphasized the importance of the United Nations as a standard-setter, and they urged a greater role in implementation through mechanisms like the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and through active efforts at democratization. At the same time, they recognized that many

member states would be reluctant to actively support such an agenda and underlined the need for NGOs to interact more effectively with member states and the United Nations to be more successful in this area.

Many in the group supported the notion that the United Nations should focus its efforts on four core functions: international peace and security, human rights, democratization, and humanitarian assistance.

### **Needed United Nations' Actions and Initiatives**

The changing global context of governance and the manifest problems of humanity at the turn of the millennium confront the international community with the clear need to retool and refocus the world's premier international organization. In the final sessions of the conference, participants explored needed actions and initiatives by member states and the United Nations and the manner in which these actions could be most effectively encouraged. An underlying theme was that the United Nations must fit the international community in which it exists. Reform for the sake of reform will not suffice. Agreement must exist on UN roles and relationships. While the participants identified key areas where the United Nations seemed particularly suited to play a strong role, they were all of the opinion that without a renewed international mandate, this would not be possible. Unless the world community is clear about what it wants the United Nations to do, the United Nations will be able to do very little. And unless the United States can resolve its own internal ambivalence about its relationship with the United Nations, the world body will be able to do even less.

<sup>1</sup>The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development.

The leadership question thus begins with the health of the organization itself. But internal leadership alone will not reanimate the organization. Adequate funding is also key. Direction and funding are in turn directly dependent on the members' commitment and their clear articulation of that commitment. Without an explicit mandate from its members, the United Nations will flounder. In many ways, participants saw such a mandate as the *sine qua non* of a UN leadership role equal to the challenges of global governance.

With a renewed mandate and reinvigorated organization, the United Nations would be well placed to fill a variety of roles in the next century. It will continue, as in the past, to play some role as the superego of the world's nation-states, as a global conscience, while also serving as a forum for the coordination of action, however difficult actual implementation may be. But the United Nations must also find a new leadership role among the multiplying number of other international actors in terms of multilateral organizations, among the business world, and among the evermore powerful voices of international civil society. This leadership will likely take two forms: (1) a more formal linkage of business and civil society into the myriad deliberative bodies that make up the UN system and (2) a less formal role as networker and clearinghouse through the organization of international conferences and ad hoc coordinating committees on specific problems like post-conflict reconstruction or the efforts to curb the use of child soldiers.

In examining the climate for global governance, the tasks to be met, and the specific initiatives and actions the United Nations could take to enhance its leadership role, the Adare conference touched on a wide variety of issues and

challenges to the United Nations and the global community. The deliberations pointed to a United Nations' leadership role that, in essence, revolves around identifying the interests of its various constituents and harnessing them to an overarching set of common objectives. Constituencies will change, but the ultimate purpose of global governance—stewardship for humanity and for the planet that sustains it—will not. The United Nations and its Charter stand in support of these principles, and the conference was in agreement that they remain valid and widely supported by the world's public. The challenge is to translate this support into a renewed mandate from the world's governments and the planet's other increasingly powerful global actors.

## PARTICIPANTS

### Chair

**Richard H. Stanley**, President, The Stanley Foundation

### Rapporteur

**Andrew B. Denison**, Faculty Associate, Department of Political Science, University of Bonn

### Participants

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**Graciana del Castillo**, Visiting Professor, Department of Economics, Columbia University

**Mathe Matthews Diseko**, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations

**Robert R. Fowler**, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations

**Samuel R. Insanally**, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana to the United Nations

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**Abraham Katz**, President Emeritus, United States Council for International Business

**Edward C. Luck**, Executive Director, Center for the Study of International Organization, New York University School of Law and the Woodrow Wilson School of Princeton University

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**William R. Pace**, Executive Director, World Federalist Movement and Institute for Global Policy

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Affiliations are listed for identification purposes only. Participants attended as individuals rather than as representatives of their governments or organizations.



Richard H. Stanley  
President, The Stanley Foundation



**W**elcome to the Stanley Foundation's thirty-fourth conference on the United Nations of the Next Decade. Annually since 1965, we have gathered policy professionals in an informal nonattribution environment to explore varied topics dealing with the United Nations and extending the rule of law.

This year our topic is "Global Governance: Defining the United Nations' Leadership Role." We have three goals. First, we will hone our understanding of the climate for global governance in the changing world of the new millennium. Next, on the premise that intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations, should focus their work in areas of core competency, we will explore global governance needs in various areas and seek to define optimal leadership roles for the United Nations. This will likely include assignments and partnering relationships between the United Nations and others. Finally, we will recommend actions and initiatives to help the United Nations fulfill its leadership roles.

### **Global Governance**

As we begin, a common understanding of the term *governance* will be helpful. For our

discussions here, let me suggest that we use the definition developed by the Commission on Global Governance.

Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceived to be in their interest.

This definition is broad, but it accurately recognizes the multiplicity of participants and the complexity of the interactions involved.

Global governance includes traditional governments and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). It includes economic and market entities such as multinational corporations, commercial and trade activity, and the global capital market. It includes nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and citizen movements, which have come to be called civil society. It includes global mass media and communication. All of these interact to form the intricate tapestry of global governance.

This week we are primarily interested in discerning the optimum leadership role for the United Nations amidst the many threads of this tapestry. But to do this, we must understand the nature of the tapestry and the present and future climate for global governance.

### **The Climate for Global Governance**

The global governance climate has changed greatly since the United Nations was established. The United Nations was constructed on a base of national sovereignty. It assumed an alliance of the powerful—the winning allies of World War II. That alliance proved illusory and, particularly since the end of the Cold War ten years ago, the sovereign power and authority of the nation-state has been eroding.

The geopolitical system is increasingly tempered and moderated by a burgeoning globalization of information, communication, markets, finance, networking, and business activity. Widespread democratization focuses attention on the needs of people rather than states. New nonstate actors abound, including a civil society which is both robust and irreverent and business enterprises motivated by market and profit. Traditional national power and sovereignty are increasingly complemented by market forces and the networking of civil society. Command and control hierarchies are less and less effective, and they are being supplanted by management systems that foster involvement and empowerment.

These continuing changes mean that global governance is not the exclusive domain of national governments and IGOs. That domain remains essential, because it is only in it that laws can be enacted and enforced. It is only in it that taxes and regulations can be imposed. Yet, the market domain and the information and networking domain are also essential parts. Each domain complements and moderates the others. The Report of the Commission on Global Governance captured this new paradigm as follows:

Effective global decision making thus needs to build upon and influence decisions taken locally, nationally, and regionally, and to draw on the skills and resources of a diversity of people and institutions at many levels. It must build partnerships—networks of institutions and processes—that enable global actors to pool information, knowledge, and capacities and to develop joint policies and practices on issues of common concern.

In some cases, governance will rely primarily on markets and market instruments, perhaps with some institutional oversight. It may depend heavily on the coordinated energies of civil organizations and state agencies. The relevance and roles of regulation, legal enforcement, and centralized decision making will vary. In appropriate cases, there will be scope for principles such as subsidiarity, in which decisions are taken as close as possible to the level at which they can be effectively implemented.

As the commission report states, global governance “...will strive to subject the rule of arbitrary power—economic, political, or military—to the rule of law within global society.”

Before leaving this subject, let me offer five observations and concerns. First, a primary driving force toward this new climate is the globalization of information, communications, values, ideas, norms, and knowledge. Technology is making access to information and knowledge much more widely available than ever before. We are rapidly moving from a situation where only a few could disseminate information to the many, making it possible to

control information flow, to a situation where nearly everyone can communicate to and with the many. Global interconnectedness is exploding.

Second, information and knowledge are vital “soft” resources which will, in the long run, be more important than traditional “hard” resources of land, capital, raw materials, etc. While traditional resources are generally “zero-sum” in nature (e.g., if one gains, another loses), there is growing evidence that “soft” resources can produce “positive sum” outcomes that benefit the many. This should encourage collaboration and cooperation.

In their 1999 publication, *The Emergence of Noopolitik*, John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt of the National Defense Research Institute use the term *noopolitik* to describe a new form of statecraft which they argue will come to be associated with the rising importance of the informational realm and the need for wise information strategies. They suggest:

*Noopolitik* is foreign-policy behavior for the information age that emphasizes the primacy of ideas, values, norms, laws, and ethics—it would work through “soft power” rather than “hard power.” *Noopolitik* is guided more by a conviction that right makes for might, than by the obverse. Both state and nonstate actors may be guided by *noopolitik*; but rather than being state-centric, its strength may likely stem from enabling state and nonstate actors to work jointly. The driving motivation of *noopolitik* cannot be national interests defined in statist terms. National interests will still play a role, but they may be defined more in society-wide than

state-centric terms and be fused with broader, even global, interests in enhancing the transnationally networked “fabric” in which the players are embedded. While *realpolitik* tends to empower states, *noopolitik* will likely empower networks of state and non-state actors. *Realpolitik* pits one state against another, but *noopolitik* encourages states to cooperate in coalitions and other mutual frameworks.

Third, effective leadership in this new climate requires investment in relationships and institutions of networking and collaboration. These must be durable and resilient—built over time. They require patterns of understanding and trust. They are a necessary part of the tapestry of cooperation and governance. For governments, this means support of and investment in multilateralism and robust multilateral institutions.

Fourth, those who fail to recognize and act in accordance with this new governance paradigm endanger their abilities to lead and participate effectively. Excessive preoccupation with national or organizational sovereignty, unilateralism, and isolationism are unlikely to be successful strategies for the future.

Finally, a discussion of the global governance climate would be incomplete without mention of the “elephant” that is in the tent. The United States is conflicted about its role in the world. It is in tension between a unilateral and a more collaborative multilateral posture. While it professes cooperation, it too often seeks to control the terms of that cooperation. As of today, June 14, the United States is only 200 days away from losing its vote in the UN General Assembly due to nonpayment of dues. Another element of the governance climate is how the



United Nations' host country will treat it in the twenty-first century.

This, then, is the global governance climate for the future. Our challenge this week is to understand it and to define those areas in which the United Nations can most effectively play a leadership role. To do this, we will explore several functional areas including: peace and security, commerce and economics, poverty and development, sustainability, and promotion and protection of human dignity.

### **Peace and Security**

Peace and security are central purposes—perhaps the primary motivation—for establishing the United Nations. The United Nations has had significant successes in peacemaking, in traditional peacekeeping where there has been a negotiated peace to keep, and in humanitarian assistance.

However, the nature of conflict has shifted from classic international wars of aggression to a pattern of intransigent intrastate civil wars and ethnic conflicts. The world is grappling with whether, how, and when to intervene in this type of conflict. The Article 2 Charter limitation on intervention in matters within the “domestic jurisdiction” of a nation is being weakened by growing support for international intervention in cases of war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity, and egregious humanitarian suffering. The principle of individual accountability for war crimes, initiated at the Nuremberg trials, is gradually being affirmed with establishment of war crimes tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda; the negotiation of the standing International Criminal Court; and most recently, the indictment of Slobodan Milosovic, the first such action against a sitting head of state.

Yet, there is no reliable system of international security today. Too often, inconsistent standards are applied. Some situations are ignored while others receive attention. Too often, decisions have been reactive and late. Too often, decisions made with good intentions have failed because of muddled mandates and grossly inadequate resource commitment. Too often, the supposed alliance of the powerful has turned into a coalition of the willing, sometimes with and sometimes without UN endorsement. Too often, might makes right and principles of international law are ignored.

Another central reason for creating the United Nations was arms control and disarmament. Yet, the world is much more heavily armed today than it was at the close of World War II. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains a major concern. Conventional weapons loom large in international commerce and are distressingly abundant in areas of conflict. Military expenditures divert needed resources from alleviation of poverty, development, and sustainability.

How should the world handle issues of peace and security? How can the growing body of international law and conventions be suitably enforced with fairness and justice? What should we learn from the current Kosovo experience? How can arms control and disarmament progress be promoted? How can the international community make peace and security decisions more wisely? How can these decisions be enforced more effectively? What is the appropriate role for the United Nations? for regional organizations? for others?

### **Commerce and Economics**

In his address to the closing meeting of the Fifty-First Session, UN General Assembly

President Razali Ismail observed that “...the United Nations seems relegated to dealing only with the ‘soft’ issues and not the ‘hard’ issues of economics.” This seems to be an accurate assessment.

The Bretton Woods institutions are specialized agencies of the United Nations. But, throughout their history, they have operated quite independently and have encouraged the United Nations to concentrate on “social” aspects of development. In 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) was established independent of the United Nations, supplanting the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. It was given significant authority to deal with international trade issues. The Group of Seven/Eight and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have significant roles in coordinating fiscal and monetary policies of the major industrialized nations. The European Union imposes such policies on its members.

Within the United Nations, attention to commerce and economics is focused in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the Secretariat. These have been uneasy about their marginal role. In the 1970s there was significant debate in the General Assembly about establishing a “New International Economic Order.” ECOSOC has made periodic efforts to raise its profile. Last fall, Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed that the United Nations should have a “seat at the table” when a new global “financial architecture” (to deal with the Asian financial turmoil) was developed so the poor and the dispossessed would be represented.

Civil society is increasingly active on commerce and economic policy issues. As one example, last year’s NGO response to the WTO’s

proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment resulted in reassessment of the proposal, the outcome of which is not yet clear.

Continuing economic globalization raises questions about the need for new roles and activities at the global level. As transnational mergers and consolidations occur, will new measures be needed to temper excesses of cartels and monopoly? Will free-market capitalism press enterprises toward transparent accounting systems, and push governments toward eliminating barriers to foreign ownership and abandoning mercantilism? Will more work be needed on issues like safety nets, working conditions, and environmental standards?

What should be the nature of UN involvement in commerce and economics? What is the optimal interaction between governments, other IGOs, enterprises, and civil society? What roles are appropriate? Should changes be made?

### **Poverty and Development**

Poverty is a significant cause of conflict. Sustainable development programs—including technical assistance, loans, and development grants—are intended to alleviate poverty, disease, hunger, illiteracy, and environmental degradation.

This is a daunting challenge. The World Bank is the central IGO in this area. It and the various regional development banks provide technical assistance and finance significant development activity. The Global Environmental Facility, established in 1991, adds capability to deal with environmental issues and opportunities. The United Nations Development Programme leads UN development work. Various UN specialized agencies provide significant technical and other assistance. Bilateral assistance also

supports development. Much development work is delivered through contract arrangements with NGOs and enterprises, who become the direct service providers.

The UN world conferences of the 1990s helped focus attention on and chart strategies for development for the next century. Strategy 21, published in 1996 by the Development Assistance Committee of OECD, focused on six key goals: reduce by half the proportion of people in extreme poverty by 2015; achieve universal primary education in all countries by 2015; eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005; reduce the mortality rates for infants and children under five by two-thirds and the mortality rates for mothers by three-fourths by 2015; provide access to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate age by 2015; and implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005 to ensure that the current loss of environmental resources is reversed globally and nationally by 2015.

World Development Indicators show great disparities in development progress. In the *1998 World Development Indicators*, World Bank Group President James D. Wolfensohn stated that the countries that have succeeded in development "...have done so by sustaining economic growth, investing in their people, and implementing the right policies. But as the recent difficulties in East Asia warn, good and open governance that builds a social consensus is equally important." The importance of economic growth is underscored by the recent World Bank estimate that the Asian financial crisis has pushed 200 million people into poverty.

Private-sector direct foreign investment in developing countries has grown rapidly, and is

now several times the total development investment through intergovernmental programs. This private direct foreign investment seeks areas of economic opportunity which may or may not be areas of development need. While it contributes to per capita income growth in developing countries, it does not replace the need for targeted intergovernmental development assistance.

Through NGOs, civil society is increasingly vocal on development and fiscal policies. Structural adjustment practices have been heavily criticized for not adequately considering human issues. The Jubilee 2000 proposals for forgiveness of poorest nations' debts are encouraging reevaluation of development policies.

What should be the UN role in promoting development and alleviating poverty? What are appropriate roles for national governments, the private sector, civil society, and other IGOs? Should the United Nations undertake roles beyond the social aspects of development?

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability includes survival issues that will determine whether this generation can continue to meet its life needs while preserving the ability of future generations to do so as well. For human life on this planet to be sustainable, the world's environment must be adequately maintained and protected, the earth's natural resources must be preserved and reused so that resource depletion does not inhibit survival, unsustainable consumption patterns must be addressed, and world population must be stabilized.

The UN world conferences and related initiatives have focused attention on environment, population, resource needs, and related social

issues. Agenda 21, an ambitious program for environment and development includes national plans responsive to identified needs. Environmental concerns have been incorporated into treaties that include national commitments on pollution, emissions, and natural resources. The UN Population Fund has done excellent work on population for many years.

The biggest challenges in this area are commitment and resources. Sustainability requires acting now to preserve the future. The human species is not very good at this. We are far better at responding to the immediate. A crisis that may be a generation away receives scant attention.

What is the appropriate role for the United Nations on sustainability? How can commitment and resources be mobilized? How can treaty commitments be coordinated and monitored? What should be the roles of other organizations?

### **Promote and Protect Human Dignity**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been a major force in promoting and protecting human dignity. Since it was written, significant strides have been made in establishing respect for human rights. There is growing acceptance that national governments cannot legitimately use claims of sovereignty as a defense against gross violations of human rights. Yet, continuing work is needed.

NGOs have played a significant role in monitoring and calling attention to human rights violations. The greatest progress has been made in the so-called first generation—civil and political—rights. Work continues on social, economic, and cultural—second generation—rights. The International Labor Organization

continues its work of many years on labor and employment standards. Conventions have been developed on such issues as racial discrimination, torture, genocide, the rights of the child, and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The United Nations has established special representatives in areas of current concern, such as children and armed conflict and violence against women.

The United Nations has also had a major role in humanitarian and refugee work. Various high commissioners and special representatives have carried responsibilities of monitoring, calling attention to difficulties, and mobilizing and coordinating relief and humanitarian efforts. Again, resource availability is often a limitation. As one recent example, the relief resources available for Kosovo refugees have been inadequate.

As noted earlier, the two special war crimes tribunals and the new International Criminal Court contribute to protection of human dignity against war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

How do we assure continuing progress in the promotion and protection of human dignity? What should be the role of the United Nations? How does this intersect with national prerogatives? How should NGOs be involved? What about treaty regimes and other IGOs?

### **Role of the United Nations**

The United Nations is at a critical juncture. Within and around it there is unease and too little sense of direction. There is fear that the organization is being circumscribed and that it may be suffering creeping irrelevance.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan is encouraging efforts to overcome these difficulties. He has called for a Millennium Assembly next year to focus the United Nations for the next century. He is seeking “workable objectives and institutional means for the United Nations to meet the challenges of human solidarity in the years ahead.”

With universal membership, the United Nations is well postured as a convener, as a facilitator of global standard-setting, and as a global meeting place. These are significant strengths in the new climate for global governance, where open, inclusive, and participatory collaboration among public and private entities must be the pattern. The United Nations must become a narrower and deeper organization, working in its areas of comparative advantage. The challenge is to define roles and relationships and to develop an optimal division of labor together with partnerships among traditional government and intergovernmental organizations, economic and market entities, civil society, and global mass media and communications.

Well done, this interactive collaboration will succeed in weaving the rich tapestry of global governance that is needed in this era of interconnectedness. It will promote peace, security, freedom, and justice for this and future generations. I look forward to our discussions.



## Introduction

**T**he United Nations' leadership role in the emerging system of global governance remains undefined and problematic. A multiplicity of new international actors—states, multilateral institutions, businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—complicate the search for a fitting role for the United Nations in a new era of globalization. Global governance—humanity's struggle to bring some sort of order to an evermore interdependent, but still very chaotic world—seems impossible without an active role by the world's premier international organization. Yet the nature of such a UN role and the degree to which it will comprise elements of leadership—vision wedded to the ability to coordinate a coalition of interests—are by no means clear.

In recognition of this, the Stanley Foundation convened its thirty-fourth annual conference of the United Nations of the Next Decade in Adare, Ireland, bringing together a diverse group of participants, each having many years of concrete experience, observation, and substantial knowledge of the United Nations and international affairs. Conference objectives were ambitious. Participants were asked, first, to sketch out the emerging climate for global governance; second, to turn their attention to the tasks of global governance and where the United Nations might exercise leadership; and third, to draw a number of conclusions about the actions and initiatives that must be taken to help the United Nations fulfill its leadership roles. These three areas make up the body of the conference report below.

It should, at the outset, also be said that the challenge posed to the United Nations by the United States was an underlying theme of the entire conference. Even as the world changes around it, the relationship between “the elephant in the tent” and the “global circus” comprises a crucial aspect of any thinking about the United Nations' leadership role. See “The Elephant in the Tent” (pp. 16-17) for an examination of the specific nature of this challenge.

## The Current and Future Climate for Global Governance

Profound upheaval in the international system confronts the United Nations with a radically new operating environment. Ramifications of the Cold War's end continue to reverberate around the world. A new dispensation of power and influence has not yet taken hold. At the same time, the information revolution is transmuting the pattern of human interaction across the planet—economically, but also, and perhaps even more dramatically, politically, and culturally. International organizations—among which the United Nations enjoys pride of place for its universality and, perhaps, its moral authority—have been tossed asunder by this tide of transformation. Seeking to channel change into constructive directions, the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) continually see their ability to foster order among the chaos threatened by their inability to adapt fast enough to have any influence at all.

Technology and economic gain may be the driving forces of globalization, but the spread of democracy and its younger sister, civil society,

have created the political climate for global governance. "Governance," not "government," it should be noted, in recognition that the diffusion of power within and among states and other actors makes centralized control increasingly unwieldy. "Governance" also because the sovereignty of nation-states, while changing, is by no means at an end. What is clear is that globalization has made governance more complex, at the national as well as the international level. The dramatic proliferation of political actors brings with it the need for new patterns of political leadership and coalition-building.

Thus the challenges confronting the United Nations as it enters the next millennium are manifold and fast changing. Changing too are the United Nations' possibilities for influencing and coordinating in this new global environment. Participants attending the Adare conference sought to identify the climate in which the United Nations operates as a first step toward identifying the role of the United Nations in the emerging system of global governance. They sought to define the various facets of globalization and international interdependence, and then examined the new (and enduring) challenges to multilateralism and international cooperation. They looked more specifically at how global business, international civil society, and the nation-state are shaping and being

shaped by globalization. And they concluded with an examination of the emerging roles and relationships of international organizations, both global and regional, recognizing that governmental and intergovernmental institutions often have less incentive to adapt than either businesses or NGOs.

### Globalization and Interdependence

Globalization drew mixed reviews from the participants. They portrayed it as both an opportunity and a challenge. They saw globalization proceeding at breakneck speed in the economic sphere, while the political, or at least institutional, sphere lagged behind. One participant even noted that fragmentation—in the guise of regionalization and local empowerment and, more negatively, ethnic nationalism—had an equally powerful influence on global events. Some spoke of globalization being akin to El Niño—falsely blamed for everything—while others argued that globalization was indeed particularly harsh on weak and underdeveloped nation-states, a point also made in the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) 1999 Human Development Report, published shortly after the conference. While relative emphasis varied, in the end there was consensus that globalization necessitated not only a "level playing field, but also some attention to condition of the players." The group largely saw global governance—both in terms of the playing field and the players—as lagging behind globalization, and there was broad consensus that the United Nations should have a significant, but as yet undefined, role in "bridging the gap."

**...globalization has made governance more complex, at the national as well as the international level.**



*The rapporteur prepared this report following the conference. It contains his interpretation of the proceedings and is not merely a descriptive, chronological account. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.*

Rapporteur Andrew B. Denison.

### Challenges to Multilateralism

Participants then turned attention to international cooperation and international organizations, identifying challenges from a variety of directions. In regard to the UN system, a number of participants saw the New York-based organization facing one of its gravest crises. At the same time, numerous participants

emphasized that “organizations can only be as strong as their members allow.” In this context, many criticized the short-term preoccupations of the larger states, with their preference for unilateralism and coalitions-of-the-willing. Here, the United States, heavily indebted to United Nations, drew withering fire as the deadbeat dad of the international system.

#### The Elephant in the Tent: The United States and the United Nations

The singular importance of the United States to the development of global governance and to the role of the United Nations is uncontested. The overwhelming influence of the United States results from the current distribution of power in the international system and from the unique historical role of the United States in pushing for the establishment of the organization and in shaping the Charter principles upon which it is based. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of US decisions on the United Nations, participants at the Adare conference were particularly critical of the United States for undermining the capacity of the United Nations to fulfill its true potential. The group saw the arrears problem as the most glaring confirmation of US hostility toward the United Nations, but many argued that the US \$1.6 billion debt to the United Nations (over half of the \$2.9 billion owed by all member states) was a symptom of a larger problem.

Some defined this problem as simple arrogance: “The United States thinks that because it stands taller, it can see further and should thus control any organization it belongs to.” Others pointed to a deep-seated distrust of government in the United States, whether at the national or the international level. In the end, the group came to the conclusion that it was a fundamental ambivalence toward multilateralism in general, and the United Nations

in particular, that plagued US relations with the United Nations.

While public opinion polls have consistently shown strong US support for the United Nations, this support, as one participant observed, “is a mile wide and an inch deep.” As such, it is easy for strong-willed interest groups and single-issue politicians in Congress to commandeer US policy in support of their crusade against the United Nations or in favor of unrelated issues.

While the Clinton administration is favorably disposed toward the New York institution, most participants saw the administration as not willing to invest much political capital in support of the United Nations. Other foreign policy objectives have higher priority. At the same time, the administration finds itself frequently turning to the United Nations to back its policies, whether in Iraq or the former Yugoslavia.

Criticism of US behavior toward the United Nations was combined with the argument that the United States could gain much from an investment of money and vision in the organization. One participant even spoke of the possibility of the United Nations becoming the United States’ “pearl,” if only the commitment were there. More negatively, there was also the warning that if Washington did not use its ascendancy to strengthen the United Nations now, it could be in trouble when other powers rise. Agreeing that the US problem was less hostility toward the United Nations than indecision and ambivalence about



There was widespread agreement that without funding, international organizations—like any form of government—would come to naught. There was, however, little or no support for adding another layer of government—with powers to tax and intrude—that could as easily erode as it could enhance individual liberties. All agreed that UN leadership was very much

a function of attitudes within nation-states toward international organizations.

The Kosovo crisis provided a timely example of how difficult it is for international institutions to reconcile effectiveness and legitimacy. While some were critical of NATO for not formally seeking UN Security Council approval of

the organization, the group underlined the importance of the United States engaging in a serious debate over what it really wants the United Nations to do.

More immediately, the United States needs to resolve the arrears problem if any progress is to be made on improving the US-UN relationship. By the same token, this is required before the United Nations can find a more solid footing in any emerging system of global governance. In this context, a brief, sharp debate ensued as to whether the US Congress had the legal authority to abrogate its commitments originally made under the UN Participation Act. Specifically, could the United States unilaterally insist on lowering its obligations to the United Nations from 31 percent of peacekeeping costs to 25 percent and from 25 percent of the general budget to 20 percent? This is one of the conditions of the so-called Helms-Biden package designed to pay US arrears in turn for the United Nations meeting specific US demands on reform.

While the exact legal ramifications of the US position were not settled, nearly all participants agreed that the United States was paying a high political price for its position. Not only was the US position undermining its credibility in the United Nations, participants were in broad agreement that the US stand is also beginning to damage relations with Washington's closest allies. In this context, another participant argued that US allies should do more to pressure the United States to pay up—instead of hiding behind the US obstructionist stance with their own inaction.

Should the United States remain in arrears to the United Nations through the end of 1999, the group saw it quite likely that the General Assembly would deny the United States voting rights in the body. A number of participants warned that even if Helms-Biden passed, its conditions and its significantly lower estimate of the amount actually owed might still lead the General Assembly to deny the United States voting rights. While some in the group agreed that such a sanction would be an appropriate response to US behavior, others feared that might cause an anti-UN backlash in the United States, thus further damaging US-UN relations. As one participant noted, "whether UN advocates like it or not, the UN needs the US more than the US needs the UN." It was this reality that left the group so unsettled about the future of the United Nations.

Indeed, there were many who argued that once the arrears issue was settled, it would be important to reduce UN dependence on the United States, at least in the financial area, by reforming the assessment process to spread the burden more evenly. One participant even argued that all veto-wielding members of the Security Council should pay the same amount. In the end, there was consensus that no matter how much the United States paid, it would still wield disproportionate influence over the organization. Without US support, there would be very little in the way of UN leadership.

—Andrew B. Denison

operation Allied Force, others argued that a veto from Russia or China would have harmed the organization more. All were impressed by NATO public relations, “able to spin every defeat into a victory, while the UN spins every victory into a defeat.”

### **The Global Triad: Business, Civil Society, and the Nation-State**

Participants noted that international business and civil society are changing the equation of global influence—often at the expense of the nation-state. They emphasized that business globalization must be seen not only in terms of production and markets but also in terms of political power. The challenge is thus to harness the interest of business to the task of global governance—with all agreeing that good business requires good government and stability.

The proliferation of NGOs, both national and international, has also had a profound effect on the climate for global governance and the opportunities for UN leadership. By and large,

the group saw the emergence of an international civil society as a positive development. There was even talk of a “new diplomacy” where citizens’ groups play a dominant role in achieving international agreement on such things as the Land Mine Convention or the International Criminal Court. At the same time, participants did not welcome all aspects of the new inter-

national civil society, particularly on the point of democratic accountability. One warned of a

new “transnational parochialism,” with NGOs “acting globally, but thinking locally.” Indeed, many NGOs oppose moving toward greater global governance.

So do many nation-states, which are often less than enthusiastic about erosion of their sovereignty and transferring any of it to global institutions. Participants agreed that while the United Nations is founded on the principle of the “sovereign equality of all its members” (Art. 2.1), the nature of sovereignty is changing: national governments must increasingly share power with both strengthened international institutions and local and regional governments seeking greater autonomy. At the same time, one participant also argued that it would be “dangerous to view nation-states as venal and international organizations as noble.” The world, he maintained, remains organized around nation-states and there can be no global governance without recognizing this fact.

### **The Proliferation of International Institutions**

The tasks of international organizations have not always been made easier by their growing numbers. Not infrequently, it is competition, not cooperation, that characterizes their interaction. While flexible coordination of effort has grown in importance, many international organizations remain inflexibly mired in the past. Participants noted that the capacity for such organizations to change lags far behind that of both international business and NGOs. The United Nations, too, is having a difficult time defining its proper relationship with other organizations. Participants warned of redundancy and inefficiency among the plethora of international governmental organizations (IGOs), but they also underlined that a wider variety of organizations provided valuable flexibility in a fast-paced world. Yet many argued

**The United Nations is having a difficult time defining its proper relationship with other organizations.**

PHOTO BY KEITH PORTER



The International Criminal Court treaty conference was marked by a high level of NGO involvement. The NGOs responsible for this sign outside the conference site favored the court's creation.

that the challenge of coordinating the various institutions should not be overlooked, for this was very much a question of “who was coordinating whom.” Even within the United Nations’ family, there is much parochialism and bickering.

The relative role of regional and global institutions was also a source of ambivalence, with many pointing to the advantages of subsidiarity and encouraging regional solutions to regional problems. Others, however, argued that regional organizations were often overwhelmed by such problems, particularly in Africa.

On economics and trade, the Bretton Woods institutions, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as the World Trade Organization (WTO), play a key role in managing the global economy. Most participants thought the United Nations, by contrast, can be most effective as an honest critic and

“gadfly,” reminding other IGOs of particular norms and standards.

The group observed that intergovernmental organizations are generally most effective in establishing norms and standards—in the words of one participant, “arm’s length governance.” On actual implementation, by contrast, many shortcomings remain. The strengths of the United Nations lie in its universality and its credibility as a representative of the “international community,” its role in standard-setting, the forum it provides for discussion. These are, however, also its weaknesses, in that consensus among its members is difficult to achieve, large gaps persist between standards set and standards implemented, and endless debate erodes credibility. Several participants also

saw the proliferation of UN Security Council resolutions in recent years (683 from 1945 to 1990, 668 from 1990 to 1999) as a disturbing symptom of discussion at the expense of action.

In sum, participants defined a profoundly changed climate for global governance at the end of the twentieth century, characterized by globalization and a new equation of influence in the triad of governments and intergovernmental institutions, international business, and an emerging civil society. The group was also in agreement that a deep resistance to change among international institutions contrasts markedly with the agility of most international business and NGOs.

**Participants defined a profoundly changed climate for global governance at the end of the twentieth century....**

## The Tasks of Global Governance and the UN Role

The tasks of global governance—the challenges that bring the international community together to forge common solutions—have grown more varied and complex in this age of globalization. While problems of war and peace remain front and center, their nature has come to be seen as more diverse. Security, whether national or human, has taken on a broader connotation. The growing gap between the world's rich and poor, the ongoing destruction of the environment, and the continuing violation of human rights all pose moral challenges in and of themselves, but they are also now very much linked to international peace and security. The

**“...multilateralism can be the sister of isolationism if toothless institutions are tasked with keeping the peace.”**

importance of security, human dignity, and environmental protection do not, however, displace the evermore-global pursuit of material well-being—the desire to make a buck and live the good life. Ironically, it seems that more mundane economic motives have done as much for global governance as the higher values of peace and justice. Many confer-

ence participants saw the WTO, as well as the IMF and the World Bank, as leading the way when it comes to pooling national sovereignty and funding global development.

In the economic sphere, as in other functional areas and regions, many specialized institutions have developed to address specific problems. Yet the United Nations, with its universal membership and overarching ambitions, has sought a role across the entire spectrum of

global challenges—sometimes effectively and sometimes not. The Adare conference examined various functional areas including peace and security, commerce and economics, poverty and development, sustainability, and human dignity. In each, participants sought to identify which problems were of particular priority, what role the United Nations should have, and what its relationship to other organizations and actors should be.

### International Peace and Security

Article 1 of the UN Charter begins by defining the organization's purpose: “to maintain international peace and security.” It was thus appropriate that the participants began their discussion of the tasks of global governance by looking at issues of war and peace. In this context, discussion focused on the role of the Security Council, which the Charter gives “primary” (but not exclusive) responsibility for the “maintenance of international peace and security” (Art. 24).

Despite this Charter tenet, problems of legitimacy, effectiveness, and selectivity undermine the Security Council's credibility. In terms of Security Council legitimacy, one participant warned “against assumption that international peace and security can be legislated.” On effectiveness, another observed: “multilateralism can be the sister of isolationism if toothless institutions are tasked with keeping the peace.” Regarding selectivity, there was agreement that cooperation in the Security Council remains highly political and thus focused on specific crises at the expense of others. In sum, without unanimity among the Permanent Five (veto-wielding) members, the Security Council can do little.

With these limitations in mind, many agreed that the Security Council should focus on

giving legitimacy to the collective use of force and not seek to employ forces directly. While some saw the long-term advantages of a UN rapid deployment force, many thought this too much for the moment. Nevertheless, one participant argued that subcontracting enforcement to regional organizations like NATO would cause the “tail to whack [sic] the dog.” Another noted that even with nineteen standby agreements earmarking national forces for UN use, the United Nations was not able to put together a military operation to prevent the Rwanda genocide. The general conclusion was that the UN culture was uncomfortable with enforcement, whether military or through economic sanctions (the efficacy of sanctions being hotly debated within the group). As such, the United Nations should focus less on Chapter VII (“Action With Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression”) than on Chapter VI (“Pacific Settlement of Disputes”), particularly with regard to peacekeeping operations.

Even on peacekeeping, one participant argued, members often use it as a “fig leaf for their own inaction, and then a scapegoat when things go wrong.” In this context, another argued that with civil wars the most common form of armed conflict, the United Nations has become more involved in post-conflict rebuilding within states. Cambodia provided many valuable lessons on how the United Nations can play a vital role in democratization, particularly in regard to institution-building and the organization and monitoring of elections. The United Nations is now similarly challenged in Kosovo, where it is moving from humanitarian assistance (primarily organized by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees) to support for democratization. In this context, many argued that intervention in domestic affairs (like Kosovo) remained uncharted territory and that it

was better to proceed on a case-by-case basis than to develop a general set of guidelines. As far as conflict prevention, the group generally agreed that the problem was less a lack of early warning than a lack of the political will to respond before a crisis hit the front pages. While many complained that much more was spent on military force than conflict prevention, others argued that the deterrent value of military force was in itself a form of prevention.

**Many criticized the international community's tendency to toss a crisis into the hands of the United Nations....**

As such, the group acknowledged that the legitimacy bestowed by the United Nations on the use of force was valuable, but dependent on all too infrequent consensus in the Security Council. On peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction, the United Nations was seen to have much more potential, particularly in the area of democratization and humanitarian assistance, but only if it could organize the financial wherewithal to actually have an impact. Many criticized the international community's tendency to toss a crisis into the hands of the United Nations, and then refuse to provide the money or the peacekeepers to do the job.

### **Trade and Investment; Poverty and Development**

Conference participants chose to address trade and investment at the same time as poverty and development, arguing that the economies of the rich world and the poor world were inextricably linked. Many of the conference participants also acknowledged that one of the world's most pressing long-term problems was

that only 20 percent of the world's people living in the highest income countries has 86 percent of the total gross domestic product (GDP).

As such, the "level playing field" of the sort sought by the WTO must be complemented by efforts to "improve the condition of the players." Many were critical that Official Development Assistance (ODA) was no where near the 0.7 percent of GDP standard set by the United Nations, but others argued that ODA has often been overrated. Consensus existed that ODA must become more targeted, and that the United Nations should lead an effort to focus on education and information access. The United Nations should also seek to include the private sector in this effort, since private direct foreign investment greatly exceeds ODA.

More generally, the United Nations should continue to remind the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO that an open global economy can only prosper if development and poverty are also addressed. Indeed, one participant noted that the United Nations had succeeded in moving the IMF to enlarge its focus beyond growth to include equity and income distribution. The United Nations should not, however, seek to become a full and formal participant in those organizations. And, argued another participant, the United Nations should be careful about getting caught up in "the anti-growth, anti-market trap." Much UN economic analysis, he argued, is regrettably of this tenor. There was, however, widespread agreement that the UN Conference on Trade and Development did



*The Kosovo crisis is an example of how difficult it is for international institutions to reconcile effectiveness and legitimacy.*

outstanding analysis on international flows of direct foreign investment.

The United Nations' leadership role in alleviating poverty and underdevelopment found widespread support, though there was also recognition that this was an area of stiff competition among various international organizations. Participants pointed to the United Nations' leading role in setting certain standards, such as 0.7 percent of GDP in foreign aid and that bodies like the UNDP are important interlocutors for poor countries. The UNDP has also been effective in teaching small business skills, empowering women, and engaging in other grassroots activities. While some participants hoped the United Nations could move beyond norm-setting to actually implementing its various agendas, others felt this might create false expectations. Instead, they felt the United Nations should become more agile and effective in the areas where it is already undertaking development assistance, including emergency humanitarian assistance. At the same time, others argued that with bad government increasingly identified as a main source of underdevelopment, a greater UN role in setting standards for good government was needed. The United Nations, they maintained, should have a leading role in pressuring for the development of democracy.

### **Sustainability**

On environmental sustainability, the group underlined the importance of the United Nations as a standard-setter, but many also argued for a more active role in bringing about multilateral environmental agreements with binding commitments. The United Nations' role as convenor of treaty conferences, such as the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) in Rio, found

broad support. The resulting Agenda 21 and Commission on Sustainable Development, many felt, were good examples of international norm-setting based on broad consensus—though some mechanism for reviewing compliance was needed. Such conferences also provide a useful meeting point for businesses and NGOs, even if much bad air remains between the two. Also, one participant underlined the importance of linking the environmental and trade agendas more closely—more effectively than is now being done.

**“What is the purpose of global governance if not human dignity?”**

While a number of participants saw an important role for the UN Environmental Programme in helping Third World environmental groups organize, others noted the troubles the Nairobi-based organization was having with corruption and its overemphasis on big projects.

### **Promotion and Protection of Human Dignity**

Human rights, human dignity, and now human security have been an important and central aspect of the United Nations since its founding, but particularly after the adoption of the “revolutionary” Declaration on Human Rights in 1948. “What is the purpose of global governance if not human dignity,” asked one of the participants. Yet the United Nations has had a difficult time with this issue, for promotion of human rights often clashes with the sovereign rights of governments. This difficulty reflects the fact, argued another participant, that the United Nations is the “last bastion of national sovereignty.” While the United Nations has long had a role in raising consciousness on this issue—whether in the area of women's rights,

children's rights, or those of ethnic minorities—it has most often done so on general terms. Implementing or protecting rights in specific countries often has been beyond its bailiwick, not least because of Article 2.7 of the Charter, which prohibits the United Nations from intervening in matters of “domestic jurisdiction.” Addressing human rights indirectly through the promotion of democratic institution-building and the organization of elections has been more successful.

Nevertheless, the growing influence of global public opinion and the increasing activism of international NGOs on this issue have created a new balance of power. The establishment of a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 1992, the war crimes tribunals, and negotiations of the International Criminal Court attest to this. Nevertheless, as participants observed, UN funding and membership enthusiasm for progress in this area remains limited. When it comes to implementation, most felt NGOs would continue to be at the forefront of new initiatives, with the United Nations tagging along behind.

**Much deadwood  
hinders the  
organization's  
flexibility.**

In discussing the various tasks of global governance, the participants largely agreed that the United Nations should focus on what it does best. As such, they identified four specific core areas, where the United Nations' strength lies in both standard-setting and in some modicum of implementation: international peace and security, democratization, human rights, and humanitarian assistance.



*The United Nations has longed played a leadership role in alleviating poverty and underdevelopment. This is now an area of stiff competition among various international organizations.*

### **Needed United Nations' Actions and Initiatives**

The changing global context of governance and the manifest problems of humanity at the turn of the millennium confront the international community with the clear need to retool and refocus the world's premier international organization. In the final sessions of the conference, participants explored needed actions and initiatives by the member states and the United Nations and the manner in which these actions could be most effectively encouraged. An underlying theme was that the United Nations must better fit the international community in which it exists. Reform for the sake of reform will not suffice. Agreement must exist on UN roles and relationships. While the participants identified key areas where the United Nations seemed particularly suited to play a strong role, they were all of the opinion that without a renewed international mandate, this would not



be possible. Unless the world community is clear about what it wants the United Nations to do, the United Nations will be able to do very little. And, unless the United States can resolve its own internal ambivalence about its relationship to the United Nations, the world body will be able to do even less.

The leadership question thus begins with the health of the organization itself. It must be taken seriously as an effective, well-functioning tool of international diplomacy if it is going to have any role in coordinating the myriad of organizations and actors that have taken up the challenge of global governance. One essential factor for the health of the organization is internal leadership; that is, getting all of the disparate members of the UN family to stand in support of a common purpose as articulated by the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the secretary-general. This, in itself, will be no easy task. Much deadwood hinders the organization's flexibility. Many participants suggested that its overage staff (averaging 49) are not up to the challenges of globalization. Moreover, strong leadership is automatically suspect to many, if not all, of the organization's 185 members.

Regardless, internal leadership alone will not reanimate the organization. Adequate funding is also key. All the noble intentions in the world can only go so far without money—which some members still refuse to provide. This occurs even though the United Nations' budget (\$2.6 billion in 1997) is a bit more than that of the US state of West Virginia (\$2.4 billion in 1997). Direction and funding are in turn directly dependent on the members' commitment and their clear articulation of that commitment. Without an explicit mandate from its members, the United Nations will flounder. In many

ways, participants saw such a mandate as the *sine qua non* of a UN leadership role equal to the challenges of global governance.

Such a discussion of a renewed mandate could, according to the participants, be guided by the following elements:

- A recommitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter
- A greater role for the mid-size powers and the European Union
- A move to focus UN efforts on four core political functions: international peace and security, democratization, human rights, and humanitarian assistance
- A sharper definition of the linkage between these core issues and other international challenges, and between the United Nations and other international actors on these matters
- Better coordination with other international organizations on making the globalization of the world economy politically, socially, and environmentally sustainable
- Some sort of UN crisis response force, whether drawn from national militaries or constituted as a standing UN force
- An effort to balance the one-nation, one-vote system with a decision-making procedure that reflects the relationship between power, influence, and responsibility
- A discussion on limiting the veto to Article VII (peace enforcement) matters; even if this

**...the United Nations should focus on what it does best.**

is eventually rejected, it will put the problem of the veto under a spotlight

- A realignment of Security Council membership to reflect current geopolitical realities
- A revision of the United Nations' system of finance with the aim of avoiding overdependence on any one country—one possibility would be equal contributions by all veto-wielding members
- A sharpening of the United Nations as an instrument in the service of its members, but without entirely undercutting its responsibility for the planet as a whole
- A redefinition of the United Nations' relationship with the United States in a way that allows US power to be harnessed to the global agenda without unnecessarily undermining US freedom of action

Several participants proposed that one possible setting in which to renew the United Nations' mandate would be the upcoming Millennium Assembly; others were less sanguine about this venue.

Several concrete proposals aimed at reinvigorating the United Nations in terms of organizational effectiveness also came up in the final sessions. In this discussion, many emphasized that box-shifting, cost-cutting, and hiring freezes do not alone make for reform. Indeed, some argued that the US-backed zero-growth budget is little more than a gambit to destroy the United Nations. The following recommendations found widespread support in the group:

- Foster a sense in the UN system that coherence and unity of purpose is more important

than the specific agendas of the various sub-organizations

- Streamline General Assembly debate; limit agenda items so as to provide more focus and avoid redundancy
- Provide the Security Council with better staff support and better information on global crises
- Make better use of the principle of elected members to the Security Council by allowing reelection of those that best contribute “to the maintenance of international security and the other purposes of the organization” (Art. 23)
- Seek to engage civil society and international business on a common global agenda (to counterbalance less internationalist nation-states)
- Professionalize UN public relations
- Enhance the quality of dialogue between developed and developing states
- Reduce micromanagement and fixation on technical questions in the committees
- Improve human resource management—keep staff small and agile, so as to better adapt to changing issues

With a renewed mandate and reinvigorated organization, the United Nations would be well placed to fill a variety of roles in the next century. It will continue, as in the past, to play some role as the superego of the world's nation-states, as a global conscience, while also serving as a forum for the coordination of action, however difficult actual implementation may be. But the United Nations must also find

a new leadership role among the multiplying number of other international actors (including other IGOs), among those in the business world, and among the evermore-powerful voices of international civil society. This leadership will likely take two forms: (1) a more formal linkage of business and civil society into the myriad deliberative bodies that make up the UN system and (2) a less formal role as networker and clearinghouse through the organization of conferences and ad hoc coordinating committees on specific problems from post-conflict reconstruction to efforts that curb the use of child soldiers.

### **Conclusion**

In examining the climate for global governance, the tasks to be met, and the specific initiatives and actions the United Nations could take to enhance its leadership role, the Adare conference touched on a wide variety of issues and challenges to the United Nations and the global community. The deliberations pointed to a United Nations' leadership role that, in essence, revolves around identifying the interests of its various constituents and harnessing them to an overarching set of common objectives. Constituencies will change, but the ultimate purpose of global governance—stewardship for humanity and for a planet that sustains it—will not. The United Nations and its Charter stand in support of these principles, and the conference was in agreement that they remain valid and widely supported by the world's public. The challenge is to translate this support into a renewed mandate from the world's governments and the planet's other increasingly powerful global actors.



1999 United Nations of the Next Decade participants





*Participants were asked, first, to sketch out the emerging climate for global governance; second, to turn their attention to the tasks of global governance and where the United Nations might exercise leadership; and third, to draw a number of conclusions about the actions and initiatives that must be taken to help the United Nations fulfill its leadership roles.*



## Chairman's Observations

Lively Adare discussions yielded significant consensus on a number of matters that should be considered and acted upon by national and international leaders. Let me underscore a few of these, adding my observations and concerns.

First, the climate for global governance is radically changed from that of even a decade ago. The nation-state and intergovernmental institutions no longer hold an exclusive franchise on governance. Participants talked of a global triad—business, civil society, and the nation-state. Governance at all levels, today and for the future, necessarily requires interaction between these three complementary domains and contribution from each. This puts new demands on, and requires new skills for, leadership. Those who fail to understand and act in accordance with this new governance environment are out of touch, and ultimately will be unsuccessful in efforts to lead. There are still too many whose leadership is ineffective because they think disproportionately in terms of hierarchy, command, and control.

The conference focused on defining the United Nations' leadership role for the future. There is growing consensus that the United Nations must become "narrower and deeper" and conference participants supported this. The United Nations cannot do everything, and its energies and resources should be concentrated in areas where it has comparative advantage. Participants identified four of these: international peace and security, democratization, human rights, and humanitarian assistance. In the months ahead, UN bodies, member states, the

Millennium Assembly, NGOs, and many other elements of the global triad will be working to optimize UN focus and direction. These four areas are on the table for that discussion.

Next, it is far too easy to talk about what the United Nations should do and the initiatives it should take without recognizing that the organization can do only what its members will allow and support. Too often, member states and national leaders still use the United Nations as a "fig leaf" to mask their own paucity of ideas and commitment on resolving intractable problems. This is both disingenuous and nonconstructive.

Finally, conference discussions provided another telling confirmation that the United States is abdicating an unprecedented opportunity for world leadership. While US business has never been more involved in the global marketplace, and while US civil society increasingly transcends national boundaries, US government and political organizations remain conflicted and ambivalent. They are unable to agree whether this country should act as "the big kid on the block," bullying others into doing what we want, or whether the United States should lead by working with others to build the rule of law, strengthen multilateral institutions, and share the burdens of global governance. As a result, the US-UN relationship is badly strained. Our reputation and our ability to lead and influence even traditional friends are being sullied by indecision, unpredictability, and failure to honor legal obligations. The "elephant" must decide what role it will play in the "tent," and the sooner, the better.



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