



## **Need for United Nations reform to establish international peace and security**

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### **Abstract**

The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental universal organization or gathering of sovereign states tainted in the closing days of the Second World War. UN with its specialized agencies deals with an amazing array of issues and areas that encompass virtually every facet to human life and every aspect of human endeavour. Its charter was adopted and signed on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1945 by 51 founding members. It is, "Child of War". United Nations is intractably linked to almost every aspect of human activity. It offers a wide range of services through its various entities. UNICEF, WHO and other agencies provide help to deliver health services, regulate standards of water and sanitation, vaccinate children and take measures to control epidemics and disease. In essence, United Nations has touched the lives of millions through the support work of its agencies. Reforming the United Nation calls for a number of reforms in its structures, institution, mindsets and attitudes. The organization must reflect the existing realities, which call for drastic reform. The United Nation desperately needs reform. These reforms include General Assembly Reform, Security Council Reform, Economic and Social Council Reform, Secretariat Reform, Democracy Reform, Financial Reform and Peace keeping Reforms. Development is not the first thought of those considering UN reform, but this field offers great opportunities for improved efficiency and coordination which can help elevate UN and its system of agencies to the status of effective and respected organizations as expected by their founders.

**Keywords:** child of war, United Nations reform international peace and security

### **Introduction**

The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental universal organization or gathering of sovereign states tainted in the closing days of the Second World War. UN with its specialized agencies deals with an amazing array of issues and areas that encompass virtually every facet to human life and every aspect of human endeavour. Its charter was adopted and signed on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1945 by 51 founding members. It is, "Child of War" of these, 4 were from Africa (Ethiopia, Egypt, Liberia and South Africa). Membership to the UN is open to all peace-loving nations that accept the principles and obligations set out in its charter. With the surge in decolonization, many states gained their independence and admission to the UN, and as a result membership rose from 51 in 1945 to 192 in 2012. The United Nations offers the world community, a system of global governance. Its cardinal missions include.

- The maintenance of international peace and security.
- The promotion of higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- The promotion of solutions to international economic, social, health and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation.
- Universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

The UN represents an invaluable global framework for international cooperation in a wide range of fields i.e.

economic, social, political, cultural, educational and health fields<sup>[1]</sup>.

The formation of the United Nation is therefore a response to the need to conduct international relation on a co-operative transparent and orderly basis<sup>[2]</sup>. It should be recalled at this early stage that the initial objective of the 'great power alliance', was to form an army strong enough to combat the then world dictator, Adolph Hitler, whose military might and economic policy in Germany as at that time, was a threat to capitalist states. Closely related to this was the desire to maintain global peace, promote socio-political and economic understanding among member nations, as well as discourage colonization in all forms. In this regard, the United Nations charter perceives issues like security, economic, cultural and humanitarian to be interrelated approaches and policies. Hopes for a more peaceful and prosperous future for all nations in the world war thus placed in a new system of a supranational organization, which was intended to provide a modicum of global governance with the ultimate objective of making the following scriptural quotation its watch words: "and they shall beat their swords into ploughs halls, and their spears into preening hooks, nation, shall not lift up swords against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **Need for Reform**

United Nations is intractably linked to almost every aspect of human activity. It offers a wide range of services through its various entities. UNICEF, WHO and other agencies provide help to deliver health services, regulate standards of water and sanitation, vaccinate children and take measures to control

epidemics and disease. UNICEF, VNESCO and UNU provides services for education, culture and related sectors. FAO and IFAD promote agriculture and food production. ICAO assists in regulating safe travel needs, and IIU deals with communication requirements. UPU helps in the smooth delivery of mails across countries and continents. UNDP, world Bank and IMF finance development projects and activities in different sectors, and help to maintain economic stability peace keeping missions help to resolve conflicts. In essence, United Nations has touched the lives of millions through the support work of its agencies <sup>[4]</sup>.

The United Nations is unique in many other ways as well. Its general assembly is a most democratic entity, closest to global parliament, where countries speak up and decide what they collectively think is best for the international community. In the same way, only the Security Council has the mandate to decide on the use of sanctions and force against a sovereign state. The Economic and Social Council sits at the top of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies that engage in virtually every conceivable economic and social activity on this planet. Big interstate disputes come to the international court of justice for settlement. Also, the United Nations has the widest representation across world capitals, and every country can claim ownership of this organization <sup>[5]</sup>.

The world is changing, and with it the demands on the United Nations. Reform is a continuous process and has to go in teen with time and emerging challenges. Reform of the United Nations has been proposed since its inception. The reform of United Nations is a priority both for the organization itself and for its member states. The United Nations is engaged in a continuous process of change and reform.

United Nation is the best roadmap for world peace and restoring a multilateral world order. As the demands of states and governments on the United Nation increase, the need for United Nation to keep pace with the changing international scenario to justify its existence also gets more emphatic. Reforming the United Nation calls fro a number of reforms in its structures, institution, mindsets and attitudes <sup>[6]</sup>.

The debate of reforming the United Nations has been in the air, at least, since the early 1990s and countries seem to have understood it differently depending on their perceptions and national interests. In December 2003, The Former Secretary General Kofi Annan set up 15 member High Level Panel and the report submitted by the Panel in December 2004, recommended more than one hundred changes. In March 2005, Kofi Annan also presented his own report entitled *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for all to interconnect security, development and human rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> century* <sup>[7]</sup>.

The organization must reflect the existing realities, which call for drastic reform. The United Nation desperately needs reform. The power relations of the global organization's structure particularly undemocratic Security Council cry out for transformation. Yet the most powerful member-states determinedly resist any prospect or reduced authority; the desire of the Second World War victors to orchestrate the post-war world however anachronistic, is undiminished. Yet it would not make sense to give up on the United Nation and build something else. A "new", United Nations that reflected

the realities of its birth-era would be likely to confirm the strategically unchallenged might of the United States the global hyper power <sup>[8]</sup>.

The starting point is to acknowledge the continuing reality that the world is still organized despite globalization and the empowerment of multinational corporation on the basis of nation states. The United Nations reflects that reality. Any notion of United Nation "democratization", is limited by the inherently undemocratic nature of nation borders and governments. But within those limitations, the United Nation can and must be for more democratic than it is today.

Three major key proposals which are considered pertinent for bringing about reform in the United Nation. These are:

- The global community needs one United Nation not 30 or 40 independent agencies to set standards manage global public goods and deliver high quality and cost-effective aid.
- Those who object to the idea of a single United Nation are just pleading special interests, failing to recognize problems and weaknesses in United Nation. Arguing for the status quo or minor changes sets a course for further United Nation decline.
- United Nation needs a window for financial loans and grants, as was proposed in the 1950s but rejected when the International Development Association (IDA) was set up under the World Bank <sup>[9]</sup>.

United Nation reform is the need of the hour. The main object of the reform is to strengthen this world organization so that it would achieve its objectives for which it was established sixty-seven years age. Reform needed are general assembly reform, security council reform, economic social council reform sectariat reform, human rights reform financial reform and peace keeping reform. Security council reform is the major reform which can make United Nations more democratic, more transparent, more accountable and more effective for the fight against international terrorism. Therefore security council reform is must for reinventing, rejuvenating and strengthening United Nations to take independent decision against terrorism.

### **General Assembly Reform**

The effort to reinvent the United Nations brings into focus the General Assembly, which is the first of the main organs of organization. It is a most democratic entity, closest to global parliament. It is a platform where countries speak up and decide what they collectively think is best for the international community. The General Assembly is the United Nations most democratic body, since it includes all member states. The General Assembly which despite its limitations remains the most democratic agency of the United Nation that will require mobilization of the assembly to assert its will in relation to decision of the Security Council. United Nation already has a precedent for asserting the primary of the General Assembly over security issues that wailed otherwise belong solely to the Security Council. The "Uniting for peace", resolution that allows the assembly, on determining that the council is unable to act, to take decision regarding war and peace.

This irony here is that the origins of this resolution lie not in any concern with democratization but in the United State's

success taking momentary advantage of a Soviet walk out of the Security Council in forcing the assembly to put a United Nation stamp on the 1950-53 war in Korea. But the General Assembly in principle has the capacity to broaden the “uniting for peace” precedent if sufficient political will can be found.

This is where the tension between the United Nations as a tool of governments and as an institutional part of global civil society comes to the fore. The General Assembly’s political will to challenge aggressive war and defy the US drive to empire, depends on global public opinion taking the lead. That means successful popular movements that can hold national governments accountable to public anti-war sentiment, and a global campaigning coherence so that enough governments are prepared to say no venue, vehicle and player in the opposition to war. An extraordinary moment in New York on the morning of 15 February 2003, a day of tumultuous worldwide demonstrations against impending war on Iraq is emblematic here, when a delegation led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu met Kofi Annan and told the United Nation Secretary General that “those people marching in those cities all around the world claim it in the name of our global mobilization for peace”. The optimism in Tutu’s claim like the millions of demonstrators could not prevent the war. But 15, February 2003 does illuminate what will be required to recover the United Nation as part of global movement for democracy and against empire. Activism, demonstrations, mobilization all must connect to demands for transparency and real democratization within the United Nation, alongside clear support for action against empire taken by the international organization.

The day before the February 2003 demonstrations when “the world said no to war”, the Security Council debating Washington’s imminent assault on Iraq welcomed the French foreign minister’s assertion that “the United Nations must be an instrument for peace, not a tool for war”, with an unprecedented standing ovation. On February the New York Times announced the birth of a “second super-power”, challenging the United States; on 18 February, open Democracy’s editor hailed “world opinion”, rather than the United Nation, in similar terms. For those around the world who defied war on that historic day, finding a way to fuse the “second super-power”, with global public activism is an essential task. An international civil society supported by an alliance of governments responding (however reluctantly) to pressure, backed by a reformed and democratized United Nations. This would be a three part “second super-power”, standing at the center of the worldwide fight back against war and empire.

Of the many reform needed to reorient the General Assembly the following measures are critically needed:

- President should be elected for two years at a time to give him more time to implement his vision and initiatives.
- The office of President should be strengthened and charged with the responsibility of following up the implementation of General Assembly resolutions.
- Agenda of the General Assembly should be reviewed to make more time for topical issues of urgent interest to the international community; outmoded mandates should be eliminated; the outdated agenda should be removed;

items and biennialize and triennialize others.

- General Assembly discussion should be made more focused and interactive, and proactive discussions should be undertaken on issues covering all aspects of shared interest of the world community.
- The committees, sub-committees and expert bodies of the General Assembly should be reviewed; the First and Fourth Committees should be merged, as both of them have witnessed their work reduced over time; revamped those entities that remain relevant and dismantle those that have lost their utility.
- General committee should be asked to determine the agenda of the General Assembly and to deliberate on the implementation of Assembly resolutions.
- The Secretary General should be asked to seek General Assembly action only to do what is within the competence and capacity of the United Nation <sup>[10]</sup>.

The ongoing efforts to revitalize the Assembly should produce good results and reinforce the faith of the people around the world who see in the General Assembly a key instrument for global governance <sup>[11]</sup>.

### Security Council Reform

As the principal organ of the United Nations, that is vested with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nation Security Council sits at the apex of the institutional architecture designed to maintain international peace and security. For this purpose, it can decide upon both the imposition of sanctions or military action. It is the primary organ which decides upon the admission of new members into the United Nation, important appointments like the Secretary General, members of International Court of Justice and the Economic and Social Council. The council is always in the spotlight on the issue of strengthening multilateralism to the observance of the United Nations charter’s purposes and principles; to the use of force; pacific settlement of disputes; conflict prevention, management and resolution; peace building; “responsibility to protect” civilians; fight against terrorism; and to non-proliferation <sup>[12]</sup>.

The Security Council reflects the global power structure of 1945, when most of today’s nations were still under colonial rule. In 1965, under pressure from a growing membership, the United Nation added four new elected members to the council, bringing its total membership to 15. But the five principal World War Second allies clung to their privileged status. They remain “permanent”, and have the power to veto any council decisions. This arrangement makes the council both undemocratic and ineffective. The veto-wielding permanent members prevent many issues from reaching the council’s agenda and they often selfishly bad widely agreed and much needed initiatives. Despite the ten elected members the Security Council remains geographically unbalanced and seriously unrepresentative. Some nations have suggested that in order to make the Security Council more effective, the veto power of its permanent members should be done away with.

For more than a decade, the United Nations General Assembly has debated council reform but has been unable to reach agreement. At the heart of this stalemate lies a conflict over

claims to new permanent council seats. Germany, Japan, Brazil, India, South Africa, Nigeria and other have demanded this special status and they have won some support for their bid. But the permanent five prefers to keep its own monopoly. And many other states firmly oppose the creation of new permanent seats, insisting that council should only be enlarged with new elected members. Other cities are concerned that enlargement would make the council unwieldy and ineffective. They purpose regionally based seats as a future oriented and more democratic reform. Beyond the vexed issue of membership, reform proposals include changes in the council's procedures and working methods, such as regular ruler of procedure, more public meetings and other steps to make the council more transparent and accountable. These reforms are more attainable. Unlike membership changes they do not require changes, they do not require changes in the United Nations charter and they can be implemented by a decision of the council itself. But the permanent five are jealous of their prerogatives and often oppose procedural changes that lessen however slightly their special powers <sup>[13]</sup>.

The following are the key reforms that are critical. These are:

- Limited expansion of the council should be under taken in its membership; more developing countries should brought on board.
- Work should be done towards the event elimination of veto power to reinforce the democratic image of the United Nations; before that happens, rules should be established to prevent the use of this power by one country.
- To work of the council should be made more transparent and its decisions making process should be made more participatory for all council members.
- The council should be made more accountable to the General Assembly in terms of reporting and consulting obligations, as enunciated in the United Nations charter.
- Sanction should be ensured which sharply focused on the target group to minimize their adverse effects on the unintended population and people; they should expire either when the council so decides or after two years, whichever is earlier, unless they are renewed.
- The council should desist from encroaching on the mandates of other organs and agencies of the United Nations.
- It should coordinate with the secretary general to do what within the competence and capacity of the United Nations <sup>[14]</sup>.

The rationale and justification for the reform of the council is clear. The council should be reformed to make it more representative more transparent, more accountable and more effective.

### **Economic and Social Council Reform**

Economic and Social Council is one of the six principal organ of the United Nations. The Economic and Social Council has been trying to reinvent itself, almost since its creation as one of the principal organs of the United Nation. Its role never was fully clarified, in contrast to that of the Security Council on one hand and the General Assembly on the other. Numerous attempts have been made over the lifetime of the United

Nations to enhance the relevance of the council, inspite of opposing suggestion that pointed in the other direction of abolishing it altogether <sup>[15]</sup>. To make it a vibrant organ, following measures are necessary

- The size of the council should be reduced from the current 54 members to nearly half that size and hold its meetings as frequently as necessary as the Security Council does.
- Economic and Social Council's decision should be made mandatory for member states, as are the Security Council's, and put in place mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of its decision.
- The function of regular monitoring should be charged with implementation of the global compacts emerging from various world conferences. Its attention should be focused on crosscutting the thematic issues, and make its decision mandatory for the governing boards of United Nations, programmes and specialized agencies.
- It should be co-ordinated with the secretary general and other United Nation agencies to do what is within the competence and capacity of the United Nations <sup>[16]</sup>.

### **Secretariat Reforms**

The Secretariat, an international staff working at the United Nations headquarters in New York and in the field, carries out day-to-day work of the organizations. The secretariat is headed by the Secretary- General who is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. The term of service is five years initially but this is subject to extension. The secretariat comprises of a Secretary General and such staff as the organization may require. The Secretary General is an important officer of the United Nation. Being the Chief Executive of the organization, he acts in all meetings of the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council and the trusteeship council. The Secretariat also needs a major overhaul. Concrete reforms and concerted efforts to implement them are critical to rescue the management processes from the current state of bureaucratic inefficiency, organizational inaction and political patronage in recruitment, promotion and transfer. The principal among them are as follows:

- The Secretary General should be elected on the basis of leadership qualities and geographical rotation; the General Assembly (or rather its special committee established for the purpose) should after careful examination, approve or disapprove the Secretary General's appointees for other senior management position.
- Departments and divisions of the United Nation and their function should be streamlined to remove duplication and overlap that exist in abundance; United Nation entities should strive for the greatest cooperation, coherence and cohesion possible in their activities for synergy and maximum value for the money they spend.
- United Nation recruitments need to be broadly based, seeking qualified candidates from all over the world, particularly from unrepresented and under represented countries in consistency with article 101 of the United Nations charter; the current system of favouring the



incumbents over the qualified outside applicants should be abandoned to improve the overall quality and performance of staff.

- Staff training and capacity building should be augmented; they could clearly be targeted for meeting organizational need rather than catering to personal interests to staff, which happens to be the case how.
- The United Nation needs to further improve its present result based budgeting and link it to output and result based management; it ought to introduce international public accounting standards; performance report should precede budget requests for better understanding and analysis of programmes. Their performance, and need for new budget.
- Oversight function (external and internal audits, should be strengthened to prevent fraud and corruption; recommendation of oversight bodies should be implemented and followed up with rigour.
- The United Nation need to introduce a culture of accountability; it must link staff performance with staff incentives and disincentives; a convincing accountability framework should clearly accompany the administrative and budgetary flexibility sought by the secretary general.
- The system of internal justice should be improved.
- The United Nation should engage in greater collaboration with other intergovernmental and regional organizations (outside its framework) to generate synergy and augmented impact as well as to avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication; such cooperation should be sought in all relevant areas, including peace and security as well as economic and social development.
- It should adopt, when necessary, the best practices outside its own house and, while doing so, must see to it that they are appropriately tailored to address its own needs <sup>[17]</sup>.

### **Democracy Reform**

Another frequent demand is that the UN become, "more democratic" and a key institution of a world democracy. This raises fundamental questions about the nature sole of the UN. The UN is not a world government, rather a forum for the world's sovereign states to debate issues and determine collective causes of action. A direct democracy would request the presidential election of the UN Secretary General by direct vote of the citizens of the democratic countries (World Presidentialism) as well as the General Assembly (just as cities, states and nations have their own representative in many systems, who attend specially issues relevant to the given level of authority).

### **Financial Reform**

On the subject of Finance, Paul Hawken made the following proposal in his book, "The Ecology of Commerce". "A tax on missiles, planes, tanks and guns would provide the UN with entire budget as well as pay for all peacekeeping efforts around the world, including the resettlement of refugees and reparation to the victim of war". The main problem with implementing such a radial tax world be finding acceptance.

Although such a system might find acceptance with some nation, particularly those

- With a history of neutral.
- Without an active military (such as cost Rice), or
- With lower levels of military spending as Japan, which currently spends 1% of its GDP on Defence, it would be unpopular among many consumers of arms. Nation in this later category range from the United States, which spends 4% of its GDP on defense, to dictatorships who depend on arms to keep themselves in power. Other likely opponents would be nations engaged in ongoing military conflicts, or others in a state of heightened military alert, such as Israel Arms producers would also oppose it, because it would increase their costs and possibly reduce their consumer base. Another tax that the UN might promote would be same sort of Global Resource Dividend.

### **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**

The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. The jurisdiction of the Court covers all questions which sovereign states refer to it, and all matters provided for in the United Nations charter or in treaties or conventions in force. The court consists of 15 judges elected by the General Assembly and the Security council voting independently. The seat of the court is at the Hague, Netherlands.

The authority and scope of ICI has been undermined after the creation of tribunal and ICC. In view of this, ICJ should be recognized as t he final court of appeal to examine the verdicts given by tribunals and ICC.

Still over the years, the United Nation has natured alternative policy ideas and a more egalitarian approach to global society. Following from the charter and building on preexisting international bodies the United Nation and its related family of institutions have contributed to global policy making on a wide range shortcomings, the United Nations is indispensable. The international community is better off with the United Nation with all its imperfections than it would be without it.

### **Peace-Keeping Reforms**

The Union peacekeeping operations should include more emphasis on:-

- Using preventive diplomacy against the surge of war.
- Working on bringing peace as a human right to all peoples.
- Continue the work on general and complete disarmament, including nuclear weapons and conventional weapons.
- Promoting a culture of peace, reconciliation and non-violence as a reason of future peacekeeping.
- Dealing with violation of human rights as a free condition for peacekeeping.
- Convening the World Summit on disarmament, non-proliferation and terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction <sup>[18]</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

The United Nations, with its specialized agencies, deals with an amazing array of issues and areas that encompass virtually every facet of human life and every aspect of human

endeavour. It is expected to preserve peace and security, promote poverty reduction and sustainable development, advance human rights and provide humanitarian assistance to the needy. As an organization with universal membership, the United Nations receives all kinds of requests for support from member states. In essence, members states witness a strong and clear imperative for the United Nations to pursue a comprehensive approach if it wants the world to attain lasting peace, security and development. Such an approach requires coherent, cohesive and coordinated efforts on the part of UN agencies. Piecemeal approaches will not be effective to deliver the objectives that humanity has always sought to attain. Development is not the first thought of those considering UN reform, but this field offers great opportunities for improved efficiency and coordination which can help elevate UN and its system of agencies to the status of effective and respected organizations as expected by their founders.

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