Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Southern Regional Model United Nations conference and to the General Assembly Plenary. My name is Christy Moore, and I am looking forward to meeting and working with each of you over the next few months. This is my second year serving on the SRMUN staff, having served twice as a delegate. I graduated in May 2002 from Berry College in North Georgia with a B.A. in French. I currently live in metro Atlanta, where I work as a corporate travel agent. Serving as the Assistant Director for the GA Plen is Gilbert Abraham. This is also Gilbert's first year on staff, but he brings with him many years of MUN experience.

Both Gilbert and I are excited about the topics chosen for debate in out committee, and we hope you share this excitement. The topics for the General Assembly Plenary are:

I.   United Nations Reform
II.   Preserving the Economic Sovereignty of Developing Countries
III.   Coordination of Humanitarian Aid

All of these topics are focused around the central idea of making the United Nations work better, addressing both the structure and function of its organs and the methods by which it operates. All three seek to create a more relevant, functional organization better equipped to fulfill the functions laid out in its Charter 60 years ago. In order to evolve for the future, the UN must continue to recognize and address both its successes and failures, and these three topics hope to do just that.

Gilbert and I have invested much time and energy writing these topics, which we believe are both interesting and informative. These guides should serve as a starting point for your research, providing structure for debate and sources for further reading. While you should consider the topic guides a thorough foundation and introduction to the topics, they are *not* intended to provide all the necessary information for productive debate. It is critical to the success of the committee that each delegation's research extends far beyond the scope of the background guides. This research will not only provide critical topic understanding and insight, have done it will improve your ability to participate in committee and make your time at conference more rewarding and interesting.

In addition to research and participation in committee, each delegation is required to submit a position paper. These papers should reflect knowledge of your state's foreign policy regarding the topics and should be no more than two pages length. Position papers must be submitted by email (in Microsoft Word format) to the Director-General, Brian Halma (srmundg@yahoo.com) **no later than 11:59 p.m. EST, OCTOBER 29**. Late and/or improperly formatted position papers will not be eligible for awards. For further format specifications concerning position papers, please consult the SRMUN website, www.srmun.org.

We hope that SRMUN XVI provides you with a memorable and educational experience in policy making and diplomacy. If you have any questions or concerns about the conference or our committee, please contact myself, Gilbert or Brian. We look forward to meeting each of you and to seeing the wonderful work of the committee.

Best of luck in your preparations. See you in November!

Christy Moore   Gilbert Abraham   Brian Halma
Director   Assistant Director   Director-General
GA Plenary   GA Plenary   srmundg@yahoo.com
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History of the General Assembly Plenary

In 1945, the delegates from 51 countries came together in a determined effort to fundamentally change the face of international diplomacy. They laid before themselves considerable challenges: to prevent war, to promote human rights, to protect justice and to advance societies.[1] These leaders chose to face these challenges by creating an organization whose membership was committed to working collectively toward the common good and which would provide those members with a forum for discussion, debate and collective action.[2] In this forum, which became the General Assembly (GA), each state would have an equal voice in international issues and an equal interest in the promotion of the common interest. They envisioned an international round table that would strive to find peaceful solutions to disputes.

Sixty years later, the United Nations (UN) has expanded to include 191 Member States and continues to evolve as the most meaningful multilateral organization in the world.[3] All Members of the UN have a seat in the GA, which is the first organ established in the Charter of the United Nations.[4] Article 10 gives the GA power to "discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter"[5] which allows the Assembly to function as the primary organ for discussion and debate among the members. The GA is the only body of the UN where every Member State has a seat and may discuss and vote on any issue of international importance. Specifically, the GA can discuss and make recommendations in matters of peace and security, political cooperation, international law, human rights and freedom, a variety of social issues and the UN budget.[6]

In matters of peace and security, the Assembly works closely with the Security Council. While the General Assembly may submit recommendations and suggest actions to the Security Council on these issues, only the Council itself, acting on behalf of all the Members of the UN, can initiate the actions required for the maintenance of international peace and security except for instances where the "Uniting for Peace" machinery is instituted.[7] Article 12 of the Charter goes further, and states that the GA may not discuss any "dispute or situation" that the Security Council is currently discussing.[8] The Security Council is required to submit reports to the GA; however, the decisions of the Security Council are binding to all members and are not voted on in the GA.

The General Assembly also cooperates with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN. The 54 members of ECOSOC are elected by the GA, and its function is to "make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters."[9] ECOSOC reports back to the GA with its suggestions. It also carries out the requests of the GA, and with approval from the GA, can enter into agreements with other specialized agencies to carry out its work.[10]

In addition to the Plenary, the GA comprises six Main Committees:

> First Committee – Disarmament and international security
> Second Committee – Economic and financial
> Third Committee – Social, humanitarian, and cultural
> Fourth Committee – Special Political and decolonization
> Fifth Committee – Administrative and budgetary

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[1] "History of the UN." The United Nations. 2000. http://www.un.org/aboutun/history.htm

[2] Article 1. *Charter of the United Nations*. The United Nations. June 26, 1945.

[3] "Press kit: General information." The United Nations. August 2004. http://www.un.org/ga/59/presskit/geninfo.htm

[4] Article 7. *Charter of the United Nations*. The United Nations. June 26, 1945.

[5] Ibid., Article 10.

[6] "Background Information." The United Nations. September 2004. http://www.un.org/ga/59/ga_background.html

[7] Article 24. *Charter of the United Nations.* The United Nations. June 26, 1945. In November 1950, the United States led the creation of the Uniting for Peace mechanism. The resolution created a mechanism for the General Assembly to take action if the Security Council was deadlocked by a veto. If 9 Security Council members or a majority of UN member-states vote in favor, an emergency session of the General Assembly will be held to deal with the issue. For examples and more information, see Lawrence Ziring, et al. *The United Nations: International Organization and World Politics.* 3rd Edition. Australia: Wadsworth. 2000, pp. 139-140.

[8] Article 12. *Charter of the United Nations.* The United Nations. June 26, 1945.

[9] Ibid., Article 62.

[10] Ibid., Article 63.

Sixth Committee – Legal[11]

For each annual session, the GA elects a President and 21 Vice-Presidents as well as Chairs for each of the six committees.[12] This group, known as the General Committee, is chosen at least three months prior to the opening of the session and makes recommendations to the membership on the agenda.[13] Because the General Assembly considers such a large number of issues, most agenda topics are initially discussed before one of the six main committees. These committees write draft resolutions and recommendations, which are then brought before the Plenary for a vote. The topics debated in the Plenary, therefore, tend to be the most immediate and pressing questions on the agenda.[14]

The second Article of the Charter declares that "the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members."[15] In the General Assembly, each Member State receives one vote, so that no one state may exert a disproportionate amount of influence. Though most issues require a simple majority to pass, certain issues, including peace and security, are considered important issues and require a two-thirds majority for adoption.[16] The General Assembly also sets the budget for the entire Organization, and budgetary matters are considered important questions.[17] One of the most significant developments of recent years has been an increased effort to decide issues through consensus among all members. Since the GA's decisions are legally non-binding, this movement towards compromise and cooperation helps to ensure that resolutions are implemented by the Member States.[18] In addition to adoption by acclamation, resolutions may be decided by a vote or, in special circumstances, a roll-call vote of the Members. Although Member States are not legally required to conform to measures adopted by the General Assembly, its decisions carry the influence and import of international opinion and often become the standards by which Member States' actions are judged.[19]

Along with the regular annual meeting of the GA, the Charter of the UN also allows the Secretary-General to call for a Special Session at the request of either the Security Council or a majority of the members.[20] The topics discussed in the 27 Special Sessions held during the Organization's history include disarmament, Apartheid, pollution, development, and HIV/AIDS. These sessions allow the members to discuss issues of pressing importance or particular interest and to draft reports on these critical topics, highlighting past progress and often laying the groundwork for future UN efforts.

Once decided, the work of the GA is typically carried out in three ways: first, the GA may designate another committee or body established by it to perform further research and report to the GA; second, the General Assembly may call for a special conference or meeting of its Members; and third, the GA may request the assistance of the Secretary-General and his staff to achieve its goals.[21]

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[11] Ibid.

[12] New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 1999*. Wellington: G P Print Limited. 1999, p. 23.

[13] "Press kit: General information." The United Nations. August 2004. http://www.un.org/ga/59/presskit/geninfo.htm

[14] Ibid.

[15] Article 2. *Charter of the United Nations*. The United Nations. June 26, 1945.

[16] "Background Information." The United Nations. September 2004. http://www.un.org/ga/59/ga_background.html

[17] Article 18. *Charter of the United Nations*. The United Nations. June 26, 1945

[18] "Press kit: General information." The United Nations. August 2004. http://www.un.org/ga/59/presskit/geninfo.htm

[19] Lawrence Ziring, et al. *The United Nations: International Organization and World Politics.* 3rd Edition. Australia: Wadsworth. 2000.

[20] Ibid., p. 39. For a listing of special sessions from 1947-1998, see p. 40.

[21] "Background Information." The United Nations. September 2004. http://www.un.org/ga/59/ga_background.html

I. United Nations Reform

"I hope in this anniversary year we will all recognize a need for renewal; the need to adapt the Organization; to strengthen the institution, and I hope that when the leaders come in September, they will take the bold decisions that are required."[22]

Introduction

In September 2000, 147 world leaders and representatives of 191 nations,[23] in response to a 1999 decision "to articulate and affirm an animating vision for the United Nations in the new era,"[24] declared their intention to renew the purpose of the UN by establishing and achieving significant improvements in eight key areas.[25] Their declaration, the *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, set high but attainable goals that exemplify the spirit of collective security and prosperity which was the founding principle of the UN. Achieving these goals would require changes in both the policies of individual states and the way the UN itself functioned. Just twelve months later, the events of September 11, 2001, demonstrated even more aptly how very different the idea of security has become since the UN Charter was drafted sixty years ago. These two events emphasize the need for global action that recognizes the connections between the developed and the developing, as well as the correlation between security, development, and human rights. Actions taken by the UN and its members since have also highlighted the need to make comprehensive changes to the function and structure of the United Nations itself.

History

Since becoming Secretary-General in 1997, Kofi Annan has advocated UN reform at all levels. Annan initiated a restructuring of the UN Secretariat early in his first term. In January 1997, Annan reorganized a variety of similar departments under 4 umbrella sectors: Peace and Security, Economic and Social, Humanitarian and Development.[26] He then appointed an executive committee for each sector to monitor and coordinate the work of the various funds, increasing both financial efficiency and productivity.[27] In an effort to increase the percentage of the UN budget that went directly to its global initiatives, he cut the administrative budget by approximately a third and streamlined existing administrative activities by eliminating excess staffing positions and taking steps to increase the quality of new employees.[28] In the fall of that first year, Secretary Annan established the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, merging several Geneva-based human rights programs under its management.[29] This not only allowed for better use of the UN's limited financial resources, but also allowed for greater efficacy as the programs harmonized their activities.

This first round of reforms was based in large part on the Secretary-General's report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform," which was later adopted by the General Assembly.[30] In this report, Annan called for significant changes to UN policy, organization and methodology. Among other things, it called for improvements in communication, taking advantage of emerging improvements in information technology, and for increased efficiency of decision making structures and work processes, both of which were aimed at making the UN function more effectively in its intended role.[31] Annan has also made changes to how UN staff and management are chosen, trained and evaluated. The changes he instituted have made the hiring process more transparent and established improved criteria for candidate qualifications and recruitment, resulting in an increase in the overall size and quality of the pool of applicants.[32] Once hired, staff training now has a greater emphasis on policy, codes of conduct and professional ethics. The reforms have strengthened existing and created new methods for staff and

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[22] "Press Encounter with the Secretary-General following his introductin [sic] of the new High Commissioner for Refugees." Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General. June 27, 2005. http://www.un.org/apps/sg/offthecuff.asp?nid=748

[23] "UN Reform Dossier: 1997-2004." The United Nations. http://www.un.org/reform/dossier.html

[24] A/RES/53/202. *The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations*. United Nations General Assembly.

[25] A/RES/55/2. *United Nations Millennium Declaration*. United Nations General Assembly.

[26] "Reform at the UN: A chronology." The United Nations. http://www.un.org/reform/chronology.html

[27] "UN Reform Dossier: 1997-2004." The United Nations. http://www.un.org/reform/dossier.html

[28] "UN Management Reform Update." The United Nations. http://www.un.org/reform/reform_update.html

[29] "Reform at the UN: A chronology." The United Nations. http://www.un.org/reform/chronology.html

[30] A/RES/52/12. *Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform*. United Nations General Assembly.

[31] A/51/950. *Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform*. United Nations General Assembly.

[32] Ibid.

managerial oversight and review in order to prevent fraud and corruption.[33] An oversight committee comprising both internal and external members as well as a management review board monitors and evaluate employee performance, helping to ensure ethical conduct.[34] In September 2002, the GA adopted the Secretary-General's second reform initiative, entitled "An Agenda for further change."[35] In it, the Assembly decided to refocus its work on the Millennium Declaration and its goals with increased attention to human rights. The resolution also emphasized the importance of working more cohesively within the UN and prioritizing resources.[36] As of 2003, an impressive 85% of the two reform initiatives had been fully or partially implemented.[37]

As a next step in his ongoing reform program, in March 2005, Secretary-General Annan issued a report which he entitled, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all." In this report, he outlines his recommendations for changes to both the work and the structure of the UN, many of which reflect the findings of various expert bodies. His changes encompass four distinct but interdependent areas: Freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom to live in dignity and strengthening the United Nations.[38]

Freedom from want

For the first time in human history, the technology and resources exist to ensure that no person lacks access to the tools necessary to prevent poverty and increase reduce mortality, yet 1 billion people still live on less than $1 per day and lack the capacity to cope with hunger, disease and environmental degradation.[39] The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted in 2000 have stimulated an advancement in efforts by the global community, but current levels of support must be more than doubled if the goals are to be reached by 2015.[40] While achievements have been made, they have not been equal in all areas of the world or on all the development goals.

To achieve the MDGs in the next decade will require a significant effort by both developing and developed states. "In larger freedom" recommends a combination of good governance strategies and development assistance. These ideals have been advanced by new partnerships for development established at conferences such as the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, but many have not been fully implemented.[41]

Freedom from fear

The Secretary-General's vision of collective security addresses anything that "can cause death or lessen life changes on a large scale."[42] This definition includes not only international conflict, but also terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, transnational organized crime, poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation. Under the concept of collective security, a threat to any one member is a threat to all members, and Annan's report encourages states to recognize and address the interconnected nature of the modern world and adopt decisions that take concerted action.[43] The report specifically addresses the issues of terrorism, calling for states to approve a definition of terrorism which would then allow them to draft an international convention on terrorism. It suggests actions to counter the risks and threats posed by nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. The report also advises changes in the way the UN handles both peacekeeping and peace-building activities. Additionally, the report calls for forging an agreed-upon set of rules in determining when and how to use force.[44] To this end, the report recommends the creation of a peace building commission.[45]

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[33] "UN Management Reform Update." The United Nations. http://www.un.org/reform/reform_update.html
[34] Ibid.
[35] A/RES/57/300. *An agenda for further change*. United Nations General Assembly.
[36] Ibid.
[37] "Reform at the UN: A chronology." The United Nations. http://www.un.org/reform/chronology.html
[38] A/59/2005. *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*. Kofi Annan.
[39] Ibid
[40] Ibid
[41] A/57/319. *Follow-up efforts to the International Conference on Financing for Development*. United Nations General Assembly.
[42] A/59/2005. *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*. United Nations General Assembly.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] A/59/2005/Add.2. *Peacebuilding Commission*. United Nations General Assembly.

In 2004, the Secretary-General commissioned a group of 16 world leaders to work together on the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. Their report contained over 100 recommendations for UN reform in the following areas: Poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation; conflict between and within States; nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons; terrorism; transnational organized crime; the role of sanctions; using force; peace enforcement and peacekeeping capability; post-conflict peace building; protecting civilians; changes to the structure of key UN bodies; and amending the Charter.[46] More than any previous report or resolution, the work of the High-level Panel demonstrates the need for sweeping reform in every area of UN work and perhaps more importantly recommends many significant changes, all of which it deems necessary "to ensure effective collective action."[47]

Freedom to live in dignity

The issue of living in dignity encompasses not only human rights, but also rule of law and democracy. The first sixty years of UN history have produced a remarkable collection of laws and treaties to protect these rights, but they have been unevenly implemented and enforced.[48] Although human rights concerns have been integrated into many areas of the UN's work, their meaning is diminished when the existing vehicles are unable to protect them. The international community is still unable to respond with the necessary swiftness to prevent many of the gross violations of human rights and the rule of law.[49]

The report of the Secretary-General outlines measures for reform to strengthen the rule of law, including support for the International Criminal Court, ratification of existing treaties, a willingness within each state to act to protect the rights of its people and the willingness of the international community to do the same.[50] To protect human rights, Annan supports a greater involvement with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in the work of other UN bodies, specifically in the Security Council.[51] The report also suggests the formation of a Human Rights Council, which would act to protect human rights in much the same way that the Security Council protects peace. As a standing body, it would be able to have regular meetings as well as emergency sessions.[52]

Strengthening the United Nations

The Secretary-General has implemented two large reform packages to the administration of the secretariat which have allowed the UN to function more effectively by establishing partnerships with state and non-state actors and by enhancing coordination between programs. *In larger freedom* suggests that these changes must also be carried over to the organs of the UN itself. It recommends modifications to the structure of the GA and the Councils in addition to further changes within the secretariat.

In the General Assembly, the report draws attention to the fact that greater numbers of resolutions are being passed by consensus in the GA. Instead of highlighting the increased sense of unity, the report indicates concern for the decrease in the substance of the work of the body.[53] On the whole, the General Assembly has ceased to fulfill its role as the central forum for debate and decision within the UN, with the examination of issues becoming secondary to the procedures of the committee.[54] In order to remain relevant, the report recommends streamlining and refocusing the substance of the GA as well as reframing the committee agenda to focus on the important core issues facing the international community. The report also recommends a restructuring of the committee organization of the Plenary in order to speed up the process of deliberation and to establish greater connections with civil society.[55]

The report recommends further changes for the Councils of the United Nations, which currently include the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council. The Trusteeship Council, which was

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[46] A/59/565. *A more secure world: our shared responsibility.* The High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.
[47] Ibid.
[48] A/59/2005. In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all. United Nations General Assembly.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] A/59/2005/Add.1. *Human Rights Council.* United Nations General Assembly.
[53] A/59/2005. In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all. United Nations General Assembly.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

created to oversee territories held under mandate following the Second World War, its function fulfilled, exists now in name only.[56] The Secretary-General's report suggests replacing it with a Human Rights Council, mandated with the protection of fundamental human rights and the enforcement of international conventions and treaties on human rights.[57] The changes recommended for the Economic and Social Council would empower it to review achievements in development, create an environment for development discussion and cooperation and assess and respond to threats to development.[58] The reform suggested for the Security Council is intended to make the body more representative of the membership of the UN by increasing the number of members and regional representation within the body. The report suggests two models for changes to the composition of the Council, both of which would increase the total membership from 15 to 24.[59] The report also recommends that states' involvement and input in the Council's decisions more greatly reflect the level of resources of personnel and material contribution to the United Nations.[60]

Conclusion

In 1997, Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated, "Reform is not an end in itself. It is a tool to create a more relevant and a more effective Organization."[61] In the fall of 2005, world leaders will gather in New York to address the need to restyle the UN into a modern and effective institution that has the power to achieve the lofty ideals upon which it was founded.

Committee Directive

In their preparation, delegates should consider the following questions: What impact, positive or negative, have the current reform efforts had on the work of the UN? Have reform plans been implemented in such a way as to maximize their impact, and if not, what improvements should be made? What is the role of the UN in the modern world, and what changes are needed to ensure that it achieves these goals? Finally, what is the role of member states in suggesting and implementing reform, and how has your state or region fulfilled its role?

II. Preserving the Economic Sovereignty of Developing Countries

"Only by multilateral action can we give people in the least developed countries the chance to escape the ugly misery of poverty, ignorance and disease."[62]

- Kofi Annan,
U.N. Secretary General

Introduction

There is a vast array of UN bodies and Specialized Agencies that are designated to help the economic development process in the developing world. The World Bank, for instance, has more than 10,000 employees dedicated to promoting development and last year gave out $9 billion in economic assistance and another $11 billion in loans.[63] The International Monetary Fund (IMF) employs a staff of 2700 and has issued more than $90 billion in loans.[64]

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[56] *Charter of the United Nations*. The United Nations. June 26, 1945. Articles 75-85.
[57] A/59/2005/Add.1. *Human Rights Council*. United Nations General Assembly.
[58] A/59/2005. In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all. United Nations General Assembly.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] "Secretary-General urges staff to strive for excellence, stressing UN performance will turn detractors into supporters." United Nations. January 9, 1997.
[62] "When Force is considered, there is no Substitute for Legitimacy Provide by United Nations, Secretary-General Says in General Assembly Address." Text of speech given by H.E. Kofi Annan at the UN General Assembly September 13, 2002. United Nations Information Service. http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2002/sgsm8378.html?print
[63] "What is the World Bank?" The World Bank. http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/0,,contentMDK:20040558~menuPK:34559~pagePK:34542~piPK:36600~theSitePK:29708,00.html
[64] "The IMF at a Glance." The International Monetary Fund. February 2005. http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/glance.htm

Developing countries received more than $50 billion in Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2000 as well as more than a third share of the $1.1 trillion of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that year.[65]

In spite of resources available to promote development, economic prospects for many countries remain bleak. Sub-Saharan Africa had its highest rate of growth last year, 5 percent, but it is not enough to put the region on pace to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving income poverty by 2015.[66] A significant share of that growth was due to the increase in oil prices which helped the export earnings for oil exporting countries such as Nigeria.[67] The IMF views Sub-Saharan Africa's economic growth and inflation outlook for 2005 as largely unchanged.[68]

Debt continues to be an issue for the developing world. Between 1980 and 1997, developing countries foreign debt rose annually at a rate of 8.2 percent and grew to $2.3 trillion.[69] Multilateral institutions now hold more than $154 billion in debt for the developing world.[70] Sixty-one percent of this debt is owed by the 15 countries of the HIPC initiative.[71]

There definitely is an international effort to promote economic development, but the results are just as definitively mixed. Many economically disenfranchised states all over the world are not ascending from their economical status but rather are plummeting or remaining stagnant. The question then becomes, why are development efforts not more successful? Is it a matter of insufficient resources, ineffective strategies and policies, or is it social and political factors such as conflict, HIV/AIDS, inadequate health care or poor education that are at fault?

One theory that has been proffered is that a combination of factors have eroded the ability of developing countries to make decisions about their own development plan and economic future. These factors forces developing countries to adopt a particular development strategy rather than giving them the freedom to try a different approach that may suit their unique characteristics better or may have empirical evidence of being effective. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and international bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the G8, according to this theory, are encroaching on developing countries' economic sovereignty and holding dominant influence over the economic affairs of the countries to which they lend money. The institutions impose stringent loan conditions on recipient countries forcing them to adopt a broad range of new economic policies.[72] Globalization and the free flow of international capital are cited as another factor. The freedom of movement of capital gives foreign direct investors great leverage to influence the economic policy of developing countries, as well.

The purposes of entities such as the IMF are to promote international monetary cooperation.[73] The World Bank asserts that their purpose is to fight poverty with passion and professionalism for lasting results.[74] Although the mission and intent of the international financial institutions is to help in the process of fiscal responsibility and better

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[65] "Financial Profile." *Report of the High Level Panel on Financing Development*. 2000.
http://www.un.org/reports/financing/profile.htm
[66] *Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa*. The International Monetary Fund. May 2005. p. 1.
http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/AFR/REO/2005/eng/01/pdf/ssareo.pdf
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Sony Kapoor. *Paying for 100% Multilateral Debt Cancellation: Current Proposals Explained*. European Network on Debt and Development. January 2005. p. 5. Available at:
http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/develop/debt/2005/01payingforrelief.pdf
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] "The Three Sisters and other Institutions." GlobalPolicy.org. http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/bwi-wto/indexbwi.htm
[73] *Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund*. The International Monetary Fund. 1947,
http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/aa/aa01.htm
[74] "Mission Statement." The World Bank Group. June 30, 2003.
http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/0,,contentMDK:20040565~menuPK:34563~pagePK:51123644~piPK:329829~theSitePK:29708,00.html

living conditions, Total debt continues to rise, despite ever-increasing payments, while aid is falling and the developing world now spends $13 on debt repayment for every $1 it receives in grants.[75]

However, programs such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative have been put into place and reports indicate that debt reduction packages have been approved for 27 countries, 23 of them in Africa, providing $32 billion (net present value terms) in debt service relief over time.[76]

History

To truly address the issue of economic sovereignty, there is a term one must become acquainted with and that is neoliberalism. The history of neoliberalism directly coincides with the history of the world and the growing problem that faces economic sovereignty.

It is affirmed that just as classical liberal philosophy justified and encouraged the "first era of globalization" which came to an end with the First World War, the collapse of the Gold Standard and the Great Depression. Neoliberalism is said to be associated with the contemporary "second era of globalization," the seeds of which were planted after the Second World War. During the period from 1915 until the 1960s or so, different versions of liberalism guided the economic and social policies of many nations.[77]

The Bretton Woods Agreement created the economic roots of neoliberalism with the re-establishment of international monetary stability. Neoliberalism as an ideological movement became increasingly prevalent based on the work of Robert Mundell and Arthur Flemming. The Mont Pelerin Society, founded at about the same time by thinkers such as Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman and Michael Polanyi, spawned free-market think tanks and advocacy groups in the UK and the US during the 1960s and 1970s.[78]

Intellects drew upon the theories of the Austrian School of economics and monetarism. Neoliberalism argued that protectionism produced economic inefficiencies and that developing nations should open their markets to the outside and focus on exporting. What was emphasized was the liquidation of state-owned corporations, and the reduction in rules designed to hinder business.[79] Neoliberal ideas found expression in a series of trade talks to form the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the regional free trade agreements such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement.[80]

The agreements exceeded the typical "free trade" and encouraged the free movement of capital funds and direct private investment. The agreements also worked to limit national restriction of business privileges. The slow and quantitative development of neoliberalism after World War II became more rapid in the 1970s, and not always by peaceful means.[81] One of the often-touted neoliberal success stories is General Augusto Pinochet's Chile. Pinochet came to power in a CIA-backed coup, violently ousting the democratically-elected government of Salvador Allende in Chile. The Allende government had pursued radical social-democratic policies and had sometimes been labeled "Marxist." "Free market" policies, including privatization of state assets, were imposed by "los Chicago Boys," Chicago School economists inspired by Milton Friedman. These policies were later imitated by the Bretton Woods institutions operating in many other poor countries, particularly in Latin America.[82]

In 1971, the General Assembly established the category of Least Developed Countries (LDC's). At the time, there were 25 countries that fit the criterion.[83] Between 1971 and 2005, "the number of Least Developed Countries

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[75] "Third World Debt Undermines Development." Global Issues. June 19, 2005.
   http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Debt.asp
[76] "Debt Relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). The International Monetary Fund. March 2005.
   http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/hipc.htm
[77] "Neoliberalism." Dictionary.LaborLawTalk.com. http://encyclopedia.laborlawtalk.com/Neoliberalism
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid
[83] "Senior UN Official: 'MDGs will not be achieved Globally unless Vulnerable Countries are Supported in their Development Efforts." UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries

doubled. LDCs are largely concentrated in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region.[84] "These countries are the poorest amongst the poor, the weakest segment of the international community. They are too often torn apart by devastating conflicts, civil strife or exposed to natural disasters," said Chowdhury.[85]

The rise of neoliberalism culminated with the Reagan government in the United States and that of Margaret Thatcher in Britain. The rise of Reagan and Thatcher coincided with the fall of the Soviet Union and the fading of social democracy and new liberalism as counterbalances or alternatives to unbridled capitalism. The Reagan and Thatcher governments not only shifted their own countries' policies toward laissez-faire economics, but they used their control of the major Bretton Woods institutions to impose their policies on the rest of the world. For this reason, some regard neoliberalism as synonymous with the "Washington Consensus," the dominant policy view at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the U.S. Treasury at the end of the 20th century and the start of the 21st. A major axiom of the neoliberal school is that (to quote Thatcher) "There Is No Alternative" to globalized capitalism. This slogan is often abbreviated as "TINA."[86]

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, neoliberal policies had been embraced by the center-left, as Bill Clinton of the United States backed the North American Free Trade Agreement. Free trade was seen as essential to his Rubinomics, which promoted the creation of technology and intellectual property rights as the means by which America would be able to manage a persistent balance of trade deficit. Some center-left neoliberal economists argued that protectionism is not a left or right issue, but an issue of asymmetry, and therefore a general cause for concern.[87]

Critics of neoliberalism in both theory and practice are numerous. This is particularly true in developing nations whose assets have been sold off to foreigners and whose domestic political and economic institutions had been undermined by the effects of being exposed to trade and rapid flows of capital. Even within the neoliberal movement there is intense criticism of how many developed nations have demanded that others liberalize their markets for manufactured goods while protecting their own domestic agricultural markets.

Anti-globalization advocates are the most vociferous opponents of neoliberalism, particularly its implementation of free capital flows but not free labor flows, meaning that investors can easily shift their money around the globe, but it is much more difficult for people to search out new economic opportunities in other countries. They argue that neoliberal policies encourage a "race to the bottom" as capital flows to the lowest environmental and labor standards, and is a merely updated form of "beggar they neighbor" imperialism, dating back 200 years. In this, they are in fundamental agreement with many of neoliberalism's supporters who argue that neoliberalism represents classical liberalism.

Some economists argue that neoliberal policies can create moral hazard: governments and international financial institutions must bail out developing nations and their creditors because they are "too big to fail." This simply encourages further risk-taking and crises. They point to the recent string of currency melt-downs such as Mexico, Russia, Eastern Europe, East Asia and Argentina as proof that there is a danger to allowing risk-taking without sufficient penalty or regulation.

The vantage point from economically disenfranchised nations is one of exploitation with most impoverished nations owing an exorbitant amount of moneys to the IMF, World Bank and other lenders. However, the perception of enfranchised nations is one of accountability. The lending nations and financial conglomerations feel as though borrowing nations should be held to a necessary standard. However, the economic plight of many fiscally challenged nations is directly linked with colonization, slavery and corruption; some of which, monetarily stable nations have had a hand in and some of which they have not.

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and Small Island Developing States. Press Release. June 1, 2005. http://www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/Press_release/01%20June%2005%20MDGs%20will%20not%20be%20achieved-symposium.pdf

[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

Sovereignty

The concept of sovereignty is very subjective and subject to interpretation. Therefore, the first order of business is to define sovereignty as it applies to economics. The agreed definition of sovereignty is a supreme power especially over a body politic, or as freedom from external control. A synonym is autonomy, which means one that is sovereign; especially: an autonomous state.[88] Kofi Annan pointed to changing nature of sovereignty, especially in an economic context:

> State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined—not least by the forces of globalization and international co-operation. States are now widely understood to be instruments at the service of their peoples, and not vice versa. At the same time individual sovereignty—by which I mean the fundamental freedom of each individual, enshrined in the charter of the UN and subsequent international treaties—has been enhanced by a renewed and spreading consciousness of individual rights. When we read the charter today, we are more than ever conscious that its aim is to protect individual human beings, not to protect those who abuse them.[89]

The protection of sovereignty is one of the key concepts of the UN Charter. The Charter also goes on to reiterate "the right of peoples to self-determination, by virtue of which they have the right freely to determine their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development."[90] Clearly it is stated that people have a right to self-determination to pursue their economic development. It is evident, then, that states have the complete sovereignty over their natural resources, and sovereignty then means countries have autonomy in every sense when speaking in terms of a free state. Since Sovereignty can be considered now to be economic, that it can also be said that economic or monetary policy is an element of sovereignty. Therefore, the UN charter grants autonomy to sovereign states to make their own economic decisions.

In spite of this, many developing countries are not able to freely make economic decisions. They face constraints that are placed on them, most often by multilateral financial institutions, ODA donor countries and investors. World Bank or IMF loans often come with conditions and consultants who seek or even demand changes in fiscal or economic policy. ODA donor countries often send economic consultants such "los Chicago Boys." Investors often have several countries to choose from and negotiate to find the best deal, forcing developing countries to conform to a set of macroeconomic or financial practices. If countries deviate from these practices or the investors lose interest or confidence, the money can be quickly transferred out of the country.

There are two opposing views on this. One view holds that economic and financial discipline is necessary, and that if the demands were not tied to aid or loans, necessary if painful reforms would never take place. The argument also holds that many developing countries lack the bureaucratic capacity or are corrupt, and without outside requirements in place, the money may be siphoned off for personal use or be inefficiently used due to mismanagement.

Countries that have an array of resources are not the most productive in cultivating their economy it has proven difficult to foster economic responsibility and transparency. Several African nations serve as an example, such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their very wealth in resources seems almost to work against them because mineral wealth provides opportunities for politicians and government officials to take bribes, kickbacks and generally enrich themselves with funds that could be developing the countries.

The opposing view holds that as sovereign countries, developing countries should have a right to pursue their own path to development. The development planning that accompanies much aid is of a strictly neoliberal bent. Proponents of this opposing view argue that the planning does not sufficiently take into account the characteristics of the country in question. They also argue that empirical data on development shows that methods other than the neoliberal approach are much more successful.

On the other side of the coin the financial institution such as the IMF, World Bank, etc. lend moneys to countries with plans for economic progress and improvement. The arguments are that the plans lack practical applications and

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[88] "Sovereignty." Dictionary.com. http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=sovereignty
[89] Kofi Annan. "Two Concepts of Sovereignty." *The Economist*. September 18, 1999.
[90] A/RES/41/128. *Declaration on the Right to Development.* United Nations General Assembly. December 1986.

that there are unstable politicians or financiers that have access to the moneys, and the developing countries, and their citizens are left with a heavy debt burden.

Neoliberalism can be contrasted with economic nationalism, fair trade, anti-corporatism and mercantilism.[91] It is said that "Neoliberalism" has been used in a theological sense as a method to deliberately modify the beliefs and practices of the church (specifically evangelical) to conform to cultural post-modernism[92]

Opponents to neoliberal economics argue that states are under pressure from international financial institutions to privatize public services like education and health care, as well as vital natural resources like water. Opponents to neoliberal economics also argue free trade areas such as NAFTA or the proposed FTAA accelerate the rate of resource exploitation and often lower wages for people in poor country, while undermining their ability to participate in democratic decision making.[93]

Committee Directive

In preparing to discuss this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: As a representative of your government, what is the goal of your policy as relates to development, economic aid, and foreign assistance? As a donor or recipient of development assistance, how has the economic thinking of the last decade helped or hindered your government in achieving this goal? Do current economic policies truly reflect the ideals upon which the UN was founded, and if not, should the policies be changed? Have international economic institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF, achieved their stated goals in building foundations for and promoting growth in the developing world, and what reform, if any, should be undertaken to make this a reality?

III. Coordination of Humanitarian Aid

"Humanitarian coordination is based on the belief that a coherent approach to emergency response will maximize its benefits and minimize its potential pitfalls – in short, that the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts."[94]

History

There are more than 245 million people living in the world today who can not, without support, attain the fundamental necessities of human life such as healthcare, food, shelter and security.[95] Most of those in need of humanitarian assistance live in Africa, and the most vulnerable among them, the young, old or infirm, are usually the most affected by natural disasters and emergencies.[96] The State accepts the fundamental responsibility to provide for the basic human needs of its people. In times of conflict or disaster, however, the government may not be able to supply the necessary support and may call upon the international community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector to assist in meeting the needs of its people.

In 1991, following the first Gulf war, the UN and its organs were instrumental in helping to deliver aid to the Kurdish refugees who had fled from Iraq.[97] Following the difficulties encountered there in coordinating relief efforts between and among various UN bodies and NGOs, the UN General Assembly adopted *Resolution 46/182*.[98] This resolution created the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the

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[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] "Globalization of the Economy." GlobalPolicy.org. http://www.globalpolicy.org/globaliz/econ/index.htm
[94] "Coordination of Humanitarian Response." United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
        http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?Nav=_coordination_en&Site=_coordination
[95] "Humanitarian Issues." United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
        http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?Nav=_humanissues_en&Site=_humanissues
[96] "2004 Humanitarian Appeals." Consolidated Appeals Process. http://www.un.org/depts/OCHA/CAP/Appeals.html
[97] Ibid.
[98] A/RES/46/182. *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations*. United
        Nations General Assembly.

means through which it works.[99] *Resolution 46/182* also created the position of Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), whose function is to develop policy, advocate humanitarian issues and lead the coordination of humanitarian emergency response.[100] In addition, the ERC heads the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the main body through which OCHA works to coordinate UN efforts.[101] The IASC is a forum for the heads of various groups to meet and discuss strategy for enacting coordinated plans for humanitarian relief. Among its members are the heads of 11 UN organs, as well as representatives of 6 major NGOs and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs).[102]

The work of the IASC and OCHA is funded through the OCHA budget, the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). The OCHA budget comes from a combination of the regular UN budget and donations from member states and other organizations, with only about 10%, or $11.1 million, coming from the regular UN budget.[103] This makes both the IASC and OCHA heavily dependent on outside capital and even more so on the allocation of those funds by donors. "Earmarking" of funds is one of the difficulties faced by OCHA, which means simply that a donor has requested its money be used for a specified purpose.[104] The difficulty which arises from this is that due to the high proportion of funds which are committed to specific activities, some emergencies and disasters are grossly under funded. In 2004, 72% of donations received by OCHA were earmarked for specific purposes.[105]

The CAP is the mechanism through which the human rights community identifies areas of need, plans a coordinated response to those needs through a Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) and submits those plans to donors to receive funding.[106] Since its creation, the CAP has become the central medium through which coordinated planning and effort has occurred. In 2004 alone, the CAP process was used to identify needs and establish more than 1,000 projects to meet those needs worldwide.[107] When the nature of a disaster or emergency requires funding before an appeal can be made, organizations are permitted to borrow money from the CERF, which is intended only to assist from the time the need begins to the point that donations are received. All money from the CERF must be paid back within 12 months, but since it is interest free, it allows UN organs to assist with immediate relief in emergent situations.[108]

Challenges

One of the foremost challenges faced by the international humanitarian community in its attempt to coordinate relief is funding. Because of its structure, the CAP has helped to improve coordination between agencies and improved the strategies through which they work, but it has still been unable to meet the rising demand for assistance. Two years ago, approximately $5.1 billion dollars was requested through the CAP mechanism, and only $3.3 billion was received.[109] Already in 2005, $4.5 billion is needed to assist 26 million people facing emergencies throughout the world.[110] It is disappointing to contemplate the situation that must be faced when the need for humanitarian aid so

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[99] Ibid.
[100] "A Brief History of OCHA." United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
    http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?Nav=_about_en&Site=_about
[101] Ibid.
[102] "IASC Membership." United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
    http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/membership.asp
    The full members and standing invitees are: FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, WFP, WHO, ICRC, ICVA, IFRC, IOM, SCHR, OCHA, OHCHR, The World Bank, InterAction, and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on IDPs.
[103] "A Brief History of OCHA." United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
    http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?Nav=_about_en&Site=_about
[104] "OCHA's Funding." United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
    http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?Nav=_funding_en&Site=_funding
[105] *OCHA Annual Report 2004: Activities and use of extrabudgetary funds.* United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. May 2005.
[106] "2004 Humanitarian Appeals." Consolidated Appeals Process. http://www.un.org/depts/ocha/cap/appeals.html
[107] Ibid.
[108] A/RES/46/182. *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations.* United Nations General Assembly.
[109] "2004 Humanitarian Appeals." Consolidated Appeals Process. http://www.un.org/depts/ocha/cap/appeals.html
[110] A/60/87-E/2005/78. *Report of the Secretary General: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.* United Nations General Assembly.

far outstrips its availability, especially when one considers that the annual total worldwide expenditure for aid is about $10 billion dollars and the annual amount spent on militaries in 2004 was about $975 billion.[111] The CAP also faces difficulties posed by the earmarking of funds: between 2000 and 2003, 78 appeals were made and over half the funds donated went to just 7 appeals.[112] Overall, funding is inadequate, slow to arrive and unevenly applied. This is partially due to the donors themselves, but also to inconsistencies in the way needs are identified, given precedence and tracked.[113]

In addition to the issue of funding, other challenges face the UN and OCHA. Some of these have been highlighted by recent events, including the Indian Ocean tsunami of late 2004 and the situation in the Sudan. Both cases can be used to illustrate the obstacles facing the international community in its efforts to coordinate humanitarian assistance.

On December 26, 2004, the strongest earthquake in 40 years struck just off the coast of Northern Sumatra, displacing the ocean floor 10 meters and creating a tidal wave that would eventually affect people in 12 nations around the world.[114] Nearly a quarter-million people were killed or lost, and millions more were displaced in the aftermath of the disaster. The resulting humanitarian crisis was one of the largest and most complex that the UN system has ever faced, with about 5 million people left urgently in need.[115] In response, the Secretary General named a Special Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to Tsunami Affected Communities and sent Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams to 5 countries. A total of 16 UN agencies responded to the crisis, as did more than 160 international NGOs, and innumerable private corporations and civil society groups.[116]

Due in part to the scale of the situation, coordination problems began to arise immediately and would continue to be a factor throughout the relief efforts. Some areas received an outpouring of materials but lacked trained personnel to distribute and utilize it; in other areas, the available resources did not correspond with needs.[117] NGOs were unable to effectively coordinate between one another, and the UN system did not successfully coordinate with the NGOs.[118] The efforts also highlighted weaknesses in capacity that had previously existed, especially in key areas like water, sanitation and shelter.[119] These gaps were a product of both the magnitude of the situation and the lack of suitably skilled and experienced staff.[120] Coordination efforts were further affected by the performance of the Resident Coordinators who are responsible for organization at the field level. The performance of the Resident Coordinators varied widely between countries.[121]

One of the most important aspects of relief coordination that can be seen in the response to the 2004 tsunami is the significance of ensuring the integration of local governments and civil society groups in planning and execution from the outset. Not only does their involvement help ensure that special needs are identified and addressed; it can also have a positive impact on the overall success in the long-term recovery. In Thailand, for example, local involvement helped draw attention to migrant workers and nomads who may not have otherwise received assistance, and in Indonesia, the government has created a dedicated agency to direct and coordinate the recovery and

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[111] "World Military Expenditure, 1995-2004." Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.
http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_world_graph.html
[112] "2004 Humanitarian Appeals." Consolidated Appeals Process. http://www.un.org/depts/ocha/cap/appeals.html
[113] A/60/87-E/2005/78. *Report of the Secretary General: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.* United Nations General Assembly.
[114] A/60/86-E/2005/77. *Report of the Secretary-General: Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.* United Nations Economic and Social Council.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] A/60/87-E/2005/78. *Report of the Secretary General: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.* United Nations General Assembly.
[119] Ibid.
[120] A/60/86-E/2005/77. *Report of the Secretary-General: Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.* United Nations Economic and Social Council.
[121] A/60/87-E/2005/78. *Report of the Secretary General: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.* United Nations General Assembly.

reconstruction efforts of the international community.[122] Further evaluation of the tsunami response has resulted in suggestions for an overall improvement of the UN response system. Because of difficulties in initial response capability, member states have recommended increasing the scope and abilities of resources on standby, as well as the creation of guidelines and benchmarks for the speed and strength of response.[123] They have further recommended a greater integration of medium- and long-term recovery goals into the initial disaster response, which would help make efforts more sustainable for overall development, as well as increasing the capacity to withstand future events.[124]

In the Sudan, the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army have been fighting a civil war since 1983 which has left over 2 million dead and over 4 million displaced.[125] Throughout the conflict, insecurity due to violence and instability have prevented the people affected by the conflict from receiving an adequate level of humanitarian aid, particularly in regions of the country where fighting was the heaviest.[126] The two parties have been working since 2002 to come to an agreement on issues of governance, security and wealth in an effort to reach a peaceful settlement. Only recently have aid workers been able to give assistance in relative safety. Despite over two decades of ongoing conflict, however, the international community lacked the capacity to quickly respond, and in fact is still weak in several key areas, including shelter, protection and camp management of displaced persons.[127]

Groundwork for the Future

Since the passing of *Resolution 46/182* in 1991, the UN General Assembly has passed at least one resolution on the coordination of humanitarian effort during every session, and many of them repeat the same themes: member states, UN agencies and NGOs should make a greater effort to coordinate through the ERC, and the Secretary-General should continue to update the UN on the progress of these efforts.[128] Progress on the issue has been slow, despite the seeming investment of the humanitarian system in the idea. The issue of strengthening the capacity and knowledge of both the leadership and support at the field level is one of these common themes, yet little has changed in the decade this has been on the international agenda.[129]

The international community has also drawn attention to the fact that UN response varies from situation to situation, both in speed and in competence. Both in the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami and the situation in the Sudan, humanitarian workers were unable to meet needs in some of the most important areas, such as housing and sanitation.[130] This represents not only a momentary inability, but also a more systemic weakness in capacity. The UN must work harder to define the roles and responsibilities within its responses, develop a system of accountability and best practices and provide long-term support for its work.[131] The current method of developing short-term, stopgap practices is not sustainable.

In other cases, the international community has generated an effective response, only to have it fail from lack of long-term support. For example, during the summer of 2004 Northwest Africa suffered severe shortages of food because of an infestation of locusts throughout the region. A decade earlier, the Food and Agriculture Organization had developed an early warning system, which later broke down because donor support for the project fell off.[132]

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[122] A/60/86-E/2005/77. *Report of the Secretary-General: Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.* United Nations Economic and Social Council.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

[125] S/2004/453. *Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan.* United Nations Security Council.

[126] Ibid.

[127] A/60/87-E/2005/78. *Report of the Secretary General: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.* United Nations General Assembly.

[128] "GA Resolutions." United Nations General Assembly. http://www.un.org/documents/resga.htm

[129] Ibid.

[130] A/60/87-E/2005/78. *Report of the Secretary General: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.* United Nations General Assembly.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

Long-term funding for humanitarian projects and interventions cannot be overstressed, but requires a commitment on the part of both donors and recipients. For its part, the UN system has been encouraged to develop a common system for the tracking and reporting of the use of donor funds in a more transparent way.[133] The system should be flexible enough to encompass not only the work of the UN itself, but also the many NGOs and governments it works with and through.[134] The UN should also recognize that when funds are urgently needed, the current system may not have the same capacity to respond as it did when it was created over a decade ago. The donor community should commit itself to helping equalize support across the board for all emergencies and disasters, by making resources more flexible and addressing situations which have been long neglected.[135]

One of the reasons why some governments and organizations choose to work outside the purview of the UN is to retain autonomy in both actions and funding. The UN should consider ways to incorporate NGOs and civil society not only into the implementation but also into the planning of disaster response, giving these groups a greater investment in the outcome of the larger effort. Failure to accomplish this in the past has resulted in regional efforts that parallel UN efforts, rather than integrated or complementary work.[136] Although the United Nations cannot dictate the terms through which other organizations choose to assist in times of crisis, they can make a greater effort to draw global attention to the benefits of a truly coordinated response whenever possible.

Summary

Although the issue of coordinating humanitarian assistance within the UN and between the UN and other actors has been on the international agenda for several years, progress has been slow. Although resolutions have been passed, many with great support, the system has failed on the whole to bridge the gap between rhetoric and implementation. The response of the humanitarian community has not always met needs in a consistent, equitable and speedy manner, and there remains a divided interest between UN agencies and other organizations. In its continued discussions on this issue, the international community should address the issues of capacity building, improving initial response, increasing involvement at the local level and of other organizations, improving funding mechanisms, and building on past successes and failures to improve the system.

Committee Directive

In preparing for this discussion, delegates should consider the following questions: What does your State consider to be the role of the UN and its organs in directing, coordinating, or providing humanitarian aid throughout the world? What is the corresponding role of its Member States? In what ways have the UN and its members succeeded in accomplishing these goals? How have they fallen short? What actions (or lack thereof) have caused this disparity, and what can the UN do to correct this problem? What are the apparent obstacles to implementing any changes recommended?

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[133] *OCHA Annual Report 2004: Activities and use of extrabudgetary funds*. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. May 2005.

[134] Ibid.

[135] A/60/87-E/2005/78. *Report of the Secretary General: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*. United Nations General Assembly.

[136] A/60/86-E/2005/77. *Report of the Secretary-General: Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster*. United Nations Economic and Social Council.