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The International Multilateral System:  
Imperatives of Change, Potential Scenarios and Suggestions for the Future

Thesis of PhD in International Relation with specialization in Globalization  
and the Environment

Lisbon, June 2011

Thesis presented to satisfy the necessary requirements for obtaining a PhD degree in International Relation with specialization in Globalization and the Environment, under the scientific orientation of Professor Teresa Rodrigues and Mr. Felix Ribeiro

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**Dedication**

To my mother...I miss you

To my father...Thank you

To my wife...I love you

To my children...God bless you

### **Acknowledgements**

I am particularly grateful for the kind help of Professor Teresa Rodrigues, without whom it once seemed impossible to have had this research. I will always remember how Professor Rodrigues received and guided me at the time I thought I had no clue how to proceed. I would also like to thank Professor Rodrigues and Mr. Felix Ribeiro for their indispensable advice and support throughout the research.

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**Abstract**

This research on the international multilateral system has its *raison-de-êtr*e in the problems of lack of effective global governance manifested in areas such as global politics, security, economy, environment and others. A fundamental focus of the research is on the latest changes in world politics, including state power shifts, power diffusion from state to non-state actors and the implications of the rapid evolution of globalization over the last two decades, with its proliferating challenges and opportunities. In addition, the research examines reform efforts in multilateral institutions and some of the reform proposals suggested in academic circles. The main objective of the research is to provide a holistic analysis of the current state of the multilateral system, the imperatives of reform in the system, its potential future scenarios as well as some suggestions for the future. No doubt, the United Nations (UN) is the core hub of the current system. Hence, the research principally approaches its subject from the perspective of the UN. In particular, the UN General Assembly is the subject of a case study that aims, among others, to highlight the predicament and potential of this unique forum of multilateral cooperation.

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### List of Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CoD	Community of Democracies
DSB	Dispute Settlement Body
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
G-2	Group of Two (the USA and China)
G-4	Group of Four (India, Japan, Germany and Brazil)
G-7	Group of Seven
G-8	Group of Eight
G-20	Group of 20
G-77	Group of 77
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHGs	Green-House Gases
GPBs	Global Public Bads
GPGs	Global Public Goods
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IBSA	India, Brazil and South Africa
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
L-20	Leading 20
LAS	League of Arab States
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEF	Major Economies Forum
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NAMA	Non-Agricultural Market Access

## DOUTORAMENTO EM RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS

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NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
RIC	Russia, India and China
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
UfC	Uniting for Consensus
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
USA	United States of America
USCIA	United States of America Central Intelligence Agency
USNIC	United States of America National Intelligence Council
WHO	World Health Organization
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization

## Preface

As per the system of postgraduate studies in the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences in the New University of Lisbon, this research is supposed to seek a PhD degree in the area of International Relations, with specialization in Globalization and the Environment. The focus of the research is on the international multilateral system, with further focus on the UN and its General Assembly. These focus areas are of significant importance to the prospects of globalization and the global environment. With respect to globalization, the multilateral system plays an important role, albeit falling short of expectations and snagging on accounts of ineffectiveness and inefficiency. Nevertheless, the system remains an indispensable platform for the management of globalization. As for the global environment, the international multilateral system, and more directly the UN, is the main platform of debate, coordination and agreements on specific actions. The UN also stands as a symbol of a “*constructed environment*,” a concept that is so dearly and deeply used in the holistic ecological approach of human, social and collective behaviors, besides being one of the major players in human societies. Hence, the analysis, arguments and suggestions presented in this research are of significant relevance to the specialization of globalization and the environment.

### Thesis Statement

The world we live in today resembles a small village enjoying a level of connectivity similar to that one typical country used to have long time ago. This world is awash with new global challenges and opportunities, and it needs a system of governance that addresses its new features. In contrast, the current world order is characterized by power shifts, power diffusion, great power indifference, defragmentation of stakeholders and a deep sense of unfairness on the side of some strata of different societies. In such an environment, a unipolar system could serve the interests of the sole pole better in the short to medium run, and so is a multipolar system for the small number of countries seeking it. In contrast, a multilateral system that serves all states on equitable footing is in the best interest of all humanity in the long run. Such a multilateral system should apply minimum rules of power and wealth

sharing. It should be one that enjoys the least common denominator of effectiveness, representativeness, accountability and democratization: Effectiveness that ensures that the system does not fail as it did in the past; representativeness that brings all players onboard, including small states, civil society and the private sector; accountability that provides for checks and balances and guarantees that spoilers are subjected to international legitimacy; and democratization that helps heal the schizophrenia between national and global governance and ensures a basic level of equality and fairness.

It should be noted, however, that the international multilateral system is not responsible for all the woes of the world. The research differentiates between local and global responsibilities. If some national government fails to live up to globally set standards, the prime responsibility on this failure lies with that national government, though it is incumbent on the international community to help overcome such a failure. Thus, the main focus of the research is on the so-called global public goods (GPGs) such as basic human rights, poverty eradication, peace and security, fight against terrorism, international economic stability and international trade integration. Notably, the basic characteristics of such goods are: they exist in the public domain – not the private one –, concern all humanity and cross borders, sectors and groups. The flipside of GPGs is global public bads (GPBs) such as violations of human rights, poverty, insecurity, economic turmoil and trade distortion.

### Research Methodology

The methodology of the research is based on the use of available literature, the researcher's own experience in world politics, as a middle-career diplomat, and other in-field contributions. Policy makers, diplomats, academics and officers of international organizations could be sources of valuable practical insights to the research, and as such they were approached using a questionnaire form covering the main focus areas of the research. For the sake of this questionnaire, direct interviews were the principal means with high-profile, immediate-vicinity contributors, while correspondence was used more with remote contributors. The results thereof will be presented and analyzed throughout the dissertation, besides being summarized in a separate appendix. In particular, the UN General Assembly is the subject of a case study. The main motivation behind the choice of this body is its uniqueness as a formal body of multilateral cooperation enjoying

global membership on equal footing, its general mandate in contrast to the specific mandate of forums such as the Security Council and the scarcity of academic interest in it if compared with the Security Council or several other multilateral forums. And the main objective of the case study is to highlight the problems and potential of the General Assembly in global governance.

### Research Objectives

The issues of global governance are of vital importance for the future of humanity, and so they should not be monopolized by some governments or think tanks approaching them from their own narrow perspectives. Instead, they should be taken up diligently by all states, academic institutions and civil society partners, in a holistic manner. They should also be appropriately debated at all-inclusive international, regional and domestic levels. With this background, the research aims to contribute to the heating debate on how best to reform global governance. The potential value added of such an endeavor would lie in its keenness to present a comprehensive, deep and balanced approach to the subject. This vision shall guide the whole process, including the basic literature review, substantial analyses and in-field contributions. It is also intended to develop alternative future scenarios for the international multilateral system, under variable global political environments. And, cognizant of the need for practicality, the research will attempt to draw a number of suggestions for action by the different national, regional and international players in order to improve the performance of the international multilateral system.

### Executive Summary

The research starts with an introductory chapter, *Chapter One*, on the current international setting. In effect, this chapter serves as a detailed introduction to the subject. It analyzes, in a historical context, the international multilateral system; the main conventional and unconventional international security concerns; the nature and major forces of globalization; the state of the global economy, with focus on the increasing vulnerability to crises and the sharp divides between the poor and the rich; and the global environment, with focus on the challenge of climate change.

*Chapter Two*, on the imperative of change, attempts to elaborate on the main reasons why, from the point of view of this research, the international multilateral system needs holistic reform today. Rather than the phenomena, this chapter aims to provide a deeper diagnosis of the root problems of global governance. It addresses these argued root problems under three main items: power shifts among the United States of America (USA) and other traditional and emerging powerhouses, with particular focus on China and the European Union (EU); power diffusion from states to non-state actors; and the complexity of current global challenges, lack of effective responses to them and the threat of anti-globalization forces, including nationalism.

Consequently, *Chapter Three*, on the current reform agendas and ideas in debate, examines the current reform agendas in the UN, Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO). In addition, it analyzes three serious reform proposals in academic circles: the trans-governmental networks approach of Anne-Marie Slaughter, the proposal of setting up a global power club or global executive committee along the lines of the Group of 20 (G-20) and the demands to establish a concert or league of world democracies together with transforming the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) into a global security organization.

*Chapter Four*, on potential future scenarios, attempts to map potential future scenarios of the international multilateral system. Virtually, this chapter provides a look into the future based on current trends and indicators. It underlines three significant potential scenarios: effective multilateralism, where the UN plays a central overarching role; multilateralism *à la carte* or multi-multilateralism, which indicates the optional use of various multilateral forums, according to feasibility, on a case-by-case basis; and return of multipolar power politics akin to those of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This chapter also refers to two other extreme scenarios, global government and global chaos. And it highlights the determining roles of the USA, other great powers and other actors as to which scenario is more likely to take root.

The aim of *Chapter Five*, on the UN and the international multilateral system, is to poise the UN at the center stage of this research. It addresses the historical background of the organization; its mission, structure and main functions; the value of the world body at the time it faces increasing existential threats; and the historical



problem of lack of political will on the side of its members. This chapter also highlights two critical challenges to the UN today: lack of representative legitimacy and the UN's relevance to the surrounding global environment.

Finally, *Chapter Six* is dedicated to a case study on the UN General Assembly. Most importantly, this chapter attempts to shed light on the unique value of the General Assembly and its potential role in ensuring more effective global governance, provided there is sufficient political will on the side the UN membership. After a basic background, the chapter analyzes the working culture and the current reform agenda in the Assembly. Consequently, it provides an analysis of how the role of the Assembly could be enhanced to improve the effectiveness of the UN in particular and the multilateral system at large.

Throughout, the research refers to the results of the aforementioned field questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered on a sample of 50 professionals, drawn from 32 countries, with careers in the fields of diplomacy, international organizations and academia. It contained 11 substantive questions about the international multilateral system and the UN in particular, including the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council.

Ultimately, the research ends with an afterword that basically recapitulates the main arguments and suggestions presented in the research. It should also be noted that the research adopts a general problem-solving approach that, besides identifying the root causes of the problems of the international multilateral system and the UN more specifically, attempts to provide practical, balanced suggestions to resolve these problems.

## **Chapter One**

### **The Current International Setting**

### **Abstract**

This is a preliminary stocktaking chapter for research on the international multilateral system: imperatives of change, potential scenarios and suggestions for the future. Ever since its consolidation after World War II, the international multilateral system appears to be in perennial crisis. All states assume collective responsibility on this, but super and great powers, most importantly the USA today, bear the brunt of the responsibility, as they could either bolster the system or undermine it without fearing repercussions. In the field of international security, at the time interstate conflicts appear to be retreating, increasing civil wars pose grave legal and institutional challenges. In addition, after September 11 attacks, terrorism has quickly jumped up the ladder of international security concerns. Nonetheless, as the issues move beyond hunting down Al-Qaeda, the global war against terror snags on entrenched disagreements and mistrust. Moreover, weapons of mass destruction pose inherent threat to human survival and impose significant strains on scarce resources that are otherwise needed to meet pressing needs. To say the least, the state of the nonproliferation regime is disgraceful and, failure after failure, the world has reached a point where these weapons are in fact proliferating not retreating. As for the main forces underlying the multilateral system, the current wave of globalization has transformed the world into a small global village, thus unprecedentedly increasing the degree of interdependence among states. However, the forces behind globalization sometimes work in such a chaotic manner that they create sharp divides between haves and have-nots, expose the world economy to vicious cycles of crises and endanger the progress achieved this far in world trade integration. Finally, over the last few years, environmental challenges have been crossing the scientific credibility threshold to pose increasing present and sensible dangers, thus they have transcended the technical and domestic spheres to become highly politicized and internationalized subjects. Unfortunately, notwithstanding the richness of the record of international cooperation on environmental issues, the international community has been faltering in its quest for combating some of the most pressing environmental challenges of the day, especially climate change.

## Chapter One

### The Current International Setting

The main subject of this research is the international multilateral system. And its main objective is to provide a practical analysis of the challenges facing the system today, with a view to highlighting the imperatives of change, drawing potential scenarios and providing suggestions for the future. To lay the ground for these tasks, this first chapter provides a preliminary stocktaking of the current setting of the system. In addition, it examines the main subjects and forces underlying the evolution of the system. Accordingly, there will be brief analyses of the international security environment, the forces behind the current wave of globalization, the state of the global economy and the challenges of the global environment.

#### I. The International Multilateral System: Multilateralism in Perennial Crisis

The international multilateral system is so wide and diverse in nature that there needs to be a clear starting point to addressing it. It is also intrinsically connected with history of international relations, which mandates an elaboration of its historical context. Henceforth, the first section of this chapter provides a basic definition and a conceptual framework of multilateralism. In addition, there will be a historical review of the evolution of the system since the end of World War II to date. It should be noted, however, that Chapter Two will provide a more detailed analysis of the current challenges facing the system.

#### A. Basic Definition and Conceptual Framework

Simplistically, multilateralism could be defined as all forms of common action amongst states in international relations. To provide a more articulated definition, in his 1993 book *“Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form,”* John Ruggie states that “multilateralism is an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct: that is, principles which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may

exist in any specific occurrence.” Ruggie further explains that the principles of multilateralism imply “indivisibility” and “diffuse reciprocity” with respect to subjects at stake and through time, which makes multilateralism a very demanding form of international relations (Newman, Thakur and Tirman, 2006).

On establishing the UN in 1945, the framers of the UN Charter were mostly motivated by the need for a fresh start after the calamities of the two World Wars (Kennedy, 2006). The devastation inflicted on humanity as a result of unilateral policies and hegemonic ambitions impelled the community of states to steer a new path with an unprecedented deal of cooperation. Indeed, the establishment of the UN crystallized the resolve of the community of states to work together to put an end to recurrent use of force in international relations. Thus, the UN emerged as the prime symbol and most focal embodiment of the values of the multilateral system, and today it stands as the most representative tapestry of aspirations, promises and limitations related to multilateralism. Ever since, the UN and the larger multilateral system have been serving the international community in different ways. Most importantly, the system has contributed to the avoidance of wide military confrontations such as those during World Wars I and II. It is also playing critical roles in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and more recently peacebuilding. In addition, the multilateral system facilitates international cooperation and coordination in such diverse fields as the global economy, environment, energy, food security, information and telecommunication technologies and many others.

Of course, the UN and its wider system of specialized agencies, funds and programs lie at the core of the multilateral system, and the Security Council is considered its highest-profile organ. But the span of the system goes beyond the UN and its system to include a sophisticated and overlapping plethora of international organizations, be it at the global level, such as the different international treaty organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, or at the regional level such as the EU, the African Union (AU) and the Organization of American States (OAS). In addition, the system is in continuous momentum, leading to new additions and transformations in its components. And the state of multilateralism in the system is subject to the surrounding political environment. At any point of time, the foreign

policy of any state is a set of sovereign, bilateral, regional and global tools. And even small states have some space to choose between going through multilateral institutions and going it alone. At the end, the sum of the foreign policy choices of individual states makes up the balance of international cooperation. However, the impact of the international political environment is perhaps most obvious when there are shockwaves in the foreign policies of great powers and at times of major crises, such as the terrorist attacks of September 11. To put it briefly, these policies and events usually have strong impact on the degree of multilateralism in the system.

## B. Historical Review of the Evolution of the System:

### 1. The Cold War Era

During the Cold War, the world was divided along two main lines, the Western camp led by the USA in confrontation with the Eastern camp led by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), with an iron curtain dividing Europe between the two camps. The division was mainly ideological in nature, with the West embracing the notions of democratic governance and free-market economy, while the East employed the notions of communist governance and centralized economic planning. Strategic and military interests of the two superpowers were addressed through two opposite military alliances, the NATO on the Western side and the Warsaw Pact on the Eastern side.

In response to this acrimonious confrontation, the so-called doctrine of containment was given birth in 1946, at the hands of George Kennan, an American diplomat in Moscow at the time. In a long telegram, Kennan argued that the main causes of friction between the USA and the USSR are ideological, not due to some misunderstanding or faulty communication. He added that the Soviet foreign policy was, in essence, based on communist ideological zeal and tsarist expansion, that there was no room for the two poles to meet and that the USA had to prepare itself for a long struggle with the USSR (Kissinger, 1994). In fact, the USSR viewed the USA and the West as irrevocably hostile to the most important founding principles of its ideology and vice versa. Afterwards, Kennan's understanding evolved into the so-called containment doctrine that largely shaped the USA's policy toward the USSR. In other contexts, the USA has also drawn on that doctrine in dealing with countries such as Iran and North Korea.

Other states often found themselves caught in the fire of the confrontation between the two camps. Hence, a group of visionary leaders mainly from the developing world launched the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961, with the aim of protecting the interests of the great majority of states, while at the same time playing the role of a buffer zone between the two competing camps. Two overarching principles of this movement were to keep a distance from all kinds of military alliances and to act as a catalyst for the effective functioning of the international multilateral system at large and the UN in particular. In a related move, the Group of 77 (G-77) was set up in 1964 basically to encourage South-South cooperation and promote the economic and social interests of the majority of developing countries. Consequently, the world became divided into three main blocks: The Western camp, the Eastern camp and the NAM bloc. There was a fragile balance of power between the two rival camps, with the NAM striding the borderline between them. However, at any point of time, each of the two camps was somehow attempting to expand its circle of influence at the expense of the other. Thus, although the NAM was meant to be a buffer zone between the two poles, its members were often subjects of fierce competition between them, which further kindled their bitter feud (Morphet, 2004). Moreover, individual states in different regions used to play the two superpowers against other and at times to even switch sides to achieve national benefits.

Nonetheless, there was a bridge of high-power politics between the two superpowers and this bridge did not usually pass by the UN. The two superpowers used the UN as a tool to varying degrees at different stages. In fact, one of the main principles of the USA's doctrine of containment was to predicate USA's policy toward the USSR on multilateralism, through the use of the UN to confront Soviet expansionism (Kissinger, 1994). Hence, the international multilateral system was mostly hostage to the competition between the USA and the USSR. This was particularly true for the UN, where the USSR was actively engaged, while in other institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the WTO, the USSR and states revolving in its circle of influence were absent, which largely absolved these institutions from the implications of the Cold War. Although the two poles could always opt out and move individually or rally groups of states behind them, they were sometimes in need of some cover of international legitimacy. For

instance, the UN Security Council was a center stage of the confrontation during the famous “pigs’ bay” episode in 1962. Hence, the confrontation between the two poles offered the UN the chance to be a prime stage and decisive factor between them. This was particularly anchored on the moral value so exclusively invested in the UN as the only multilateral forum with quasi-global membership.

The tug of war between the two poles often led to impasses in the UN and escalated to edge-of-abyss confrontations at times, with the rest of world largely standing by helplessly. During periods of accentuated confrontation, the world had to pay dearly for the lack of an environment conducive to addressing its more pressing woes. On the other hand, during periods of détente, when the two poles could give the voice of wisdom more space, the international community could achieve some progress toward addressing the different challenges it faced (Newman, 2006). Other international forums and regional organizations were not in any better position. And even in cases where neither of the two superpowers was member, there used to be divisions along the lines of the confrontation between the West and the East. As a result, the Cold War era was fraught with wars such as those in Korea and Vietnam. Even worse, in 1962, the aforementioned Cuban missile crisis took the two superpowers to the verge of nuclear confrontation. And, instead of attempting to resolve long-entrenched regional conflicts, such as those in the Middle East and Kashmir, these conflicts were somehow used by the two poles to project their relative powers (UN, 2004). However, in the case of the Middle East, the USA ultimately managed to monopolize the cards of the game, especially after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, and ever since, the role of the UN in the conflict has almost been reduced to nothing. Moreover, people in different parts of the world had to stand ruthless oppression, especially those in communist circles of influence and in marginal areas, such as Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, while the attention of superpowers was mainly focused on the dynamics of their relentless rivalry.

## 2. The Aftermath of the Cold War

With the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the USSR in 1990, the USA came out as the winner of the Cold War. For the first time in modern history, there was only one world superpower in what was to be called the new unipolar world order.



Consequently, the world was set for massive transformations, whether in foreign or internal policy settings, and all and sundry looked up to the USA for steering the path. There were strong hopes that with the end of the Cold War, the international multilateral system was headed toward reinforcement without the USSR standing in the way. And it seemed positive at the beginning with the UN Security Council making unprecedented moves on some subjects (UN, 2004). For instance, in a historical resolution, the Council authorized the use of force to liberate Kuwait after its invasion by Iraq in 1990. This incidence gave people affected by long-entrenched conflicts in different parts of the world hope that change would be forthcoming. It also seemed that there was a new revolution in foreign policy in the making, with the introduction of such controversial notions as human security and the right of intervention to stop massive human atrocities such as genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Notably, these new notions were met with fierce resistance from a big majority of states, mostly from the South, but they persevered on their appeal to a wide swathe of Western states and global public opinion.

Logically, it all depended on the direction the new sole pole decided to take, whether it engineers its foreign policy on the basis of multilateralism or chooses to go it alone. In his article *“The Unipolar Moment”* published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1990, Charles Krauthammer is recognized to be the first to coin the term “unipolar world order.” In this article, Krauthammer argues that the UN is good for nothing. He even reduced multilateralism to providing coverage for USA's actions that are in fact unilateral, only to accommodate supportive USA's public (Krauthammer, 2003). One should indicate that this kind of arguments reflects the conservative line of thinking that prevailed later on during the Bush administration. In contrast, during its first year in office in 1993, the USA's Clinton administration declared its adherence to what it called “assertive multilateralism.” This orientation was based on the argument that international institutions and multilateral partnerships were useful tools to share burdens and risks, win wide global support for USA's policies and accomplish objectives that seemed otherwise out of reach. Unfortunately, this policy soon came under attack, especially as moves through the UN to restore peace in areas such as Somalia and the Balkans failed. And opponents attacked multilateral institutions for reducing the freedom of movement of the USA and threatening USA's interests (Patrick, 2003).

Thus, the Clinton administration had to retreat to a more conditional stance with regard to multilateralism: “multilateralism when we can, unilateralism when we must.”

In effect, it appeared that the end of the Cold War only created a need for the USA to find an appealing rationale for keeping the state of militarization of the world in the absence of the Soviet threat. What followed was the continuation of war doctrines in foreign policy, predicated on the alleged need to fight against a wide spectrum of alternative threats, including rogue states, terrorist groups and organized-crime networks (Klare, 1995). It was the USA's conviction that the world continued to be a dangerous place, with threats no less alarming than those of the “evil Soviet empire,” and that the best means to face these threats was through absolute military superiority more than anything else. Thus, it turned out that the UN had exchanged the constraints of the cold war for the shackles of the unipolar world order (UN, 2004). Long-standing conflicts, such as those in the Middle East and Kashmir, dragged on. And failures to react on time to the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia rendered a strong blow to the hopes for an effective multilateral system and a just world order. Moreover, the USA chose to diverge with worldwide consensuses on issues such as the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change and the 1998 Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court. In sum, the aftermath of the Cold War presented a mixed picture and a missed opportunity to launch a more effective multilateral system.

Nonetheless, some argue that although the Cold War was fraught with crises, it did offer one important thing and that was order (Kurth, 2007). States belonging to the Western camp enjoyed a good deal of liberty and prosperity under order. And, on the other side, states in the Eastern Camp, though largely deprived of liberty or prosperity, could still enjoy the essential advantage of order, even if it was despotic in most cases. In addition to preserving order within their respective circles, it was in the best interest of the two superpowers to also sustain a variety of mostly despotic regimes in the Third World, especially those that were perceived as client regimes. In contrast, the aftermath of the Cold War witnessed violent turbulences in world politics and the world seemed in need for reordering. Hence, there has been a plethora of “world order” concepts after the Cold War, including unipolar, multipolar and nonpolar orders. Unfortunately, none of

these concepts could hold true for long. And, currently, the world seems to be still undergoing transition to a new, unclear world order.

### 3. The Attacks of 11 September 2001

The whole world was severely shaken by the suicide-attacks that took place in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. The attacks targeted one prime symbol of capitalism, the building of the World Trade Center in New York. They also targeted the world military powerhouse, the Pentagon in Washington and the world highest-profile building, the White House, but failed to strike the latter. These attacks caused huge human and material losses, and it was later revealed that the perpetrators were all Muslims originating from the Middle East and affiliated to the so-called Al-Qaeda terrorist network. In effect, the September 11 attacks were so grave that they ushered in radical changes in the global political environment and in the concepts and doctrines of national and collective security.

Without hesitancy, the whole world declared its readiness to stand by the USA in its endeavor to hunt those behind the attacks and to react to the threat posed by Al-Qaeda and all kinds of terrorist groups (Luck, 2006). The UN-endorsed NATO operation in Afghanistan was launched, with the contribution, logistical assistance and support of an unprecedented number of states. It became clear that, for the first time in centuries, the world has come together to face one common threat. The whole world also stood behind the interim government that was installed in Afghanistan shortly after the war there. In fact, the attacks were the main factor behind a concert of international efforts at the multilateral, regional and national levels to confront the threats of such extremist groups as Al-Qaeda. And it seemed that the attacks could give multilateralism another chance by forcing the Bush administration to modify its campaign rhetoric and adopt a policy of more active international engagement. Indeed, there were early signs that the attacks would lead to a post-September 11 new world order (Rahiman, 2001). However, the USA chose to react through the so-called "coalition against terror," established after direct consultation with USA's allies and away from the UN. Thus, from the outset, the USA leaned toward informal multilateralism. Moreover, the USA's foreign policy threatened of a grave polarization of the international community, as it employed a radical classification of countries, according to which they are either friends

or enemies. In this light, the USA's approach to the fight against terrorism was somehow reminiscent of the old Cold-War politics.

In particular, the USA's Bush administration deserves singling out as one of the most important factors behind the retreat of multilateralism since World War II. Although the problems of the USA with the world and the problems of the world with the USA date before George W. Bush took office, his approach to multilateralism was based on notions of neo-conservatism that dismayed the world. President Bush and his team basically viewed USA's foreign policy from the narrow perspective of USA's national interests, while disregarding the role and duties of the USA as a natural world leader (Kagan, 2008). Although the September 11 attacks enforced some deal of nuance in Bush's foreign policy, it turned out to be only a tactical change of tones. Indeed, the Bush administration adopted a general foreign policy line that was in stark contempt of multilateralism, including withdrawing from globally tumultuous multilateral treaties, polarizing the international community along the fault lines of friends/enemies, democratic/undemocratic in addition to monopolizing the war against terror as if it was a USA's domestic affair. As a result, anti-Americanism reached unprecedented heights throughout the world, which denied the world the needed moral example and leader that only the USA was qualified to discharge.

Moreover, shortly after September 11 attacks, the USA indulged in unprecedented classification of states, most particularly using the so-called lists of rogue states, failing and ungoverned territories. The list of rogue states included those that pose threats to the USA or provide safe heavens for terrorist groups that could target the USA. In particular, the Bush-administration's list of rogue states included North Korea, Iraq and Iran. Accordingly, these three states were set for special targeting mechanisms and pressures. In 2003, the USA decided to attack Iraq, with the unfounded claim that it had a program for developing nuclear weapons (Williams, 2004). The two others, North Korea and Iran, are still in confrontation with the USA, but attacking them seems to be less feasible militarily and politically. In particular, the spirit of common destiny that prevailed after September 11 attacks got rapidly eroded by the insistence of the USA on striking Iraq in spite of wide objections to this move in the UN Security Council, especially from other permanent members and USA's European allies.

#### 4. After the Invasion of Iraq

As previously mentioned, the USA's Bush administration arrived at a conviction that Iraq is a rogue state and that Saddam Hussein's regime has to be toppled by force. It deployed desperate efforts to authorize the use of force against Iraq in the UN Security Council, on the pretext that the Iraqi regime is posing a threat to international peace. The American administration tried to substantiate this claim on the ground that Iraq is concealing a nuclear-weapons program and attempted to manipulate the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) into this direction. Although all these efforts failed and there were wide objections from the international community to using force against Iraq, the USA rallied the so-called "coalition of the willing" and invaded Iraq in 2003, thus rendering a grave blow to the UN and multilateralism (Slaughter, 2005).

The episode of Iraq is still dragging on today and it has even turned out to be so influential that it has become a landmark for policy makers and international relations theorists arguing that it was a turning point between two different world orders, the unipolar world order led by the USA and a new world order in the making (Haas, 2008). Several factors have contributed to this line of thought. Firstly, as it became obvious after the invasion, the USA had a clear entry strategy but lacked a similarly clear exit strategy. It was as if the USA wanted to topple the Iraqi regime at any price and notwithstanding whatever happens afterward. To its dismay, after its early sweeping victory, the war proved to be a serious over-stretch in the USA's military capacity, especially given USA's commitments to operations in Afghanistan. In particular, the guerilla war tactics used by different Iraqi militia have been a source of continuous drain on the USA's military, thus weakening the overall military outreach of the USA and shaking the security foundations of USA's allies who have for long depended on the USA's global security umbrella.

Secondly, the images and news reports of torture in Abou Gharib prison in Iraq and in Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba have, to say the least, shocked the global public opinion. Especially, the revelations of torture at Abou Gharib rendered a serious blow to the soft power of the USA and undermined the credibility of its advocacy of human rights (Roth, 2005). In addition, the combined effect of the

elongated operations in Iraq, together with the wrongful ideological handling of the war and its assimilation to crusades, have transformed Iraq into a pole attracting extremists from the region and beyond, thus further complicating the situation. Moreover, the Abou Gharib revelations coincided with preceding criticisms of the USA for its insistence on treating those detained in Guantanamo Bay as enemy fighters, not as prisoners of war, which could have brought them under the umbrella of the 1949 Third Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War. This stance was widely condemned, as a poignant action to evade responsibilities set by international law. Now that the new USA's administration has committed to withdraw from Iraq and to close the detention camp in Guantanamo Bay, the USA's reputation could meet some consolation. Nonetheless, the damage done was so huge that it will not be easy to overcome.

Thirdly, the acrimonious disagreement between the USA and its transatlantic allies over the war has caused a rift in transatlantic relations (Kagan, 2008). Although a world powerhouse, the UK, sided with the USA on using force against Iraq, along with some other European countries including Spain, other European powerhouses, such as France and Germany, along with most other European countries were outspoken against the USA's insistence on using force. However, the then USA's administration paid too little attention to the concerns of its European allies. This has left a scar in the transatlantic alliance and proved to be detrimental to transatlantic cooperation on other issues of global concern. Moreover, the episode of Iraq was used as a landmark epitomizing the deep ideological and historical differences between the two transatlantic allies. For instance, Robert Kagan argues that the USA belongs to Mars, indicating hard power, while its European allies belong to Venus, indicating the power of example. Of particular importance here, the USA-European rift left both sides in weaker positions in the international arena. And the USA found itself not only lacking the support of its traditional European allies, but also suffering from a grossly damaged image in Europe and worldwide.

Fourthly, the Iraq war served an ultimatum to small states and the international community at large that the new sole superpower is not a benign hegemon that defends a rule-based world order, exercises its power through multilateral institutions and plays

the role of an “offshore balancer.” Instead, it was proven, the sole hegemon, facing new external challenges, is driven by internal particularistic interests, in quest for building an informal empire, where force is used to topple antagonist regimes, impose client ones and enforce economic subordination (Hinnebusch, 2006). Thus, the very event of the eruption and quick victory of the USA in Iraq was a clear indication that there has arrived a new unipolar world order, where the new sole pole is itself a source of disorder or self-centered chaotic order. Of course, other states may adapt to, or even benefit from band-wagoning with, a new rogue superpower, but it is these states that are to bear the brunt of a world setting where the sole superpower undermines the rules constraining the use of force in international relations.

With the election of the current USA’s Obama administration, the USA’s neo-conservatism that was behind the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq has significantly subsided. In parallel, the new administration has been striving to heal the woes in the transatlantic alliance. In addition, it has taken an outright decision to close the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, in an attempt to repair the USA’s image. Moreover, it has reshuffled the war agenda, by agreeing to a schedule of withdrawal from Iraq by 2011 and moving the focus of its military clout to the still ongoing war in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the new administration has honored its electoral campaign commitment to cooperate more closely with external partners, including China and Russia, and to work more through multilateral institutions. Thus, multilateralism might be said to have got another chance with the new USA’s administration. Notably, the USA is still the world most powerful nation and the future of multilateralism depends on its conduct. And, clearly, there has been some tangible progress in the effectiveness of multilateral institutions during the new administration. However, the reading of the USA’s multilateral inclination this far reveals a great deal of reliance on informal multilateralism, through forums and group meetings outside the UN, as the main pillar of its foreign policy, at the expense of binding multilateral institutions. In fact, this trend vindicates the theory of Richard Haas, President of the Council on Foreign Affairs, of “multilateralism *à la carte*,” as the most likely course for the multilateral system in the foreseeable future (Haas, 2008).



To sum up, it seems that the international multilateral system has been facing hurdles ever since its consolidation in the aftermath of World War II. The community of states assumes collective responsibility on this overall picture. Indeed, multilateral institutions do not have wills of their own; instead their wills are those of their member states. Nonetheless, super and great powers, most importantly the USA nowadays, assume special responsibility, given their weights and roles, which make them capable of either bolstering the system or undermining it without fearing repercussions. Fortunately, the new USA's administration has shown some better commitment to multilateralism. However, the system is still at crossroads and either multilateralism takes the road of effective global governance, i.e. rule-based governance by all and for all, or it takes the less-travelled road of informal and looser global governance. In effect, it is the very basic aspiration of a fair and just world that is at stake today.

## II. Global (In)Security

Global security has been a constant concern for the international community. In large part, the UN was established to provide a guarantee against relapse in aggressions after World War II. In so doing, the UN employs the so-called collective security principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Notably, the UN has succeeded in preventing a recurrence of world wars, but time and again, it has been proven ill-poised and ill-equipped to guarantee a secure world. Various threats to international security have been fomenting. This section, it follows, will provide concise analyses of the main challenges to global security, including interstate conflicts, internal conflicts, international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

### A. Interstate Conflicts

Interstate and regional conflicts are the traditional types of conflicts threatening international peace. Fortunately, the frequency and magnitude of these conflicts have decreased significantly since World War II. The probability that a state could be party to a war or a military intervention in any year has decreased from one chance in seven for the period from 1495 to 1918 to one chance in hundred since 1990 (Holsti, 2006). During the Cold War, there was usually some kind of balance at flashing points, with parties on one front taking sides with the USA and parties on the other front taking sides with the former USSR. Accordingly, the Cold War contributed to the retreat of this kind



of conflicts. More recently, the forces of globalization have been closing the gaps among states, increasing the degree of interdependence and binding humanity altogether. Economic, social and cultural exchanges among states create strong interests in avoiding disruption to the flow of these exchanges. Thus, states find more and more reasons to relegate the resort to outright war to fewer and fewer cases of interstate conflicts.

However, statistics also indicate that if we combine incidences of interstate war since 1945 with acts of unilateral military intervention aimed at toppling or otherwise reinforcing regimes in other states, the figures suggest an overall increase in this type of armed conflicts. In the period from 1496 to 1945, a war or military intervention took place every three years on average. Since 1945, the interval shrank to one year and half, which refers to a doubling of overall incidences of resort to violence in international relations (Holsti, 2006). Although the number of states has substantially increased since 1496, this figure remains an overly alarming indicator. Moreover, long-entrenched conflicts remain unresolved in areas such as the Middle East, South Asia and North-East Asia. These conflicts continue to pose threats to international peace and security and hinder the potential of cooperation between the antagonists such as the Arab states and Israel, India and Pakistan and South Korea and North Korea. Furthermore, they have implications on the internal stability of the states involved and have in some cases fueled internal conflicts and civil wars, which in turn exacerbate wider regional conflicts. Such an environment diverts scarce resources into weapon stockpiling at the expense of pressing developmental needs. In addition, external conflicts are sometimes used as an excuse for lack of progress on internal challenges, which imposes dear sacrifices on local populations.

In particular, the Russian Georgian War of 2008 is novel evidence that there is some kind of resurgence of use of force in international relations (Peral, 2009). The images of Russian troops sweeping into Georgia served a clear ultimatum that the case of a UN member state waging an outright war against another UN member state is still a standing, albeit latent, threat to international peace and security. Although, this war erupted in a traditionally contentious region, the Caucasus, it took place at a time the international community was self-assured that the transition to the post-USSR era has

completed and while attention was largely focused on helping ex-USSR and Eastern European states modernize and become more active members of the community of states. Moreover, in the geographical sense, the war was so close to the footsteps of the NATO and the EU that it caused a great shock to the West and the international community at large and alarmed that wider confrontations could ensue if Russia is not contained. As a result, the war in Georgia led to a comprehensive reassessment of the relations between the West and Russia. And there is growing evidence that Russia, a powerful belligerent, stands to gain from this reassessment in terms of its foreign policy agenda.

### B. Civil Wars

Civil wars have substantially increased in number since the 1970s, reaching up to 30 such conflicts by 2003 (UN, 2004). They have come to dominate the agenda of the UN Security Council, with traditional interstate wars largely succumbing to history. The African continent plays host to most of these conflicts. Generally, root causes of such conflicts include ethnic polarization, lack of good governance, weak institutions and poverty and deprivation. They cause massive human sufferings and have implications on regional peace and security. As an intergovernmental organization, and given its background, the UN was not configured to deal with internal conflicts. And this is all the more evident when lacking the approval of the government or the warring parties concerned. Still, the UN played an active role in many internal conflicts through means such as mediation, peacekeeping, post-conflict assistance in addition to humanitarian relief. This is particularly true for the period after the end of the Cold War, especially as sentiments soared that the UN could finally rid itself of the fetters of the sensitive balance of the Cold War and would hitherto move more swiftly to face threats to international peace and security.

Nonetheless, some of the most discrediting claims against the UN and the larger international multilateral system stem from failures to contain civil strife in areas such as Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, Kosovo and Darfur. In fact, the conflicts most challenging to the international community today are mainly internal in nature, with those in Darfur and Somalia topping the list. Although the UN Security Council is the prime international authority in charge of international peace and security, regional

organizations have been playing an increasingly important role, as foreseen by the UN Charter (Hettne and Soderbaum, 2006). Most particularly, the AU and its predecessor Organization of African Unity (OAU) played an active role in dealing with rampant internal conflicts in Africa. However, this does not absolve the international community and most specifically the UN Security Council, of the responsibility toward such conflicts. And this becomes all the more needed when we take in consideration the lack of human expertise, technical, logistical and financial capabilities required to face civil wars at the regional level.

In this regard, after the attacks of September 11, the USA developed the concept of weak, failing and failed states, in the course of revisiting its national security strategy (USA National Security Strategies 2002 and 2006). In fact, there is an understanding in the USA that weak and war-torn states could pose as much threat to USA's security as strong states (Slaughter et al, 2008). Although this concept was mostly motivated by the need to deprive terrorists from safe heavens in states with poor governance, it is also linked to the proliferation of internal conflicts. According to the USA's vision, weak states are generally those that lack central control over their territories, which leaves room for terrorist groups that could as well cooperate with dissident groups, organized crime networks and local militia. Applying these general criteria, it turns out that most sub-Saharan African countries are either weak, failing or failed states. Thus, in the context of the global war against terrorism, internal conflicts and their related chaos have gained new dimensions. Fortunately, this may also hold fruits, as it sheds more light on internal conflicts such as those in Darfur and Somalia.

However, the biggest failures of the international multilateral system in containing civil strife have been in preventing ethnic cleansing, genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes (UN, 2004). One stark example of these failures is the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994. The UN failed to foresee the deterioration of the conflict to the level of genocide. Moreover, after the genocide started, troop contributors withdrew peacekeepers and the UN Security Council, bowing to USA's pressure, failed to respond. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1995, the role of the UN was confined to humanitarian assistance, while watching mass killing taking place over a long stretch of time, without any meaningful political or military action to stop it. A

third example is Kosovo, where the paralysis of the UN Security Council gave way to the military intervention by the NATO in 1999 to prevent further ethnic cleansing.

In a related move, the introduction of the notions of human security and humanitarian intervention (later named the responsibility to protect) came as a major aberration from the post-Westphalian world order. The two notions are very controversial and could stand many definitions. But one could say that the notion of human security is in fact a wider frame for the responsibility to protect. For the first time since 1648, the world appeared set to redefine the notion of national sovereignty to open the door for international intervention in internal affairs of nation-states in cases of massive atrocities. In 1999, in an address to the UN General Assembly, Kofi Anan, then UN Secretary General, went so far as to suggest that the classical legal concept of state sovereignty may have to yield in some circumstances to the “sovereignty of the individual.” In reaction, UN member states have shown a great deal of division on the subject, and there seems to be very little space for reconciling divergent views on the balance between the notions of state sovereignty and humanitarian intervention (Evans and Sahnoun, 2001).

Notably, these two controversial notions started taking shape after the end of the cold war, with sponsorship from several countries, including the USA, Japan and Canada. In a historical landmark in 1992, the UN Security Council authorized the use of force in Somalia for humanitarian purposes. In a second incidence, the NATO intervened in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 to protect UN designated safe areas. Another landmark, though without UN authorization, was the USA-led NATO strikes against Serbia in 1999 to halt the human atrocities in Kosovo. However, the UN, the body where the notions of human security and humanitarian intervention were born, failed to uphold them in two stark cases (UN, 2004). The first was the failure to act on time to stop the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the second was the massive ethnic cleansing that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995. As a result, currently, the international community seems more determined not to let such gross violations of human rights take place again.

More specifically, the notion of human security first appeared in 1994 in a report of the UN Development Program (UNDP). Later on, it gained momentum thanks to the

report of the Independent Commission on Human Security in 2003 (Commission on Human Security, 2003). However, the UN Millennium Review Summit in 2005 failed to reach a consensus on the issue. Under the subtitle of “human security,” the Outcome Document of the UN Millennium Review Summit in 2005 stated that “We stress the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. We recognize that all individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential.” Due to the wide controversy such a concept raises, the Outcome Document only reflected a commitment to further discussing and better defining the notion of human security in the UN General Assembly (UN, 2005).

In contrast, the more specific notion of the responsibility to protect received some kind of international endorsement. The UN Millennium Review Summit in 2005 provides a practical definition of this notion, stating that “Each individual state has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help states exercise this responsibility and support the UN in establishing an early warning capability.” Beforehand, the Canadian government had sponsored the so-called International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty that issued a report on the responsibility to protect in 2001 (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001). Although this commission lacked a specific UN mandate, its report contributed significantly to ultimately building some consensus around the subject at the Millennium Review Summit. Still, it is not the ink on paper that matters, as there continues to be wide controversy, with some states even contending that the language in the Outcome Document of the Millennium Review Summit is not binding to them.

In the real world, the application of the notions of human security and the responsibility to protect seems to be subject to a political-appropriateness test. For instance, concurrently with the atrocities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya, in Russia, was witnessing perhaps no less shocking atrocities. Nonetheless, the world was

unable to move to put an end to the tragedy there. There are plenty of other examples, including atrocities in Sierra Leone, the Great lakes region and the Sudan. In contrast, when the USA deemed it appropriate to intervene militarily to reinstall the Aristide regime in Haiti in 1994, it did so without even consulting the UN. Although this intervention was donned the mantra of human rights and values, it failed to meet the basic internationally agreed standards of the responsibility to protect. In fact, the criteria for international intervention are highly politicized (Kissinger, 2002). While moral principles are universal and timeless, foreign policy is subject to circumstances. Unfortunately, recent history indicates that incidences of mass human suffering are likely to happen again in the future. Consequently, if the international community is serious about confronting these incidences effectively, there has to be a clear, stable and unbiased framework for timely responses to them (Evans and Sahnoun, 2001).

### C. Terrorism

The attacks of September 11 marked a turning point in the cognizance of the international community about terrorism and brought that term forward as a keyword in international relations. As a result, there has risen a fervent interest in studying that phenomenon and combating it. However, it should be noted, terrorism as a phenomenon had existed long before September 2001 and scorched many countries with its flames. Countries like Egypt, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Algeria, Philippines and Ireland are among those that had to pay dear price for terrorist activities. Along these lines, this subsection will set off with an elaboration on the definition and recent history of terrorism. Then, it will provide brief analyses of its root causes and international reactions to it, especially after September 11 attacks.

#### 1. Definition and Recent History

Negotiations in the UN on an international convention on terrorism have failed this far to arrive at a consensual definition of this phenomenon, because of gaps of positions that will be examined later on. But the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change provided a basic definition, describing it as “any action, that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population or to compel a

government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act” (UN, 2004).

Notably, terrorism as a phenomenon has no specific home or religious affiliation. One of the first and most significant acts of terrorism after the establishment of the UN was the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte, the then UN mediator in Palestine, in Jerusalem in 1948. However, it is evident that there has been an unprecedented surge in terrorist activities since the end of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1989, shortly before the collapse of the USSR. During the fight against the Soviets, the USA in coordination with allied regimes, such as those in Pakistan and Egypt, was encouraging volunteer fighters to travel to Afghanistan to join the resistance against the Soviet occupation, in the name of Islam (Al-Shobki, 2006). This tactic served the USA’s purposes in the Cold War and at the same time served cooperative regimes by ridding them of unwanted extremists on their soil. Shortly before the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, terrorist groups there established the so-called World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders. By the time the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, it had become home to an avalanche of virulent terrorist groups including Al-Qaeda. And these groups wanted to redeploy their jihad, fighting in the name of God, in some other direction.

It was no secret that jihadists were determined to fight whom they thought of as enemies of Islam, including in Israel, the USA, the larger West and even the Arab world. At the outset, the ensuing civil war in Afghanistan helped guarantee that the country would continue to serve as a safe heaven for groups like Al-Qaeda, which later formed an alliance with the Taliban movement originating from Pakistan. It was also clear that the long-entrenched Middle Eastern conflict played a decisive role in the redirection of jihad operations. Indeed, this conflict is one of the main sources of extremism in the region, in view of the animosity it grows between the Arabs and the Israelis. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, some of the more fatal terrorist operations targeted USA’s assets around the world. In particular, the USA increasingly became a target of terrorist groups based in the Middle East, partly because of USA’s support to Israel and repressive Arab regimes (Luck, 2006). In response, the USA started to move more actively in the UN and other multilateral forums to combat terrorism.



Consequently, terrorism started to attract worldwide attention, out of fear that it is becoming an open war against modern life patterns and Western values. Ultimately, the attacks of September 11 marked a radical departure in the perception of terrorism, given their huge magnitude and impact.

## 2. Root Causes and Catalysts

Certainly, terrorism is unjustifiable under any circumstances and whatever the reasons could be. To say the least, it is an inhumane way of expressing one's ideas. However, there is a noticeable gap in understanding its causes between two main lines of thinking. On one hand, there is some belief that terrorist groups are mainly motivated by grudge against the American and Western model of life and that they are meant to destroy this model and revive the memories of the dark ages (Ikenberry and Slaughter, 2006). This value-based understanding is widely shared by Western circles. On the other hand, there is a counter argument that is being defended mostly by Southern circles. These latter circles tend to think that terrorism has some root causes, most importantly injustice, poverty and lack of democracy (UN, 2004). And they perceive destroying the American model of life as a byproduct of these root causes, not a root cause in itself. Clearly, the gap is large and hinders joining efforts in the fight against terrorism.

For instance, with regard to injustice, there is some sort of sympathy with Al-Qaeda and some like terrorist groups in Arab and Muslim countries, as sympathizers share the extremist perspective that the existing world order is one that lacks basic justice (Bell, 2006). Although large swathes of Arabs and Muslims, especially from younger generations, are fond of the American model of life, there is widespread rage against the USA's foreign policy in the Middle East, in view of the USA's traditional support to Israel in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. And the Iraq war added a significant deal to tarnishing the image of the USA in the Arab and Muslim world. People disaffected by USA's policies toward other conflicts are no much different (Glynn, 2005). In fact, a quick look at the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and some other entrenched conflicts reveals a state of despair about reaching peaceful settlements to these conflicts, with the USA and the West at large receiving the brunt of the blame.



Poverty and inequality are also believed to provide a fertile environment for extremism and terrorism (Glynn, 2005). Globalization has failed to realize the basic expectations of a great majority of humanity. There are currently more than one billion persons living under the UN official poverty line. A dynamic analysis of this situation further complicates the image, as large groups of people not only lack access to basic necessities, such as food, clean water and sanitation, but also lack decent education, healthcare and decent work and feel hopeless about the future. Terrorist groups find this environment availing and exploit it to promote their agendas. Most importantly, the sense of deprivation of young poor people makes it easier to recruit and replenish membership cadres of terrorist networks. In addition, poor and deprived people make up a large base receptive to, or at least sympathetic with, extremist ideas. Hence, terrorist groups find more safe heavens among poor populations, be it in poor or rich countries.

There is also another contended root cause; lack of democracy. This basically refers to the lack of the basic freedoms of opinion, expression and association, which are the three most fundamental freedoms in international human rights law. The aforementioned sympathy with Al-Qaeda in Arab and Muslim countries stems partly from the close relationship between the USA and conservative regimes in these countries (Bell, 2006). Most of these regimes stifle popular participation and fall short of meeting the basic requirements of modern democracy (Glynn, 2005). They also suffer from corruption, lack of rule of law, lack of accountability and transparency and deep-rooted misconceptions about history and traditions. In addition, there is some kind of security paranoia in Arab and Muslim countries, with red lines that if crossed could lead to arbitrary arrests, imprisonment and torture. In such an environment, there can hardly be any space for disagreement or dialogue. Consequently, opponents find solace in different kinds of secret organizations that could have extremist ideologies.

In addition to root causes, there are catalysts that magnify terrorist threats. In effect, the era we are living is ripe with factors that contribute to what could be called the “globalization of terror” (Al-Shobki, 2006). No doubt, terrorism has become more horrifying, as the revolution in mass communications has made it easier for terrorist groups to spread their dogma and reach. In addition, the unprecedented globalization of finance and the torrents of newly invented financial instruments have helped financing

terrorism. Moreover, there is evidence that global terrorist networks draw on the capabilities of organized-crime networks, as manifested by the relation between opium trade and terrorism in Afghanistan. In fact, the attacks of 11 September 2001 are exemplary of the “globalization of terror,” in view of the globalized nature of the attacks, which were perpetrated by Middle Easterners who lived and studied in Europe and the USA, at instructions from Al-Qaeda leadership in Afghanistan. These attacks also reflected another important trend; the evolution of terrorist operations from targeting political leaders and elites to targeting symbolic and high-profile targets, such as the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, without sympathy toward the would-be innocent victims. Moreover, the continuing shackles of the international systems of WMD nonproliferation contribute to yet more magnification of terrorist threats. There are substantiated fears that terrorist networks could get their hands on nuclear or other WMD, which scenario could lead to inflicting hitherto unimaginable human and material losses (Ikenberry and Slaughter, 2006). These fears were clearly reflected in the USA’s national security strategies that came out since September 11 attacks as well as in the EU security strategy. Obviously, one of the main objectives of the last generation of Western security strategies is to prevent the scenario of WMD “catastrophic terrorism” (Slaughter et al, 2008).

### 3. International Reactions to Terrorism

As mentioned above, the attacks of September 11 in Washington and New York shook the world violently. In the aftermath, terrorism has come to the forefront as the most dangerous global threat. This led to far-reaching implications on international military and political fronts. Militarily, the attacks proved outdated the traditional national security doctrines. In effect, they have come as significant evidence that threats to security have become globalized, and so they require global approaches. The fact that the heart of the USA, given its traditional sense of geographical isolation, was the target of the September 11 attacks left no doubt that no single country can face the security threats of the day on its own. The UN High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change states that these attacks were an indication that states and intergovernmental security institutions have failed to keep up with changes in the nature of threats (UN, 2004). It adds that the technological revolution enables smaller and smaller numbers of people to inflict greater and greater harms. And it articulates three basic pillars of

collective security today: threats go beyond state borderlines, they are linked and they must be addressed at multilayered levels, including global, regional and national levels.

A byproduct of the attacks of September 11 was the birth of the so-called preemptive defense concept in the USA, before some other states transplanted it (Ikenberry and Slaughter, 2006). Notably, the Charter of the UN prohibits member states from using or threatening to use force against each other, as a general rule in the interest of world peace and security as well as friendly relations between member states. While the Charter provides two exceptions to this general rule: one for self-defense against imminent threats and the other for military measures authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VII, in cases of threats or breaches of international peace. However, the USA, shocked by the attacks, expanded its own doctrine of national security to introduce the concept of preemptive strikes in its two national security strategies of 2002 and 2006, on the basis of need for removing threats of attacks before they materialize, which could fail the UN test of the right to self-defense. In 2010, the new USA national security strategy partially diluted this concept, tying it to exhausting diplomatic means.

On the political level, the response of the international community to the attacks reflected greater involvement and dedication. One day past the attacks, the UN General Assembly and the Security Council issued two strong, unanimous resolutions condemning the attacks and drafting the way forward for consolidating international cooperation in combating terrorism. The Security Council's resolution was interpreted to provide a blanket authorization for the USA to use force against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Two weeks later, the Security Council passed the famous resolution 1373, which is the most comprehensive and far-reaching of its genre in the field of combating terrorism. That resolution established the so-called Counter Terrorism Committee, as an ongoing subsidiary body in charge of overseeing the anti-terrorism measures elaborated by the resolution. Three years later, the Security Council passed a resolution on the link between terrorism and WMD, which established two more bodies, bringing the total to four subsidiary organs in charge of combating terrorism (Luck, 2006).

The report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change reflected an agreement on the need for a global comprehensive anti-terrorism strategy that

incorporates measures broader than coercive ones and addresses the so-called root causes of terrorism (UN, 2004). In 2005, the Outcome Document of the UN Millennium Review Summit marked another qualitative shift in global reactions to terrorism. That document expressed a strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and stressed the need for a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy and a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. In 2006, the UN General Assembly passed the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, with an annexed plan of action elaborating guidelines for detailed measures by all concerned actors. Notably, there are currently 13 international legal instruments on combating terrorism, but these instruments are scattered and lack core focus. In this respect, negotiations on a comprehensive international convention on terrorism started after the 2005 Millennium Review Summit, with a view to integrating the 13 preceding agreements into a new convention. But, unfortunately, these negotiations are still facing insurmountable disagreements. Although the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change proposed a basic definition of terrorism, the negotiations are mostly stalemated around this very basic item (Schlesinger, 2008). On one side, states belonging to conflict areas like the Middle East insist that such a convention must exempt resistance to foreign occupation from the scope of terrorist acts and demand that state terrorism be covered by the convention. On the other side, there is staunch rejection to these demands, coming mainly from states with unsettled territorial claims as well as from Western states whose definition of terrorism is almost Al-Qaeda-tailored.

In the overall analysis, the reaction of the international community to the threats of terrorism is fragile. Only targeting Al-Qaeda enjoys general international consensus, but as the issues move beyond Al-Qaeda, they become problematic (Pillar, 2004). The main reason is that there is a lack of consensus on the appropriate means to combat terrorism, with many states disagreeing with the USA's record of concentration on coercive and military measures as well as its disrespect of international law and multilateral institutions. In view of this lack of consensus, the current trend indicates some kind of satisfaction with addressing terrorism as a localized issue. One obvious reflection of this trend is the lack of compromise on the divergent positions in the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive international convention on terrorism. Another problem is the proliferation of international anti-terrorism efforts in the UN,

Bretton Woods institutions, G-8 and other forums, which raises questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of these efforts. Moreover, the USA's approach to combating terrorism has alienated the international public opinion and tarnished the image of the USA in the world. The saga of the treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay as prisoners of war or enemy combatants stands out as one issue where the USA defied the rest of the world. And leaked images of prisoners in Guantanamo shocked international public conscience and had negative implications on the unity of the international front against terrorism. Notably, these images contributed to sympathy with terrorist propaganda, and so they were received by terrorist networks as a boon to their agendas.

#### D. Weapons of Mass Destruction

The very existence of WMD, including nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons fails to meet any human logic, as they threaten all humanity with apocalyptic ends. Although they were meant to enhance security, they not only represent a critical threat to human survival, but also impose significant drains on scarce resources that are otherwise short of meeting basic human needs such as food, healthcare and education. Nonetheless, the state of international cooperation on WMD is disgraceful to say the least and, failure after failure, the world has reached an alarming stage, where these weapons are in fact proliferating not retreating. Notwithstanding that the last wave of globalization has brought about an unprecedented degree of interdependence and there is some tacit consensus that these weapons must not be used unless there are exceptionally grave threats, states still fail to steer the path toward reliable regimes of nonproliferation, not to mention their removal altogether.

One of episodes of failures was at the 2005 UN Millennium Review Summit that even failed to include any textual agreement on WMD in its Outcome Document. This not only reflects wide gaps between positions, but also, and perhaps more importantly, a lack of confidence that seriously threatens the sensitive and precarious nonproliferation regimes. In fact, there was a series of unavailing events that led up to such an impasse in the UN Millennium Review Summit (Findlay, 2006). First, the 7<sup>th</sup> review conference of the 1968 NPT in 2005 failed to achieve any progress with regard to nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament. Secondly, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

(CTBT) continues to be out of force for lack of ratifications. Thirdly, the work of the Conference on Disarmament has been deadlocked over the basic issue of its agenda. The list of failures goes on and on, but to mention only a few more very concisely, it includes the inability to launch negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, the collapse of negotiations on a biological weapons verification protocol and the state of uncertainty with regard to the future of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

Like in other fields, the USA receives most of the blame for the precarious state of the WMD regimes (Findlay, 2006). In particular, there has been little progress on USA-Russian nuclear disarmament, although the Cold War ended more than 20 years ago and the USA came out of this war as the victor, which granted the USA quasi-monopoly of the cards of the game. Notably, neo-conservative unilateral policies of the USA's Bush administration have caused a lot of harm to international cooperation on WMD. Fortunately, the current USA's Obama administration has taken a welcome reengagement stance in this regard. In an audacious move, in his remarks before the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2009, president Obama called for resuming international cooperation to reinvigorate the nuclear nonproliferation regime and ultimately achieve complete nuclear disarmament (Obama, 2009). He also announced his administration resolute to pursue a new agreement with Russia to further reduce strategic warheads and launchers. In this regard, the readjustment of the Bush-era plan for a missile-defense system in Europe is hoped to hold some fruits for USA-Russian cooperation and wider international cooperation.

However, it is still unclear whether the USA could lead the world to break the deep deadlocks on WMD, which the USA itself had long nurtured (Yale Global, 2009). In particular, it seems that the main focus of the new USA's administration is on avoiding the fearful scenario that terrorists could get their hands on nuclear weapons, a high strategic priority for the USA, given the horrifying background of the attacks of September 2001. In addition, the USA assigns high priorities to addressing the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran. In fact, the nuclear nonproliferation regime has been previously discredited when India, Pakistan, Israel, along with North Korea passed the nuclear weaponry threshold, thus joining the ranks of the five nuclear states recognized

by the NPT. But the cases of North Korea and Iran are radically different from the USA's perspective. Obviously, the USA and the West at large cannot contemplate the possibility of failure in these two cases, provided the classification of the two states as antagonistic, rogue and axis of evil states. However, for WMD nonproliferation and disarmament efforts to meet success, there has to be consistency in addressing the security concerns of all countries on equal footing.

The Middle East region poses a particular conundrum in the context of efforts aimed at reinvigorating the nuclear nonproliferation regime. The USA's war in Iraq shocked the sensitive balance in this overheated region. After the war, Iran appeared as a regional superpower, thanks to a number of political cards at its disposal, including its hard-won strong influence in Iraq and its influential proxies in Palestine, Hamas, and in Lebanon, Hezbollah. Iran's rise came at the expense of other traditional powerhouses in the region, especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The Iranian regime is also known for its animosity toward Israel, a special USA's strategic ally. As a result, the USA and the West at large have become embroiled by the dilemma of reconciling the rejection of moderate Middle Eastern regimes to what they call double-standard favoritism toward the nuclear capabilities of Israel, their traditional enemy, while at the same time intensifying the pressure on the Iranian regime to make sure it comes clear and safe on its nuclear program (Yale Global, 2009). This conundrum was one of the main, if not the most influential, debacles that the NPT review conference in 2005 stumbled on. And it played a critical role in the NPT review conference in 2010, which met a relative success.

### III. Globalization: Our Small Global Village

By and large, globalization has become the tone of life of the world. It manifests itself in our day-to-day life as well as in the life of states and all other players in the international arena. This section starts with a general definition of globalization, before moving on to its modern history. Afterwards, it highlights some of the fundamental forces behind globalization: technological change, economic globalization, globalization of paradigms and regionalism.



### A. General Definitions of Globalization

There is no standard definition of globalization. Rather, there are several different definitions, all explaining the process from different perspectives, while keeping one main common line: technological change. Five such definitions are provided here. Held (2007) defines globalization as the intensification of worldwide social relations and interactions, such that distant events acquire very localized impacts and vice versa. It, he adds, involves a rescaling of social relations, from the economic sphere to the security sphere, beyond the national to the transnational, transcontinental and transworld. Stiglitz (2002) defines it as the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world, which has been brought about by the enormous reduction of the costs of transportation and communication and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge and people across borders. Rothschild (1999) states that in the last two decades, globalization or internationalization has been depicted as a condition of the present and the future – a phenomenon without a past. This phenomenon is associated with new and unprecedented technologies: the internet, international capital markets, supersonic travel, cable news and just-in-time deliveries across vast distances. Streeten (2001) defines international integration as the result of increased flows of trade, people, information and ideas across national boundaries. This integration implies the application of policies by different countries as if they were a single political unit. The IMF defines economic globalization as an extended process of increasing economic integration that is originally motivated by technological change (IMF, 2000). Notably, the term “globalization” also covers other dimensions, including cultural, political and environmental ones. Thus, it could be said that globalization is such an overwhelming force that is meshing the different strands of mankind together in one pot.

### B. Short History

Though the word “globalization” itself was barely used 20 years ago, globalization is not a new process. Instead, we are only living a new wave of this historical phenomenon. Notably, there are three big forefathers of globalization: the British economist Adam Smith, the French writer and diplomat Francois-Rene de Chateaubriand and the German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (Rothschild, 1999). In 1776, in his book “*The Wealth of Nations*,” Adam Smith wrote that the



discovery of America in 1492 by Christopher Columbus and the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope in 1498 by Vasco da Gama are the two greatest events in the history of mankind, since they allowed distant parts of the world to satisfy one another's needs and encourage each other's industry. He predicted that globalization would further drive economic growth through international division of labor, which stimulates productivity and growth. This prediction was vindicated in the following two centuries. Two long waves of globalization, the first from 1870 (the introduction of the gold standard) to 1914 and the second from around 1950 till today, have been characterized with rapid growth of the global economy. On the contrary, the interwar period of 1914-1945 was mostly a period of rebellion on the liberalization principles of *Laissez Faire* and *Laissez passer* (Sachs, 2000).

In 1841, Chateaubriand stated that “when fiscal and commercial barriers will have been abolished between different states, as they have already been between the provinces of the same state; when different countries, in daily relations, tend toward the unity of peoples, how will you be able to revive the old model of separation?” And in 1774, Gottfried wrote: “When has the entire earth ever been so closely joined together, by so few threads? Who has ever had more power and more machines such that with a single impulse, with a single movement of a finger, entire nations are shaken?” More recently, Slaughter (2003) argues that the concept of nation-state is “out of fashion” and that the 1990s witnessed the return of “medievalism,” a back to the future model of pre-Westphalian Europe, where authority was overlapping among many players within one geopolitical unit. A group of bright figures had also expected the demise of the nation-state long ago, beginning with Immanuel Kant in his 1795 essay “*Perpetual Peace*,” through Karl Marx in “*Withering Away of the State*,” to Bertrand Russell in his speeches in the 1950s and 1960s. However, it should be noted, though significantly marginalized by the forces of globalization, nation-states remain at the helm of world affairs. It is also widely agreed that nation-states will continue to play the most decisive role in the world in the foreseeable future, most importantly deciding on whether to advance or, otherwise, rein in globalization (Drucker, 1997).

In the past centuries, big firms from advanced countries got intensively involved in international trade and production activities, particularly during the colonial reign of

their home countries. For instance, starting from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch, English, French and Swedish East India companies played a crucial role in globalization. This was followed by further economic expansion in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Rothschild, 1999). However, especially the last two decades (1990-2010) have witnessed a new vigorous wave of globalization. After the formulation of Washington Consensus in the late 1980s, the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the former USSR in 1990, formerly centrally-planned economies as well as most other developing countries started to pursue increasing liberalization. These developments turned out to be some of the most influential catalysts behind the last wave of globalization, as they opened the way for global integration to sweep throughout the world, under the influence of the technological revolution.

### C. Major Forces behind Globalization

#### 1. Technological Change

Since the mid-twentieth century, technological change has been driving the so-called information revolution or third industrial revolution. This revolution is still unfolding and produces huge flows of information and knowledge as its main outputs. In particular, technological advances in the fields of information, communication and transportation have become the most important sources of economic growth, competitiveness, wealth and power. Consequently, information has become a source of power and today a large portion of the world population has access to this power. In effect, the information revolution has transformed the world into a small global village, by virtually minimizing the value of distance in space and time and removing traditional barriers to the movement of goods, services and people. However, one major paradox of information is that of plenty, where the huge flows of information are welcome but go beyond the human absorptive capacity and require advanced computers and software to process them. Hence, the technological revolution is driven by rapid technological progress in computer hardware, software and communications. And it not only increases the speed of communications across the globe, but also makes them unimaginably affordable. It has three main dimensions; the first is information as data in forms such as news and statistics (Nye, 2002). The second is information in the form of technical knowhow used for building competitive advantages. And the third dimension is strategic information or information about the plans and moves of peers.

This has led to far-reaching effects on human life, economy, politics and all other facets of life. With respect to human life, technology has become an integral part of our lives and its pervasiveness has come to dominate all fields, including education, health and entertainment. Technology has also restructured the fabrics of societies along technological lines, with technological utilities, such as chatting, instant messages, tweets and blogs, becoming important vehicles of human interaction across the globe. Moreover, technology has made possible the evolution of some sort of global public opinion, as events taking place at one end of the globe has come within easy reach of peoples at other ends. As for the economy, capital and labor were long considered the main factors of production. Today, with the increasing globalization of business activities, knowledge and information have been gaining importance as vital factors of success. Competitive advantages, such as technological leads and product differentiation, play an ever increasing role in accumulative comparative advantage building. In addition, rapid information flows through the globe connect distant markets in an unprecedented way, thus making competition in world markets all the more demanding. In parallel, the technological revolution helps open up new opportunities for developing countries to leapfrog stages on the development scale using advanced technologies. In fact, the world has transcended from an industrial age to an information age, in which technology has become the most decisive factor of production (Dunning and Narula, 2000). As for politics, political decision-making has now become technology-dependent. It is unthinkable that a state authority could take an enlightened decision on a given subject without consulting the information made available by advanced technologies. In particular, in the fields of international relations and diplomacy, there has been a revolution in state representation before other states and international organizations. Thanks to technology, the share of information that is not usually widely circulated by international media outlets has shrunk to the negligible margin of highly classified information. Thus, the role of state representatives as information agents has almost elapsed and their focus has now moved onto acting as communicators and analysts.

## 2. Economic Globalization

Although globalization has different dimensions, economists usually describe it as if it was synonymous with economic change. In particular, the apostles of the new

economy declared irrelevant anything invented before the internet. The revolution in information technology has transformed the world into a virtual small village, as it made possible transferring huge amounts of money within few seconds. This is perhaps the most pronounced aspect of the current wave of globalization. Other secondary factors include the collapse of the international fixed exchange rate system, the increasing deregulation and liberalization of capital flows and the emergence of new financial instruments such as financial derivatives and hedge funds. In fact, financial globalization has radically changed the face of the world (Tobin, 2000). It facilitates the transfer of savings in rich countries to productive investments in poor countries and at the same time can be a source of currency crises, recessions and depressions (Knight, 1999). In 1776, Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritar, Marquis de Condorcet, stated that people who work on and own land have an interest in the general happiness of the society because it is more difficult for them to leave it. Today, this rationale has largely ceased to exist for the investor who, by a banking operation, within a few seconds, could become Egyptian, Portuguese or Chinese (Rothschild, 1999).

The collapse of the Bretton Woods USA's dollar-gold standard in 1971, together with the information revolution, made possible torrential trading in "virtual money" across borders (Drucker, 1997). This money is not created by investment, production, consumption or trade, and it has no existence in the real economy. Instead, it is an imaginary offspring of financial innovation. However, the power of virtual money is real and its volume is so huge that its movements in or out of a given country could have far greater impact than movements of direct investment or foreign trade. Miraculously, the amount of virtual money traded in one day on world markets could be as big as the amount needed to finance global investment and trade in a whole year. And this money enjoys total mobility, because it reflects no real economic activity and follows no economic logic or nationality. In addition, it is highly volatile and sensitive to rumours, which makes it a lot more dangerous.

Apart from financial globalization, international trade liberalization is said to be the most concrete aspect of globalization. It has grown fast thanks to drastic reductions in quota and tariff barriers. And, today, the bulk of world trade has become intra-industry or even intra-firm. In fact, manufactured products nowadays contain

components from so many countries that it makes little sense to attribute single nationalities to them (Feenstra, 1998). In particular, the Uruguay Round outcome has contributed a historical stride on the road of international trade liberalization. And, according to the Doha Declaration, the current Doha Round should foster further liberalization, including in the agricultural sector, industrial goods and trade in services (Cho, 2007). Foreign direct investment (FDI) is another important force of economic globalization, including multinational (production locations in different countries) and transnational (loss of national identity and consolidation of global citizenship) investments by giant firms. In fact, FDI flows have become important vehicles of development, growth and integration in the global economy. In parallel, these flows have also become subjects of fierce competition among countries, especially developing ones. As for developed economies, mergers and acquisitions (M&A) have become important drivers of FDI, due to increased competition in the world economy and the need for bigger pools of resources. Notably, through MA, fewer numbers of transnational corporations (TNCs) come to control larger proportions of global markets in a wide variety of sectors. As a result, TNCs have evolved into important players in the global economy and global governance at large. Even more, big business firms are now being referred to as the “private authority,” which insinuates a kind of rivalry with conventional state authority (Fritsch, 2008).

### 3. Globalization of Paradigms: Democracy and Capitalism

In his 1992 book, *“The End of History and the Last Man,”* Francis Fukuyama argued that with the end of the Cold War, the victory of western democracy in its confrontation with communism signaled the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and the final form of human government. In fact, especially since the end of the Cold War, the world has been witnessing a multifaceted fever combining the forces of democracy, rule of law and human rights in transforming societies from the roots and reshaping world politics. Even more, democracy has become the only serious source of legitimacy in today’s world, thanks mainly to the advocacy role of the USA and the West (Fukuyama, 2004). Thus, democracy has developed into a world common value and a dear aspiration of those who lack it. In addition, the democratic world has employed democratic reform as a corner stone of its foreign policy agendas and an almost *sine qua non* condition for official development assistance. To be clear, the core

strength of democracy is that even if it does not guarantee the choice of the best government, it provides the means to change any government.

Nonetheless, Fukuyama's theory fell short of accounting for nationalistic affiliations as a decisive factor of state formation and governmental policies. No doubt, nationalism is still a significant force in world politics. It suffices to look at the map of world conflicts to see how nationalistic sentiments are playing a decisive role in kindling these conflicts and in shaping the agenda of international relations, such as in the cases of the Middle Eastern conflict, the conflict in Kashmir, the Russian-Georgian war in 2008 and civil wars such as those in the Sudan and Somalia. It should also be noted that for democracy to be sustainable, it necessitates some core local pillars, including an educated citizenry, a culture of democracy, stable and strong institutions and rule of law. And, that although democracy is generally recognized to be the best available system of government, it is not flawless. In contrast, practical experiences indicate that democracy could fall hostage to small interest groups that do not necessarily uphold general public interests. Moreover, the configuration of democratic forces could block vital decisions and stifle further reform policies, especially when political parties lack the culture of dialogue. Furthermore, drawing on the experiences of democratization, it is clear that there can be no one size democracy that fits all. Instead, democratic reforms should be sensitive to local traditions and cultural particularities and should be home grown and owned, otherwise they would come face to face with local populations, which might undermine them.

In particular, for real democracy to take root, there has to be strong liberal institutions in place, without which scenarios like that of Adolf Hitler taking power in Germany before World War II could be repeated (Zakaria, 2003). Taking the example of the Arab world, if free elections are introduced before strong liberal institutions are in place, radical Islamists could gain access to power, which would certainly dismay the West. Another example is Sub-Saharan Africa, where there is a general lack of institutionalism altogether. As a result, news about coups d'états on the continent have been business as usual. And even with recent progress in building institutions in some parts, many African countries are still far from reaching the basic prerequisites for stability and sustainable progress. In addition, some countries in Asia and, until

recently, Latin America are in situations similar to those of African Countries. A contradictory opinion holds that democracy like any other system of governance has its shortcomings and that its introduction should not be withheld until the would-be optimum conditions are in place. USA secretary of state Condoleezza Rice advocated this very theory fiercely and even went so far as to speak of tolerance to what she called “constructive chaos,” i.e. chaos that could arise as a result of the introduction of democracy, on the basis that it is likely to short-live and gradually give way to sustainable democracy (Rice, 2008). Accordingly, Rice saw no justifiable reason why should not the USA and its democratic allies intensify their efforts in order to spread democracy in all directions, defended the introduction of democracy in Iraq by force and further suggested punishing uncooperative regimes by isolation.

As for capitalism, one could say that it has become the flip side of one same coin with democracy. With the end of the Cold War, capitalism gained unprecedented pace, as the Washington Consensus of the late 1980s was largely a byproduct of the new unipolar world order. Ever since, the policies of market liberalization, privatization and fiscal austerity have come into force as global mantras of reform in societies that heretofore hardly knew about the free-market economy. And Bretton Woods institutions were entrusted with a pivotal role in facilitating and, at times, enforcing transformation into free-market economies. Notably, these institutions, along with the capitalist world led by the USA, impose harsh reform conditionalities on countries seeking development assistance. Hence, it is made clear that joining the capitalist club offers some lucrative opportunities, while remaining outside it means detrimental isolation. However, capitalism has failed to bail hundreds of millions out of the quagmire of poverty (Stiglitz, 2002). Thus, protests against the policies of Bretton Woods institutions have surpassed all expectations. For long, people in underdeveloped and developing countries used to take to the streets to express their frustration with economic reform policies imposed on them. More recently, however, people in developed countries have also joined the march against capitalism, which has markedly contributed to the anti-globalization movement.

Consequently, there has been increasing voices calling for a withdrawal from the Washington Consensus. For instance, a group of intellectuals and politicians from the



North and the South have formed a global left front that has consolidated itself as an advocacy group of what they call “global socialism.” In addition, a group of leaders from both developed and developing countries have established a forum for what they call the “the third way.” Moreover, in 2000, the G-20 ministers of finance adopted the so-called Montreal Consensus, as a would-be alternative to the neo-liberal Washington Consensus (Hale and Slaughter, 2005). This new consensus emphasized the role of economic globalization as a powerful engine of growth, while at the same time recognizing the need to complement liberalization with social programs. Around the same time, the 2000 UN Millennium Summit endorsed the so-called Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), setting concrete targets for efforts to combat poverty, disease, hunger and other global ailments. More recently, the international economic crisis that broke out in the USA in 2007 has had a detrimental effect on capitalism. In its aftermath, there has been an irresistible movement toward more state intervention, strengthened and new regulations and trade protectionism. The old wisdom that all can win in a single world market has received a severe blow (Altman, 2009). Ironically, while new-comers to the free market has suffered what they called unfair damage, countries with relatively closed markets, like China and India, have suffered the least. Although the G-20 at the newly introduced summit level, besides the old ministerial level, has made some strenuous efforts to contain the crisis and regain confidence in the free-market economic system, it remains to be seen if this would put the global economy back on track.

#### 4. Regionalism, Inter-Regionalism and Globalization

Like globalization, regionalism or regional integration lack a widely recognized definition. But one simple, practical definition is that it refers to a “process by which a group of usually contiguous countries moves from a condition of partial or complete isolation toward one of partial or complete unification” (Thakur and Langenhove, 2006). This move usually involves a progressive erosion of internal boundaries, concurrently with a progressive rise of external boundaries vis-à-vis the rest of the world. It also often provides for the establishment of some kind of formal intergovernmental institution to oversee the integration process.



The early signals of regionalism coincided with the end of World War II, i.e. long before the last and most overwhelming wave of globalization began. And there have been three main forces behind this phenomenon. Firstly, regionalism was induced by the decolonization movement. Decolonization resulted in a plethora of newly independent, vulnerable states, which needed to form regional blocs to protect their collective interests, and this was the case of the OAU, the predecessor of the AU. Secondly, regional integration was also motivated by common security concerns, such as in the case of the EU. Thirdly, a rebounding rationale behind regionalism is the quest for free trade and economic integration. In fact, the configuration of the international trade system gives impetus to regional economic blocs through the exemptions granted to these blocs from the basic principles of non-discrimination and most favored nation. Hence, today, there is an avalanche of regional economic blocs, at different levels of integration and sometimes so overlapping that their rationalization becomes a sophisticated exercise. Notably, for such blocs to be compatible with the need for world trade liberalization, members should have similar intra- and extra- bloc comparative advantages (Kono, 2002). Unfortunately, this is not often the case and regional economic blocs could even have negative net effects on world trade.

From one perspective, regionalism could be looked at as both a midway step to, and a vehicle of, globalization. In essence, regionalism is globalization within a specific regional context. Paradoxically, its main motivation is usually building strong fronts to face up to the rest of the world. And, although sovereign nation-states are the main building blocs of both global and regional organization, it is often more efficient and effective for a global institution, such as the UN, to delegate its authority with respect to a specific region to organizations in that region, especially in the case of security and peacekeeping activities (Durward, 2006). It also appears that states in general favor multilayered structures of international cooperation, moving up the ladder from state to regional and global levels. Thus, regionalism also plays an intermediate role between global governance and state government (Thakur and Langenhove, 2006). Particularly, the EU is a pioneer regional integration model. It is also a strong advocate of a rule-based multilateral world, including nation-states and regional blocs (Grevi and Vasconcelos, 2008).

Along with the proliferation of regional integration structures, there has also been a gradual emergence of inter-regionalism. Starting from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we have been witnessing a transition from the classical Westphalian world order based on the nation-state to a world order where regions and their organizations are playing an increasingly important role as players in international relations (Langenhove, 2004). The EU has been leading on this front, beginning with its inter-regional cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the 1980s. Today, the EU has a wide inter-regional cooperation network that includes, among others, Africa, Asia and the League of Arab States (LAS). Other regional organizations are following suit, with the AU establishing a no less pervasive inter-regional cooperation network that involves African sub-regions as well as different external organizations. Although most inter-regional cooperation structures focus on economic, social and cultural exchanges, they also, though to a lesser extent, cover coordination in foreign policy, international security and other fields.

#### IV. The State of the Global Economy

It is still incumbent to deal with the specifics of the global economy to come to grips with their state of play. Accordingly, this section will start with a short historical background of the global economic order before moving onto the state of the foundations of the global economy. Afterwards, it will examine the current state of three main pillars: global finance, global development and international trade. Throughout, the pros and cons of the global economic order and its institutions as well as the impact of the current international economic crisis will be integrated into the analysis.

##### A. Short History

The Industrial Revolution in England from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century marked the move from agrarian economies and handicraft fabrication to large scale industrialization and economies of scale. From England, the revolution spread to Europe and the rest of the world. Afterwards, the record of world economic growth could be divided into three main stages (Sachs, 2008). At the beginning, world economic growth was marked with divergence, as there were increasing gaps in production and income between the North Atlantic countries and the rest of the world. Major factors behind the lead of the North included early industrialization and market development, extensive

coal deposits and large pools of natural resources mostly coming from colonies in the South. Almost until World War I, Western economies were on the rise and the rest of the world was falling behind. Later on, the stage from World War I to the aftermath of World War II witnessed a general trend of convergence among different parts of the world. Notably, the two World Wars with the intervening Great Depression had disastrous effects on European economies, while the USA came out as a world-class powerhouse. This in turn contributed to the decolonization movement, which dealt another blow to European empires. On the other side, the South was beginning to reap the benefits of education, science and technology and improved infrastructure and economic development policies, which the North had a vital role in introducing as part of colonial policies. Ultimately, the current stage of evolution extends from the aftermath of World War II until today and it is also marked with convergence, including between the North and the South, the West and the East. An outstanding example of this stage is the fast rise of Japan and, in its footsteps, Southeast Asia through the flying geese model. More recently, China, India, Brazil and Mexico joined the convergence trend with the launching of rapid market-based growth. Currently, the North is giving way to economies in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East in terms of shares in global income. This trend is expected to continue in the foreseeable future and perhaps to lead to deep reconfiguration in the distribution of economic power in the world.

#### B. The State of the Foundations of the Global Economy

There is an overwhelming majority of voices that argue that globalization is the best recipe the world has developed and that retreating from it could lead to more disadvantages than what is already here (Sachs, 2003). Rightly, free-market policies have brought some benefits for the world. And, although falling short of the promised 0.7% of gross national income (GNI), official development assistance (ODA) has been benefiting millions of needy populations in the South (Hoeven, 2000). Ironically, to the developed north, globalization equals triumphant capitalism on the American style, i.e. a straight jacket that developing countries must accept, if they are to join the club (Stiglitz, 2002). In contrast, globalization has become controversial lately and general perceptions about it have turned increasingly negative. For many in the developing world, it has failed to bring about the promised benefits. Especially, the big masses of the unemployed and angry young people in the South pose serious challenges to

stability throughout the world. Hence, there have been more and louder calls to rethink globalization over. At the same time, there have been concerns as to the sustainability of the current wave of globalization and whether it would lead to a breakdown of the remaining order in the system or, more plausibly, the birth of a new system that can effectively administer the mighty forces of globalization (Ikenberry, 2000).

Obviously, the West looks determined to keep globalization on track, even in the midst of the current crisis. Nonetheless, there has been a lot controversy about the demise of globalization and whether it remains in force after the attacks of September 11 and the war on Iraq (Held, 2007). In this regard, it is sometimes argued that globalization is irreversible, while history proves that it is in fact reversible. Even more, the history of the world economy is in essence the history of the ends of periods of globalization (Streeten, 2001). All previous globalization epochs came to an end in a more or less abrupt manner and this can be traced by looking at the history of international trade, international finance and the evolution of international economic institutions (Rothschild, 1999). To give but one example, after reaching a peak by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world withdrew from international economic integration in the interwar period and until after World War II. Thus, being unprecedentedly integrated today is no reason why the possibility of reverse should be excluded. And even if globalization is the best option available for today, its chaotic forces may deal it a self-defeating blow earlier than some can expect. In 1798, Thomas Malthus wrote: “the laboring poor, to use a vulgar expression, seem always to live from hand to mouth. Their present wants employ their whole attention and they seldom think of the future.” In addition to the suffering poor, other anti-globalization and radical groups are proliferating, including global socialists, radical environmentalists, anarchists and neo-communists, which is further galvanizing the threat to globalization.

In any case, it is evident that capitalism is facing retreat, especially after the outbreak of the last international financial crisis in 1997. This crisis is clear evidence that the forces of economic globalization have run out of control and have come to pose insurmountable challenges to nation-states and international institutions. In fact, the overall political foundations of economic liberalism have significantly weakened over the last decade, as the growth of international trade and capital movements has exposed

the inadequacy of international economic institutions (Gilpin, 2000). And although reform has long been on the agendas of the Bretton Woods institutions as well as the WTO more recently, including calls for a new Bretton Woods, even basic reform has been facing hurdles, due to lack of political will. In addition, there has been a two-tier catch-up dynamic that has been redistributing power in the international economic order, one within the North and the other drawing the South increasingly closer to the North. Notably, the last international economic crisis has further accelerated this power shift. In particular, the USA's economy has been shocked violently by the crisis and the USA had to stand the brunt of the blame for the crisis, which has significantly damaged the USA's superpower status. As a result, and as the USA finds itself forced to focus inwards, lack of leadership behind economic globalization poses threats of potential relapse into the vicious circles of the past, including chronic turbulences in financial markets, trade protectionism, economic nationalism and unproductive regional blocs. And this could even further escalate into social strife and political instability (Gilpin, 2000).

The role of the USA's dollar as an international reserve and transaction currency has been vital for the stability of the international economy (Stiglitz, 2009). It has also bestowed special privileges on the USA, including the right to print extra dollars at will, i.e. the right of "seigniorage." No doubt, the status of the USA's dollar is a national security issue for the USA (Bergsten, 2009). However, the leading role of the dollar has come under increasing pressure, as the USA has been running huge trade and current-account deficits. In addition, the USA's budget is currently operating at about USA \$ 12 trillion debt, while a country like China is hoarding the largest stash of foreign reserves in the world (the balance of foreign assets of the People's Bank of China rose to about USA \$ 2.4 trillion in 2009) and has become the USA's largest foreign creditor. Together with the distorting peg of the Chinese yuan and other key currencies to the USA's dollar, this is feeding into worrying structural imbalances that are threatening the global economy. Notably, these imbalances are a source of great concern during the current international economic crisis, which in turn has further shaken the status of the dollar. Consequently, countries such as China, Russia, Brazil and some oil-producing countries are calling for the revision of the dollar's position as the world's leading currency. And, in practice, there has been a gradual withdrawal from the USA's dollar toward other key

currencies, especially the euro, and this is increasingly evident in oil-pricing policies and the composition of national reserves of foreign assets (Eichengreen, 2009).

### C. Vulnerability to Crises

The world economy is bubble-prone and vulnerable to crises. Even worse, the question is more precisely about time, not whether or not a crisis will hit, and economists have become under increasing criticism for failing to steer the path out of recurrent crises. In fact, the global economy has taken a course parting with the prescriptions of John Maynard Keynes, the prominent economist who co-engineered the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions. Crisis after crisis only reveals the sightedness and wisdom of Keynes who advocated governments taking a dominant role in financial markets. In contrast, the efficient-market hypothesis, based on the presumptions that market forces are the most rational and reliable determinants of value and that markets are inherently invested with the power to correct themselves, has proved to be flawed. Unfortunately, this and other neo-classical concepts have been shaping the configuration of the global economy (Makin, 2009). Even in the midst of the current Great-Depression like crisis, one could still see some strong advocacy of these concepts in parallel with strong resistance to introducing new regulations of international financial markets.

Although financial globalization is relatively recent, it went too far too fast (Tobin, 2000). Today, this is the most integrated sector of the global economy. By nature, capital is the factor of production most mobile and volatile. And capital movements across borders have been a force of integration at times of stability, of disintegration at times of crisis and a source of concern for governments all through. However, more recently, the technological revolution opened the way for sweeping capital movements across borders at a click of a button. Consequently, in 2008, the amount of outstanding international debt securities reached over USA \$ 22,731 billion, the level of world stock market capitalization exceeded USA \$ 33,513 billion and the total amount of national foreign reserves skyrocketed to USA \$ 6,787 billion (IMF, 2009). Naturally, the huge figures of these indicators contribute to the magnification and accentuation of the risks associated with the mobility and volatility of capital. In addition, they challenge governments and international institutions and aggravate the

calculations of potential crises. Notwithstanding, international institutions demand developing countries to follow the path of financial liberalization, on the basis that financial openness would help fund development programs through capital inflows. Hence, these countries have become more than ever vulnerable to the risks associated with the volatility of cross-border, short-term capital flows and foreign-exchange speculation. The infancy of their financial architectures and their relative lack of resources render developing countries more vulnerable to financial crises than developed countries (Knight, 1999). As for developed countries, one very important lesson from the current crisis is that vulnerability does not only stem from trading activities in international financial hubs, but can also hit these very hubs at the core.

The record of international finance is awash with crises, especially after the collapse of the gold standard in 1971. However, the sovereign debt crisis of developing countries in the 1980s and the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 were unparalleled in nature and magnitude. The sovereign debt crisis of the 1980s hit developing countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe and Africa. It derived from several factors, including the global recession that prevailed at the time, the implications of untoward import-substitution models of economy, as well as the trickle-down effects of the oil boom since 1973-1974. Altogether, these factors led to a credit crunch and sovereign debt defaults that commenced by hitting Mexico in 1982. Notably, the crisis was accentuated by the increased level of interdependence in international financial markets, taking into consideration that Eurodollars coming from the Middle East, invested in stock markets in the USA and Europe and then used to finance loans to Latin American and other developing countries were a major factor behind the crisis. It was so grave that it caused massive social strife and political instability, especially in Latin America and Africa. In the aftermath, the IMF dismissed import-substitution models as villain and most countries in the hit region and beyond rushed to replace them with export-oriented industrialization models.

In turn, the Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 caught East and Southeast Asia in a cascade of unwinding external deficits and currency collapses that were mixed with deep economic crises and political upheavals. Early signs of recovery started about two years later, but the crisis had so grave implications that it is still in active memory today.



Shaken by the crisis, the world launched efforts to review the international financial architecture. Consequently, there was some limited restructuring of international sovereign bonds and the IMF introduced a few new lending facilities tailored to help economies facing crises arising from sudden fluctuations in capital flows (Narine, 2008). However, international efforts fell short on two main fronts. First, IMF help was not sufficient and was tied to stringent conditionalities, which later on led some countries to announcing that they would never seek IMF support again. As a result, the implications of the crisis gave birth to suggestions related to helping emerging economies reduce their vulnerability by building up large reserves of foreign assets. Nonetheless, today, these reserves cause worrisome international economic imbalances. Secondly, as usual, the role of the IMF in the crisis was defined more by decisions taken by key countries during time of crisis, rather than by well-thought moves taken by all concerned parties toward an adequate reform of the international financial architecture (Sester, 2009). In other words, the international community tackled the crisis using the same old tactic of emergency measures and palliatives.

Most recently, the world economy has been hit by a Great-Depression like crisis that was triggered in the USA in 2007, as a downturn in USA's home prices led to large losses for banks and broker-dealers in the so-called housing bubble. Some of the main factors behind the build-up of that bubble included lack of regulation and surveillance, circumventing regulations through financial inventiveness, sub-prime high-risk lending, exaggerated leveraging in financial institutions and the easy credit conditions that prevailed before the crisis. In 2008, the crisis seeped to other market clusters and the USA's stock market collapsed. Within three days in September 2008, three USA's financial icons fell apart: Lehman Brothers, the financial giant, filed for bankruptcy, while the mega-insurance firm, American Insurance Group (AIG), was taken over by the USA's government and Merrill Lynch, another financial icon, was absorbed by Bank of America, in a deal induced by the USA's government. From that moment on, the contagion of the crisis spread at unanticipated speed to other financial markets throughout the world and it especially hit those markets having strong linkages with the USA's market. As a result, panic hovered above the world economy, credit withdrew from circulation and the world gradually plummeted into a recession unprecedented since the Great Depression. In response, governments throughout the world, especially



those emerging economies that went by the book of financial liberalization and were booming until the crisis, directed severe criticisms at the USA. In addition, there emerged a rush toward putting in place stimulus packages to boost economic activity. However, one major problem with these packages is that they increase budget deficits, hence implying the need to either cut spending or raise taxes shortly afterward. Thus, the crisis and its subsequent ramifications have been confounding policymakers, entrepreneurs and the working class. It has also caused massive social strife and threatened fragile security in different parts of the world.

The crisis also gave rise to calls for better regulation and surveillance of financial markets, and so it mandated increased coordination at the international level, without which new regulatory measures in one country could harm, or otherwise be preempted by, others. Hence, there has been improved international coordination, with the slightly expanded G-20 forum elevated to summit level and given the role usually played by the Group of Eight (G-8) as the main forum dealing with the global economy. One clear advantage of the G-20 is that it gets other important countries onboard, including the so-called Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS). However, other countries from both the North and the South are pushing for further expansion to have places onboard. In addition, there have been voices of concern in the UN over the increasing marginalization of the organization, where the G-20 is rising to dominate the global economic scene. Moreover, there is no adequate mechanism for enforcing the decisions of the forum, which provides no guarantee that its efforts could make a significant difference. Furthermore, the G-20 has not this far confronted the root causes behind the crisis (Setser, 2009). Notably, there has been strong resistance to introducing new regulations, on the basis that the existing regulations are sufficient and only need to be better enforced. Hence, the largely unregulated institutions and financial instruments that sparked the crisis remain out of rein (Dieter, 2009). In sum, one could say that the G-20 succeeded in projecting a united front in facing the crisis, sending reassurance messages to the markets and controlling the damage. However, if the international community is serious about preventing future crises, there should be serious remedies for the main ailments of the international financial architecture, including the long-due reform of international financial institutions, global structural

imbalances, the problems posed by the too-big-to-fail institutions and distortive foreign-exchange regimes.

#### D. The Haves and Have-Nots

Globalization has been a source of disillusion, especially for those who advocate it as a force of improving standards of living and convergence between the rich and the poor. The forces of economic globalization work in such a chaotic manner that they create sharp divides between the haves and have-nots. Notwithstanding the rapid catch-up of countries in the South with the North, there are many parts in the world where poverty is in fact increasing. This is true for countries as well as strata of societies within countries in the South and the North. However, the picture is particularly bleak in some regions, including sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and parts of the Andean and Central American highlands, as these parts seem to be revolving in vicious poverty circles. In addition, many other Latin American and Asian countries have experienced long periods of stagnation or decline in average living standards. Thus, at the time we see some countries making good use of globalization, others are suffering from it. For instance, the miraculous success story of China, which has achieved an average growth rate of around 9% a year over the last three decades, stands in sharp contrast to the decline in average living standards in most sub-Saharan African countries since the early 1980s. Despite the promises made by international economic institutions and countries at the vanguard of global capitalism, standards of living in the South have deteriorated in relative, and in some cases absolute, terms. Over the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of people living in poverty has increased by almost 100 million and this occurred while total world income increased by an average of 2.5% a year (Stiglitz, 2002). Today, it is estimated that around 1.5 billion person live under the poverty line of USA \$ 1.25 a day (UN, 2009). This inequality is threatening the sustainability of the global economic system, as it is lacerating social fabrics, sowing sources of grudge and threatening political stability.

As for hunger, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates the number of people suffering from hunger to be around one billion, i.e. one in every six human-beings, of which some 200 million are children. Starting in 2007, a mix of factors, including hikes in oil prices, falling USA's dollar, market speculation, climate

change and some types of bio-fuels, has produced a world hunger crisis, as it led to an alarming lack of food with an unwarranted increase in its prices. As a result, developing countries found themselves in a precarious situation, and demonstrations against hunger swept throughout the world. Particularly, the situation in drought and conflict-stricken countries, most of which are in sub-Saharan Africa, is most worrying. For instance, FAO estimates the numbers of people suffering from extreme hunger in Ethiopia at around 20 million, four millions in the Sudan and 3.6 million in Somalia. The 2009 G-8 Summit in Italy pledged USA \$ 20 billion for combating hunger over three years, but this falls too short of the funding needed to feed the hungry, which FAO estimates at USA \$ 44 billion per year (FAO, 2009a). Moreover, the World Summit on Food Security in Rome in November 2009 was ignored by most of the leaders of world's richest countries and the meeting failed to agree on precise funding commitments or action objectives to stop this human farce (FAO, 2009b).

The UN Millennium Summit in 2000 endorsed the eight so-called MDGs. It is noteworthy to indicate that these goals had previously been projected by different international organizations and agencies and that the UN Millennium Declaration only compiled them in one document and renovated and elevated the commitment to achieve them as one holistic package by 2015. Although there has been some progress toward achieving some of the eight goals, especially those less demanding, this still falls short of the required progress to meet the 2015 deadline. Furthermore, performance in some regions and with regard to some goals reversed, as in the case of the rise of people in developing countries living in hunger from 16% in 2006 to 17% in 2008 (UN, 2009). In parallel, although there has been some progress on scaling ODA up to achieve the UN target of 0.7% of GNI, its level in 2008 was 0.3% only, i.e. less than half the target. In addition, provided that ODA targets are sometimes set in percentage of GNI, the current global recession translates into net decreases in ODA outflows from some countries. This could lead to negative effects on development efforts, especially in least developed countries that seem to live hand to mouth. Even more worrisome, the economic crisis threatens of reversing the progress achieved this far, due to its adverse effects on economic growth, poverty eradication, employment creation, trade and investment.

The sense of deprivation is not limited to the means to steer a decent life. Rather, the world is also divided along technological lines to haves and have-nots, and this division is likely to have an ever increasing impact on growth in the foreseeable future. In fact, globalization does not imply universality, as large numbers of people in different parts of the world continue to lack knowledge and even access to computers or telephones. At the level of nation-states, the World Bank's World Development Report (2010) lists only 40 countries in its statistics on innovation, research and development, because of lack of national statistics in other countries. In addition, this list is mostly dominated by countries from the North, with only seven countries from the South lagging at the bottom. By itself, this is an indication of the gravity of the technological divide. Furthermore, statistics show that the bulk of world investment in research and development (R&D) is dominated by a relatively limited number of countries and TNCs. Knowing that innovation bears increasing returns to scale, advanced-technology owners are better placed to innovate further, because they have the required infrastructure and means. In contrast, technology laggards seem to be caught in poverty and disease traps.

#### E. The State of World Trade

World trade has by far been the most successful example of global economic governance, thanks to the basic principles of the most favored nation and nondiscrimination (Birkbeck and Melendez-Ortiz, 2009). Since 1947, the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), and the WTO as of 1995, has markedly contributed to the growth of international trade and its regulation. Unfortunately, progress toward concluding the Doha Round of trade negotiations still eludes member states. In addition, the recent global recession has significantly slowed the growth of international trade. According to WTO estimates, world exports were expected to shrink by 9% in 2009, mainly because of decline in global economic activity by 1%, which would be the largest such decline since World War II. In effect, lack of progress in the Doha Round and the current global recession act as double jeopardy factors that risk of a collapse in world trade. In contrast, on the positive side, the size of world exports continued to rise in 2008 to USA \$ 15.8 trillion in commodities and USA \$ 3.7 trillion in services, numbers that were until the recent past unimaginable (WTO, 2009). In addition, there are some signs that the world economy may already be on a recovery

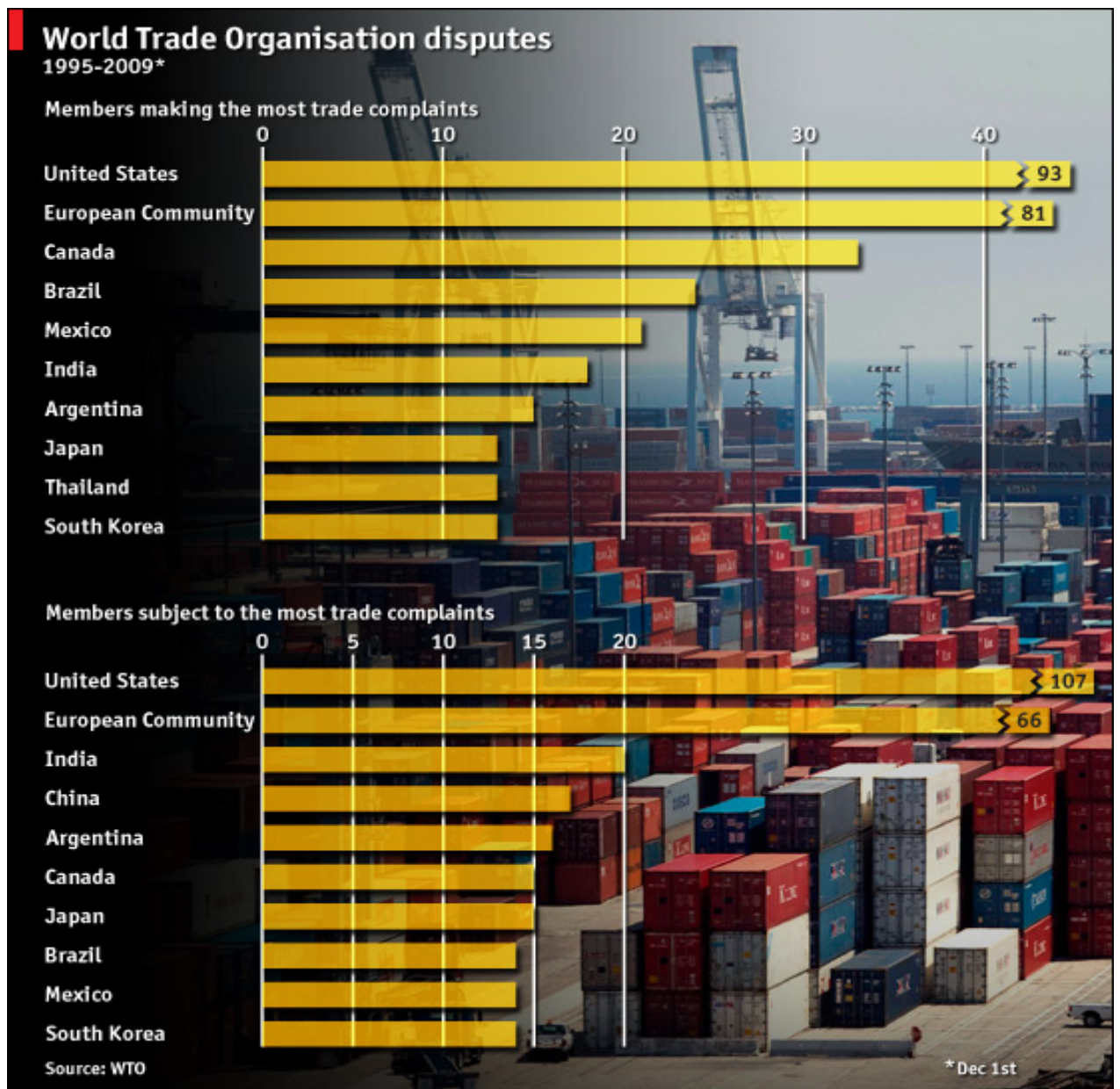
slope. No doubt, a breakthrough in the Doha Round can significantly contribute to these early positive signs.

In particular, the WTO dispute settlement body (DSB) is a pioneering model of effective multilateral cooperation and rule-based global governance. Although developing countries continue to face capacity constraints in resorting to the body, they are reported to be parties to about 80% of all cases this far (Dadush, 2009). There has also been an increasing resort to the body by emerging economies over the period 1995-2009 (refer to Chart 1 below). In essence, the DSB provides a role model of how to protect the weak. Thus, the frequency and intensity of trade disputes have been on the rise. However, its judgments are time-consuming and strictly law-based, which does not often lead to conciliatory conclusions. As a result, judgments could leave dismay, which would in turn lead to vicious circles of retaliatory measures. Notably, there have been intensifying trade confrontations involving old and emerging world powerhouses such as the USA, EU, Japan, China, India and Brazil. In addition, predatory and retaliatory trade policies have been sowing further like policies, which have had negative implications on the efforts to further consolidate the international trading system. And this precarious state of affairs has been further exacerbated by the implications of the current international economic crisis, especially as more and more countries are giving in to protectionist pressures.

Chart (1)

World Trade Organization Disputes

In 15 years since its birth on January 1995, 401 trade disputes—over matters ranging from export curbs on minerals to restrictions on the import of seal products—have been brought to the WTO’s DSB. The bulk of these cases has been brought by a few litigious members. The USA and the EU have lodged 176 cases since the WTO came into existence, and they are also the most frequently complained against. Rich countries were the most active users of the DSB in the first five years of its existence, filing more than three quarters of all the complaints. But, in the last 10 years, that share has fallen to just over half, as big emerging economies have become more active trade litigators.



Source: [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

In this regard, there have also been some questions as to the fairness of the international trading system. The bargaining balance in trade negotiations is obviously



tilted toward the powerful countries, and these countries can easily exploit the process and prevail over the weak countries (Cho, 2007). And although the increasing power of developing countries over the recent past has served the interests of the weak, this has not so often helped the interests of the overall system. The counterbalance of developing countries fuels disagreements and has come up as one of the main forces behind repetitive derailments of the Doha Round. Moreover, the process is subject to hijacking by domestic pressure groups, whose causes sometimes come at the expense of the public interest. For instance, domestic pressure groups in different countries have been hindering progress toward compromise on agricultural subsidies and tariffs, an issue at the core of the current negotiations, although these subsidies and tariffs cause significant distortion to international trade and harm developing countries heavily. Furthermore, the agreement on trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) restricts the access of poor countries to medicine they need but cannot afford. Hence, at the time patents draw lucrative profits for their right-holders, the poor and sick in developing countries hardly receive some sympathy.

Indeed, since the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the establishment of the WTO in 1995, the international trading system has failed to live up to the expectations. At some exceptional juncture in the aftermath of September 11 attacks, and after faltering for six years, the Doha Round with its Development Agenda was launched in 2001 at the impetus of the developing countries' need to address their developmental concerns. Ever since, ministerials after ministerials have failed to launch negotiations on the core issues of agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA), as member states even find problems closing their position gaps on the basic issue of modalities of negotiations. Leading developing countries also insist that the outcome of the Doha Round should be integrated in a single undertaking, in order to pressure developed countries on the need for progress on the tracks of agriculture and NAMA. Consequently, countries have been relying more on unilateral, bilateral and regional approaches to further their trade interests (Beth, 2006). No doubt, the whole world stands to lose from this inertia through the opportunity costs involved. However, in particular, it is estimated that the so-called development failure, i.e. the failure of the Doha Development Agenda, costs developing countries around USA \$ 100 billion annually (Cho, 2007).

Moreover, despite promises to the opposite, the current global economic crisis has led to a wave of new protectionism. Some 78 protectionist measures have been proposed or implemented by both developed and developing countries since the inception of the crisis, the most famous of which is the “Buy American” provisions in the USA’s stimulus package (World Bank, 2009b). In this regard, it appears that while developing countries tend to erect new barriers in the face of foreign imports, developed countries lean more toward introducing new subsidies to their products. Although most of these measures are likely to comply with WTO rules, they are still a reason of concern for the international community. In a worst-case scenario, protectionist and beggar-thy-neighbor measures could build up to force a withdrawal from global trade integration. In addition, such measures might lead to a relapse of fragmentation in the international economy, similar to that of the inter-war period.

#### V. The Challenges of the Global Environment

The global environment is perhaps one of the most pressing challenges facing the international community today. Clearly, it is very high on the agenda of international relations. However, one main distinctive feature of environmental challenges is that their impacts are usually mooted into future uncertainties and controversies. Unfortunately, these challenges have recently been passing the scientific credibility threshold to pose increasing present and sensible dangers such as global warming, tsunamis and famines. In parallel, environmental issues have transcended the technical and domestic spheres to become highly politicized and internationalized. Along these lines, this section will provide a concise review of the challenges of the global environment, with special focus on climate change.

The increasing human population, now at 6.7 billion, producing around USA \$ 67 trillion in annual output and growing at around 3-5% annually, puts an increasing pressure on non-renewable environmental resources (Sachs, 2008). In fact, one important byproduct of economic growth has been the careless appropriation of limited environmental resources. Although technology is growing more environment-friendly, the current pace of resource exploitation is unsustainable if the world continues with business as usual. Unless there is some adequate technological shift toward environment-friendly production and consumption patterns and a commensurate



political action to halt, or at least slow, the depletion speed, planet earth will continue to seep out of control. And it will probably continue to surprise us with devastating reactions. To name just a few, over the last few years, the world was hard hit by environmental catastrophes such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 Katrina hurricane, the 2010 volcano of Iceland and the 2011 tsunami in Japan.

Understandably, the environment plays a pivotal role in the so-called triangle of sustainable development, besides economic and social development. In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg highlighted the linkages between these three axes. A sustainable environment is necessary for sustainable economic growth, poverty alleviation and development. And without economic growth, social wellbeing will continue to be out of reach. Thus, it becomes clear that the wellbeing of the world is environment-dependent. Nonetheless, there is a great deal of conflict between environmental concerns and economic interests. This unnecessary conflict has grown to become a paramount hurdle to environmental preservation in both the North and the South. In fact, although all humanity stands to lose from lack of progress toward better environmental management, a large and dominant swathe of opinion seems to favor short-term economic growth at any price, even at the expense of sustainable future economic growth.

In addition, there is a multiplicity of factors that transform the environmental challenge into a political and security one. Some of these factors include the fervent economic competition within the North, the catch-up momentum between the South and the North and the vicious poverty traps in the South. At the time rich and emerging countries have been reaching out for access to natural resources in relatively less developed regions, countries in these regions have been struggling to provide for their subsistence. For instance, there has been a scramble by China, the USA and Europe for larger shares in the highly unexploited natural-resource base in sub-Saharan Africa. In the meantime, African countries themselves are striving to come out of age. This mix of fierce competition and careless consumption of environmental resources, together with continuing social and political strife in some parts of the world could feed into a spiral of risks, including wars, pandemics, displacements, illegal migration and criminal activities. One might even say that the already fragile state of global security will, to a

great extent, depend on the understanding of the linkages between environmental challenges and global stability as well as the capacity to find appropriate technological and political solutions to face those challenges (Sachs, 2008).

In fact, the record of multilateral cooperation on environmental issues boasts significant successes, including around 900 international agreements and strong expressions in dozens of major international forums. The first seminal moment of multilateral cooperation in this area was the 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, which marked the evolution of environmental issues from tight national frameworks to international horizons. In addition, there are numerous other international forums that concluded specific agreements on environmental cooperation, including the 1987 Montreal conference that adopted the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. But, in particular, the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro was an outstanding seminal point for having ushered in the dynamic of transnational citizen activism with unprecedented participation in its proceedings by non-state actors.

The 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm established the prime international governmental authority in charge of the global environment, the UN Environment Program (UNEP), to supervise the implementation of the recommendations of that as well as subsequent related conferences. Although the UNEP has been doing a good job, it continues to lack the clout of full-fledged intergovernmental organizations. Thus, there have been some moves lately toward upgrading the UNEP to an independent international organization, though these moves face strong resistance from several major countries in both the North and the South. In a related move, in 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established as a joint venture of the UNEP, the UNDP and the World Bank, with the main objective of helping developing countries fulfill their commitments under different environmental agreements. This innovative new body has been playing a critical trail-blazing role in providing developing countries with needed technical assistance and helping raise funding for their environmental projects on a voluntary basis. However, some of the criticisms usually directed at the GEF include lack of transparency in decision-making

and the tendency of donor countries to monopolize the orientation of funding and to impose unproductive conditionalities (Winchester, 2009).

Although the record of international cooperation on environmental issues is rich, governance of the global environment still falls short of expectations (Gupta, 2006). Even more, international cooperation in this field has plummeted over the last few years. And addressing issues related to the global environment through global legal instruments has become one of the most intractable tasks, as the interests at stake have grown bigger and the parties to the equations have increased. Examples of this reverse of direction include the continuing tug-of-war over climate change, conflicts over genetically modified food and the failure to act appropriately to halt deforestation in different parts of the world. Conspicuously, the global environment is a common good, in the sense that no single person or institution, private or public, has control over it. This, in turn, indicates that any contribution to preserving the environment is useful for all and any damage to it is harmful for all. On the national level, although national governments play leading roles in combating environmental threats, as the only sovereign sources of authority in world politics, they face restrictions and pressures that limit their freedom of movement. The balance between domestic pressure groups advocating environment-friendly policies and counteracting influential industry lobbies that resist such policies is not always conducive to positive change. In aggregate, the restrictions that different governments face on the domestic level sum up to conundrums on the international level.

Of course, foreign policy is a reflection of domestic policy, but national governments could not be absolved of the blame for lack of effective global environmental governance. For instance, the USA, though the world superpower, has failed to strike a good example for others, especially during the Bush administration. In fact, the Bush administration acted in general contempt of multilateralism at large over most of its two terms in office, including disregarding the 1997 Kyoto protocol on climate change in 2001. Some other countries share in the blame for taking stringent positions and failing to raise public awareness and to rally support for environmental objectives that serve the interests of all humanity. In contrast, the EU has risen as a major advocate of developing a rule-based world in general and as a torch carrier with

regard to the need to take immediate action to address environmental concerns in particular.

Lately, faced with increasing internal and external difficulties standing in the way of concluding multilateral agreements on environmental issues, the international community has started relying more on hybrid approaches such as UN multi-partner conferences along the lines of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (Winchester, 2009). Although this summit set out a detailed plan of action with multi-level supervisory machinery and has given space for several hundred voluntary initiatives, its outcome is not legally binding and lacks effective implementation mechanisms. Nonetheless, there seems to be growing global awareness of the imperative of environmental challenges. And public and private actors from around the world have been coming forward with new contributions toward preserving the global environment. These new trends and contributions are welcome, but it remains to be seen if they could lead up to a breakthrough on environmental challenges.

### Climate Change

Today, climate change is a kicking reality and threat, not an abstract scientific theory anymore. Emissions of green-house gases (GHGs), most importantly CO<sub>2</sub> methane and nitrous oxide, into the atmosphere has led to global warming, which in turn is being felt in more floods, droughts, storms and heat waves. If global emissions of GHGs continue at the current pace, scientists expect the temperature of planet earth to rise five Celsius degrees above its preindustrial level by end of century. This could lead to disastrous implications, including more unwieldy weather conditions, inundation of islands and coastal areas, transformations in ecosystems and the extinction of whole species. Henceforth, there seems to be an international consensus that the rise in earth's temperature should not exceed 2 Celsius degrees, the worst acceptable threshold earmarked by scientists. But even achieving this target requires immediate efforts to reduce GHGs emissions and adapt to the resulting changes in the global environment.

Although some vested interests, especially in the developing world, insist on rejecting any commitment to specific reductions in GHGs emissions, on the basis that such commitment would restrict their economic growth potential, the two are not

necessarily mutually exclusive. Instead, investing in new green development could create new opportunities for employment, poverty alleviation and growth. Statistically, while high-income countries have been responsible for 64% of cumulative GHGs emissions since 1850, developing countries account for 62% of emissions in 2005 (World Bank, 2010). However, although developed countries are better prepared to face the challenges of climate change, given their technological and financial capabilities, these challenges remain global in nature and do not differentiate between north and south, rich and poor. Indeed, developed countries should help developing countries adapt to the challenges of climate change, at least from the viewpoint that no country can isolate itself from the goings in the rest of the world, especially in today's globalized world.

Strongly related to the green-house effect, the first serious multilateral effort toward addressing problems related to the atmosphere was aimed at the thinning of the ozone layer, where the UNEP, in 1982, set up a non-political international forum to work toward concluding an international framework convention on protecting the ozone layer (a natural gas that protects life on earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation from the sun) from chlorofluorocarbons (chemical compounds used as propellants in aerosol cans, insulation, refrigerants and others). Although this forum succeeded in reaching an interim agreement in Vienna in 1985, European business lobbies objected to it, and a new effort was launched to conclude a separate protocol on reducing chlorofluorocarbons. Subsequently, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was concluded in 1987 and was later on signed by 24 countries, including the major chlorofluorocarbon emitters, which guaranteed the reduction of 50% from the emissions levels of 1986 (Winchester, 2009) .

In contrast to the relative success with regard to reducing the emissions of chlorofluorocarbons, the international community has been faltering in its quest for reducing GHGs that stand behind global warming. The 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change set the ground for international cooperation in this field, albeit without setting specific targets. The convention states as its ultimate objective “the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.” As a first

concrete step, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol employed a cap-and-trade regime, which put specific ceilings for the emissions of developed countries by 2012 in comparison with their 1990 levels. It also introduced the so-called carbon trading regime, through which an actor can sell carbon credits to another, so that ceilings of emissions could still be met by all actors at the end. Although a vast majority of states are parties to the aforementioned UN Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, the USA, the world superpower and second biggest emitter of GHGs, disregarded that protocol in 2001. In addition, other countries have shown tendencies to act in ways that they perceive protect their own best interests, even when this comes at odds with the need to halt global warming (Winchester, 2009). While less developed countries refuse to commit to emission reductions that would curtail their growth potential, and oil-producing countries reject any moves that could lead to falls in demand for oil, countries most vulnerable to the risks of rising sea levels demand strong and immediate action.

At the time the Kyoto Protocol is nearing its time threshold of 2012, there has been a concentration of efforts behind the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009. However, reaching a new binding agreement on restricting GHGs emissions beyond 2012 has been utterly excluded in Copenhagen, and there seems to be a common understanding that efforts should be now refocused on realizing such an agreement. Still, reaching such an agreement by next year seems vanishingly small, given the complications of the USA's internal position (Levi, 2009). Other contentious issues include developing countries' rejection to any specific commitment as to the reduction of GHGs emissions and these countries' demands for specific developed countries' commitments in financial and technical assistance to the former adapt to the challenges of climate change. Noticeably, there has been some progress toward reducing GHGs emissions in different other forums, including the G-20 and the Major Economies Forum (MEF), in addition to agreements and voluntary initiatives to this effect at international, bilateral and national levels. However, the premature failure in Copenhagen caused a great deal of disappointment throughout the globe. Although there is a good record of international cooperation with respect to environmental issues, and notwithstanding the existence of a strong case for more and continued cooperation on

climate change, the potential of achieving a breakthrough in this field looks remote. This could lead to unexpected consequences, especially that there is an emerging scientific and political consensus that emissions of GHGs should be cut by half from its 1990 levels by 2050 in order to safe planet earth.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Imperatives of Change**



### **Abstract**

Power shifts among states, within the North as well as between the North and the South, is the master phenomenon of world politics today. It seems that the old East-West dichotomy of the Cold War is now giving way to a growing North-South dichotomy, with emerging Southern powers shaking the international power balance. Consequently, multilateral institutions are growing illegitimate and ineffective because their structures and rules do not reflect real power distribution. Power is also diffusing away from nation-states to rising new actors in the international system, including civil society, private sector and infra-state and sub-state actors. These new actors are continuously challenging nation-states and the state-centered world order and seeking bigger stakes in that order. At the same time, global connectivity and interdependence have reached unprecedented heights. And globalization has been outdoing global governance on all fronts. As a result, globalization has entered a turbulent stage, with threats to international security and wellbeing growing rapidly and risks proliferating across borders. In addition, anti-globalization and new nationalistic discourses are increasing. To address these challenges, power shifts between states need to be managed carefully in the short as well as long runs to make sure that their implications are smoothed out and that emerging powers are accommodated. The multiplication of actors in the international system should also be addressed holistically, so as to capitalize on its opportunities and overcome its difficulties. Perhaps even more importantly, the world needs a shift in the quality and quantity of multilateral cooperation, with the prime objective of readjusting and safeguarding the direction of globalization.

## Chapter Two

### Imperatives of Change

It is clear from the previous chapter that the international multilateral system is facing acute problems that require appropriate reforms. However, one also needs to be clear on the exact causes of the current crisis of multilateralism, so as not to confuse the symptoms with the real ailments. In other words, it is of essential importance to be clear on the imperatives of needed change in the multilateral system. Accordingly, this chapter addresses the main imperatives of change in three substantive clusters: shifts in conventional state powers inside the West and between the North and the South, the proliferation of actors in the international system with non-state actors playing increasingly influential roles, the complexity of current global challenges that both transcend and penetrate conventional state boundaries and defy the premises of the current international system, which results in lack of world public goods such as order, security, natural resources, food and other basic human needs.

#### I. Power Shifts: The Dynamics of State Power Politics

To start, one should preferably lay down a clear understanding of the notion of power. It could simply be defined as the ability to realize desired results (Nye, 2002). It derives from such sources as population, land, natural resources, economic means, technology, civilization and culture. Generally, sources of power could be grouped in three main clusters: military, economic and cultural or ideological. Military power is purely hard, as it involves using force to coerce others to do as desired. Although there is no consensus on one classification of economic power, with some seeing it as hard and others seeing it as soft, it is perhaps more accurate to say that it has both hard and soft aspects. It is hard when employed in the form of sanctions or as a stick in negotiations. And it is soft from the perspective of aspiration to wellbeing and prosperity. Cultural or ideological power, such as the power of example, role models, values and style of life, is soft in nature, in the sense that they attract rather than coerce others. In the current age of globalization and information revolution, soft power, the power of attraction and the ability to shape others' preferences, play an increasing role

in the power mix of any nation. Military and economic capabilities are no longer the determining factors they used in the past.

For the multilateral system to be effective, it should reflect the underlying distribution of power among its members. Historically, the current system was consolidated in the aftermath of World War II. The winners designed it according to their interests, with the exclusion of the then called enemy states. Although there have been some later changes in the membership of multilateral institutions, the underlying power formula remains flawed. This is most obvious in the composition of the UN Security Council as it stands today. As has been demonstrated in Chapter One, power politics during the Cold War stood in the way of more and better multilateral cooperation. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the system witnessed some signs of unsustainable progress and shortly fell victim anew to great power complacency. Recently, flaws in the distribution of power in the system have increasingly rendered it incapable of functioning properly. More specifically, the main dimensions of power imbalances in the current system relate to shifts in the USA's power, power shifts inside the conventionally powerful North and the rise of new powers in the South. This section will attempt to analyze those three dimensions while keeping focus on the relationship between relative power distribution and the performance of the multilateral system.

#### A. The United States of America

The twentieth century was largely an American century. The world enjoyed an epoch of relative peace under Pax Americana, which took the lead from a correlated Pax Britannica. Starting from the interval of World Wars I and II, the USA had been rising as a world powerhouse replacing the UK in the leading power seat. By the end of World War II, the USA had become a world superpower in acrimonious confrontation with another superpower, the USSR. With the fall of Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the USA has become the world sole superpower, a global power posture without analogy since the old Roman Empire held unchallenged sway throughout the world. Thus, the USA has come to be named the colossus, empire and hegemon of the day. Indeed, the USA's primacy is pervasive in all aspects of life, be it military, political, economic, technological or ideological. It has been at the helm of globalization, steering the path, leading the way and sometimes even dictating the rules. In response, many

observers have spoken of new American imperialism, as globalization simply appears to be a disguise for Americanization (Kissinger, 2001). For instance, during the USA's Clinton administration, USA's power was very obvious, due in part to a short-lived bout of assertive multilateralism. Concurrently, the USA also came under criticism of arrogance, as Hubert Vedrine, Former French Foreign Minister, spoke of USA's "hyperpower," indicating too much reliance on power.

The Tragedy of September 11, 2001, caused a great shock to the USA's conscience, especially that the attacks came at the time the USA was at the apex of power, with a great sense of exclusion and security. Before the attacks, Americans could not be more disinterested in USA's foreign policy or the world beyond their borders. There was a significant deal of complacency, and many Americans thought their administration did not even need to listen to others (Nye, 2002). In the preceding decade, the USA acted in disdain of multilateral institutions in several cases, won the Second Gulf War easily, spearheaded the bombing of Serbia without suffering casualties, hindered progress on several international agreements at stake for the rest of the world, such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Rome Statute, and reduced the flows of its foreign development assistance. After the attacks, the world at large showed sympathy toward the USA and a great majority of countries contributed to the subsequent war in Afghanistan. On the USA's home front, the attacks have led to more sensitivity toward concerns of other nations and common global problems, especially those related to terrorism and security.

In 2003, the USA forced the war on Iraq on the pretext of a clandestine nuclear weaponry program, though it failed to secure a UN authorization, and in spite of the opposition of most of its European allies, Russia, China and the international community at large. The war appeared as an outright betrayal to the most fundamental pillars of the notion of collective security on which the current multilateral system is based (Thakur, 2005). It has also caused a grave rift inside the transatlantic alliance, which rift still has repercussions today (Kagan, 2008). Absent the unity of the transatlantic alliance, together with the lack of confidence on the side of most other actors, multilateral cooperation was hard hit. The war was further depicted as evidence that America and Europe are significantly different, with the famous metaphor that

Americans come from Mars, while Europeans descend from Venus, which indicates that Americans are mired in an anarchic Hobbesian world and are inclined to use force to achieve their objectives, while Europeans are entering the post-historical paradise of Kant's perpetual peace and seek an international order based on law. From another perspective, America is strong and this is why it finds it better to act alone, while Europe is weak and this is why it clings to order (Kagan, 2003).

Although the war on Iraq had serious implications on the USA's power, especially in its soft aspects, and the last economic crisis shook it violently, the USA remains the most powerful nation on earth both in terms of material and soft power and the aspiration to lead. In particular, it is in the military and security domain that the USA's power is most evident. The USA is the only country with nuclear and conventional forces of global reach. Its defense budget in 2008 amounted to USA \$ 607 billion, compared to an aggregate European expenditure of around USA \$ 354.4 billion and out of a world total of USA \$ 1464 billion. USA's expenditure has further increased in 2009 to USA \$ 675 billion, due to additional outlays for the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq (Sipri Yearbook, 2009). Practically, USA's military might extends beyond its large financial base. The USA is rightly considered the master of modern warfare in air, naval and ground fields (Niblett, 2009). It also boasts a sophisticated web of intelligence agencies, which have been reinforced after the attacks of September 11. In addition, a wide network of bases, bilateral and regional security arrangements and military alliances provide the USA with quasi-global military dominance.

Economic power is particularly essential for sustainable total power, for it is the mainstay of power (Kurth, 2009). On this front, the USA is in the lead as the biggest state economy on earth. However, it is facing competition from a number of other conventional and emerging powers, especially the EU and China (please refer to Table 1 below). Using percentage comparisons, USA's gross domestic product (GDP) comes second in the world with 20.3% after the EU total of 20.7%, while China comes third with 12.5% (USCIA World Factbook, 2010). In effect, the USA has been leading the world economy in industrial, financial and technological fields since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although it has lost its competitive advantage in several conventional industries lately, it has managed to capture a large market share in high-technology

industries and service sectors. It even invents whole new industries and services, thanks to its strong R&D base. Notably, on the Global Competitiveness Index 2009-2010, the USA ranked second after Switzerland (Global Competitiveness Report, 2009-2010). However, although the USA enjoys a technological edge that puts it in a leading position, this is specifically where it is facing the most heated competition from several other Northern and Southern rivals.

Before becoming the largest debtor state, with an external debt of USA \$ 13.45 trillion in 2009, the USA was a creditor during much of the twentieth century (Kurth, 2009). The latest financial crisis notwithstanding, Wall Street remains the most important financial hub in the world, with gigantic corporations in fields such as banking, investment and insurance. In addition, USA's TNCs and financial institutions continue to figure as leading and influential investors across the globe. Furthermore, since the inception of the Bretton Woods system, the USA has enjoyed the unique right of "seigniorage," i.e. freedom to print extra dollars at will, as well as the ability to run huge current-account and budget deficits, thanks to the position of the USA's dollar as the world's leading reserve currency. Today, it also holds the largest voting weights in the Bretton Woods institutions and is the biggest contributor to the UN budget. These wieldy economic tools guarantee special influence for the USA, whether bilaterally or multilaterally. In addition, the USA is demographically vibrant, in contrast to a demographically stalled Europe. Today, the percentage of people in the USA under 15 is 20% and that of people above 65 is 13%, while these percentages in Europe are 15% and 17% respectively (USCIA World Factbook, 2010). It is estimated that by 2030, the USA's population will grow by 65 million, while the population of Europe will remain virtually stagnant. This is in fact the secret weapon of the USA in the face of Europe (Zakaria, 2008). On the 2009 Human Development Index, the USA ranks 13 after France and Japan and before Germany. The USA is also rich in natural resources, as for example, it produces 10% of the world's crude oil (though this falls short of satisfying half of its domestic demand), possesses the largest coal reserves and figures as a major producer of food and agricultural products (Niblett, 2009).

Table (1)

Selection of State Power Indicators

	US	EU	China	India	Brazil	Russia	Japan	World Total
Territory (thousand km <sup>2</sup> )	9,827	4,324	9,597	3,287	8,515	17,098	378	510,072
Population (millions – 2009)	307	492	1,339	1,157	199	140	127	6,790
Nuclear Warheads (deployed - 2009)	2,702	460	186	60-70	0	4,834	0	8,392
Military Expenditure (billion USA \$ - 2008)	607	354.4*	84.9	30	23.3	58.6	46.3	1464
Military Personnel (thousands – 2003)	1,496	2,275	2,241	1,205	288	863	236	-
GDP (billion USA \$ - PPP - 2009)	14.26	14.51	8.791	3.561	2.024	2.117	4.141	70.24
GDP per Capita (USA \$ - PPP - 2009)	46,400	32,700	6,500	3,100	10,200	15,200	32,600	10,500

\* This figure refers to all European military expenditure excluding that of Russia.

Source: USCIA *World Factbook*, 2010, *Sipri Yearbook*, 2009 and *Sipri Databases*, 2009.

Less tangible but perhaps more important is the USA's soft power or the attractiveness of the values that the USA stands for, especially with respect to liberal democracy, free markets and its open society. It is true that the two most dominant paradigms of globalization, i.e. democracy and capitalism, find their roots in the old British Empire, but today the USA is the main driving force behind their continuity and prevalence. Recent moves toward further economic liberalization and democratization across the world have further bolstered the USA's soft power. In addition, American and Western cultures, based on individualism and personal freedoms, have global reach

and attractiveness thanks to the machinery of modern mass media and telecommunications. In the current information age, this kind of power is becoming increasingly important. In effect, it is an effective, indirect way to exercise power through shaping the preferences of others to get them to want what you want, which minimizes resistance and reduces the cost of leadership (Nye, 2002). Even with USA's politics coming in the way at times, the attractiveness of the American model of life is still an important asset for the USA's global reach and influence.

After briefly elaborating on the main sources of the USA's power, one comes to the most vivid question of whether this power is in decline and to what extent. Talk of decline has been a recurrent feature of USA's politics since the 1950s, i.e. since the USA took full-fledged leadership in the international system (Zakaria, 2008). Almost every 10 years, it is decline time in the USA (Joffe, 2009). In the late 1950s, it was motivated by the Sputnik shock, when the USSR took the USA and the world by surprise after launching the first earth-orbiting artificial satellite of its kind. In the early 1960s, it was the Cuban missile crisis and the ensuing confrontation that approached the verge of nuclear war. In the early 1970s, the decline talk was induced by the rise in oil prices and slow growth in the USA. In the same decade, Presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter invoked crises of confidence in USA's supremacy by talking of the advent of a multipolar world order. In 1987, Paul Kennedy published his famous book *"The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000,"* in which he predicted the downfall of USA's power because of imperial overstretch and internal problems. At that time, Japan was thought to become the dominant superpower technologically and economically. In the 1990s, declinism took a pause, only to revive in full force in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Each of these predictions had its rationale, but none of them was vindicated. In fact, over the years, a number of writers and politicians tried to predict the rise and fall of powers, especially the current superpower, the USA. Some have even attempted to generalize on the basis of the experiences of historical powers such as Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, France and Great Britain. However, most of these theoretical expectations were based on vague definitions and concluded with arbitrary judgments (Nye, 2002). In particular, they tend to subsume the notion of power into specific sets of



resources, while ignoring others that are no less important. All this notwithstanding, it seems different this time, as there is more support to the idea that we are approaching a new world order, taking in consideration the actual relative decline of the USA's power, the actual relative rise of the rest and the perplexing implications of the current wave of globalization (Zakaria, 2008). Indeed, the USA seems to be in a historical low moment after the war on Iraq and the last global financial crash.

The war on Iraq proved to be a very costly war for the USA, militarily, economically and diplomatically (Haas, 2008). After a relatively easy invasion, the prolonged and bloody course of the war imposed a serious overstretch on the USA's military capabilities. In addition to the damage caused by the invasion itself, the Abou Gharib scandal has been incalculably detrimental to the USA's image. The USA did not only appear as a self-absorbed hegemon, but also and perhaps more seriously an incompetent self-absorbed hegemon (Kagan, 2008). Subsequently, in its first year in office, the Obama administration concluded a deal to withdraw USA's forces from Iraq by 2011, though the transition in Iraq is not yet secure and the situation in its region remains volatile. Still, the USA finds itself in a critical situation today, because of lack of sufficient military resources to continue its security role and at the same time its need to reinforce its forces in Afghanistan, in a quest to achieve a crucial victory in the war on terrorism. Under these circumstances, the USA is ill-poised to assume any additional burdens in the framework of its global security umbrella, which makes its allies more vulnerable to unforeseen threats and casts doubts on the sustainability of USA's global security role. On a related front, the war on Iraq also deprived the USA of much of the conventional support it used to receive from its Western allies, particularly from those in Europe such as France and Germany. In its own right, the war was an additional reason why Europe should seek an effective multilateral system, as opposed to a unipolar or multipolar world order (Vasconcelos, 2008). Indeed, the Iraqi episode delivered a severe blow to multilateralism, shook the faith in USA's leadership and delegitimized the power of the USA in the eyes of the world (Thakur, 2005).

On the economic front, the 2008 financial crash in Wall Street was a unique historical event with far-reaching consequences. The uniqueness of the crash partially stems from its source, Wall Street, which makes it the first such incidence since World

War II. The crash had a devastating impact on financial markets in the USA and the world, and it led to a wider economic recession that is still haunting the world today. It was the world's worst financial collapse since 1929 and has escalated into the worst economic slowdown since the Great Depression (Zakaria, 2008). Among others, the crash resulted in the largest bankruptcy in history by Lehman Brothers, the nationalization of the American Insurance Group (AIG), the acquisition of Merrill Lynch by Bank of America, partial nationalization of the European giant Fortis group before its ultimate acquisition by BNP Paribas, a revolt against investment banking, the loss of around USA \$ 50 billion in world markets and bailouts and stimulus packages amounting to trillions of USA's dollars. Paradoxically, the crash is largely attributed to success, rather failure, of markets, together with lack of effective regulation. However, besides the subsequent economic crisis, it delivered strong blows to the USA's economy, the status of the USA's dollar as the key international reserve currency, USA's leadership of the free-market philosophy and indeed to this very philosophy. In sum, this crisis makes it clear that the economic competitiveness of the USA is in decline (Gelb, 2009).

But even beyond the last financial crisis, USA's global posture has been eroding over the last decade (Stewart, 2010). Economic and social dysfunctions in the USA are real, including those related to health care, social security, schools and tax reforms. Although reforms could correct most of these problems, internal politics often stand in the way. In fact, USA's internal politics hinder progress toward addressing most of the challenges the USA faces internally and internationally (Gelb, 2009). Given its long history of bipartisanship, it is hard to reach internal consensus on such issues as climate change, multilateral cooperation and many other foreign policy issues. Other USA's internal problems include the indifference of the general public to international affairs, leaving the foreign policy realm to a limited group of interested actors. Even after the shock of the attacks of September 11, USA's public remains largely self-centric, which is an old American legacy (Nye, 2002). In fact, USA's foreign policy is mostly determined according to two main parameters: ambivalence between power and values and domestic pressure groups (Kissinger, 2001).

With regard to the USA's soft power, the war on Iraq, the revelations of wrongdoing by USA's forces both in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the USA's unilateral approach especially during the Bush administration have all drastically tarnished its image. It seems that the demons of ideology, internal politics and arrogance have disproportionate influence on governance and public debate about foreign policy in the USA (Gelb, 2009). In 2007, asked what the USA could do to help France under President Nicolas Sarkozy, one of the most openly declared friends of the USA, the French President replied "improve your image in the world." Mr. Sarkozy further clarified that it is difficult when the country that is the most powerful is one of the most unpopular in the world. Indeed, polls of international public opinion show a steady decline in the approval of the USA in Europe and many other parts of the world (Vasconcelos, 2008). Rather, a true leader should lead by example, not go it alone. Lately, the USA's Obama administration has made this challenge a high priority and has been undertaking efforts in all directions to address it. As a result, the USA has recuperated some of its lost credit, but the damage already done seems to go beyond President Obama's worldwide personal appeal (Stewart, 2010).

The above analysis does in fact show that the power of the USA is in relative decline. Today, the USA is not even close to holding the same overwhelming material and soft influence it had in the 1940s (Stewart, 2010). Recent global developments indicate that the USA was only living a unipolar illusion and that its global supremacy was grossly overestimated (Calleo, 2007). Lately, Americans themselves tend to speak more of a "unipolar moment" than a "unipolar era," which carries along a recognition that the world is indeed in transition. It is also clear that over the last few years, the USA has failed to assume its responsibilities on maintaining world order, which makes the demise of the current system impending (Mahbubani, 2005). The USA even turned its back on rules it was the main force behind, as in the case of the war on Iraq. Such unilateral acts create reactive resistance and could hasten the decline of the USA by inducing other powerful nations to attempt to balance against it (Talmadge, 2002). In a way, the status of USA's power in the world today is analogous to that of empires in the past, but even empires eventually fall. And, throughout history, empires do not follow predictable life cycles. Instead, they usually collapse abruptly, albeit with some prior

signs, particularly monetary and fiscal. Today, the USA seems to be already on the edge of chaos, as there are already enough ominous signs about its future (Ferguson, 2010).

Nevertheless, there are some, in the USA and the world at large, who deny the possibility of transition and express firm faith in the resilience of USA's power (Gelb, 2009). In fact, the supremacy of the USA is still significant, as it continues to figure as the most powerful nation in the world, and this is expected to be the case in the foreseeable future (Joffe, 2009). In addition, demand for USA's leadership remains strong, as the world needs a competent leader to guarantee stability and guide the struggle against global challenges. Furthermore, the USA does not lack, but rather almost monopolizes, the aspiration to lead, albeit with some mixed signals coming from the EU and a nascent Chinese power projection. In fact, with the Obama administration, the USA is attempting to reposition itself in the global leadership seat. But, this time, it puts more stress on partnership than on the virtues of American power (Obama, 2009). In any case, and even if we agree with USA decline theories, the future of world order still depends on the USA and its actions more than anything else (Brooks, 2009).

There is yet another group that tends to take a more careful approach toward global power shifts. The decline of the USA is more relative to others than absolute in nature (Zakaria, 2008). The USA's position in the world today is not as bad as some claim, and predictions that other powers will joint forces to balance against the USA have proved inaccurate this far (Kagan, 2008). For instance, Chinese strategists tend to think that the current international configuration of power is likely to endure for some time. In particular, as long as potential challengers remain wary of each other and inspire concerns more than sympathy from their neighbors, the world order is expected to remain as it has been, with one superpower and several other great powers. The USA is expected to continue to grow in absolute power and to remain the world's strongest and wealthiest nation, but it is expected to decline relative to others (Haas, 2008). Accordingly, optimistic voices in the USA argue that the USA can remain the most prominent – though not dominant – of several great powers (Kurth, 2009). In sum, it seems that the USA is about to become a first, not a super, power (Gelb, 2009). And the paradox of American power is that it is yet too great to be challenged by any other state, but not great enough to solve the problems it wants to solve alone (Nye, 2002).

In the midst of this analysis, one should take into consideration that the notion of power itself is subject to developments in the surrounding environment. Thus, to be accurate, the power of the USA today should be measured against an environment that is substantially different from what it was during the Cold War for example. Besides the rise of the rest, power diffusion and the complexity of current global challenges, which will be addressed in detail later on in this same Chapter, there are several other significant factors that affects power measurement, especially with regard to global security, politics, economics and technology. In the field of security, the weight of military power has significantly decreased, as its use as a foreign policy tool has largely subsided (Kissinger, 2001). In addition, the USA's military might is unfit to face new forms of threats, including those posed by guerrilla fighters and suicidal terrorists. Thus, the unrivaled USA's supremacy in the security field does not carry the same value it used to in the past. In politics, the gradual decline of the USA has deprived it of much of its leverage. In particular, resentment to USA's power makes it harder for it to secure the diplomatic support of even some of the smallest states (Talmadge, 2002). As for economics, modern markets level the playing field for other states, the business sector and other non-state actors (Zakaria, 2008). In addition, the declining weight of ODA diminishes the potential of USA's economic influence. Finally, the technological revolution amplifies the subtle, but important, component of soft power in the overall power mix (Nye, 2002). No doubt, the USA maintains the ability to act alone, but this usually comes at a cost and this cost is increasing with the technological revolution. Moreover, technological progress opens new horizons for other state and non-state actors, such as Al-Qaeda, to compete with and even threaten the USA.

#### **B. The Rise of the Rest**

In the previous section, one could see that the decline of the USA is more relative to others than absolute in nature. It is the rise of the rest that is the master phenomenon of world politics today (Zakaria, 2008). A few years ago, no one expected the USA to face so many challenges not only from emerging powers, but also from traditional allies (Kagan, 2008). More specifically, by the late 1990s, an international system characterized with multipolarity appeared to have risen, as China and Russia were taking stances to balance against the USA. From a wider perspective, the world today appears to be multipolar, with the USA, China, the EU, India, Japan and Russia as

major powers. These six major powers host over half of the world's population, account for around 75% of global GDP and 80% of global defense spending (Haas, 2008). Thus, the list of major challengers to the USA includes China, Japan, Russia, India and the EU (Nye, 2002). And there are numerous other regional powers, including Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela in Latin America; Nigeria and South Africa in Africa; Egypt, Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East; Pakistan in South Asia; Australia, Indonesia and South Korea in East Asia and Oceania (Haas, 2008). In general, the new map of world power distribution reflects a transition from the old East-West dichotomy of the Cold War to a consolidating South-North dichotomy, which is being nurtured by emerging powers in the South.

Indeed, we live at times of transition and confusion. Particularly perplexing is the rapidly evolving distribution of power. Yet, these are times with fewer dominant powers than was the case during most of mankind's history. Even more, with the end of the Cold War, we seemed to have had a unipolar moment (Krauthammer, 2003). Eventually, this moment is giving way to a world with three dominant powers that, besides the USA, includes China and the EU (Khanna, 2008). China's mix of large population, industrial output and financial wealth makes it a power with unprecedented potential. The EU is economically wealthier than both the USA and China, with population in between and significant military and technological power. In addition to these three dominant powers, there have also risen a number of other great or emerging powers, but these mostly belong to a second tier of power that Parag Khanna calls "the second world." In general, shifts in world power distribution over the last decade could be viewed from two main angles: one for Western powers other than the USA, particularly the EU and Japan, and the other for the four newly emerging or reviving powerhouses, China, India, Brazil and Russia. However, considering their heavy weights, the EU and China deserve to be addressed each separately. Afterwards, there will be a collective analysis of major other powers, with focus on India, Russia, Japan and Brazil.

### 1. The European Union

Although the EU is a major force in the Western alliance, it is the closest challenger to the USA, especially with respect to economic power and technological

proWess (Nye, 2002). While the USA's economy is almost four times that of Germany, the biggest European economy, it is a little less than the size of the aggregate EU economy. The USA's population is significantly less than that of the EU (please refer to Table 1 above for other indicators). In terms of soft power, the EU is a role model in regional integration and multilateralism. It sows power using its enlargement policy, which is based on discipline not dominance (Khanna, 2008). European cultures have long had a sense of appeal in the rest of the world, and the EU shares the dominant paradigms of the current world, democracy and capitalism. However, the colonial history of several European powers still leaves some sense of bitterness in former colonies, which in a way favors the USA and some other powers. With respect to military power, the EU does not lack the essential resources, but it is still far from projecting a strategic threat to the USA's dominance due to lack of unity in this field. Only recently, there have been scattered calls for a united European army, including by Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France, during his country's last chairmanship of the EU and by Guido Westerwelle, German Foreign Minister, during the Munich security conference of 2010.

On the other hand, the EU faces serious economic and social problems, compounded by demographic challenges. Expansion in the EU is not only a choice, it is a requirement, for without expansion the EU might die (Khanna, 2008). Labor markets and social security are major problems in the EU, even at the time it is the biggest global economic power (Zakaria, 2008). And the EU suffers from persistent internal divisions over crucial aspects of domestic as well as foreign policy (Glencross, 2010). As the experience of the failed constitution demonstrates, pro-integration elites inside EU countries are growing less able to sell the benefits of integration to their national publics, and citizens are becoming more concerned about the impact of further integration on their lives. The continuation of divergence on the benefits of deeper economic, social and political integration in the EU could leave it a fettered giant consumed by internal differences and competing national agendas. Unless the EU breaks these taboos, it will not be in place to translate its economic power to full-fledged global power (USNIC, 2008).



Henry Kissinger, former USA State Secretary in the 1970s, made a comment that is usually quoted in reference to Europe's global role, by asking what Europe's phone number is. Nonetheless, European integration has continued ever since and many things have changed. In December 2009, Lisbon Treaty came into force, thus bringing more coherence and effectiveness to the EU's external policy. Most importantly, the treaty creates two new positions, President of the EU Council and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. In a testimony before the USA's Congress, Sally McNamara of the Heritage Foundation described the treaty as an instrument that transforms the EU into a superstate, reflects the EU's ambition to become a global power and to challenge the American leadership, poses unique threats to the special Anglo-American alliance and limits the margins of movement of the USA with its EU allies (McNamara, 2009). This is particularly concerning given the background of European powers balancing against the USA during the Iraq war. Nevertheless, she also added that the treaty was adopted without a shred of democratic legitimacy or public support after around eight years of controversy. In fact, whether this treaty will enable the EU to play a more assertive role in the world remains unclear, especially in view of the preservation of rotating six-month presidencies and the troika format (composed of the Commission, current and following rotating presidencies), the interpretative declarations secured by the UK to the effect of reasserting the integrity of national foreign policies, the preservation of the unanimity rule when deciding on foreign affairs and security issues and the confusion the treaty creates in distributing the roles in dealing with the external world (Chopin and Lefebvre, 2010). By and large, there is no doubt that when considering external issues, the UK, France and Germany will still play critical roles, for decisions on such issues without their support will carry less value.

One could say that the Lisbon Treaty makes the EU a superpower without teeth or a modest superpower. With regard to projecting power at the global level, the EU will never be able to compete with powerhouses such as the USA and China (Guerot, 2010). Those who speak of the EU as a full-fledged global power fail to recognize what the EU truly is (Maull, 2005). Realistically, the EU is a pool of nation-states that are developing unprecedented integration, which makes it a "post-modern" actor in international relations, not a great power nor a quasi-state. In other words, the most likely role for the EU in world order is to be a pole and an example of international



cooperation. Similarly, Vasconcelos (2008) argues that, in view of its uniqueness, the EU is not directly comparable to any other global power. The European Security Strategy of 2005 states as two main objectives promoting an international order based on effective multilateralism and enhancing security in Europe's immediate neighborhood. Logically, it is because the EU is a modest power that one of its strategic objectives is a world order shaped by norms and rules, not one where power prevails. And it is because the EU is the most advanced form of regional integration and multilateralism that it seeks a multilateral order that accommodates regionalism. However, cognizant that the EU's multilateral integration experiment is based on "unity within diversity," its soft power will to a large extent depend on its ability to integrate Turkey and absorb migrant communities, especially Muslims. And this is largely why observers are very attentive to the EU's approach toward these two issues.

The financial crisis in Greece is but one example of the kind of economic challenges that the EU faces today. The crisis underlines some fundamental weaknesses in the institutional design behind the euro (Fenby and Stokes, 2010). Individual euro-area economies have a single currency whose value they do not control. And the EU's central surveillance mechanisms do not guarantee that all member countries would enact economic policies consistent with the common monetary and fiscal policies, which exposes the euro area to beggar-thy-neighbor policies. Notably, there are other EU economies that find themselves under huge economic pressures, including Portugal and Spain, and this is not likely to be the last crisis of its kind. In this regard, one major problem is that if a member country faces liquidity problems like Greece did, the euro zone does not have a lender of last resort to extend credit lines against collateral (Dieter, 2010). Hence, a proposal came up to establish a European Monetary Fund that would lend countries facing monetary crises and give teeth to EU surveillance mechanisms. Moreover, Dieter adds, the EU's decision to involve the IMF in the Greek crisis is a harbinger about the European single currency, as it deprives it of much of its respect and competitive value as an international reserve currency vis-à-vis the USA's dollar.

## 2. China

No doubt, the rise of China is one of the most heated subjects of world politics in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is a famous saying by the historic French

emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, “let China sleeps, for when China wakes, she will shake the world.” It seems to be time now, as the world appears to be going through the shaking phase. Historically, the recent rise of China started with the economic and political reforms introduced by President Deng Xiaoping in 1979. By the early 1990s, it started a rapid course of economic development. Its export-driven development model has availed it a growth rate of more than 9% on average over the last three decades (Tellis, 2010). It is in the economic domain that China’s power is most obvious (please refer to Table 1 above for more indicators of China’s power). With a population of 1,339 million in 2009 and an economic weight of 12.5% of the world, China appears to be coming of age to revive its past glory, which poses a number of challenging conundrums for the rest of the world. In particular, China has become the wealthiest country, with the balance of foreign assets of the People's Bank of China reaching USA \$ 2.4 trillion in 2009, which also enabled China to become the largest foreign creditor of the USA. Most importantly, China is being widely touted to be the main challenger of the USA’s economic supremacy. According to a famous estimate by Goldman Sachs, the Chinese economy is projected to become as big as that of the USA by 2027, and the BRIC (before the inclusion of South Africa in December 2010) are expected to bar with the G-7 (G-8 minus Russia) by 2032 (Goldman Sachs, 2009). Notably, the Chinese economy was the first to recover from the current economic crisis, while the USA and Europe are yet struggling on their path out. China is also a nuclear power and has the largest army on earth. It might lack some of the power resources needed for a superpower, but, unlike the EU, it certainly does not lack statehood or other fundamental elements needed to project concrete global power.

There is a paradox facing the USA with regard to China, and it is basically that the rise of China is in fact being nurtured by the USA itself (Tellis, 2010). The USA’s security umbrella in Asia-Pacific, its championing of development under the mantra of economic liberalism and even its historical support to the Republic of China to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council are some of the main dimensions of the environment in which China rises. Thus, although China is feared, the USA finds itself in the awkward position of having to sustain a system that bolsters further growth of what is projected to be its most significant rival over time. In turn, China is exploiting this very system to continue its rise, while attempting to assure the rest that it only seeks

a “peaceful rise.” Also interesting is that for more than a hundred years, the way the USA and the West at large saw China was as a dream land of market possibilities, which dream never crossed the reality threshold (Zakaria, 2008). Instead, old dreams got almost reversed with Chinese products invading the world at large. Even more worrying is that the alternative dream today is not a pleasant one, as concerns mount that when China rises enough, it may not remain peaceful.

However, some argue that the Chinese ascending curve has reached its breakeven point and is going to start a painful fall (Chang, 2010). It is estimated that 38% of economic activity in China is export-driven. But, with the current economic crisis, global demand is falling, new protectionism is on the rise and countries throughout the world are putting brakes on economic globalization and entrenching their sovereign economic spaces. In the meantime, Chinese policy makers seem to be too focused on encouraging further investment, industrialization and exports, without doing enough to encourage domestic consumption, which nurtures imbalances in the Chinese economy. Moreover, China is accused of being the main player behind international economic imbalances that haunt the world today. In strict terms, China insists it is a developing country. Yet, it is the biggest creditor of the USA, continues to hoard USA’s dollar assets and pegs its currency to the USA’s dollar. In particular, China’s economic miracle is driven by a model that preys on foreign markets. And although its economic leap has created new welfare aspirations among its citizens, this is not yet adequately reflected in real life. As a result, Chinese economic policies have been a standing point of contention with the USA, especially in what concerns undervaluing its currency against the USA’s dollar to maintain the price competitiveness of Chinese exports.

On the political front, China remains authoritarian with a strong one-party regime. The Chinese Communist Party is by far the single most influential extension of the communist legacy. Notably, China’s impressive rise under such an authoritarian regime comes as clear evidence that democracy is not a prerequisite for development, which indicates that the Western model of democratic governance has somehow failed to prevail. In fact, the Chinese experience proves that notions such as modernization and liberalization, along the Chinese model, have replaced Westernization (Mahbubani,

2005). While authoritarian regimes are generally fragile because of lack of legitimacy, coercive policies, centralized decision making and the prevalence of individuals over institutions, the Chinese regime has proven to be an exception. This has particularly been possible thanks to the economic miracle. However, the inherent weaknesses of authoritarianism could become too big to contain, if the economy goes on a declining trajectory (Chang, 2010). Hence, China's internal politics and its human rights record are sources of concern to Western democracies and the world, especially from the perspective that instability in China could pose huge threats to its region and the world. Another source of concern is that China is in latent conflicts with some regional rivals and neighbors, especially India, which conflicts might erupt any time. By and large, a stable China is very important for the world, and a China in peace with its neighbors and the rest of the world is even more important.

The rise of China is reshaping the world landscape, especially in economics and to some extent security affairs and politics. It is playing an increasing role in the international system and becoming more able to counteract the USA's power. However, China is not likely to seek global leadership in the near future (Niblett, 2009). This is clearly reflected in its current foreign policy, which is largely focused on three priorities: protecting its security and territorial integrity under the slogan of "one China" (which reflects its sovereign claims over Taiwan), promoting economic development and earning global status through rejuvenating China (Medeiros, 2009). In fact, China still avoids acting like a great power and keeps on reiterating that it is a developing country. Hence, to be specific, China's rise is changing the dynamics of the current international system, but not transforming its rules or structure. Nonetheless, as has been elaborated earlier, China's economic policies are a source of concern about the future of the world economy. And its energy policies are drawing it into increasing competition with conventional and other emerging powers on limited crude oil and natural gas resources, especially in the Middle East and Africa. Regionally, China is in the process of reclaiming its historical status as a major regional power, which could also bring it face to face with the USA. Although China takes a peaceful global attitude, at least so far, it is clear that it is seeking a bigger role in shaping global norms, rules and institutions, which quest is mostly motivated by its need to protect and further its interests. Notably, the USA seems responsive and shows keenness on further integrating

China in the current international system, and for this sake, it demonstrates openness to reforming that system. For instance, China is asking for more voting power in the Bretton Woods institutions and the USA is showing responsiveness. In addition, Barack Obama, current USA President, has stated that the USA's relationship with China is likely to shape the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In this regard, the two countries seem to be consolidating some kind of constructive dialogue through the so-called Group of Two (G-2).

### 3. Other Major Powers

There are several other powers that are either emerging or conventional but still holding onto power. Notably, the list of emerging powers includes India and Brazil, while that of conventional powers includes Russia and Japan (though the latter is also relatively a new powerhouse). India is one of three major powers in Asia-Pacific, besides China and Japan, and it is a growing great power at the global level. It is proud to be the biggest democracy on earth, a nuclear power and a central hub in information industries. If compared with China, it has advantages such as its English tongue and more demographic youthfulness. On the downside, India faces several challenges, including lack of central control, lack of internal security, energy insecurity, the social complications of its unique caste system, worrying corruption, environmental degradation and deteriorating quality of life (Luce, 2009). Even with all its power resources and potential, India remains an underdeveloped country, with almost a quarter of its population under the poverty line and even more illiterate people. Individually, India is unlikely to pose a challenge to the USA in the near future. However, its coalition with China and Russia (RIC) could reshape world politics if it proceeds effectively (Nye, 2002). Clearly, India's foreign policy reflects a preference for the evolution of a multipolar world order in which India is a major player. But, certainly, it prefers a USA-led unipolar order to a Sino-centric order, which makes it a favorable ally for the USA (Zakaria, 2008). Together with Japan, India has an interest in balancing against Chinese influence in Asia. Lately, India's relations with China have been alarmingly deteriorating over two main subjects: China's contest of India's control over the border region of Arunachal Pradesh and India's refuge to Dalai Lama. With regard to the current international system, India demands a permanent seat in the UN

Security Council and, like China, seeks better representation in the Bretton Woods institutions.

Russia controls the largest state territory in the world, even after the successive dissolutions of the former USSR. It preceded the USA into space and holds the biggest nuclear arsenal on earth. Because of its relative decline after the end of the Cold War, Russia shows more reliance on its nuclear deterrent than its conventional military capabilities (Nye, 2002). This is clearly reflected by the latest revision of Russia's nuclear doctrine, and it still holds true after the signature of START II agreement in April 2010. Another main source of Russian power vis-à-vis its European neighbors and, by proxy, the USA is its abundant fossil energy resources. In fact, it is mostly thanks to these energy resources that Russia could transcend from debt-default to financial abundance over the last few years (Greene and Trenin, 2009). Moreover, Russia boasts a highly educated population, a big number of scientists and engineers and vast natural resources. On the downside, Russia faces problems related to democracy and human rights, its energy-dependent economy, weak political and economic institutions, ethnic disputes, alarming corruption, social strife and dismal public services. In total, however, Russia remains powerful enough in relation to its neighbors and other global powers. Over the last few years, Russia's foreign policy reveals a focus on dominance in its immediate neighborhood and attempts to recuperate its lost power to become a major player in a multipolar world order (Trenin, 2009). In particular, Russia is the power most outspoken against the USA, which indicates that it does not lack the motivation to re-ascend to power nor the intention to challenge the USA (Khanna, 2008). And the most significant threat Russia poses to the USA comes from its tendency to ally with China, especially given the historical precedence (their alliance during the 1950s, before China switched sides toward the USA in the 1970s) and the resumption and rapid evolution of their partnership after the end of the Cold War. Russia also has a special partnership with India, another ascending great power, and both had long been allies during the later stages of the Cold War. With regard to the current international system, Russia uses its power resources, including its permanent seat in the UN Security Council, to counterbalance the USA (Nye, 2002). At the same time, and in addition to security issues, Russia demands a seat at the table when

discussing issues such as world trade, climate change and financial regulation, and it seeks a louder voice in the Bretton Woods institutions.

Like the EU, Japan belongs to the rich North and the ideological West. In the 1980s, there were projections that Japan is about to become a superpower and concerns that it might make a quick switch to nuclear weaponry (Nye, 2002). These projections did not materialize. Nonetheless, today, Japan is a great power in Asia-Pacific and the world, even with the rise of other powers such as China and India. It has the third largest economy in the world, a sophisticated industrial and technological base, very developed population and the most modern military in Asia. On the other side, Japan is tight squeezed in a very small territory; its population is small and aging and it lacks natural resources. It has long been a strategic ally of the USA and reckons with the USA's security umbrella and USA's role as a stabilizer in East Asia, especially with regard to China, its historical enemy. In turn, the USA benefits from Japan's role as a balancer against China, in the so-called USA-Japan-China triad (Kwa and Tan, 2001). Japan also shows aspiration to more power, as it seeks a permanent seat in the UN Security Council and its new generations call for relaxing the constitutional provisions restricting its military to self-defense. Recently, Japanese American relations have been tense over the USA marine base in Okinawa. In addition, lately, Japan has shown more interest in strengthening its relations with China and even in joining an East Asian community together with China and India. These developments reveal a Japanese move away from the USA, with more efforts aimed at building more bridges with its neighbors.

Brazil is the principal regional power in South America and a rising great power at the global level. It is an outstanding economic performer, an influential global trader and it possesses a large territory that is rich with natural resources, especially newly-found oil. Despite its lack of capacity to cater for the needs of its neighbors, Brazil shows keenness to become the pole of Latin American diplomacy. Its economic hub, Sao Paulo, is considered the most important center of airplane design and production after Seattle and Toulouse (Khanna, 2008). On the other side, Brazil neither has nuclear weapons nor the intention to, suffers from chronic public security problems and struggles to lift more than a quarter of its population above the poverty line. Notably,



Brazil's foreign trade policy is clearer than its foreign affairs policy, which in fact reflects ambivalence in its political role both regionally and globally. Over the last few years, however, Brazil has taken a foreign policy line that is both more assertive and more independent from conventional great powers. From the global perspective, Brazil attempts to enhance its visibility as an emerging power, works through such forums as the BRICS and India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) to protect its interests at the multilateral level and counterbalance the USA in its near vicinity (Vaz, 2009). This, in turn, reflects a Brazilian foreign policy attitude in support of multipolarity. Like India, Brazil seeks a permanent seat in the UN Security Council and demands better representation in the Bretton Woods institutions.

### C. Implications of Power Shifts

While the USA maintains its position as the current military hegemon, it faces increasing military constraints, has already lost its dominance as the economic hegemon and current trends suggest further future power shifts (Drezner, 2008). We are truly living in a multipolar world, where power, whether hard or soft, is distributed asymmetrically across the globe (Vasconcelos, 2008). This world order is characterized with the emergence of new global actors, such as China, India and resurgent Russia, which puts pressure on the USA's power and that of other players (Nye, 2002). Hence, world powers are being rebalanced without one single power center (Khanna, 2008). By challenging the USA's power and making new alliances around the world, the EU and China have managed a power shift toward three relatively equivalent power centers: Washington, Brussels and Beijing. In addition, alignments, such as the RIC, BRICS and IBSA are increasingly consolidating themselves in the international arena with power balancing attitudes. Most worrying is the effect of these power shifts on the leading global role of the USA. Lack of adequate leadership could have significant implications on the world, especially that no single country or combination of countries and no international institution appears qualified to replace the USA in the leadership seat (Gelb, 2009). Notably, the USA's administration itself admits that it needs more help in dealing with global challenges, as President Barack Obama made it clear in front of the UN General Assembly (Obama, 2009).



Also of particular concern here, the current situation poses challenges to the power base of current structures of global governance. Historically, the institutions of the current multilateral system, be it the UN or the Bretton Woods institutions, reflect the international power status in the aftermath of World-War II. Today, the formula of power distribution has substantially changed and there are several ascending powerhouses in quest for protecting their interests in global governance. It is obvious that the old East-West dichotomy is now giving way to an evolving South-North dichotomy. As a result, current multilateral institutions are growing ineffective. Indeed, state power shifts raise questions about the legitimacy of the current structures of multilateral institutions, which in turn reduce the effectiveness of these institutions (Hurd, 2002). Over and above, there seems to be a great deal of ambivalence about multilateralism, particularly from the side of the yet most dominant power, the USA (Patrick, 2003). Although the USA is widely acknowledged to be the first beneficiary of the current multilateral system, USA's domestic politics and its foreign policy reflect lack of dissatisfaction with that system. Hence, the current multilateral system is under attack from almost all and sundry.

International analysts posit the rise of the BRICS as an introduction to a transformation of global governance structures (Drezner, 2008). In particular, it is widely held that unless new powerhouses, such as China and India, are accommodated and fully incorporated in the current system, its future will remain uncertain. It is perhaps imprecise to rely on uncertain future extrapolations, but this remains wiser than relying on a *status quo* that is more than 65 years old. Multilateral institutions are the creation of powerful states. While these institutions could survive shifts in global power distribution in the short run, the festering of mismatches between governance structures and real power distribution could shake the foundations of these institutions in the long run. And, historically, global governance structures could not persist long after the decline of the power of their initiators, even when power shifts were peaceful. Thus, no doubt, ongoing global power shifts pose significant challenges to the current USA-dominated multilateral system.

Notably, emerging powers differ with respect to power potential, political system, economic vision, perception of risks and attitude toward the current

international system, which makes it complicated to go about integrating them in that system (Stewart, 2010). Recent trends indicate that the USA is alert to these facts, as has been reflected by its variable approaches to emerging powers, including the recent USA-India nuclear deal and the emerging G-2 forum with China. However, the end results of USA's efforts in this regard are uneven and continue to fall short of meeting the aspirations of emerging powers. In addition, even when the USA chooses to move toward accommodating emerging powers, it is likely to face resistance from other conventional powers, such as the UK, France, Germany, Russia and Japan. Such an approach is also likely to face opposition from countries opposed to emerging powerhouses, such as Mexico in the case of Brazil and Pakistan in the case of India, and from developing and poor countries on the margins of the system. Thus, one ends up with a conundrum, the essence of which is that rewriting the rules of the multilateral system is an almost intractable task. Furthermore, assuming that this task could be concluded successfully, bringing more players to the game does not often lead to better understanding, effectiveness or efficiency. Anything comes at a price, and although better representativeness is advocated to enhance legitimacy, it could somehow compromise effectiveness.

The USA's National Intelligence Council (USNIC) projects that USA's dominance will be significantly diminished by 2025 and that the principal area of American superiority, military power, will become less significant in an increasingly competitive world (USNIC, 2008). A global multipolar system is emerging with the rise of global heavy weights such as China and India. In addition, gaps in power will continue to narrow between developed and developing countries. Together with the dynamics of globalization and the growing influence of non-state actors, the whole international system, as formed after World War II, will almost succumb to history. Moreover, it is predicted that the notion of community of nation-states will almost no longer exist. Currently, all emerging powers show commitment to global institutions such as the UN. Nonetheless, it is uncertain whether these powers will continue to work with multilateral institutions to adapt their structures and functions to the changed geopolitical space and make them more responsive to their needs, especially as these powers continue their rise to become bigger players at the global level.

In this regard, one has to differentiate between the West, i.e. the USA and its Western allies, and the rest, most particularly China. There is no doubt that the rise of the rest has evolved on the basis of Western paradigms, as other countries have absorbed West-born concepts such as capitalism and Western teachings about the virtues of free-market economies and the importance of science and technology. In contrast, with respect to Western political liberalism and democracy, some of the newly emerging giants do not concur, especially China. Though China is growing more liberal, it is still communist in theory and practice. And, although democracy is commonly considered a global value and a prerequisite for modernity, the Chinese development model is an outstanding exception. This is evidence that Western liberal ideas never really penetrated the psychology of much of the world (Barma et al, 2007). In fact, it seems that with the last wave of globalization, westernization has given way to modernization, opposite to what Francis Fukuyama predicted in his book *“The End of history and the Last Man,”* where he contended that Western democratic governance is the final form of human governance (Mahbubani, 2005). In any case, it has become clear that the most fundamental elements of political modernization, including democracy, have transcended their Western origin to become universal values not Western per se.

This poses the question of what would be the relationship between the West and the rising rest. Would the rest accept a world order revolving around the Western primacy of post-World War II and Western conceptions of order based most fundamentally on capitalism and democracy? In other words, would the rest integrate into the existing world order or it would instead attempt to modify this order? Related to these questions, what are the limits of what the West could accept in terms of adaptation and are these limits confined to the substance, i.e. capitalism and democracy, or they extend to the form, i.e. the structure and distribution of power. These are all decisive questions, the answers to which will shape the future. In fact, history indicates that USA’s hegemonic practices invite countervailing coalitions that could eventually further limit USA’s power, while its multilateral practices invite more respect to multilateralism (Nye, 2002). However, it is expected that with the rise of China, more countries may get attracted to China’s development model at the expense of Western models of political and economic development. Moreover, it is expected that with new

powerhouses coming to the world scene, Western traditional alliances may be at the risk of weakening. Hence, the future may indeed witness some kind of confrontation between the West and the rest.

It is also important to note two contradictory trends of history with respect to world power distribution. Firstly, there seems to be a consensus that periods when one or a small number of powerful states dominated tended to witness more peace and stability (Nye, 2002, Khanna, 2008 and Zakaria, 2008). This was the case during the reign of Rome, the Cold War and, to some extent, the decade following the end of the Cold War. On the contrary, periods when there were several powerful states or a transition of power were often marked with more violence and turbulence. This was the case during the era of power concerts in Europe from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, where Great Britain was the principal, but not dominant, power, and during the transition from the multipolar world order of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the bipolar world order in the aftermath of World War II. The second trend is that multilateral cooperation and the dose of democracy in international relations tend to run the opposite way. In other words, they increase during periods of abundance of power centers and power transition and vice versa. For instance, there was more respect to rules of international order during the Cold War than today, and there is no doubt that the League of Nations was significantly more democratic than the UN (please refer to Chapter Five). It seems, then, that the world is set for more turbulence and more democracy, due to current global power shifts.

It also seems that there are two main potential future scenarios: either systemic conflict between the West and the rest or eventual assimilation between them. On one hand, there are some who predict that the transition of power will be marked with tension, distrust and even conflict (Ikenberry, 2008). It is expected that as China rises, it together with other aligned countries will try to use power to redraw the rules and reshape the institutions of the international system, whereas the declining hegemon and its allies will start to see the rise of the rest as an increasing threat, thus creating room for confrontation. In addition, the current state of world affairs indicates a Hobbesian future, where scarce resources threaten of a war of all against all (Calleo, 2007). Nature puts increasing pressure on human needs and aspirations. And the scarcity of resources,

pollution and climate change seem to run opposite the dream of prosperity for all. In fact, it appears as if Malthus has returned once more to dismiss the Kantian notion of “perpetual peace.” In such a world, it will be hard to reconcile the rich North with the rising, poor South.

In this regard, it is argued that the most important determinant is USA’s foreign policy (Zakaria, 2008). If the USA withdraws from its leadership seat, it might produce chaos, and if it overacts, it could motivate others to counteract, which could lead to instability. In particular, the outcome of the ongoing power transition will mostly depend on the USA’s approach toward China. In the meantime, the USA is still in the leadership seat and capable of shaping the environment in which China rises. If the USA is keen on preserving its leadership, it should strengthen the rules and institutions of the current West-centered order (Ikenberry, 2008). This would be a wise strategy, for if the defining struggle is between the USA and China, China is more probable to win, but if it is between China and a reformed West-centered system, the West is more probable to win. In general, deepening global connectivity is creating a new world order without the West or a parallel international system increasingly autonomous from Western control (Barma et al, 2007). The emerging powers in this new system have already started to redraw the map of global governance according to their own perspectives of what is legitimate and sustainable. This approach risks of exposing the world to serious confrontations, especially if the West chooses to act aggressively in order to block further development of a new world order. In this case, the West would find itself facing a big bloc of countries spearheaded by an economic powerhouse, China, and the West’s chances of winning will be meager. In addition, the relationships among the emerging powers are expected to play an important role. If these powers cooperate, the transition would be quicker and smoother, whereas if they compete or slide into confrontations with each other, the transition could be extended and turbulent.

Hopefully, the shift could be gradual, in order and proceed peacefully. Factors to support this hypothesis include that, unlike in the past, war between great powers is unthinkable, mainly because all actual and emerging powers tend to benefit from the current system and all of them are in crisis together. Historically, moves toward global governance redesigns often came at staggering costs, but the good news this time is that

having another great war is remote. In addition, although, the emerging new world order is likely to be one with more rivals and even antagonists, it is also expected to be one with more negotiators and regional leaders with interest in keeping the peace. In fact, if these expectations are accurately conceived and advanced, the world would be a better place for all and potential confrontations would be avoided (Ikenberry, 2008). Moreover, the projected USA-Chinese power transition is expected to be significantly different from similar transitions in the past, because China faces a world order significantly different from those that prevailed in the past. Today, China faces a West-centered international system that is largely open to newcomers, integrated and rule-based. It follows, then, that the Western order is hard to overturn, but easy to join.

The current international system is more than 65 years old. It is West-centered, but is gradually seeping out of Western control. Taken together, the relative decline of the USA and the power shift toward newly emerging powers necessitate changes in the current rules and structures of global governance. The main impulse behind projected changes is the need to accommodate the rising powers, especially China. But they should also be ones that protect the interests of the West, ensure future stability and allow for more prosperity for all. In fact, it is the West, and most particularly the USA, that can and should take the lead to reform and reinvigorate the current multilateral system. Indeed, there is hardly any doubt that reforming the current system to make it more reflective of the new map of global power distribution will help the system become more stable and effective. Nonetheless, this reform does not appear to be forthcoming. Instead, the current reform momentum in multilateral institutions seems to be trapped in gaps of divergent self-interested and short-sighted positions. Although the reform agenda imposes itself and holds fruits for all, the world can barely move forward on its essential elements.

## II. Power Diffusion: The Proliferation of Actors in the International System

Globalization dilutes conventional state power through two fundamental forces. One is cross-border exchanges that take place beyond the control and/or the knowledge of governments. The Second is that the administrators of these cross-border exchanges are often non-state actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business firms and terrorist groups that challenge state power (Haas, 2008). These forces imply a

diffusion of power away from nation-states to non-state actors. Fareed Zakaria (2008) describes non-state actors as “the predators of globalization.” Individuals and groups are being empowered, while hierarchy, central control and sovereignty are being compromised. NGOs are now penetrating all aspects of life throughout the world. Capital and business firms are travelling the world to hunt investment opportunities, thus rewarding some governments and punishing others. Terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaeda, drug cartels, dissident groups, militias...etc create spaces and safe heavens for their activities in and across countries. Anne-Marie Slaughter has dedicated a lot of her work to studying the phenomenon and implications of the rising role of non-state actors in the international system. She argues that the concept of nation-state is “out of fashion,” and that starting in the 1990s, the world has been witnessing a relapse of “medievalism,” a back to the future model of Europe before the thirty-year war, where authority was shared among many players in individual geopolitical units (Slaughter, 2004b).

At the time the information revolution has transformed the world into a small village, global challenges have changed in nature and impact and have even gone beyond the capacities of nation-states or international organizations (Nye, 2002). Non-state actors make all possible use of the current environment to amplify their role and power. At the domestic level, they put pressure, lobby, challenge and, in some cases, substitute for local authorities. At the global level, they contribute to the work of inter-governmental organizations, mentor them, motivate change and struggle to carve bigger stakes for themselves. Terrorist groups, organized crime organizations, militias and the like organizations exploit increasing global connectivity to further their hostile objectives, which undermines state sovereignty and raises concerns about the benefits and sustainability of globalization. Moreover, there are other intertwining relationships between different non-state actors at both domestic and international levels. For instance, NGOs monitor the social responsibility of business firms, while terrorist groups cooperate with organized crime groups. Accordingly, the following section provides a more detailed analysis of the nature and implications of the rising role of non-state actors on the international system under three main subsections: NGOs, private sector and other non-state actors.



### A. Nongovernmental Organizations

As a starting point, the term NGOs is meant to refer to organizations that are neither related to governments nor to markets. These organizations proliferate at different levels, domestically, regionally and globally. For the subject of this research, the focus is on international NGOs. These latter organizations have been playing an increasing role in the international system. They are involved in the entire cycle of international politics (Forman and Segaar, 2006). They participate in meetings and activities of intergovernmental organizations, in what has become a common practice; observe international negotiations, missions and litigation processes; influence, and at times initiate, new norms and rules, especially in the form of international legal instruments; and form global networks that can raise more awareness about global challenges, advocate international cooperation and put more pressure on states. In particular, international humanitarian organizations play a critical role in conflict areas, whether at grass-root level or in cooperation with national and international organizations. At the domestic level, NGOs partner with other stakeholders to provide community services and contribute to development, which in some cases goes as far as substituting for state authority, especially in peripheral areas inside fragile states, which demonstrates the evolution of new forms of lack of sovereignty.

Most importantly, NGOs challenge state sovereignty and control over its citizens by creating new communitarian associations that cut across classes and cultures and form new communitarian identities (Slaughter, 2003). Indeed, they create new ponds of loyalty, other than those between national governments and their citizens, on the pretext that governments do not always reflect the views of their citizens (Suter, 2006). Consequently, domestic politics, including national positions from international issues, come under the influence of NGOs as distinct actors besides conventional political forces and interest groups. Some of the communitarian associations created by NGOs also cut across borders and challenge fundamental principles of the current international system, which is based on nation-states as the main building blocs. Over the last two decades, the proliferation of NGOs and the growth of their contribution to national and international governance have been posing conundrums, especially regarding how best to integrate them. On one side, governments are willing to make good use of these organizations within the limits of state sovereignty and legal rights and obligations. On



the other side, NGOs seek an ever increasing space and legitimacy and challenge the notion that nation-states are the principal actors in the international system.

There are two main contributions that NGOs could add to the multilateral system (Edwards, 2002). One is through enhancing the quality of debate and decisions by sharing information and experiences, ensuring more transparency and accountability and introducing additional pressure for taking speedy and adequate actions to face global challenges. Examples of this kind of contributions include the Jubilee 2000 movement on debt relief, the anti-personnel landmine campaign and NGO-led environmental certification systems such as the Forest Stewardship Council. Second, the inclusion of NGOs could confer an additional degree of legitimacy on the work of multilateral organizations and guarantee more effectiveness in the implementation of their decisions. NGOs' contribution to global governance not only gives voices to marginalized groups and increases pluralism, but also offers governments and multilateral institutions valuable partners (Forman and Segaar, 2006). In general, NGOs seem to work as links to public opinion, which involves transmitting public pressure and motivating public support or lack thereof. Accordingly, the support of these organizations to decisions is a catalyst for making them work or vice versa. This is particularly true for NGOs with concrete influence and strong bases, especially with the current information evolution giving them more outreach and impact.

On the other side, there are two main complexities with the role that NGOs play in the international system (Edwards, 2002). Firstly, their legitimacy is usually challenged on records such as lack of formal or clear links with those they claim to represent, lack of accountability for their own actions, taking positions that are sometimes inaccurate or misleading and being active only at the policy level without roots in national or local bases. This, in turn, raises questions on how to structure the role of NGOs in the international system in a way that helps overcome, rather than accentuate, existing social, economic and political inequalities. Secondly, the proliferation of NGOs at all levels makes it impossible to give all of them an equal chance of participation. As a result, there has to be a selective approach toward them. There is also a clear lack of balance between NGOs in the North and their peers in the South, with Northern NGOs more in number and richer in resources, which exposes

Southern NGOs to domination from their Northern peers. This is clearly reflected by the geographical distribution of NGOs with consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In addition, these organizations lack common worldwide agendas. For instance, some NGOs are associated with anti-globalization and represent specific anti-globalization constituencies or interest groups. In the meantime, there are other pro-globalization NGOs, but these mainstream organizations do not usually attract equal public attention. Furthermore, NGO networks lack sustainability, as they tend to rely more on independent members who have their own sources of funding, which makes it relatively easy to dissolve as soon as goals have been achieved and facilitates the rapid formation of new networks around new issues (Forman and Segaar, 2006). Though this has some positive aspects, it could result in sudden gaps that might lead to relapses in some activity areas.

There is a lot of academic debate about the accountability of states and intergovernmental organizations today. Here, most of the arguments are advanced in support of a bigger role for NGOs as an additional accountability mechanism in the multilateral system. Of particular relevance here, NGOs and their advocates demand subjecting multilateral organizations to some sort of direct individual accountability, on the basis that these organizations take decisions that could affect the lives of individuals anywhere. In light of the fact that world politics, unlike those domestic, lack electoral accountability and that the tools of international legal accountability are fragmented and often ineffective, NGOs and their advocates contend to be honest brokers for this purpose and seek an ever bigger stake in the multilateral system. Thus, it has become common practice to challenge the legitimacy of multilateral organizations such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, including through anti-globalization protests. In fact, although intergovernmental organizations are naturally subject to legal accountability to their member states, which are in turn subject to legal and democratic accountability to their citizens, there remains some accountability deficit in the multilateral system (Keohane, 2005). In this regard, NGOs have already become an active accountability mechanism and a source of concern for governments and multilateral institutions throughout the world. However, as has been elaborated above, there are many questions about the legitimacy and accountability of NGOs themselves, which questions restrict their potential in global governance.

## B. Private Sector

TNCs, or international private actors, are a product of globalization. They bestride a world economy where state borders have become largely invisible to the movement of capital and where trade liberalization has removed a great bulk of barriers to the flows of commodities and services across borders. Only the movement of labor is still highly restricted. No doubt, TNCs are deepening the degree of interdependence and giving everyone a stake in globalization, which could be seen as a force of peace and prosperity. Nonetheless, markets are having an increasingly louder voice and states have lost full control over their national economies. Indeed, states may be able to regulate international economic activities, but they have grown unable to control these activities. They are even becoming victims of market forces, as the last international economic crisis eloquently shows. Moreover, TNCs have rendered nationalistic economic policies of the past ineffective. For instance, promoting domestic commodities on nationalistic bases, like some states still do, has become an outdated practice. Furthermore, TNCs are developing state-like structures and accumulating wealth and outreach that make them capable of pressurizing states, as in industrialized countries, and even manipulating them, as in developing countries. In fact, some of these corporations have annual budgets that even dwarf those of some states. In general, however, private sector actors are usually considered to be allies of states and multilateral institutions, while NGOs and the public are usually considered to be together on an opposite front.

Naturally, TNCs tend to work in concert with state governments, but they have become so powerful that they do not need host states to help them open up or guarantee foreign markets (Suter, 2006). Even more, they can do better on their own at times and can even help thaw political tensions between states. To promote their public acceptance, TNCs have internationalized the concept of social responsibility. In turn, faced with many challenges, states and multilateral institutions look out to the business community to match its growing global reach with global responsibilities that contribute to global governance. Cognizant of the importance of TNCs as cross-border actors, multilateral institutions have been opening their doors for partnership with them. The pioneering experience of the UN Global Compact is a case in point. Historically, the Compact was launched in 2000, under Secretary General Kofi Annan, as a mechanism

to set global standards for corporate social responsibility and to promote the concept of public private partnerships (PPPs). In other words, it is a means to ensure that with their freedom to act globally, TNCs also have responsibilities toward the global community (Annan, 2002). Indeed, one of the most important developments in the international system over the last few years is the quantitative and qualitative shift in private sector participation, especially in development activities (Forman and Segaar, 2006). While some international organizations have a long history of involvement with the private sector, others have introduced similar practices more recently. This in fact marks a significant departure from past hostilities to business actors due to defunct communism and centralized economic planning.

However, the trend of increasing private sector participation in multilateral relations raises concerns about its net impact on global governance (Bull et al, 2004). On one side, proponents argue that the multilateral system is basically reactive to developments in the surrounding environment, while the private sector is usually ahead of trends, which makes joint partnerships a logical and genuinely positive tool. They also see those partnerships as a constructive move to help multilateral institutions better deliver on their mandates, at the time rich countries are not willing to provide more resources for pulling the poor out of suffering. In addition, the participation of the private sector in deliberations of multilateral institutions carries along an important value added in terms of expertise and ideas, which gives these institutions more influence over actors that are beyond their immediate control. With respect to concerns about the legitimacy of private actors, proponents contend that these concerns are mere formal complications that should be resolved in light of the changes in the global environment and the need for integrating TNCs in the efforts aimed at improving global governance. In particular, they are of the view that partnerships between multilateral institutions and the private sector are a necessary extension of national PPPs. Even more, some of them go as far as arguing that PPPs at the multilateral level bolster the power, flexibility and relevance of multilateral institutions.

On the other side, some critics see the participation of the private sector in the international system as de facto "privatization" of the system, propelled by the crisis of multilateralism (Bull et al, 2004). This group also argues that increased TNCs

participation in multilateral institutions undermines the legitimacy of these institutions, due to the lack of clear rules in this regard. In particular, they raise questions about the mechanisms of selecting which TNCs participate, the interference of substantive and geographic priorities of private sector funding with action priorities of multilateral institutions and the influence the private sector could have on policy coherence and decision making inside those institutions. In addition, opponents fear that partnerships with the private sector could result in fragmentation and duplication due to the creation of new institutional units to oversee these partnerships. Moreover, they highlight that competition between such institutions as UN specialized agencies on private funding does not go without some political implications. Notably, experience indicates that some agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), are more successful in raising private funding, thanks to their expansive outreach efforts, while others, such as the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), are lagging behind. Some of the critics also argue that the usual short-term objectives of global PPPs do not necessarily match with long-term objectives of multilateral institutions (Forman and Segaar, 2006). They add that public funds dedicated to PPPs may impose additional limitations on the ability of multilateral institutions to secure funds from the same donor sources.

### C. Other Non-State Actors

The list of non-state actors emerging at the international level includes several other kinds of actors. But one could subsume those others under four main groups: sub-state, infra-state, supra-state and rogue actors (Slaughter, 2003). The group of sub-state actors includes individual states in federal unions, in addition to regional and local administrations. Notable examples of states in federal unions include the cases of the USA and Canada. Federal states demonstrate increasing consciousness and activity with respect to national security, international trade and foreign policy issues. Self-governing regions within states follow the same logic and demonstrate similar interest in national issues. With more reliance on decentralization, regional and local administrations have also come to play an increasing role in deciding what is acceptable and what is not in terms of national foreign policy. Minorities and endogenous peoples could fall under this same group. Notably, these latter actors are stereotyped to be sources of external

pressures on national governments, but they also play larger internal and external roles through informal community associations at home and across borders.

Recent experience shows that horizontal networks of infra-state actors, such as ministries and other governmental agencies, have been replacing hierarchical channels of authority inside as well as among states. In other words, such actors are increasingly interacting with counterparts in other countries and focal points in relevant international institutions directly, i.e. without going through supervisory authorities inside their respective countries. These networks carry along a tremendous potential of cross-fertilization of ideas and gradual evolution of transnational consensuses over global challenges. By bypassing central national authorities in charge of external relations, the same institutions that make and implement rules at home are increasingly performing these same functions at the global level. This reveals a trend toward disaggregating governments into constituent institutions and forming trans-governmental networks of infra-state actors. In effect, the latter actors supplant rather than supplement the state, albeit without violating or openly challenging the authoritative core of the state (Slaughter, 2003).

Supra-state actors are those multilateral organizations where member states voluntarily give up some of their sovereign authorities to the supra-state body. A leading example of such actors is the EU, which has been pursuing the ever most advanced model of regional integration. With the last major step in the course of European integration, the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has further distinguished itself with the first precedence of its type and scale in developing supra-state authorities. The main crux of the Lisbon Treaty is more unity in the domains of foreign affairs, security and defense, with a quasi-EU foreign minister. As a result, today, a Spanish citizen can define oneself as a Spaniard, Barcelonan, Catalan, Mediterranean or European. Interestingly, at the time the Spanish central government has ceded some of its prerogatives to regions, such as Catalonia, it has also ceded some others to the EU. The AU is another example following the footsteps of the EU, but with a nascent record. At the time these supra-state organizations are consolidating their authorities, they also seek more recognition and space at the global level. For instance, the 2005 EU Security Strategy sets effective multilateralism as one of its main external objectives. In fact, this

reflects an EU's quest to secure a bigger role at the global level, on the basis of the defining assumption that the notion of effective multilateralism accommodates regionalism and opens the doors for regional organizations to have more influence at the international level (Vasconcelos, 2008).

Finally, rogue actors are those that lack legitimacy, pose threats to the international system and do not seek legitimate access to national or multilateral institutions (Slaughter, 2004b). Most important examples of these actors are terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaeda, organized crime groups, dissident factions and militias. Like others, rogue actors make good use of the advanced tools of globalization to promote their causes and interests. Recent precedence indicates that rogue actors could form coalitions with other actors, such as rogue states or organized crime groups. They also prey on weak states to create safe heavens for their activities. Thus, rogue actors pose varying challenges to world security, development and wellbeing. In this regard, the main question is how to face and defeat these actors, rather than how to accommodate them. Especially terrorist groups pose a clear danger to humanity, as their threat has been gaining visibility recently. This, in turn, reflects the imperative of a more effective multilateral system capable of facing this as well as other challenges.

#### D. Implications of Power Diffusion

Kofi Anan, past UN Secretary General, used to reiterate that current post-war multilateral institutions were built for an international world, but we now live in a global world. In such an environment, the notions of sovereignty and state authority, whether political or economic, are going downhill. In addition, the conventional wisdom that nation-states are the building blocs of the international system is undertaking substantial metamorphosis. One major force behind these changes is the evolving role of non-state actors at the world scene. While governments in general work with non-state actors to capitalize on their positive impact, provided that this does not infringe on their fundamental sovereign rights, non-state actors are continuously challenging nation-states and the multilateral system and seeking more room and recognition. Drawing upon the above analysis, the participation of non-state actors in the international system does not come without problems, whether related to legitimacy, integrity, policy coherence, quantity or quality of participation. Nonetheless, there seems to be a subtle



consensus on the need for cooperation with these actors through mechanisms that maximize their positive impact and minimize their side-effects.

There is the argument that that when a paradigm can no longer keep pace with reality or when aberrations outdo theory's ability to explain them, there emerges a need to move onto new approaches (Simons et al, 2007). Indeed, the increasing role of rogue and other non-state actors is one indication that some states are falling short on accounts of sovereignty and territorial integrity. In other words, while state sovereignty and territorial integrity are generally regarded as sacrosanct, rogue and other non-state actors proliferate and feed on weak states that are seldom held accountable on the responsibilities that come along with these notions. For instance, today, we see terrorist groups that take safe heavens on the territories of sovereign states, global networks of humanitarian organizations that are usually called upon to fill up sovereignty gaps caused by the inability of states to provide for the basic needs of their citizens and weak states that barely thrive on foreign aid. Hence, there is a need to revisit the notion of sovereignty to make sure all states are not only enjoying its rights, but are also held accountable with respect to its responsibilities. This could only be accomplished through an adequate revision of some of the fundamental principles of the current multilateral system, especially that of sovereignty.

At the same time, the classic form of multilateralism has come under pressure, not only from unilateral policies of great powers, but also from global structural changes caused by the growing role of non-state actors and the related weakening of the notion of sovereignty. As a result, the current multilateral system needs transformation. In this regard, there are some who advocate alternative forms of multilateralism that can accommodate non-state actors. One alternative is the so-called "communitarian multilateralism" that is claimed to be already thriving (Adler, 2006). This conceptual model relies mostly on tendencies of collective-identity formation that derive from material power as well as common understandings among groups of actors. In other words, actors belonging to different nation-states tend to form their own informal, exclusive platforms of multilateral cooperation, which could be identity-defined, such as religious associations, or substance-defined such as global forums on security, environment and justice. Along similar lines, Slaughter (2004a) argues for a new world



order based mostly on horizontal trans-national networks of infra-state authorities such as institutions in charge of the environment, health and education. In addition to the latter networks, the structure of this contemplated world order also includes vertical governmental networks, i.e. supra-national institutions, besides states and networks of other non-state actors.

On the opposite side, there is the argument that the state needs to be rediscovered (Luck, 2002). Until recently, the world order was too state centric, with little attention to non-state actors. As the current wave of globalization accelerated after the end of the Cold War, the failed promise of multilateralism has contributed to moving the focus to informal, sub-national and trans-national dimensions of politics. In such an environment, civil society, private sector and other non-state actors act as driving forces behind the shrinkage in state authority. This shrinkage, however, has gone too far, and it is time to return the state to the center stage. Although non-state actors can play important roles in addressing global challenges, they can only do that as supplements not substitutes for the state. In fact, part of the success of non-state actors is due to their intrinsic admission of the centrality of the state as the principal actor to partner with. In other words, non-state actors largely matter as much as they influence the policies of states, while their power and capabilities cannot be compared to those of states. From the legitimacy point of view, it is states that are the basic formal actors in international relations, while non-state actors face legitimacy deficits because of lack of transparency, accountability and democratic structures (Keohane, 2005). Likewise, international organizations play critical roles in many fields, mostly because of their constituent blocs, nation-states. However, international organizations do not have wills of their own. On the contrary, these organizations themselves and their policies are expressions of the wills of their member states.

Hence, the increasing role of non-state actors is shaking fundamental principles of the current international system. In response, the UN and other multilateral institutions have been attempting to adapt. Currently, there are two main gates in the UN for NGOs and private sector entities to partner with the world body in different activities, namely the ECOSOC and the Global Compact respectively. However, these mechanisms reflect attempts to turn around the challenges posed by non-state actors

rather than to face them upfront (Ruggie, 2003). At the bottom line, the UN has a constitutional framework, the Charter, that it cannot override and this framework does not recognize non-state actors as actors in the international system. By and large, the same applies to the Bretton Woods institutions and other multilateral organizations. This, in fact, indicates a need for a holistic approach in dealing with the participation of non-state actors in the international system, with due consideration to the determinants of the current wave of globalization, its challenges and the opportunities it offers.

### III. Complexity of Current Global Challenges: Global Governance Deficit

The previous two sections were mainly focused on actors in the international system, whether states or non-state actors. In turn, this section will address the imperatives of change emanating from the underlying global environment. While globalization has been changing the world, the multilateral system has not been keeping pace. Thus, a major factor behind the fomenting of global problems is lack of responsiveness at the international political level. In fact, from the Cold War era through to the so-called unipolar moment, the international system seems to be in a perennial crisis. The afore-mentioned two factors, globalization and lack of adequate political response to it, are putting huge pressure on the current multilateral system. In response, the system is in labor to adapt.

The background provided in Chapter One about the current international setting should provide a basis for the discussion of the complexity of current global challenges. Especially the background related to the problems of the multilateral system, humanitarian intervention and state sovereignty, the main forces of globalization and gaps in the distribution of benefits and the resulting divides are of relevance here. The discussion in Chapter Five on the relevance of the UN in the world today is also pertinent, especially from the perspective that current problems challenge the fundamental premises of the current system, including the role of nation-states as building blocs, state sovereignty and equality of states. Indeed, this same question of relevance is valid for the multilateral system at large. Equally important are the previous discussion in this chapter about the challenges posed by non-states actors and changes in global power distribution in the aftermath of the Cold War. Thus, for the sake of brevity, the focus here will be on the major implications of globalization, together with

lack of adequate political responsiveness to it, on the current international system. Accordingly, this section will include analyses on the complexity of global governance, lack of institutional responses, anti-globalization forces and the rise of nationalism.

#### A. Complexity of Global Governance

To start, the term global governance should be read as management of globalization. It emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War, in an environment of optimism about the future, as a more appealing alternative to global government. It suggests that problems posed by globalization, such as poverty, insecurity and regional conflicts, require an international system where there is a degree of order and control beyond what currently exists. But, while the term globalization is relatively novel, the underlying phenomenon is not. In fact, it has been in existence for centuries and the only difference today is that it is growing thicker and quicker (Nye, 2002). In this regard, the changes in the nature of the current wave of globalization are mostly related to advances in the fields of information, communication and transportation, which increase the density of interdependence throughout the globe. As a result, an event at one end of the world could have profound effects on countries and peoples at the other end. Environmental interdependence is perhaps the oldest form of globalization, and the recent wave of globalization has only accentuated its impact, such as in the case of climate change. For instance, recent problems of ashes from volcanic activity in Iceland demonstrate how the global environment should be viewed as one integral unit. Moreover, there has risen some sort of globalization of health concerns, where endemics challenge all kinds of measures to hinder them from spreading across borders. Yet again, phenomena, such as the avian flu, are not novel; they only used to be less destructive. Historically, the first smallpox endemic was recorded in Egypt in 1350 B.C. and spread to China, Europe and the Americas over centuries, as connectivity was yet feeble. Other examples of global event linkages include news that flow in no time and people far from incidents developing reactions and attitudes toward them. As a result, globalization has contributed to the development of some kind of international public opinion that is putting pressure on governments and multilateral institutions.

In addition, actors in any part of the world could have fairly easy access and impact on any other part. Non-state actors, such as business corporations, NGOs and

terrorist groups, internationalize their activities using modern technologies. Some of these actors are also growing more agile in building international networks that could even challenge strict state controls. In particular, terrorist groups, like Al-Qaeda, are of special concern to the modern world. As has been detailed in Chapter One, these groups use globalization to enhance their outreach and further their causes. And in some cases, they create cooperative links with other state and/or non-state actors. Because the world is infested with intractable problems and political responses to these problems are inadequate, the threat of terrorism is becoming all the more alarming. And though still purely theoretical, the possibility that terrorist groups could get their hands on some types of WMD is so horrifying that world governments are already mobilizing to foreclose it.

Furthermore, globalization has a double-edge relationship with individuals. From one perspective, direct public participation in shaping global affairs has markedly increased due to higher connectivity. For instance, ordinary people invest huge sums of money in stock markets, trust funds and financial institutions across the globe, and they speculate, gamble and shop online. As the case of the Southeast Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 demonstrates, decisions of individual foreign investors could create chain-reactions that could lead to financial and economic crises. From an opposite perspective, globalization has strong impact on people, as it has some irresistible cultural and social dimensions resulting from the flows people and ideas. In this regard, cultural interaction should be viewed as a two-way, two-prong process. In other words, globalization creates gives and takes, generalizations and exceptions, amity and apprehension...etc. Thus, while globalization has sometimes been equated with Americanization, it also creates backlashes against American culture and even contributes to attempts to change that culture from within. A less appealing depiction of cultural interaction is that of the controversial theory of clash of civilizations, which focuses on negative aspects and downplays those positive.

On one hand, globalization is often associated with privateness, due to its individualistic premises. It widens personal freedoms, promotes business entrepreneurship and opens wider doors for communication and travel. On the other hand, it is also about publicness, due to its effect on making peoples' lives more

interdependent. Notably, global linkages create GPGs, where rights and responsibilities could hardly be differentiated. These GPGs are public, as opposed to private goods, with benefits or costs, as in the case of GPBs, that extend across countries, regions and peoples (Kaul et al, 2002). Thus, globalization, GPGs and GPBs are inextricably linked. Examples of GPGs include economic wellbeing and security, while examples of GPBs include terrorism and environmental degradation. For instance, climate change affects the lives of people everywhere, but no one country has distinct rights to environmental preservation and responsibilities on global warming are overlapping among stakeholders at all levels. No doubt, the development and provision of GPGs are issues at the core of the multilateral system. And the tradeoff between GPGs and GPBs at any point of time determines whether globalization is an opportunity or threat.

International linkages, whether economic, political or otherwise, are growing increasingly complex and unpredictable. In particular, these linkages are visible in the economic field, due to the various forces of economic globalization. Hence, globalization is associated with a great deal of sophistication and uncertainty. As a result, people and countries around the world feel a great deal of insecurity (Kaul et al, 2002). On one side, industrial countries make up a fearful North, living in timid prosperity, with even the most powerful countries growing unable to go it alone. On the other side, developing and poor countries view globalization as a predatory force that is impinging on their autonomy and providing opportunities that are hard to realize and risks that are similarly hard to avoid. However, all governments, multilateral institutions, corporations and other international actors have problems in comprehending, exploiting and/or combating network effects and sophisticated linkages. As a result, for example, international economic crises are recurring in spite of efforts to prevent them. In addition, responses to the challenges of globalization are variable (Nye, 2002). One possible reaction is to embrace change, as exemplified by democratization and free-market transformation in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the former USSR. Another possible reaction could be withdrawal from globalization, such as reversals of integration in the world economy to reduce the negative spillovers of global economic crises. A third, more balanced approach could be to accommodate and adapt to global forces, like in the case of countries applying free-market economic

policies, while maintaining relatively large governments and bolstering compensation mechanisms directed to less advantaged sectors.

### B. The Institutional Challenge: Global Governance Deficit

A major factor behind the fomenting of global problems is lack of political responsiveness to them. In fact, there is a clear lack of order in the international system today. And it seems that the system has only laid down the fetters of the Cold War to surrender to the shackles of superpower dominance, great power indifference and lack of vision and political will required to face the challenges of the day. Notably, until the early 1990s, the system was struggling its way in the midst of bipolar animosity. After a short bout of optimism in the aftermath of the Cold War, it turned out that the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity was yet another daunting challenge facing the system. Ever since then, the system has been struggling to readapt to the new realities of world politics. In the meantime, it seemed that unipolarity gave the world superpower more leeway of hegemonic practices, as demonstrated in the case of the war on Iraq. Thus, it emerged that the Cold War had one important advantage; that of relative order, where each of the two superpowers was wary of the other. As a result, the world witnessed an era of relative peace, security and stability. In contrast, unipolarity deprived the world of the balance needed to maintain that relative order (Kurth, 2007).

It is only normal that the multilateral system reacts to developments in the surrounding environment. However, especially over the last two decades, multilateral reactions to globalization have been mostly slow and ineffective. In addition, power shifts on the world political map and power diffusion from states to non-state actors are increasingly rendering the current system illegitimate - in view of its outdated power formula - and irrelevant to the rapidly evolving surrounding environment. Over and above, there seems to be a dilemma of both too much and too little or no multilateralism. While most arguments suggest that there is a proliferation and overlapping of multilateral institutions, there are others that contend to the contrary. For instance, Drezner (2008) argues that one of the major challenges facing the multilateral system today is the proliferation of institutions and arrangements, especially since the end of the Cold War, with the number of multilateral organizations, international conferences and treaties reaching around five thousands in 2003. Reasons behind this

include the failure of existing platforms to address global problems and lack of reform in these platforms. Along similar lines, Forman and Segaar (2006) argue that the current international political environment reflects a proliferation, fluctuation and overlapping of formal and informal governance structures.

In addition, there has been a steady increase in the number of reforms in existing multilateral institutions and in new institutions and new institutional arrangements, including hybrid arrangements involving different actors such as the Global Environment Facility and the Global Compact. Furthermore, there has been an explosion in the number of extra-institutional responses taking the form of ad hoc, informal forums such as the G-8 and the G-20. In particular, reliance on diverse multilateral responses is clear in the contexts of the global war on terrorism and WMD anti-proliferation efforts. Indeed, the big number of multilateral structures, formal and informal, could contribute to efficacy in facing the challenges of globalization. It may imply that formal rules regulate more of the behavior of actors, especially powerful ones, thus creating what could be called “institutional thickness,” i.e. deepening of governance rules. However, the multiplication and overlapping of structures addressing the same issues also raise questions as to the effectiveness, accountability and sustainability of global governance; pose challenges to the authority of formal governance structures; and encourage forum shopping and dilutes the sense of legal responsibility. In addition, overlaps and gaps in and between international and regional structures and arrangements make coordination among their activities a very challenging task (Jones, 2010). In particular, this results in higher transaction costs and imposes resource strains on stakeholders, especially the poorer ones. Furthermore, while new and more flexible arrangements can give existing institutions healthy competition, the increasing institutional density complicates the vision of reforming the multilateral system, as it is usually hard to eliminate or even relocate power within existing institutions (Stewart, 2010).

On the other side, multilateral institutions fail to make a difference on some fronts. Paradoxically, this is clearer in the economic field than in the political field, though the world is far more interconnected economically than politically. In fact, the evolution of the international economy is decided more by the acts of a small group of



influential states than by carefully charted multilateral actions (Setser, 2009). And this is even more the case at times of crisis, where especially powerful states tend to scramble to taking unilateral decisions to protect their own interests, which could jeopardize relative stability in their vicinity and beyond. With respect to politics, Fukuyama (2007) argues that the world today does not have enough multilateral institutions to confer legitimacy on collective actions. For instance, the UN failed to either endorse or prevent the USA's war on Iraq. Hence, establishing new institutions that can better balance the considerations of legitimacy and effectiveness should be a prime task for the coming generations. In addition, while the world is ripe with vertical hierarchical institutions, such as the UN, it needs institutions that can guarantee horizontal responsibility among states, thus holding each state accountable for its acts or lack thereof. In other words, the increased interdependence among states and the differences in power and influence among them necessitate collective forums capable of regulating state acts and ensuring overall wellbeing.

Even more obviously, Dimitrov et al (2007) refer to a lack of multilateral responses in some areas of international relations. For instance, there are no formal multilateral rules to regulate subjects such as tactical nuclear weapons, small arms, deforestation, information privacy, cyber space and internally displaced persons. However, lack of international agreements in some areas does not imply lack of governance altogether, as there could be other institutional or informal arrangements to address them. On the contrary, the existence of specific multilateral accords does not guarantee the implementation and enforcement of their provisions. Nonetheless, international agreements are widely held to affect the behavior of states and other international actors, even when these agreements are not satisfactorily effective. Accordingly, it is clear that although the scene of world politics is predominantly marked with proliferation of multilateral regimes, there are some areas where states fail to produce multilateral responses or to enforce them. Unfortunately, this is a phenomenon that has been suffering from negligence, though it has considerable policy implications and transaction costs and as such warrants more attention.

The world also seems to suffer from dualism between existing formal rules of multilateralism and evolving new modes of international cooperation, which creates



dilemmas of global governance (Maull, 2005). While existing formal rules fall short of providing adequate responses to the needs of global governance, most new modes lack formal grounds and/or suffer from lack of appeal. Informal forums, such as the G-8 and the G-20, serve as platforms for important decisions, but lack formal grounds, which exposes them to legitimacy questions. Whereas a judicial organization such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) lacks appeal and faces charges of politicization. This dualism hinders the performance of global governance institutions and deprives them of clear future guidelines. No doubt, the world today is characterized with significant diffusion of authority, which results in a lack of effective institutional checks and balances, persistent turbulence and recurrent violence. Moreover, because of the fundamental nature of the dualism, the world does not seem likely to resolve the resulting dilemmas any time soon, which elongates and accentuates the ambiguity of the rules of global governance.

Another interesting argument to highlight here is that even the notion of international community is only rhetoric (Appadurai, 2002). It is neither international nor community. It is not international because it does not have any internationally recognized structure. And it is not a community because it has little to do with peaceful coexistence, amicable relations or solidarity. Even the UN does not serve this purpose, as it is merely a feeble community of states. Thus, the notion of international community is more an expression of aspirations and moral promises that lack factual manifestations. In fact, relations between states are premised on power and interests. When interests are at stake and power is available, states pursue their interests using all kind of tools, sometimes even in violation of internationally agreed rules. Thus, the prevailing vision of survival is mostly individualistic not collective. Hence, it seems impossible to adequately restructure and reform global governance. This has not only been the case, but is also expected to remain so. Unless interests bring the different strands of mankind together, there can be no meaningful change. For instance, after the two World Wars, the world was motivated by strong interests to establish the UN to put an end to the then prevailing culture of violence. Today, the interest is there, but unfortunately not so clear and strong as to warrant a similar response.

### C. Anti-Globalization Forces

Globalization has brought about many benefits to the world, including in terms of trade openness, financial integration and human development. But to many in the developing world, it has not delivered on its promises. The unevenness of globalization, especially in economic terms, has led to sharp divides between haves and have-nots. This is the most influential discontent about globalization and it is very pervasive between and within countries, rich and poor. In addition, there are almost entire geographic regions characterized with rampant poverty, including sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and Andean and Central America. By and large, the West has driven the agenda of globalization in such a way to ensure that it receives a disproportionate share of its benefits, at the expense of the developing world (Stiglitz, 2002). Although the international community has been alert to these problems, they have been eluding efforts to confront them and have even increased in relative terms in some parts of the world. In particular, there is a lack of clarity regarding the causes of these problems and the best remedies to them. This, in turn, results in anger and despair, especially among young people, to whom information technology has given means to threaten social stability in their countries and beyond, including the wealthy West.

Globalization has not only failed to reduce poverty and inequality, but has also accentuated problems of economic and political instability and social strife (Ikenberry, 2000). Economic crises, like the current one, further accentuate income gaps, threaten social cohesion and lead to anti-integration measures. Paradoxically, at times of crises, the poor usually gets poorer, while financial traders and speculators continue to stack profits. As a result, anti-globalization rallies are expanding in the four corners of the world. And migration works as a vehicle of contagion among countries, transmitting disappointment across borders. Although migration from poorer to richer countries tends to reduce inequality in home countries, it also tends to increase inequality in richer countries and overall world inequality (Nye, 2002). Economic crises further exacerbate migration's side effects and lead to anti-globalization phenomena such as xenophobia and racial discrimination. Also worrisome is that globalization not been environment-friendly (Sachs, 2008). As a result, environmental activists play an increasing role in the anti-globalization movement and impose pressure on governments, regional and international organizations to react.

Historically, protests against economic policies are not new, especially in developing countries. Instead, what is new is the scale, spread and aggressiveness of protests in developed countries and at the global level, especially since the WTO Seattle meeting in 1999 (Stiglitz, 2002). In part, this increase comes as a result of increased global economic integration (Nye, 2002). While lack of integration deprives some countries from some benefits of globalization, it provides buffer zones that could be helpful socially and politically. In other words, market inefficiencies and distortions are not always harmful. In contrast, deeper global economic integration creates wider pools of gains and costs, from which emerges despair about the future. Consequently, disaffected people feel more inclined to mobilize against globalization. And some NGOs, such as Green Peace and Oxfam, play leadership roles in coordinating and supporting this movement. In addition, disadvantaged populations in different countries provide a fertile environment for fundamentalism, which makes it easier for terrorist groups to find safe heavens, advance their causes and recruit new adherents. Unfortunately, this aspect of terrorism has not been adequately integrated in international efforts to combat terrorism this far. Instead, the focus is on security measures such as police and military actions.

One outstanding case of anti-globalization is that of the World Social Forum (WSF), which was launched in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001 to counteract the Davos World Economic Forum (WEF). The grassroots of the WSF go back to the great uprising of Seattle in 1999, which linked various anti-globalization currents and provided the main thrust for the emergence of something totally novel such as the WSF. In sum, the WSF is an open forum for social movements, networks, NGOs and other civil society actors opposed to neo-liberal capitalism, to debate ideas and formulate proposals aimed at creating a more humane, democratic and fair world. Membership of the forum expands to include actors from cross social, cultural and geographic spectrums. In addition to its annual meetings, the WSF has also introduced regional, national, local and thematic meetings and initiatives. Some of the WSF's main objectives are countering the power of global organizations especially in the fields of finance and trade, opposing war mongering and growing militarization of international relations, resisting unilateralism and reconstructing multilateralism and world governance for the sake of more peace (Grzybowski, 2006). In effect, the WSF reflects

the growth of hostility toward globalization, and in particular wealth concentration, social exclusion and environmental degradation. In addition, it indicates the emergence of a global citizenry notion that is based on the rationale of common responsibility and destiny. In a way, the emergence this kind of forums is also an outcome or reaction to globalization. Strengthening global interdependence provides the means and motivation for mobilizing at a global scale against the discontents of globalization. Lately, however, the left movement that has long driven forums such as the WSF has been losing ground to neo-liberal forces. Notwithstanding all its woes, capitalism has already consolidated itself as the globally dominant economic paradigm. Nonetheless, the wider framework of globalization, beyond capitalism per se, continues to face serious threats from anti-globalization forces, including in terms of stability and security.

#### D. The Rise of Nationalism

In addition to aforementioned anti-globalization forces, nationalism warrants a separate treatment as a force that has been on the rise against the dominant trend of globalization. It basically relates to the role nation-states play in the context of globalization and whether they slow, speed or manipulate it. Strongly related is the notion of sovereignty that has been addressed in Chapter One, especially from the angle of infringement on state sovereignty. In turn, the focus here is on nationalism, i.e. the return to nation-states to help solve problems of globalization, even as they are becoming less able to do so individually. To some extent, reemphasizing state sovereignty and authority could be a pretext for unilateralism at the time globalization has been running past the ability of the world to comprehend and regulate it. Instead of further band-wagoning with global mainstream currents, nationalistic forces push to withdraw from them. Thus, nationalism has serious anti-globalization and anti-multilateralism dimensions.

Indeed, there seems to be a paradox of dualism in international relations between two fundamentally different trends, globalization and nationalism (Maull, 2005). Although globalization is meshing the different strands of mankind together, one of its byproducts is the rise of differentiation on the basis of identity. This drifting toward nationalism comes in response to, or rather in defense against, the perceived harms and dangers of globalization. And this reflects a paradox, because at the time global forces

require significant international cooperation, nationalistic forces are gaining more ground throughout the globe. In the meantime, nation-states are becoming less capable and/or willing to address problems with global dimensions. A partial explanation of this phenomenon is served by the continuing legacy of Westphalia, where formal political power remains strongly invested in nation-states in spite of the pressure of globalization to the contrary. In fact, it is mainly due to this kind of nationalism that theories, such the end of history, have been proven wrong. In such an environment, it is particularly hard to imagine how the world can move forward on solving old regional conflicts, such as those in the Middle East and Kashmir, addressing socio-economic and cultural transformations and enhancing global security.

The rise of nationalism is also associated with developments in the global environment in an intriguing way (Zakaria, 2009). First, the end of the Cold War gave rise to thoughts that the rest of the world would join the Western wagon, just as Germany and Japan did after World War II. These thoughts were proven simplistic, as some parts of the non-Western world resists westernization. Indeed, Westernization has given way to modernization (Mahbubani, 2008). Today, rather than choosing between Westernization and isolation, newly emerging powers appear to follow a third way. They integrate with the Western world according to their own terms, while growing more willing and capable of reshaping the existing West-centered system. This is expected to continue in the future, driven mostly by differences in cultural identities, political perspectives, needs and aspirations. Secondly, as economic booms take root, nationalism also tends to rise. There are two main factors to explain this relationship, one is the gaps that economic globalization creates between haves and have-nots, where have-nots usually take anti-globalization reactions. The other relates to growing national pride in national success stories such as raising new fortunes, boosting economic development and enhancing human development. Thirdly, as globalization proceeds, cultural differences between and inside countries become more acute. Although globalization carries American and Western cultural influences across the globe, there has also been a galvanization of distinct national identities and cultural differences in the non-West. Among others, nationalistic responses to Americanization could take the form of indifference to it or, in some extreme cases, fundamentalist attitudes. It should also be noted that cultural polarization does not only take place between states, but also

inside states. Consider for example the cases of the Scots in the UK, the Flemish in Belgium or the Sikhs in India. Sub-nationalistic movements and minorities inside nation-states strengthen as globalization provides them with easier and quicker means to connect and establish community structures. They also strive on political liberalization, which gives them more sensible political weights and recognition.

Nonetheless, with nationalism or not, nation-states are central to globalization and should remain so, otherwise it is unlikely that the world could achieve sustainable progress toward a more secure and fair international order or toward better global governance. Luck (2002) argues that the forces of globalization have pushed the focus too far away from the nation-state as the main player in the international system, to the extent of undermining the important and necessary role of the state in regulating and sustaining globalization. He adds that it is now time to return the state to the center-stage. Trans-nationalism, sub-nationalism and even internationalism cannot substitute for nation-states. For instance, although the evolution of the notion of human security is welcome, it cannot be isolated from the imperative of pursuing and protecting conventional state security. In fact, state security may not be sufficient, but it is certainly a necessary precondition for overall security. Likewise, regarding multilateral institutions as distinct or even competitive players with their member states is damaging. States and the problematic world they live in are the main pivots of the work of multilateral institutions, and they remain the most important players in the age of globalization. Although the international system is vital for addressing global challenges, it is nation-states that ultimately provide the required resources and reflect the choices of their peoples. The choices and aspirations of these peoples, be it with or against globalization, should be respected.

No doubt, the private usually comes before the public. And, in the context of this subject, the national comes before the international. Nonetheless, catering for individual national interests does not have to contradict with common world interests in peace, stability, development, environmental protection and many other fields. The world is slowly but surely becoming a global society, with problems at one end echoing throughout the whole globe. Under these circumstances, one cannot apply the rules of wild nature, where the strong preys on the weak. On the contrary, the world needs to

further consolidate the culture of global living-together. Unfortunately, in practice, there are cases where tight national gains translate into wide global losses. In such cases, concerned players tend to take decisions that only reflect their individual national interests. Even worse, it seems that no one is willing to start with oneself. Even world leading players, be it nation-states or private players, tend to strike bad examples. In short, if global good continues to stumble on the rock of lack of political will, then global bad is likely to increase.

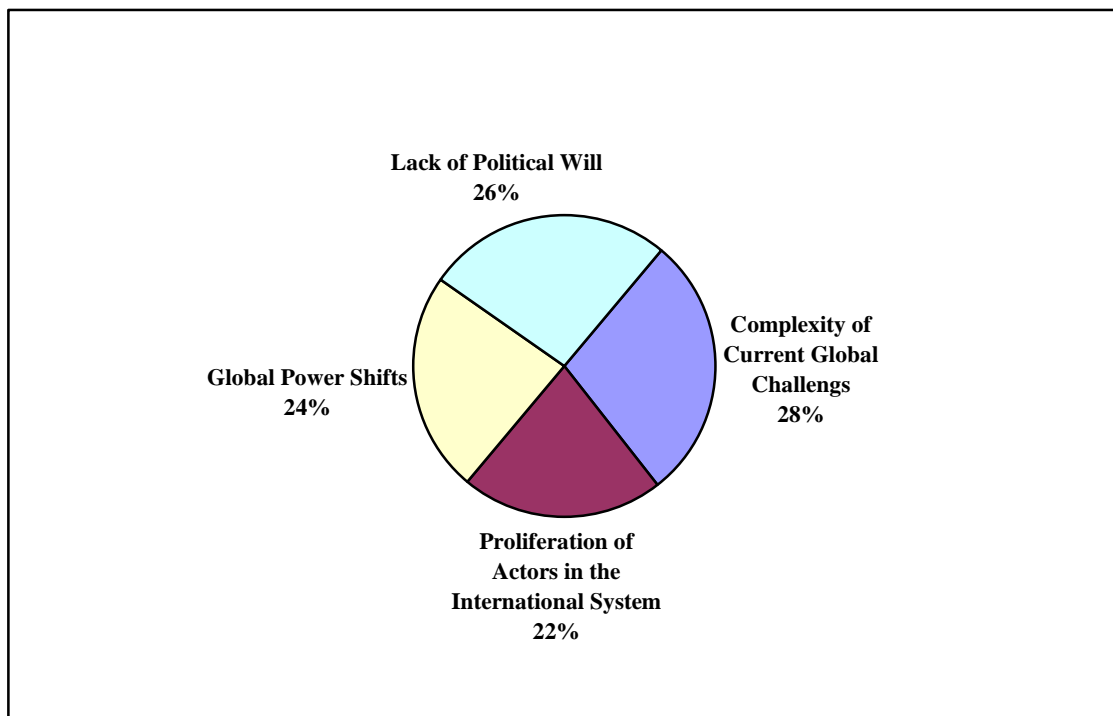
To draw some practical insights on the subject of this chapter, the field questionnaire conducted as part of this research had a question on challenges to multilateralism. Notably, this questionnaire involved a sample of 50 professionals in the fields of diplomacy, international organizations and academia, selected from a diverse set of 32 countries, including some of the most powerful and some of the least powerful countries (please refer to the Appendix). The participants were asked to arrange in ascending order four assumed challenges to multilateralism: complexity of current global challenges, proliferation of actors in the international system, global power shifts and lack of political will. To allow for proportionality, the answers were given weights ranging from four for coming first, three for second, two for third and one point for coming fourth (please refer to Chart 2 below). The outcome revealed that complexity of current global challenges is considered the most important challenge with 142 points out of 499 overall points or about 28.5% of the total. Lack of political will came second with 131 points or about 26.5%, global power shifts came third with 118 points or around 23.5% and the proliferation of actors in the international system came fourth with 108 points or about 21.5%. Generally, these results indicate that the sophisticated nature of current global challenges is the main source of the problem. To face up to this problem, the world needs collective political will that is clearly lacking. And, in view of the central role states play in this regard, global power shifts came third, followed by the proliferation of non-state actors, who are more of secondary actors in real life.

It should be noted here that two participants thought that lack of political will is not relevant and did not tick it at all, insinuating that there is enough political will. Nonetheless, this option still came second in the overall order. In addition, the participants were asked if they thought there are other relevant challenges to



multilateralism. In response, eight participants suggested some specific problem areas, including some that could come under the complexity of global challenges, such as global interdependence and the problems of the international financial architecture, climate change and organized crime. Participants also highlighted some other problems that could come under lack of political will, such as power politics, informal multilateralism, lack of accountability at local and international levels, lack of consensus in multilateral forums, North/South divisions, lack of leadership, lack of acceptance for gradual evolution on the side of proponents of multilateralism and lack of representativeness of small states in some multilateral forums. Of course, in total, this does not make an exhaustive list of challenges to multilateralism. Instead, the main focus here is on the most important such challenges.

Chart (2)  
 Challenges to Multilateralism



Source: Own elaboration based on the results of a field questionnaire (see the Appendix).

In sum, human activity is becoming global, especially from the technological and economic points of view. Unfortunately, globalization has been outdoing global governance on all fronts. Historically, this has usually been the case. Nonetheless,



today, globalization poses daunting challenges at an unprecedented scale. It even seems that the world is running against the acceptable limits of globalization (Griffin, 2003). In countries throughout the world, public support to international integration is fading on the backdrop of disaffection with its outcomes. Main reasons behind this include the sense of exclusion, social strife and perceived injustices. This dissatisfaction is further compounded by the inability to go it alone. Nationalistic and unilateral policies even by the most powerful states are growing unproductive and untenable. At the same time, it has been proven once and more that globalization will not correct itself automatically. Instead, it continues to create sharp divides between haves and have-nots, face strong anti-globalization movements and defy efforts aimed at tackling its threats. Certainly, globalization is creating demand for GPGs and the supply of these goods has been short of meeting the expectations. Hence, it is time to come together to revisit global governance in terms of policies and institutions in order to create an international system with institutions capable enough of providing GPGs.

Historically, however, shocks, rather than stress, have been the primary triggers of change in the international system, which usually only comes after global crises erupt. Pressures from conflicting sources used to build up for long periods in the absence of adequate remedies, and when released, these pressures create chaos. Such was the case with the two World Wars I and II, the terrorist attacks against the USA in 2001 and several others. Likewise, the previous cycle of globalization ended in 1914 on the footprints of fragmentation, lack of mutual understanding and tendency toward violence. Today, the international system is similarly infested with problems that hinder it from confronting the challenges of globalization and expose it anew to the risk of chaos (Evans et al, 2010). There is a clear lack of order in the system, and the world is becoming a precarious place because of rapid globalization and lack of adequate policy response to it (Maull, 2006). However, the current cycle of globalization could and should fare better, especially that all powers and stakeholders, conventional and ascending, profit from it. To turn this into a fact, there has to be a shift in the quality and quantity of multilateral cooperation, with the prime objective of readjusting and safeguarding the direction of globalization.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Current Reform Agendas and Ideas in Debate**

### **Abstract**

Cognizant of the imperative of reform to face evolving global challenges, multilateral institutions have outlined various reform agendas over time. This is the case of the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions, while the WTO is coming under increasing pressure to follow suit. Nonetheless, current reform agendas are viewed with a great deal of ambivalence as to their sufficiency and progress on their implementation has been slow at best. The grooming of the G-20 to be the hub of global economic governance is perhaps the most outstanding evolution in this field over the last few years. No doubt, the G-20 has contributed to containing the last international financial crisis. However, it is yet to address the underlying problems of global economic governance. In parallel to multilateral cooperation, academia has been active in debating the problems of global governance and proposing solutions for them. In this regard, there are three noteworthy proposals: the trans-governmental networks approach, the power club/executive committee approach and the twin proposals of concert of democracies and “global NATO.” Each of these proposals has its pros and cons. More specifically, the trans-governmental networks approach presents an enlightened perspective on the evolution of modes and nodes of multilateral cooperation. However, it does not warrant a true new world order, as it purports, and does not even promise sufficient change in world politics. In contrast, setting up global power clubs carries important practical benefits, including in terms of effectiveness, coherence and resource mobilization. Nonetheless, this idea wanes on legitimacy grounds in comparison with such formal forums as the UN. Finally, the twin proposals for a concert of democracies and a “global NATO” raise controversy, driven by biased theoretical zeal. Moreover, the latter proposals suffer from lack of coherence and even relevance to the very nature of international cooperation.

## Chapter Three

### Current Reform Agendas and Ideas in Debate

After resting the case of the imperatives of reform, one moves to responses to these imperatives so far, whether in multilateral institutions or in the literature. Cognizant of the need for continued relevance and the basic instinct of defense against new threats, multilateral institutions have developed extensive reform agendas over time. In fact, multilateral reform is a natural ongoing process similar to human evolution. However, one has seen a plethora of reform agendas and proposals in multilateral institutions since the end of the Cold War. For the sake of this research, one will focus on current reform efforts in the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO and the G-20, with an additional focus on those major reforms related to membership, voting rights and other crucial functional reforms. As for reform ideas in the literature, their magnitude is enormous. To keep focus, the research will only address holistic reform proposals or those that carry substantial implications, rather than general, vague statements and expressions. After an extensive literature review, it appears that there are three such noteworthy proposals: the trans-governmental networks approach, the power club/executive committee approach and the twin proposals of concert of democracies and “global NATO.” In addition, there are some useful academic arguments related to reform agendas in specific multilateral institutions, which arguments will be included in the part on current reform agendas in multilateral institutions.

#### I. Current Reform Agendas

There seems to be a fever of reforms in multilateral institutions at large. These reforms are mostly motivated by the general consensus that the multilateral system does need comprehensive reforms to cure its woes, which have become all the more problematic over the last few years. They extend from the UN system to global economic institutions, especially the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. In addition, the informal architecture of global economic governance has witnessed some major rearrangements, especially with the upgrading and transformation of the G-20 to become the hub of global economic decision-making instead of the G-8. Accordingly,

this section will address the most significant items on the current reform agendas in the aforementioned institutions and forums, in addition to some related, important arguments in the literature.

#### A. Reform in the United Nations

In the aftermath of the war on Iraq, the UN Millennium Review Summit in 2005 was accompanied by public aspirations for large reforms in the UN system. Member states, however, demonstrated that they were not so much displeased with the performance of their organization (Luck, 2005). Consequently, the Outcome Document of the summit reflected a middle compromise that was met with mixed reactions, some of which described it as disappointing (de Kerckhove, 2008). In contrast, others, especially in formal state circles, welcomed that compromise and described it as ambitious. In the final analysis, the Outcome Document set the floor for yet the most expansive and purposeful reform agenda in the history of the world body. This reform agenda relates to all the UN principal organs, its specialized agencies and Secretariat. Moreover, it extends beyond structural aspects to touch on thematic and cross-cutting activities. In particular, reforms in the Security Council receive special glamour, for they are the most sensitive politically, the most far-reaching and the most contentious. These reforms relate, among others, to the membership, the veto right and the Council's working methods. On the contrary, reforms in the General Assembly are mostly procedural in nature, with focus on the Assembly's agenda, working methods, mandates and the role of its rotating presidency. Likewise, reforms in the ECOSOC are focused on its agenda, procedures and methods of work. In addition to the existing UN organs, the Outcome Document established some new organs, the most important of which are the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) as a principal organ and the Peacebuilding Commission. The document also launched major reforms in the structure and management practices of the Secretariat. Given the focus of this research, Security Council reforms and those other reforms related to the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly will be addressed in further detail in this subsection.

This subsection will shed light on proposals of reform in the Council, with special focus on the functional aspects of its work and the latest developments in the reform process (please refer to the detailed analysis in Chapter Five on the question of

representative legitimacy in the UN Security Council). According to the mandate granted by the 2005 Millennium Review Summit, negotiations on Security Council reform have commenced in February 2009, with focus on five key issues: categories of membership, the question of veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Council and its working methods and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. In May 2010, the facilitator of the negotiations presented a first draft of a negotiation text that is basically a summarized compilation of all state positions. Though preliminary, this is a significant move toward the more arduous task of inking down a consensus agreement. In fact, the culmination of the reform process into the negotiating stage is largely due to efforts by those UN member states seeking new permanent seats, such as the Group of Four (G-4) (India, Japan, Germany and Brazil), besides the support that the rationale of reform enjoys in many parts of the world.

The veto right is generally viewed in non-veto member states as a symbol of an undemocratic and unjust world order (Please also refer to Chapter Five). The report of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change described it as an anachronistic relic in a world marked with democratic transformation (UN, 2004). In contrast, proponents argue that the veto is one important reason why the UN could overcome the turbulences of the Cold War and survive until today (Luck, 2003). It provides great powers with an invincible guarantee that their interests could be safeguarded. In practice, however, the veto has crippled the Council in many instances where international peace and security were at stake. This is particularly evident in the case of old conflicts such as the one in the Middle East. Moreover, the veto has discredited the world body and deprived it of much of the formal and public support it needs to carry out its mission. Notably, although the Council is considered the most prestigious multilateral organ and UN member states scramble for its two-year non-permanent seats, it needs political support and material resources from the UN membership to help it maintain international peace and security. With some member states questioning the legitimacy of the veto and the effectiveness of the Council, it finds it increasingly difficult to secure the cooperation and resources it needs to discharge its hefty mandate.

Fortunately, the resort to the veto has been on decline since the end of the Cold War (Weiss, 2003). However, a backdoor to the veto is removing items off the Council's agenda altogether in diplomatic compromises at the behest of permanent members with the veto providing a fallback cushion. In addition, the veto remains a tool that is sometimes abused by permanent members to protect their distinct interests at the expense of the needs of the UN collective security system. This was particularly evident during the Cold War epoch. However, the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change concluded that there are no practical means to abrogate the veto, because the five permanent states would not give it up (UN, 2004). Instead, the panel invited the permanent states to restrict the use of veto to cases where vital interests are at stake and to refrain from using it in cases of genocide and gross violations of human rights. In addition, the panel recommended that under any reform package, the veto should not be extended to other member states. It also proposed the so-called "indicative voting" procedure, i.e. the right of any member state to call for an initial public voting where the veto is ruled out, provided that such a procedure has no legal force and that a second formal session of voting would follow under the veto and other normal rules. Basically, these proposals are meant to increase the accountability of permanent states and to take a step forward in containing the use of veto.

In contrast, one proposal in the ongoing negotiations is to gradually abolish the veto right. In the meantime, it is also proposed to use such intermediate steps as introducing a new rule to the effect that negative votes of permanent states could be specified as non-veto votes; limiting that right to cases falling under Chapter VII of the Charter on threats or breaches of international peace; precluding it in cases involving war crimes, crimes against humanity, terrorism, the election of the Secretary General, enforcement of ICT judgments, admitting new members, suspending and expelling members; requiring permanent states to explain why they cast vetoes; and introducing the possibility of overruling vetoes by resolutions in the Council or the General Assembly (UN, 2010a). Notably, the permanent states stand firmly against extending this right to new permanent states. However, the African group is asking for two new permanent seats with veto right until that right is totally abolished and some other member states support this position. In contrast, the G-4 is ready to accept permanent

seats without veto right until the question of its extension to new permanent states has been decided as part of a future comprehensive review.

The revised Security Council negotiation text contains several other positions and proposals aiming at the veto right (UN, 2010b). In response, permanent states refuse any tinkering with their veto privilege. No doubt, producing a negotiation text is a staunch step ahead on the path to Security Council reform. However, in view of the sensitivity of the subject and the wide divergence among the proposals included in the text, it seems insurmountable to reconcile these proposals together. The real debacle in this regard, and with respect to UN reform in general, is that no Charter amendment can pass without having two-thirds majority vote in the UN General Assembly and the same in national ratifications, including those of the five permanent states. Thus, in theory, reforms could be defeated by a single veto. In practice, however, it never happened before that one or more permanent members stood against a Charter amendment after being adopted by the General Assembly, obviously because the political cost of such an action would be disproportionately high. This, in fact, indicates that there always remains a possibility to press reforms against the will of some of the permanent states, which becomes even more possible if the permanent five fail to strike joint common positions on these reforms. Yet, looking at the map of different state positions, one sees a great deal of fragmentation. While the AU is demanding two permanent seats with veto right, the G-4 can live with permanent seats without veto right, and both groups face resistance from the so-called Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group. In such an environment, it is relatively easy for reform opponents to practice divide and rule tactics to derail the whole process.

As has been mentioned earlier, the composition of the Security Council as it stands today reflects the power map and political realities in the aftermath of World War II, albeit with the addition of four non-permanent seats in 1965. Instead, the structure of the Council should reflect current power distribution for the sake of effectiveness and legitimacy. Cognizant of this fact, there seems to be a general consensus on the need to enlarge the membership of the Council in both its permanent and non-permanent categories. There are also several proposals concerning the so-called regional representation, in view of the basic UN principle of equitable regional representation.



However, there is no agreement on what should be the size of the enlarged Council nor on the names of states to take new permanent (whether with or without veto) or non-permanent seats. Proposals concerning the size of the enlarged Council range from 21 to 26 seats, with the number of new permanent seats ranging from one to six (UN, 2010b). One main criterion behind these proposals is maintaining an agile Council. Nonetheless, some states contend that a Council with 21-26 members would be too large to be effective (Weiss, 2008). On the other side, ambitious players, including the G-4 and the African Group, insist on the legitimacy of their demands for new seats. Even more difficult is deciding on which states take permanent seats. For instance, the G-4 has regional opponents such as Pakistan, Argentina, Mexico, Italy, Spain and South Korea. And within the African group, there is a heated competition between South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt, which states also have opponents from within their region. To a lesser extent, there is another competition on which regions would be assigned additional non-permanent seats, especially among Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Over and above, permanent states have starkly different positions on the quests of different states and regions for new seats, especially permanent ones. Hence, positions on the size of the enlarged Council and which states take new seats are no less divergent than those on the veto right.

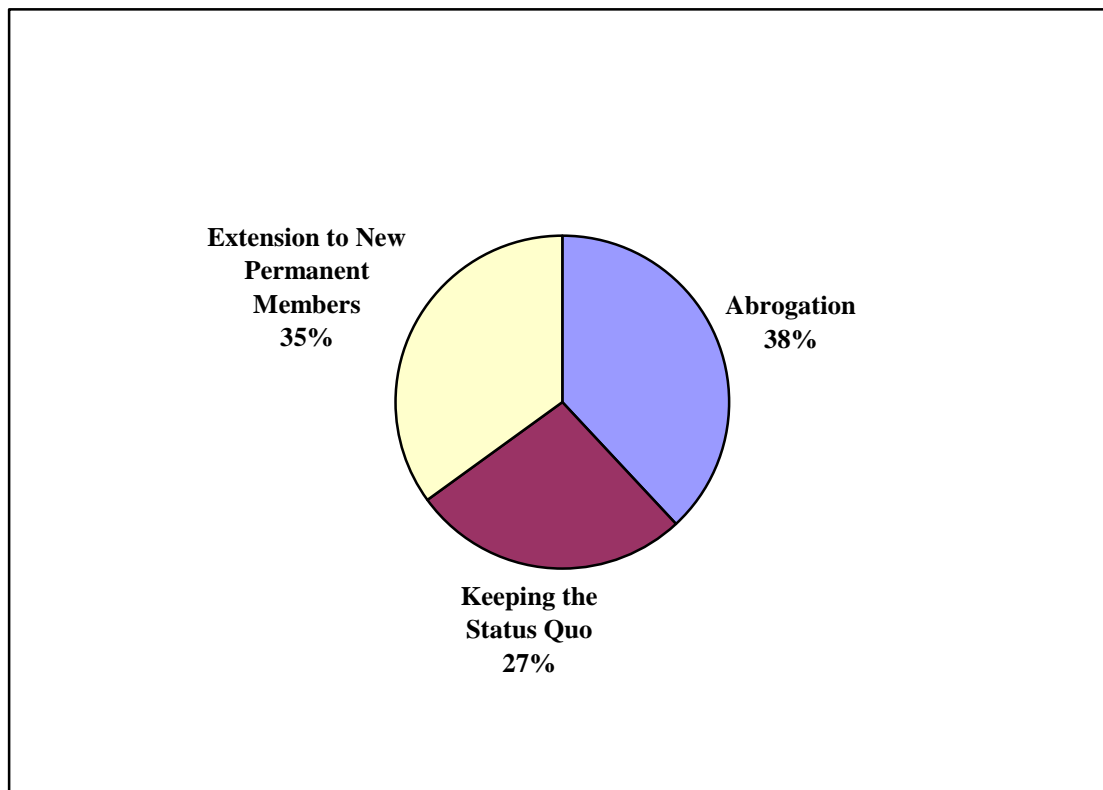
In the framework of this research, a field questionnaire was administered on a sample of 50 professionals in the fields of diplomacy, international organizations and academia, selected from a diverse set of 32 countries, including some of the permanent five and some of the least powerful countries (please refer to the Appendix). This questionnaire included two questions related to the Security Council, concerning the enlargement and the veto power. Firstly, in an attempt to measure the level of support to enlarging the Council, 33 participants or 66% expressed strong agreement and 12 participants or 24% expressed simple agreement, which makes an overwhelming majority of 45 participants or 90% of the sample in support of enlargement. In contrast, only two participants or 4% were neutral, three participants or 6% disagreed and no one expressed strong disagreement. Obviously, this wide support to enlargement derives from the recognition that the Council's membership structure today does not reflect the real distribution of power in the world. And this is not only an issue of fairness and legitimacy, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, an issue of effectiveness, as

the lack of representation of some of the important players could deprive the Council of some of the means it needs to carry out its mission.

Secondly, the questionnaire sought the views of the sample participants on whether the veto right should be abrogated, maintained or extended to potential new permanent members. To allow for proportionality, the answers were given weights ranging from three for coming first, two for second and one for third (please refer to Chart 3 below). The summation of points shows the abrogation of the veto altogether to be the most favorite option with 113 from 297 overall points or around 38% of the total. In contrast, extending this right to potential new permanent members came second with 104 points or around 35%. Finally, the option of keeping the *status quo* came third with 80 points or around 27%. No doubt, this is a very sensitive issue that relates to the dearest interests of some countries, especially the current permanent five and future potential ones. But the veto right has increasingly become the focus of criticism from a great majority of countries and other stakeholders, in view of its role behind recurrent paralysis in the Council. The results of questionnaire reflect just that with a simple majority supporting the abrogation of the veto. However, this option seems practically impossible, given the public determination of the permanent five to oppose it. In contrast, keeping the *status quo* seems more pragmatic, though it does not help solve the problems caused by the veto. Finally, extending this right to potential newcomers may be justified on the ground of fairness, but this faces opposition from the permanent members and might even further complicate the problems of the Council. It should be noted, however, that one participant only ticked this last option, indicating that he thought this is the only warranted way forward of reform.

Chart (3)

Suggested Reform Options for the Veto



Source: Own elaboration based on the results of a field questionnaire (see the Appendix).

In addition to the questions of veto and enlargement, the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly is another important subject that receives little attention in the literature. Reading through the revised Security Council negotiation text, several member states refer to the unique posture of the Assembly with its universal, equal membership, the importance of ensuring the general mandate of the Assembly in all matters of international cooperation and the need to reverse the marginalization of the Assembly and the encroachment on it by the Council (UN, 2010b). This seems to be an issue of great importance and convincing rationale, especially given recurrent failures of the Council on subjects of international peace and security. No doubt, enhancing and ensuring respect to the powers of the Assembly is in line with democratic values. Nonetheless, great powers, especially those enjoying the veto privilege, prefer to act through the Council. This helps them maximize their own influence on the direction of the world body, avoid the bureaucratic demands of doing

business in the Assembly and ensure the focus and effectiveness of debate. In addition, some states have repeatedly expressed positions to the effect that endorsements of using force should come solely from the Council (Weiss, 2003). In a way, this is a reflection of a desire to regulate the use of force, but it could also be a pretext to marginalize the Assembly. In contrast, proposals to enable the Assembly to interfere in the area of peace and security do not have to contradict with the primary authority of the Council in this area, for they are by nature limited to cases where the Council fails to act promptly to prevent or put an end to hostilities.

In fact, the Charter provides that the General Assembly may call the attention of the Security Council to situations that are likely to threaten international peace and security, but the former cannot make any recommendation concerning matters on the agenda of the Council. Nonetheless, the historical Assembly's resolution 377 of 1950, the "uniting for peace" resolution, came as an exception to this Charter rule. This resolution authorizes the Assembly, in cases where the Council fails to discharge its primary responsibility on maintaining international peace and security, to consider the matter and make appropriate recommendations to member states, including the use of force when necessary. Notably, in the course of the ongoing negotiations, some member states emphasize the importance of the uniting for peace procedure in cases where the veto hinders action by the Council (UN, 2010b). Historically, resolution 377 was used three times to authorize the use of force (the Suez Canal crisis of 1956, the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956 and the Congo conflict in 1960). In total, the procedure was invoked to hold 10 Assembly emergency special sessions, most of which dedicated to the Arab Israeli conflict. Although these sessions can only issue recommendations, not resolutions as in the case of the Council, those recommendations have to undergo a two-thirds majority test in the Assembly, which endows them with heavy moral and political power and unique legitimacy. At times, they also serve an important cause, which is overturning vetoes made against the interests of at least two-thirds of the UN membership.

The above-mentioned and other UN reform efforts reflect the least common denominator of member state positions on the need to reform the world body, in light of developments in the surrounding environment and new challenges facing the

organization. The magnitude and potential impact of this reform agenda are viewed with some degree of satisfaction, but actual progress and end results have been failing the expectations. Thus, there is a general feeling of ambivalence about the current UN reform process. Indeed, the process is complex, time-consuming and vulnerable to external factors, most importantly changes in the surrounding political environment, such as those related to the end of the Cold War. Moreover, the process is focused on the institutional problems of the world body, i.e. the structures and working methods, within limits prescribed by member states. In contrast, political problems, i.e. problems related to member state policies, are perhaps even more important. In fact, this kind of problems receives little attention in multilateral institutions, where individual country policies are treated as matters of state sovereignty. For instance, the problems of Iraq war in 2003 were mostly political in nature, and an enlarged and reformed Security Council, as per the current reform process, could at best have done a little more to prevent the war. The real problem here is that the UN is often too involved in the process that it neglects the consequences (Weiss, 2008). In particular, enlarging the Security Council is a subject that receives special attention in public policy circles, because it touches on sensitive and dear state interests and is considered to be more realistic in comparison with the issue of the veto right. In turn, this latter issue seems to be traded off for gaining the support of permanent states to enlargement and other reforms. Nonetheless, enlargement per se, does not hold any reliable promise of improving decision making in the Council or enabling it to make more progress in facing global security challenges. Notably, the current Council reform process gives little attention to such important dimensions as accountability to the general UN membership.

Certainly, the reform process and its results are all dependent on the UN membership and fall within the limits of institutional and constitutional appropriateness endorsed by the membership. Nonetheless, some ideas elaborated in the literature deserve to be highlighted here. One such idea is to move from the current voting system, based mostly on the one-state, one-vote principle, to a weighted voting system that reflects real power distribution, similar to the system used in some EU institutions. And one approach to put this idea to practice is to use the so-called entitlement quotients (EQs), which are calculated using a formula that incorporates equal

sovereignty weights, besides percentages of world population and contributions to the UN budget over some specified period (Schwartzberg, 2003). In this framework, it is thought that introducing such a system could enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of UN organs, such as the General Assembly and the Security Council, and that with the new system, the veto should be abolished and the decisions of the General Assembly should enjoy binding force similar to that of the resolutions of the Security Council. An alternative approach is to use a weighted voting system that incorporates such factors as population, economic size and contribution to the UN budget and peacekeeping (Fearon, 2008). This alternative goes even further to suggest the creation of a new security organ to replace the Security Council and to restrict membership in this new organ to democratic countries. In general, the idea of weighted voting rights does not lack rationale, but it goes against the interests of a great majority of the UN membership, which makes it largely infeasible.

In contrast to the rhetoric of reform in multilateral institutions, where the political aspects of reform receive little attention, the literature deals extensively with the role that the political will of member states play in international cooperation. No doubt, this is a subject of great importance, but addressing it is a thorny exercise that goes beyond this research. On one side, there can hardly be any significant progress in dealing with global problems, if nation-states do not cooperate in good faith. On the other side, nation-states are at the center-stage of the multilateral system; they are the actors that created multilateral institutions and the ones that prescribe the guidelines of cooperation in these institutions, whether in their founding documents or their evolving day-to-day work.

#### **B. Reform of Global Economic Governance**

Over the last few years, institutions of global economic governance have witnessed a particularly strong reform momentum. This is largely due to the current international economic crisis, the scale of which is judged by some as unprecedented since the Great Depression of the 1930s (Zakaria, 2008). Bretton Woods institutions have either passed or are on their way to pass important amendments to their quota and voting systems. In addition, these institutions have introduced some new policies and programs to face the crisis. The WTO has also introduced some policy tools in response

to the economic crisis and the overstretching of the Doha Round of trade negotiations, but institutional reform is yet largely absent from the organization's agenda. Though an informal forum, the upgrading of the G-20 and grooming it to replace the G-8 as the hub of international economic decision making is widely touted as the most significant reform in the field of global economic governance. Accordingly, the following section will address the most significant reforms in the Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO and informal forums of global economic governance.

The last financial crisis unfolded so gravely that it gave rise to calls for a new Bretton Woods system, including from politicians such as Nicolas Sarkozy, the French President, and Gordon Brown, former UK Prime Minister (Helleiner, 2010). These calls were partially justified by the fact that the crisis turned out to be the worst since the Great Depression, which at the time led up to the 1944 Bretton Woods conference. In response, in its 2010 spring meetings, the World Bank passed a decision on its quota and voting systems, giving more weight to developing and transition economies. This decision came in response to persistent demands made by developing countries, especially the BRICS. According to the decision, there would be a 3.13% increase in the voting power of developing and transition economies, thus bringing their total to 47.19%, which sums up to a total shift of 4.59% since 2008, when phase one of the process was concluded, in addition to a total shift of 6.07% in the voting power of these same economies in the affiliated International Finance Corporation (IFC) since 2008. Similarly, in its 2006 autumn meetings in Singapore, the IMF adopted an initial ad hoc increase in the quotas of the then so-called most underrepresented countries, China, South Korea, Mexico and Turkey, by 1.8% of total quotas at the time. In the 2008 Spring meetings, the IMF also approved a new formula to guide the assessment of the adequacy of member states' quotas, tripled the so-called basic votes for all member countries from 250 to 750 each after the erosion of the percentage of these votes to total votes over the years and launched a second round of quota system review that is now expected to be finalized in the near future.

Notably, the quota and voting system in the IMF are subject to revision every five years, while those of the World Bank do not have a specific periodical discipline. Revision is based on a formula used for calculating shares, incorporating measures of



GDP, economic openness, variability of the current account, capital flows and the stock of international reserves. However, decisions to alter quota distribution are usually met with resistance from countries on the losing side, typically developed countries that usually have to sacrifice shares and votes to emerging countries. There are also some other problems with quota systems (World Bank, 2009a and IMF, 2009). First, there is the erosion of the weight of basic votes, due to consecutive increases in shares, which mostly affects the participation of small countries in decision making. Second, the quota systems in the two Bretton Woods institutions are linked, with the World Bank using the formula developed by the IMF, although the missions and functions of the two institutions are substantially different. Third, the fact that the World Bank does not have automatic revisions of its quota system leads to more voice gaps in that institution.

It is true that since the 2007-2008 crisis, one has seen some innovation in global financial governance, but reform has been limited and hopes for a new Bretton Woods have been disappointed. Indeed, what is needed is more than those reforms already done or scheduled in quota and voting systems (World Bank, 2009a and IMF, 2009). One problem that is usually flagged by developing countries is the monopoly on the top posts in the two institutions, where the president of the World Bank comes from the USA, while the director of the IMF comes from the EU. Second, the 85% special-majority required for decisions on such subjects as constitutional amendments, capital increases and adding new members to boards grants the USA a veto privilege, in view of holding more than 15% of the votes in the two institutions. Third, the executive boards of the two institutions have enclaves of appointed members (five appointed by the biggest shareholding countries, the USA, Japan, Germany, France and the UK) and country-specific elected members (three from China, Russia and Saudi Arabia), whereas the rest get elected to represent variable groups of member states. These are problems of concern for the rest of the membership, especially developing countries that lament their lack of representation.

With respect to the functions of the two institutions, the Committee on IMF Governance Reform highlighted one major problem area, which is the need to extend the Fund's surveillance mandate beyond exchange rate policies to macroeconomic policies, safeguarding measures and financial flows, including through monitoring



capital account movements (IMF, 2009). The Committee also referred to the importance of enhancing the Fund's effectiveness and accountability, increasing its financial resources, reinforcing its capabilities and expertise, especially in areas such as macroeconomic coordination and financial and capital account issues, in order to enable the Fund to ensure global financial stability. In addition, the Committee made recommendations on ensuring timelier decision-making through reinvigorating the Council of Ministers and Governors and on the need for clearer division of labor between the Executive Board and the Fund's management. On the other side, the High-Level Commission on World Bank Group Governance underlined the historical challenge the World Bank is facing with respect to the need to bridge persistent developmental gaps, including by making the best use of its cross-country development experience (World Bank, 2009a). For this sake, the Commission highlighted weaknesses related to insufficient institutional accountability, inadequacy of strategic planning, lack of resources, lack of aid effectiveness and mission creep. The Commission also recommended elevating the representation in the Bank's board to the level of ministers, more delegation of authority on operations to the management, the establishment of an advisory council to support the board and strengthening internal management.

In particular, there are many reasons to worry about the future of the IMF and to fear that the Fund might slip into obscurity if it does not undertake needed reforms (Dieter, 2006). Consequently, calls for IMF reform have been building up over the last few years. In this regard, there are two issues that require immediate attention. One is the governance structure of the Fund, where members belonging to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) control the Fund's policies and programs, while the countries most affected by its policies are primarily developing countries on the receiving side. The second issue is the need for the IMF to provide a reliable safety net against financial crises by guaranteeing satisfactory levels of crisis prevention and management. For this purpose, the Fund needs to review its policies and lending tools, otherwise alternative financial governance structures will continue to evolve and vulnerable countries will keep on developing their own mechanisms both individually and in groups. For instance, one might consider the cases of East Asia and Latin America, two important regions that have turned their backs on the Fund after

suffering severe financial crises. If this course of action continues, the Fund might find itself marginalized in the midst of an alien environment. Moreover, the IMF faces a crisis of relevance and credibility, which stems from three major sources. One is bias and political interference in the Fund's work, especially at times of financial crises. Second, Fund policies, based on outworn market efficiency presumptions, have, in several cases, resulted in deepening recessions rather than helping overcome them (Stiglitz, 2002). Third, general IMF policy recommendations, have not only fell short of generating sufficient benefits for developing countries, but have also backfired frequently as a result of mounting socioeconomic and political pressures. It is on this backdrop that Michel Camdessus, former managing director of the IMF, wonders if the Fund's policies could be humanized (Camdessus, 2001). He further suggests that three values should be at the core of IMF reform: global responsibility, solidarity to alleviate and eradicate poverty and global citizenship. Along similar lines, it is argued that the reform process ongoing in the IMF is focused on finding better ways for doing what the Fund already does, but does not address the fundamental question of what would be the optimum role of the Fund in the global economy today, which subject requires leadership and vision from the key stakeholders (Dodge and Murray, 2006).

On another side, the World Bank has been expanding its development mandate and activities, with eyes on the dream of a world free of poverty. The Bank has also accumulated experience and expertise that make it a true repository of knowledge in its field. Nonetheless, it seems that developments in the surrounding environment have taken their toll on the Bank. Hence, there is very little agreement on whether the Bank has been successful in its mission (Weaver and Park, 2007). On one hand, proponents boast about statistics indicating decreases in absolute poverty and improvements in economic growth and human development. On the other hand, critics challenge these claims and provide evidence to support their arguments that the Bank has failed in fostering equitable, sustainable growth or human development and has even contributed to the deepening of poverty in some parts of the world. The Bank has also become a usual target of anti-globalization protests, like its twin institution, the IMF. In fact, both insiders and outsiders have come to share a common perception that the Bank is in crisis. The most important dimension of this crisis is the legitimacy of the institution, especially in view of charges such as lack of democracy in its governance structures,

ideological rigidity, pervasive corruption within its aid programs and lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms. A second important dimension of the crisis is lack of effectiveness, as the Bank suffers from mission creep, implementation gaps and a history of mixed loan results. In response, there has been a significant decline in demand for Bank lending from middle-income countries, which, in fact, raises questions about the very *raison d'être* of the Bank. Hence, the debate about whether to reinvent or rescue the Bank has gained momentum over the last few years. And, over the coming few years, the Bank is likely to come under increasing pressure to undertake major reforms, but the reform course is likely to face difficulties related to politicization and lack of agreement on its specifics.

It is important to see the differences between the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO. The latter is widely viewed as the most successful forum of multilateral cooperation in the world today (Birkbeck and Melendez-Ortiz, 2009). It is also considered a particularly indispensable multilateral institution, given the forces of global integration, the formidable volume of trade flowing across borders and the need for rules to regulate these flows (Birkbeck and Monagle, 2009). This is partially why reform signals in the WTO are weaker than those in other multilateral institutions. Yet, there are reasons to worry about the future of the WTO. For instance, trade has been evolving from a technical to a politicized subject of strategic importance. As a result, trade wars between different economic powerhouses, both industrialized and emerging, have been on the rise. In parallel, the work of the WTO has been receiving more official and public attention than that of the Bretton Woods institutions. In addition, one could see a pattern of aggravating North-South rift in the institution since its launching in 2005 (Laidi, 2008). This is an obvious difference between the WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions, where rules give a few industrialized economies an unpopular sweeping control. Indeed, confrontations in the WTO derive from some major sources, the most important of which is the relatively even playing field, where developing countries have succeeded in projecting a united, strong front, unlike in the Bretton Woods institutions.

Evidently, over the years, developing countries have grown uncomfortable with rich countries imposing binding liberalization agendas that reflect the interests of these

latter countries, such as trade in services, intellectual property rights, environmental considerations and labor standards, while the most pressing interests of developing countries, such as agriculture and social security, usually suffer from lack of attention, if not strong resistance, from the North. As a result, developing countries have been entrenching their collective weight with a new mighty companion, China, which contributed significantly to the tumultuous failure of the WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle in 1999 and subsequent failures and confrontations. In this light, one could even argue that trade liberalization no longer refers to competition between economies, but confrontation between social systems (Laidi, 2008). In fact, the WTO was the target of the burst of the anti-globalization movement in Seattle and continues to face special opposition from an emerging aggressive global public opinion, largely shaped by rising civil society actors. This further kindles the North-South divide inside the organization, as the two sides hold divergent positions on civil society demands in areas such as the global environment, labor standards and human rights. And the malaise of the WTO gets further exacerbated by some public tendency to view trade negotiations with apprehension, in view of the fact that its benefits are rarely immediate, while its costs are sometimes instantly felt.

The Doha Round of trade negotiations has overstretched its timeframes several times and continues to lack a clear time horizon. In response, the WTO has introduced some reactive policy responses to reinvigorate global trade, such as the so-called aid for trade initiative, which is aimed at facilitating foreign aid flows to developing countries to help them develop trade-related skills and infrastructure needed to participate and benefit from the international trading system. In addition, the institution has undergone some light functional and administrative reforms over the last few years, in order to consolidate its viability and sustain the progress of the multilateral trading system (Birkbeck and Monagle, 2009). Unfortunately, the detrimental implications of the current economic crisis have translated into new protectionism measures in many parts of the world, thus further complicating the picture and imposing higher hurdles in the face of the Doha Round. The World Bank indicates that some 78 protectionist measures have been proposed or implemented by developed and developing countries since the inception of the crisis (World Bank, 2009b). Hence, lately, there has emerged a buildup of calls for wider, substantial WTO reform. And most of these calls are concentrated on

flaws in the negotiation methodology, the so-called single undertaking approach. It has become obvious that this methodology has several limitations and stands in the way of resolving some of the critical items on the agenda of trade negotiations (Tarasofsky and Palmer, 2006). For instance, liberalization in the agricultural cluster is a typical case of the disadvantages of the single undertaking approach. Agricultural policies, such as trade barriers and subsidies, touch on such vital interests as food security, poverty alleviation, rural development, the environment and health. It is not clear how concessions in these areas could be traded off against liberalization in areas such as industrial goods and services. As a result, reaching a compromise on these issues has been eluding member states. Instead, what the WTO needs is a more focused and better integrated approach of liberalization.

Perhaps an even more compelling argument on the need for WTO reform is that of Dadush (2009). He argues that the organization has been a stalwart of progress in world trade, but it has become clear lately that it failed to sustain the process of trade liberalization and introducing new trade rules. The current economic crisis has further accentuated the problems of the organization, as the importance of rules usually becomes more obvious at times of slow growth and rising protectionism. Here, the case of WTO reform is thought to go beyond the Doha Round, i.e. the conclusion of that round cannot undo the need for reform. On the contrary, finalizing the Doha Round would even highlight the need for more reforms to meet evolving challenges. Most importantly, the organization needs to adopt a more flexible approach to trade negotiations, with due consideration to the needs of individual countries and groups. In addition, the organization needs to move from its dysfunctional focus on reciprocal multilateral concessions to assisting its members to enact autonomous trade reforms, promoting cooperation among groups of members that establish new rules or open new market opportunities in important sectors, mainstreaming and making good use of the momentum created by regional trade agreements, consolidating liberalization efforts that have already fruited and/or that require modest steps to widen their pools and revisiting its idealistic principles of the most-favored nation and nondiscrimination in line with developments taking place outside the organization.

Birkbeck and Monagle (2009) have developed a compilation of past and prospective reforms in the WTO since its establishment in 1995. They base their work on the premise that there is nothing more harmful for an institution than standing still or going backward, especially at the time the world is moving fast toward the future. After more than 65 years of promoting open international trade, the WTO needs to protect and build upon its inheritance. Indeed, it is incumbent to further strengthen the institution so that it can better cope with the evolving political and economic environment, address the sustainable development challenge of our generation and support the aspiration for new achievements. The aforementioned compilation stems from official statements of member states, the WTO Secretariat and academic contributions. It includes reforms in areas such as WTO management and internal administration; strategic direction, policy orientation and decision making; negotiation methodology; monitoring, assessing and evaluating performance; dispute settlement; international cooperation and coordination; public outreach; capacity building; and research and development. This compilation reflects an expanding consensus on the need to undertake some reforms in the multilateral trading system, especially in areas such as the structure and methodology of trade negotiations.

In general, there is hardly any doubt that the financial crisis that started in the USA in 2007 delivered a severe blow to the USA's economy before spilling out to European and other markets. It even shook the USA's status as the leading world economy and cast doubts on the fundamental premises of the free-market economy (Gelb, 2009). Fortunately, the crisis also gave strong impetus to preceding appeals for better regulation and surveillance of financial markets. In addition, it exposed the imbalances in the structures of global economic governance and propelled the grooming of the G-20 to replace the G-8 as the hub of global economic policy setting (Dieter, 2009). Of course, one notable difference between these two forums is the expanded membership of the latter, where the BRICS are members. Thereafter, the reformed G-20 succeeded in projecting a united front facing the crisis, which served an important reassurance of markets (Sester, 2009). It has also made some progress in dealing with old problems, including the regulation and surveillance of financial markets and reforms of the Bretton Woods institutions. Consequently, the biannual G-20 summits have come to attract more global attention than the G-8 annual summer retreats.

Unfortunately, there are a number of challenges that the renovated G-20 faces. First, past experiences indicate that economic decision making is more of a national subject than an international one (Sester, 2009). Thus, the move from the G-8 to the G-20 is no guarantee that economic decision making will change course in the future, especially given the fact that the two forums are by and large loose informal ones. Second, the G-20 has thus far fell short of addressing the root causes behind recurring financial and economic crises, including the too-big-to-fail corporations, global structural imbalances and beggar-thy-neighbor foreign exchange and economic policies (Dieter, 2009). Notably, calls for deeper reforms and new regulations of financial markets have been opposed with the counter-argument that what is needed is only better implementation of existing regulations. In the meantime, the main factors behind the high vulnerability of the world economy to financial crises continues unabated. Third, although the G-20 marked a positive shift in international cooperation in the economic field, some outsider countries continue to challenge its legitimacy and demand admission. Of course, rich economies carry a special responsibility in reforming the international financial system, but emerging economies have a special interest in an adequately regulated financial system. Hence, the voices of these economies should be heeded. Fourth, even with its current membership structure, reaching consensus about global economic issues has become more complicated by the bigger pool of the G-20 in comparison with the G-8. Fifth, like the G-8, the G-20 lacks any clear mechanism to ensure that agreed policies are implemented in good faith, which also derives from its underlying informal nature. Sixth, the consolidation of the G-20 and the momentum and prestige it acquired gave rise to voices of concern in the UN over the increasing marginalization of the organization in international economic decision-making (Jones, 2010). These are voices of discontent that should be taken seriously, in view of the long experience, universality and legitimacy invested in the UN.

In particular, it seems that the biggest challenge facing the G-20 is global rebalancing, especially given the current state of turmoil in the world economy (Dobson, 2009). Of course, rebalancing between the USA and China is at the core of global rebalancing. At the time market demand in the USA is hitting historical lows, fast-growing economies such as China, Southeast-Asian and Latin-American economies need to reduce their reliance on export-led growth and stimulate domestic demand to



sustain their growth. The EU also needs to move forward with required structural reforms in the euro zone. The G-20 should address this challenge through enacting the policies required to put the world economy on the track of balanced, robust and sustainable growth (Blustein et al, 2010). In addition, The G-20 should work in earnest to conclude the Doha Round of world trade negotiations. Commitments to the effect of combating protectionist measures are important but not sufficient to reinvigorate world trade. Instead, finalizing the Doha Round should be at the forefront of the agenda of the group, for it not only provides a strong cushion against protectionist trends, but also constitutes an important step toward sustainable recovery from the current crisis and holds more fruits for developing countries than the already declining official development assistance. Moreover, the relationship between the G-20 and the UN should be mainstreamed, with full respect to the universal mandate of the UN. In fact, each of the two forums has its unique advantages and potential, and they need not be on opposite tracks.

The previously mentioned field questionnaire conducted as part of this research attempted to measure the level of satisfaction with the performance of the current multilateral system (please refer to the Appendix). In response, 12 out of 50 participants or 24% of the sample expressed unqualified satisfaction, while no one expressed strong satisfaction. On the other side, 24 participants or 48% of the total, which is exactly two folds the number of those satisfied, expressed unqualified dissatisfaction and no one expressed strong dissatisfaction. Otherwise, the number of neutral responses was 14 or 28%. These results reflect a clear dissatisfaction with the performance of the current system. However, remarkably, no one was either strongly satisfied or strongly dissatisfied. In a way, this indicates either a general trend of disappointment with multilateral institutions or, in the latter case, sympathy with the system and determination to maintain it. In fact, especially over the last few years, some multilateral institutions, such as the UN, have come under severe criticisms, while others, such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, have become increasingly unpopular.

The field questionnaire also sought some practical insights on the current reform agendas in multilateral institutions. Asking the participants about their level of satisfaction with the current reform agendas in the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions



and the WTO, 11 out of 50 participants or 22% of the total expressed unqualified satisfaction with these reform agendas, while no one expressed strong satisfaction in this regard. On the opposite side, 22 participants or 44% of the sample expressed dissatisfaction with the current reform agendas, among whom two participants or 4% expressed strong dissatisfaction. On the borderline, 17 participants or 34% of the total were neutral on the subject. Notably, one participant expressed satisfaction with the reform agendas themselves, but dissatisfaction with the progress and implementation of reforms. And it is worthy of attention that no respondent was strongly satisfied with the current reform agendas. Generally, these results reflect a clear propensity to think negatively of the current reform efforts in the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions, considering them both inadequate and ineffective.

## II. Reform Ideas in Debate

Coming to reform ideas in the academic field, there are torrents of sources on the reform of the international multilateral system at large. Indeed, the imperatives of reform are clear, given the developments in the surrounding global environment, but the real conundrums lie in the specifics of needed reforms and how to go about implementing them. However, it seems that a great part of the literature presents reform demands without clear perspectives as to how to put them to practice. In contrast, this section will analyze three specific reform proposals that are worth contemplation, for they either employ holistic reform approaches or carry substantial implications. These proposals are the trans-governmental networks approach of the new world order of Anne-Marie Slaughter, former Director of Policy Planning at the USA's State Department, the power club/executive committee approach and the twin proposals of concert of democracies and "global NATO."

### A. The Trans-Governmental Networks Approach

Anne-Marie Slaughter introduces an intriguing perspective on reform; the so-called trans-governmental networks approach (Slaughter, 2004a). She sets out from the point that global governance is indeed in crisis, in light of the perceived general erosion of authorities and capabilities of intergovernmental organizations and regimes across the globe. In particular, she argues that multilateral institutions created in the aftermath of World War II have become outdated. Hence, these institutions need to be reformed,

reinvented or even replaced. In the meantime, there are small steps in the direction of reform. However, efforts to advance critically needed reforms are usually faced with insurmountable hurdles. In this regard, Slaughter speaks of a globalization paradox, where the world needs more government but fears it, which makes global government both unfeasible and undesirable. The would-be size and scope of such a government could threaten individual liberties and the diversity of peoples to be governed makes it unimaginable to put them under the rule of one political unit. Besides, no state would accept to give up decision-making power and coercive authority to central powers far from home. In other words, the current nation-state system needs substantial reform, but it inherently resists this reform, which puts the system in a dismal situation.

In response, Slaughter contends that there is a revolution of global governance already taking place underneath the surface, with nation-states communicating horizontally through presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers and other infra-state agencies. Multilateral institutions, such as the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, in their own right, represent vertical, supra-state networks and create their own cross-cutting, horizontal networks of infra-state agencies. Slaughter argues that horizontal, infra-state networks are substituting for hierarchies of authority inside nation-states and multilateral institutions. Technocrats in charge of such subjects as security, justice and health interact with their counterparts directly, without going through supervisory authorities in their national governments. These networks debate relevant issues, coordinate policies and form important consensuses about international problems. Thus, Slaughter argues, the same agencies that manage domestic subjects come to manage these same subjects at the global level, which reflects a trend toward disaggregating governments into their constituent parts. Slaughter further argues that these networks supplant rather than supplement the nation-state system, though without openly challenging or violating the sovereignty formally invested in this system (Slaughter, 2003). In parallel, NGOs and TNCs also form their own global networks and others in collaboration with governments and multilateral institutions. Thus, the world is becoming a sophisticated network of networks that include governmental agencies, multilateral organizations, NGOs, TNCs and other actors.

Governance through transnational networks is yet a nascent mode of governance (Slaughter, 2004c). It is more evident in some regions than others and does not often include all countries. Its effectiveness is asserted on the ground, though not clearly demonstrated. Nonetheless, it has gone global and has been spreading in many areas over the last few years. Hence, it is considered a feasible and effective tool to address global problems. For instance, the EU is a pioneer in using the network approach to governance. This is partially the outcome of the EU dilemma of the need for more uniformity at the time greater centralization of power is politically inappropriate and probably undesirable (Slaughter, 2004a). As a result, the EU has developed vast networks of ministers, judges, legislatures...etc. to govern common EU affairs. At the global level, the USA has frequently advocated channeling multilateral cooperation in many areas through networks of government officials rather than traditional multilateral mechanisms. Historically, governmental networks established for limited purposes, such as postal and telecommunication cooperation, have existed for over a century. And more recently, such networks have consolidated their identity and autonomy in some areas under the auspices of forums such as the G-8, the G-20, the Commonwealth and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

Most importantly, Slaughter advances transnational networks as a potential solution to current crises of global governance (Slaughter, 2004a). Given their past record, governmental networks have effectively served several purposes, including forging convergence on some subjects, introducing regulatory principles and standards, distilling and disseminating reliable information and best practices, allowing for individual national particularities and preferences, enhancing compliance with agreed rules, promoting capacity building in various fields and enhancing cooperation through networked national focal points. Furthermore, Slaughter suggests that governmental networks could be enhanced to serve more purposes that could better global governance, provided the following advantages: these networks induce and enforce compliance with their standards, have a record of propensity for self-regulation, develop their own strong internal communication networks, have selective membership schemes, generate reasonable solutions to complicated problems and act as engines of continued trust and cooperation even at times of conflict.

Although the functional units of governmental networks are part and parcel of sovereign governments, these networks lack formal legitimacy of their own. However, legitimacy could have another form; practical legitimacy. The latter indicates the level of public appeal of a given entity based on its effectiveness on the ground. Slaughter suggests that the achievements and advantages of intergovernmental networks are enough evidence of their practical legitimacy (Slaughter, 2004c). Indeed, at the time the record of cooperation among nation-states provides a mixed picture, the record of governmental networks provides a more positive image. At the domestic level, public service agencies within governments develop goodwill of their own. In comparison with politically elected governments, these agencies receive special recognition and sympathy, in view of the result-oriented nature of their work and their relative proximity to the public. Yet, governmental networks at the end are components of the nation-state system. Although they could bypass political hierarchy complications at the international level, which gives them a relative practical advantage, they can not cross some threshold of political boundary lines.

Slaughter chose "*A New World Order*" as a title for her book, indicating that trans-governmental networks are a force of change from the current world order to an evolving new one. She contends that governmental networks can help address the so-called tri-lemma of global governance, where a global government is needed, but is considered infeasible, which deprives the world of a means to better governance and accountability in the multilateral system. In this regard, governmental networks are thought to offer a flexible and fast way of doing business, coordinating national government policies and initiating and monitoring collective actions aimed at addressing common problems. However, as Slaughter herself admits, the new world order defended here is basically an expression of a different conceptual framework of the existing infrastructure of world order using a three-dimensional web of links between state institutions: horizontal networks, linking infra-state units across borders and vertical networks, bringing together both national governments and the supranational institutions they choose to establish. Together horizontal and vertical governmental networks make up the skeleton of global governance in the conceived new world order. In particular, Slaughter highlights the accountability advantages of governmental networks, as these networks add an additional layer of accountability

besides those of nation-states and multilateral institutions. Although governmental networks are made up of infra-state actors, these actors interact with a wide range of non-state actors, especially NGOs and TNCs, which brings the voices and contributions of other stakeholders onboard.

In fact, the increasing influence of governmental networks is widely acknowledged. Back in the 1970s, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye studied trans-governmental networks in detail (Slaughter, 2004a). They distinguished the activity of these networks from wider transnational cooperation and defined it as “sets of direct interactions among sub-units of different governments that are not controlled or closely guided by the policies of the cabinets of chief executives of their governments.” They further argued that trans-governmental networks are one integral aspect of interdependence in the age of accelerated globalization. To be clear, their main objective was to elaborate on the different ways through which infra-state cooperation, besides other traditional transnational modes of cooperation, could help multilateral organizations play a more effective role in global governance. More recently, in his book, *"The Paradox of American Power,"* Nye argues that to achieve their objectives, most governments find it increasingly necessary to coordinate their activities through such means as bilateral and multilateral agreements, informal structures and delegation of authority to formal intergovernmental institutions. Yet, some attempts for better participation in global governance do not involve states as actors, but brings together components of states and/or nongovernmental actors, alongside the necessary, but imperfect, interstate institutional architecture (Nye, 2002). Thus, it appears that trans-governmental networks are not truly a novel phenomenon and have for long been contributing to global governance through the nation-state system.

Notably, governmental networks are decentralized and dispersed without clear structures or material power capabilities. In addition, the increasing role of these networks disaggregates state sovereignty from within nation-states and disaggregates the international system into countless, loose and soft hubs of governance. Moreover, these networks are made up of technocrats, i.e. appointed officers who lack electoral legitimacy or direct accountability to the public, which indicates their lack of reliability. Furthermore, the contribution of governmental networks could at times contradict with

domestically popular policies or traditions, which could expose their work to political resistance. It is also feared that the flexibility and informality of governmental networks could be a backdoor to turn around formal constraints of traditional mechanisms of international cooperation, which might alienate nation-states and international organizations. Another concern refers to the disadvantage of weak states in governmental networks. These states lack technical capacity and financial resources, which may lead to their exclusion from influential governmental networks. Over and above, like others, governmental networks could suffer from corruption, special interest groups and political pressure. And, given the fact that the accountability of these networks is mostly civil, not political, in nature, corruption and the like risk factors might exacerbate more than in the case of traditional governance structures.

In addition, it is hard to imagine that governmental networks could be separated from sovereign governments, letting aside the idea that these networks could compete with those governments on sovereignty grounds. In fact, the formal legitimacy of governmental networks is derived from the nation-state system and their work is subject to direction from their respective political authorities. Rightly, these networks might supplant constituent governments through informal communication, but network members will probably remain restricted by the general policy lines of their respective governments and wary of the political appropriateness of their actions. Civil servants participating in these networks are also directly subject to political guidelines and limitations. Hence, relying on the informal aspect of the work of governmental networks, as a leeway to better international cooperation, provides no sufficient guarantee of effectiveness. In practice, however, they could be useful auxiliary actors on which decision-making authorities could lean to do better informed jobs. But, even in this very context, they could also be used as legally correct means to dilute, relegate or elongate decision-making processes. At the bottom line, it is nation-states that undertake foreign policy and multilateral cooperation. And the role of governmental networks, even as detailed by Slaughter herself, can be useful, but not sufficient to address global problems. In contrast, nation-states remain the most vital actors in the multilateral system and problems such as environmental pollution, nuclear proliferation and poverty can only be faced holistically through their gate.

### B. The Power Club/Executive Committee Approach

Another major proposal to address the predicament of global governance is the so-called power club or global executive committee approach. Typical examples of this approach include the G-8 and the G-20. There is also a plethora of other less powerful G groupings, including the G-77 (group of developing countries in the UN), the Group of 24 (G-24) (group of developing countries in the Bretton Woods institutions), Group of 15 (G-15) (group of developing countries along lines similar to those of the G-8) and the G-2 (the USA and China). Most of these groupings existed long before the end of the Cold War, but it seems that the exacerbation of problems of global governance in the aftermath of the Cold War gave renewed momentum to this mode of governance both in real world politics and in the literature. This is particularly true for the last three years, as one has seen the G-8 transform into the G-20 after the proposal of the leading 20 (L-20) of Paul Martin, former Prime Minister of Canada, and several other like proposals. In this regard, it should be highlighted that the last international financial crisis and its tremors were major propellers behind the consolidation of the reformed G-20 in November 2008, as the depth of the crisis exposed the dysfunctions of the current architecture of global economic governance.

Schneckener (2009) defines global governance clubs as groupings of states, at times with the involvement of multilateral organizations, exercising global governance functions in one or more fields beyond the immediate circles of their members. Their areas of work could include exchanging information and expertise, coordinating positions, mobilizing resources, setting norms and standards, carrying out concrete actions and setting up political frameworks or regimes to deal with specific problems. Given this definition, governance by clubs takes a middle position between two typical forms of multilateralism from the institutional perspective. One is formal multilateralism, represented by the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions and regional organizations, such as the EU. And the second is informal multilateralism, represented by groups of like-minded members pursuing particular interests such as the so-called coalitions of the willing. Notably, some clubs purport to act for the global common good, though their membership schemes could be limited and selective. However, not every club actually exercises or even seeks to exercise global governance functions. In contrast to the G-20, which acts as a global governance hub, there are various alliances,



cartels and groups that are publicly declared to seek the interests of their members, such as the NATO and the Organization of Petrol Exporting Countries (OPEC).

In fact, a large part of the current debate about global power clubs or executive committees is focused on the defense and/or justification of the transition from the G-8 to the G-20. It highlights the three most quoted criticisms of the G-8: lacking legitimacy because of limited and selective membership, ineffectiveness in implementing agreements and lacking the power base needed for solving global problems. Notably, these problems continued until even after the proliferation of G-8 plus formats to include dialogues with the G-5 (China, India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa), selected African countries and the AU and the MEF. In response, several alternative proposals have been made, including enlarging the G-8 to G-13, G-14 or G-16; substituting the G-20 or some other forum for the G-8; or resorting to smaller clubs such as the G-2 or G-3 (G-2 plus the EU). In particular, Paul Martin, former Prime Minister of Canada, fueled active debate when he advocated a move from the G-8 to what he termed the Leading 20 (L-20) (Martin, 2007). He argued that in spite of its positive contribution, the G-8 has failed to develop critically needed global public policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Consequently, a summit meeting of the 20 most important countries in the world, along the lines of the then G-20 of ministers of finance, could make a significant breakthrough. At the time, which was even before the exacerbation of the last international economic crisis, the L-20 was envisaged as a forum that could build on the strengths of informality and flexibility of the G-8, while drawing on the experience of the UN. Henceforth, it took around a year before the proposal was put to practice in November 2008 at the behest of the USA's administration.

Nonetheless, part of the debate is generic in nature and focuses mostly on club or executive committee governance as a general approach to global governance. And arguments of this kind are basically meant to advocate creating some kind of a core group of global governance, with an all-encompassing mandate, not one limited to economic governance. Notably, the main rationale behind these arguments is that current multilateral institutions lack representativeness and effectiveness, while proposals to address structural imbalances and flaws in the system are at best elusive. In other words, current multilateral institutions do not, and are not expected to, meet the



standards of effective representativeness of the most willing and able states, which deprives the world from a system capable of addressing the challenges ahead. For instance, it is argued that current proposals to reform the UN Security Council and enlarge it by admitting emerging powerhouses, such as India and Brazil, as permanent members are unlikely to see daylight (Rosencrance, 2006). Moreover, structural imbalances in the Bretton Woods institutions, and most particularly the de facto veto of the USA in these institutions, could at best be only marginally mended. Hence, it is proposed to set up a concert of great powers, with representation limited to members who possess the economic and military power needed to carry out concrete measures. In particular, candidates include the USA, the EU and Japan on the side of traditional powers and China, India and Russia on the side of rising powers.

Obviously, the latest shifts in great power balances give feasibility for the proposals of clubs of great powers, on the basis that with the relative decline of the USA's power over the last few years, the USA needs more help from others. In this regard, it is hoped that in spite of their differences, an agglomeration of great powers, traditional and rising, could be drawn similar to the concerts of power in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, a new concert of great powers could be in the best interest of these great powers and a good recipe for effective global governance, given the current international political environment (Rosecrance, 2006). In contrast, resorting to unilateral policies would be unproductive and could bring more trouble and chaos to the world. Along similar lines, Bell (2006) suggests that a conflict-limiting concert of great powers under the USA's leadership is necessary to maintain order in the world and help avoid the evolution of a complex multipolar world order that current forms of multilateralism would be incapable of managing. In general, one of the high-priority tasks for would-be concerts of great powers is devising cooperation mechanisms capable of combating transnational groups and forces that threaten established order, with particular focus on terrorist networks.

The advantages and disadvantages of governance by clubs could be measured along the scales of legitimacy, effectiveness, coherence and resource mobilization (Schneckener, 2009). Legitimacy is usually measured against such criteria as participation, fairness, transparency and acceptance of decisions by others. On all these

fronts, global governance by clubs lose to formal governance epitomized by the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO. Effectiveness and problem-solving capacity mostly depend on the collective power of members, the degree of internal coherence and the surrounding environment. Here, the comparison is reversed, as formal governance forums are generally more cumbersome than power clubs, where in the latter the focus is kept on the most capable members. Coherence is generally enhanced when the like-mindedness of the members is maintained and decisions are free of contradictions. Here again, the rule is that the larger the forum and the wider the agenda, the more are the complications of consensus building and decision making, which complications get reflected in the solidarity among members and the precision of decisions. Resource mobilization refers to raising the financial, human and technical resources needed to implement political decisions. Although formal multilateral forums have more resources in their general pools, selective clubs can mobilize greater and faster resources. This is partially due to the fact that within power clubs, members usually have more control over their resources, which also better guarantees the most efficient use of these resources.

In light of the above analysis, formal multilateral structures appear to have a clear advantage with respect to legitimacy, while power clubs and informal structures appear to have clear advantages with respect to effectiveness, coherence and resource mobilization. However, it is imprecise to view these four scales as independent from each other, for legitimacy could be both a subject and a source of effectiveness, while effectiveness, coherence and resource mobilization are all closely intertwined. In fact, it seems that this is all about trade-offs between formality/legitimacy on one side and informality/effectiveness on the other side. Nonetheless, it should be noted, formal multilateral institutions could lose legitimacy over time, while informal forums could fall short of meeting effectiveness aspirations. Besides, legitimacy and effectiveness should not be mutually exclusive, and there could, and should, be approaches to capitalize on both of them. Ultimately, the most important criterion of success of any multilateral forum is the willingness of its members to agree on common actions and their ability to implement them on the ground.

There is no doubt that great powers could gain more from cooperation than from confrontation and that the whole world could be much better off with great powers taking a cooperative approach toward global challenges. For instance, great powers share common objectives such as world peace, economic prosperity and combating terrorism, which are all reasons to come together. Nonetheless, legitimate questions arise as to whether members of power clubs would act for world common good even when this contradicts with their own distinct interests and whether there are reliable guarantees to this effect. In fact, the power-clubs approach risks the possibility of proliferation of forums and fragmentation of the multilateral system, without guarantees of common good. In contrast, the UN may indeed seem to be a loose institution, but it remains the best available forum to ensure the world common good. Moreover, a given power club might be best fit to address some specific problem, but its membership might not be inclusive enough to address other problems. As a result, we have seen some reproduction of power clubs and informal groupings such as those dealing with the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea. Furthermore, setting up new forums to address specific problems may guarantee better effectiveness, but it will surely impose some coordination costs, which could be avoided in the case of established forums. Over and above, one of the most detrimental effects of the proliferation of power clubs is further dilution and marginalization of existing formal multilateral institutions, which might lead to slowly rendering these institutions irrelevant.

In addition, the approach of power clubs overemphasizes the recent shifts in power balances, while ignoring two other important variables. One is the proliferation of actors beyond the nation-state system, whether at the international or domestic levels. It is not only state power shifts that matter, but also power diffusions from states to non-state, sub-state, infra-state and other actors. Indeed, this is one prime difference between the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and today. Today, it is hard to imagine how states alone, even if in concerts, could address global problems. The second variable is the complexity of global challenges and opportunities, where forces of globalization transcend state boundaries and erode the conventional notion of state sovereignty. Notably, the challenges and opportunities of globalization have become transnational in nature, and as such require transnational approaches. This is a reality that faces both state and non-state actors and that requires creative adaptation approaches. For instance,

if we take the example of climate change, it turns immediately clear that in order for states to address global warming, they need to work in tandem with non-state actors to design and implement solutions for this problem.

### C. Concert of Democracies and Global NATO

Last, but not least, are the proposals advocating the establishment of some sort of concert or league of world democratic states, with a parallel proposal to the effect of transforming the NATO into a global security organization. In particular, the USA's presidential elections campaign in 2008 gave staunch support to these proposals, as Senator John McCain ran with a commitment to establish a league of democracies that "would form the core of an international order of peace based on freedom and that could act where the UN fails, among others, to relieve human suffering in places like Darfur in the Sudan." To some extent, these proposals shed light on the Community of Democracies (CoD), consolidated in a meeting of ministers from over 120 states in Warsaw in June 2000, at a joint initiative from Madeleine Albright, the then USA Secretary of State, and Bronislaw Geremek, the then foreign minister of Poland. After 10 years and five biennial ministerial meetings, the last of which held in Lisbon in 2009, the CoD has developed its internal governance structure, created a democracy caucus in the UN and introduced an independent body of international experts to provide recommendations as to which states meet the CoD's membership criteria. Notably, these latter recommendations help decide which states earn themselves invitations to CoD biennial ministerial meetings, which have resulted in a noticeable downsizing of participation in these meetings. Like the CoD, the most cardinal principle of the proposed concert or league of democracies is the qualification of prospective members as democratic states that share a commitment for collective action. However, paradoxically, advocates of such new forums seem to ignore the existence and experience of the CoD altogether, perhaps because what they seek is so different from what the CoD offers. Most alarmingly, there are suspicions that such proposals might be meant to kill the UN, through creating a parallel multilateral institution that is more responsive to the needs of their advocates (Piccone, 2008).

In general, advocates of the need for a concert or league of democracies share some kind of frustration with the inability of the UN to act to address threats to

international peace and security caused by regimes that abuse their own peoples and take hostile attitudes toward other states. Hence, they suggest a concert of democracies that acts as “an alternative forum for the approval of the use of force in cases where the use of veto in the UN Security Council prevents free nations from keeping faith with the aims of the UN Charter” (Ikenberry and Slaughter, 2006). They further suggest that the new forum should have three main functions: to help democratic states face their mutual security challenges, motivate economic growth and development and promote democracy and human rights (Daalder and Lindsay, 2006a). However, these proposals lack clarity as to how objectives could be implemented, especially the areas of democracy, human right and economic development. Instead, their main focus seems to be on security, namely that of the so-classified democratic states. In this regard, some advocates suggest that the NATO should become a “global NATO”, by opening its doors to any democratic state and transforming it into a global alliance capable of addressing global security challenges (Daalder and Lindsay, 2006b). Indeed, the new strategic concept of the NATO, adopted in Lisbon in November 2010, reflects an expansion of the substantive range of its operations and their geographic span. Nonetheless, the NATO remains by and large a military alliance serving the security interests of its members, not one with a true global mandate.

In addition, advocates argue that a concert of democracies would be effective, because democratic states have the greatest militaries, economies and technological bases. And such a forum would also be legitimate, because democratic states are governed by democratically elected governments (Piccone, 2008). Consequently, such a forum would be qualified to spread democracy and human rights throughout the world. Indeed, a multilateral forum of democracies could help enhance democracy and human rights, if it is designed to do so. Notably, Keohane (2006) argues that proponents of the current multilateral system should begin to reconstruct its legitimacy on a 21<sup>st</sup> century basis, i.e. with more emphasis on democratic principles than on sovereignty. However, the framework of Keohane’s argument is international, not national, and its essence is that the current system needs reform to meet three basic criteria: inclusiveness, effectiveness and accountability. In other words, all valid interests should be represented; the system should be capable of taking effective action, even against strong members; and the decision-making process should be transparent and open to criticism

from both insiders and outsiders. In contrast, the suggested forum seems to ignore democracy in global governance, while stressing on democratization within nation-states, albeit without a clear strategy.

Keith Griffin (2003) argues that economic globalization is rendering state boundaries increasingly irrelevant, which weakens the notion of state sovereignty. As a result, the world needs global governance institutions capable of managing economic globalization, addressing economic inequalities, combating unilateral actions and providing global public goods. And these institutions need to be democratic and accountable to people throughout the world. Likewise, many others refer to lack of democracy in the international system, with their eyes on such subjects as the veto right, sophisticated decision-making mechanisms and lack of implementation, enforcement, transparency, accountability and reliability. In contrast, those advocating a concert or league of democracies seem to base their argument on the premise that lack of democracy inside nation-states is the main problem facing global governance. Even more, advocates of great-power clubs often refer to excess democracy in multilateral institutions such as the UN as one of the major problems. In particular, they point to large pools of membership, demanding bureaucracy and complications of consensus-building as major hurdles to effectiveness.

Remarkably, the field questionnaire that makes part of this research revealed significant support to democratizing global governance (please refer to the Appendix). From 50 participants, 21 or 42% of the sample thought that state democracy could be adapted to the global setting, with even eight participants or 16% expressing strong agreement to this proposition. On the opposite side, 19 participants or 38% of the sample disagreed, and only two participants or 4% were in strong disagreement. On the borderline, eight participants or 16% of the sample expressed neutrality about this idea. Notably, the literature shows that reference to democracy in international relations is usually met with apprehension or even considered idealistic. However, the issue here is not whether we could see a world government emerging, but rather whether global governance could be made more democratic using the fundamental values of modern-state democracy. And the results of the field questionnaire support this latter hypothesis. At least, some democratic notions, such as inclusiveness and accountability, are

increasingly required in our world today, and there is growing understanding that enhancing such notions in the international system could bolster its performance.

No doubt, democracy has become a global value and promoting it should be a high priority inside states as well as at the international level. However, it is not clear how promoting democracy inside states could contribute to international cooperation. On the contrary, national democratic processes could, at times, stand in the way of better multilateral cooperation. For instance, a national democratically elected parliament could block or at least dilute international cooperation on some specific issue. In fact, this is even an intrinsic element of the current multilateral system, in view of the fact that sovereign nation-states are the building blocks of the system. And, even if we concur with the rationale behind proposals for a concert or league of democracies, one should wonder about the criteria of democracy and the authority that is going to apply them. Questions also arise as to how to guarantee the impartiality and effectiveness of a global organization aiming at promoting democracy inside nation-states. It also remains to be said that although the international community plays an important role and carries a moral responsibility on the respect of democracy and human rights, democratization needs to be home grown and owned in order for it to be sustainable. In addition, the notion of human rights is subject to cultural particularities that need to be watched and respected. In other words, there can be no one size fits all in this regard.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Potential Future Scenarios**



### Abstract

The future course of the multilateral system will principally depend on the actions of the yet superpower, the USA, as well as those of other traditional and emerging powers, including China, the EU, Russia, India and Brazil. The potential scenarios to be analyzed here include effective multilateralism, multilateralism *à la carte* and an international system dominated by multipolarity, in addition to two other extreme scenarios: global government and global chaos. Indeed, there is a great deal of uncertainty in such an analysis and there are no clear cutting lines between those potential scenarios, due to the many, different and sometimes even contradictory dynamics of the current momentous transition of world order. However, based on current trends and the reading of foreign policies of the major players, effective multilateralism does not seem any near in the horizon. One fundamental reason behind this is that there continue to be intractable difficulties blocking the road to reforming the multilateral system to make it more effective and responsive to the needs of its stakeholders. Hence, on one side, the USA shows an increasing propensity to multilateralism *à la carte*, among others as a means to bypass the complications of the current system to get things done and as an approach to help extend and maximize the projection of its remaining power and influence. On another side, emerging powers are demanding deep reforms, with special focus on the need to represent their rising weights in the institutions of the system. In parallel, these powers are also seeking multipolarity as a means to force their multilateral reform demands ahead. Unfortunately, it is neither in the interest of traditional powers nor of a significant majority of states to concur with the reform demands of emerging powers, for this would cost them directly in terms of relative status in multilateral institutions. As a result, the world seems closer to multilateralism *à la carte* and multipolar power politics than to effective multilateralism.

## Chapter Four

### Potential Future Scenarios

Now that it is clear that multilateralism has been always in some kind of crisis, but is currently undergoing a critical phase of its evolution, it seems wise to wonder about its potential future scenarios. Indeed, current trends presuppose a decline of formal multilateral institutions. But hopes remain that these unpromising trends could change course and that “effective multilateralism,” saliently championed by the EU, takes hold. Otherwise, there could be two other potential scenarios, the first is “multilateralism *à la carte*,” predicted by Richard Haas, President of the Council on Foreign Relations in the USA. A close analogue is “multi-multilateralism,” advocated by Francis Fukuyama, author of *The End of History and the Last Man*. Secondly, the world might witness a relapse in multipolar power politics akin to those of the interwar period. Two other remote, extreme scenarios are those of global government and global chaos, which could practically be excluded, but remain theoretically possible. Of course, two or more of these scenarios could overlap and coexist. Besides, the quest of which scenario is more likely to take effect depends on a number of determinants and uncertainties, including the actions of the yet sole superpower, the USA, actions of other traditional and emerging powers, the role of the great majority of states and the contribution of non-state actors. This chapter will attempt to elaborate on the aforesaid scenarios, before moving onto underlining the major determinants that will most probably guide us into the future.

#### I. Effective Multilateralism

Effective multilateralism would be the best scenario along the scale of potential courses of action analyzed here. In essence, it refers to having a multilateral system that functions effectively in addressing both international challenges and opportunities. It should be noted, however, that effectiveness is not synonymous with legitimacy and that the notion of effective multilateralism basically refers to a system that is effective from the functional point of view. Nonetheless, it needn't be overemphasized that legitimacy contributes to effectiveness and vice versa. Unfortunately, it seems that steering a way

toward effective multilateralism is faced with many difficulties and uncertainties, especially given the diversity of actors, both formal and informal, and the huge magnitude of rules, principles and norms governing international cooperation. Notably, nation-states, the building blocs of the system, vary widely in their approaches to multilateralism. On one side, they seem inclined, by default, to act through multilateral forums, as a means to enhance their reach and potential. On the other side, they could choose to act unilaterally; especially when doing so helps them achieve individual objectives and does not come at unaffordable costs. At the end, the multilateral system is tied to the behavior and interests of nation-states, and it is only through their collective will that the system can make any progress in any field. In their own right, however, multilateral forums strive to contribute to global governance in spite of the limitations on their roles. At least, these forums provide nation-states with settings and incentives to cooperate to achieve win-win objectives.

Thus, a fundamental question here is whether the international community could create an effective multilateral system. There can be no certain answer to this question, but one hopes that nation-states and other actors in the system demonstrate sufficient willingness and capacity to act collectively for this purpose. If this is the case, then determining and agreeing on the needed reforms could become within closer reach. And, consequently, the international community could ultimately set off on the road of building an effective multilateral system adequately equipped to meet current challenges. This research argues that constructing such a system is possible, especially in view of the fact that no individual actor can face global challenges on its own. In fact, states are increasingly pressurized to seek cooperation with other states and actors and to go through multilateral forums. At this point, it is important to consider the potential scope of an effective multilateral system. Would it be a formal, informal or a mixed system? And, would organizations such as the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO continue to act as main engines of cooperation? Or, the organizational chart of an effective multilateral system would witness some variations?

In just as much effectiveness does not have to be legitimate, it does not have to be formal. In fact, informal modes of cooperation could contribute significantly to formal cooperation, by paving the way for progress and saving time and effort. Besides,

there is no legal or customary rule that restricts this kind of cooperation. On the contrary, the notion of sovereignty of nation-states implies that they enjoy full freedom in their foreign policy acts, provided that they do not violate obligations they have previously subscribed to. Nonetheless, the informal component of multilateralism should be measured carefully to ensure that it does not render the system loose or make it incoherent or inconsistent. In other words, the central core of the current system, most fundamentally represented by the UN, should remain protected and empowered. From many aspects, the UN is indispensable for effective global governance, particularly in view of its unique legitimacy and inclusiveness (Tharoor, 2003). In addition, enhancing the role of the UN offers a number of other advantages, including the use of its accumulated expertise and established platforms of cooperation, coordination and burden sharing. Nonetheless, some voices suggest relying more on loose, informal structures and using the UN on a case by case basis, provided that certain criteria of feasibility are met, in order to keep focus with respect to actors involved and issues discussed (Wright, 2009). Clearly, this kind of arguments is advanced in the name of further effectiveness, but seems to underestimate the legitimacy effect on effectiveness. It also threatens of further marginalization of the UN, which might deal a blow to the system, because the UN remains the only universal forum of multilateral cooperation enjoying unequivocal legitimacy.

Some others argue that for effective multilateralism to be realized, considerations of power distribution and individual leadership should be downsized and, in their place, considerations of partnership and common good should be made the guiding ones (Alexandroff, 2008). Thus, it is understood, a fundamental principle of effective multilateralism should be the willingness to act collectively and share burdens. Of course, concerns of legitimacy should not be ignored altogether so simplistically. In fact, these concerns continue to haunt the current system, where the sole superpower has demonstrated lack of enlightened leadership in the recent past and has lately shown signs of power fatigue; emerging powers such as the BRICS demand a more even playing field at any cost; and non-state actors are gaining influence and challenging state authority and legitimacy. In such an environment, where different actors have fundamentally different agendas, the task of instilling effective multilateralism seems an intractable one. Even more worrying, with increasing challenges to legitimacy coming

mostly from emerging powers and non-state actors, the current system might be set for further loss of effectiveness.

In addition, one should wonder how democratic should the sought multilateral system be. In fact, the general line of thinking is tilted toward considering democracy in international relations an unfeasible and/or unnecessary factor (Wright, 2009). Some even contend that it is a mistake to think that nation-state democracy could be transcended to the multilateral system, because the necessary political and social conditions are not in place and are not expected to be met in the foreseeable future (Buchanan and Keohane, 2006). On the contrary, it is suggested that there is a need to address the democracy deficit in the system and to readapt it to the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Keohane, 2006). In particular, the current system needs reform to meet three basic criteria: inclusiveness, effectiveness and accountability to the best possible level. However, an example usually drawn to oppose this argument is the failure of the League of Nations, which was by far more democratic than the current UN, to maintain international peace or even survive in the midst of the turbulent interwar period. In contrast, the UN Charter integrated a delicate power balance formula and solemnly acknowledges that some states have special responsibilities and should receive special privileges in exchange. Due to this formula, the UN managed to survive the long confrontation of the Cold War (Luck, 2003). In this regard, one should also highlight that it is for the common good to have an inclusive, effective and accountable multilateral system, even if such a system would be short of typical nation-state democratic parameters.

No doubt, effective multilateralism is a dear hope for all those who believe in multilateralism and common human destiny. Hence, one could trace torrents of demands and appeals for an effective multilateral system in official UN documents. In particular, groupings, such as the NAM and the G-77, as well as other groupings of less powerful states and these states themselves individually figure strongly among those calling for effective multilateralism. This implicitly reflects the special interest of these actors in a rule-based, well-functioning multilateral system, given their relative power disadvantage vis-à-vis great powers. In addition, emerging powers, such as China, India and Brazil, have an old tradition of advocating an effective multilateral system. Now

that these powers have further developed their power bases and entered in various engagements with traditional powers, such as the USA and Russia, it remains to be seen if they will keep on the same track or readjust their positions to achieve more easily attainable gains. Last but not least, calls for effective multilateralism resonate strongly in the circles of an emerging global public opinion, as evident in international media and discourses of NGOs.

Lately, the EU has risen to be the most salient champion of effective multilateralism. Notably, in its 2003 security strategy, the EU adopted a distinct vision of an international order based on effective multilateralism (EU, 2003). Ever since, effective multilateralism has become mainstreamed in the EU's foreign policy. Notably, the 2003 strategy indicates that it is the EU's perspective that its security and prosperity increasingly depend on an effective multilateral system. As a result, the document underlines that the development of a stronger international society, well-functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order are priority EU foreign policy objectives. And it expresses commitment to upholding and developing international law, as an important means to achieving these objectives. Most importantly, however, the strategy states that "the fundamental framework for international relations is the UN Charter. The UN Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Strengthening the UN, equipping it to fulfill its responsibilities and to act effectively, is a European priority." Hence, it is clear that the EU's perspective on effective multilateralism revolves around a central core that is the UN, i.e. stressing the formal dimension of multilateralism.

Having a powerful actor as the EU backing the demands for an effective multilateral system is an encouraging fact. But, it should be noted, other powerful actors do not pronounce themselves against that objective. On the contrary, great powers, including the USA, have strong interest in effective multilateralism. Nevertheless, these powers tend to use the multilateral system to the extent that it serves their immediate interests. And experience shows that when interests of great powers contradict with multilateral rules, these powers could violate those rules without fearing the consequences (Brooks, 2009). This is a sad but true fact of international politics, where

foreign policy is usually mandated by interests not principles. Ultimately, however, no one can violate the rules without bearing some price, albeit sometimes affordable. For instance, USA's violations of human rights in the course of the global war on terrorism were in stark contradiction with USA's international obligations, and ultimately the USA paid a price for these violations in terms of its image.

Still, a question arises as to why such a powerful actor as the EU seems so deeply committed to effective multilateralism and parts itself from traditional great powers. As has been elaborated in Chapter Two, a factor of great importance in this regard is that the EU is not a conventional power. Rather, it is the product of the most advanced exercise of supranational integration. In particular, the Lisbon Treaty of December 2009 brought to the union more effectiveness and coherence in its foreign policy. However, the treaty was adopted in spite of lack of public support after around eight years of controversy. In addition, the EU continues to suffer from chronic divisions on internal and external issues. And European great powers, such as the UK, Germany and France, continue to play decisive roles as individual actors both regionally and globally. Thus, no matter how powerful economically, politically and strategically, the EU still lacks the ability to project unified power such as that of the USA or China. In fact, it is argued that unless the EU manages to break the taboos of divergence on the benefits of deeper economic, social and political integration, it would not be able to transform into a full-fledged global power (USNIC, 2008). It also seems that the EU's strategic choice of effective multilateralism has some ideological roots. This is most clearly reflected in Robert Kagan's book *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, where Kagan assimilates Europe to Venus and America to Mars, indicating that Europeans are ideologically inclined toward an effective international order based on law, while Americans lean more toward using force to achieve their targets. In fact, this comparison partially relies on differences in history, culture and capabilities, which in turn shape the strategic choices of the two sides.

Cognizant of these facts, the EU remains confined to the limits of an ambitious regional organization seeking special recognition within an effective multilateral system that accommodates its aspirations. Hence, the EU's security strategy underlines that regionalism strengthens global governance and that regional organizations contribute to



a more orderly world. In addition, the EU seems to promote effective multilateralism as an alternative to multipolar power politics, especially at the time it continues to lack the basic attributes of sovereign power projection (Vasconcelos, 2008). In fact, resurgence of multipolar power politics, such as those of the interwar period, is one potential future scenario to be analyzed later on, in light of shifts in the world power map over the last two decades. In response, the EU looks determined to build a network of strategic partnerships with traditional and emerging powers in order to avoid multipolarity and ensure the development of an effective multilateral system. Furthermore, the EU continues its attempts to mend its traditional cross-Atlantic alliance with the USA, with a belief that acting together, the two sides could be a formidable force behind constructive change in the world.

## II. Multilateralism *à la Carte* and Multi-multilateralism

The two concepts of multilateralism *à la carte*, of Richard Haas, and multi-multilateralism, of Francis Fukuyama, have one common fundamental basis, which is a multi-layered multilateral system with many different and overlapping formal and informal structures. In essence, this refers to a world of multiple forms, levels and scopes of multilateral structures. Actors in these structures could include states, non-state actors, international organizations and even new actors such as community organizations, sub-state and infra-state actors. And their mandates are case-specific and make up an optimum mix of foreign-policy tools for a country like the USA. In fact, an important factor in understanding the two said concepts is that both were basically suggested in the course of thinking of the best possible designs of the USA's foreign policy in the future. It is also noteworthy that both concepts are meant to give more space and recognition to multilateral cooperation, as opposed to unilateral policies that tarnish the image of the USA and harm the whole international community. However, multilateralism *à la carte* gives the UN no special status and implies that some issues could be wholly addressed outside the world body, while multi-multilateralism takes a more aggressive approach and views the UN as an organization that has grown too unwieldy and unsalvageable.

As for multilateralism *à la carte*, Richard Haas underlines what he sees as a historical shift in world order from unipolarity led by the USA to the so-called



nonpolarity, i.e. a world order dominated by many actors exercising different kinds of power (Haas, 2008). Thus, from one side, Haas excludes the continuation of unipolarity, on the basis that the USA has been undergoing a relative decline in power together with an absolute decline in influence. As a result, the USA needs more help from others and unipolarity can no longer be sustained. From the other side, Haas also excludes the evolution of a multipolar world order. In essence, multipolarity is an order where a few great powers set the rules of international relations and enforce them on the would-be violators or otherwise one where a few great powers compete along some balance of powers, which does not exclude the possibility of conflicts or breakdowns. In this regard, even with the existence of powers such as the USA, the EU, BRICS and Japan, Haas argues, the emerging world order is one that is fundamentally different from classic cases of multipolarity. Today, conventional state authority is facing challenges from above by international organizations, from below by such actors as terrorist and dissident groups and from the sides by non-state actors such as NGOs. These multiple challenges are driven by globalization, where cross-border flows take place beyond the control of nation-states and strengthen the capacity of non-state actors. As a result, states have lost their monopoly and even their control in many domains. In other words, states can no longer rule alone, need help from other actors, while at the same time facing challenges from these other actors.

In fact, world politics at any point of time are a mix of anarchy and order. The real question, then, is about the balance between the two and the general trend. In the meantime, recurrent failures and lack of reform in the multilateral system reflect an anarchic balance and a negative trend. Indeed, reform in multilateral institutions has been a slow process with unsatisfactory results, which exposes the system to critical challenges that could further erode its effectiveness and legitimacy. Thus, Haas argues, an optimum foreign policy mix for the USA would be one based on multilateralism *à la carte*. According to this proposed paradigm, multilateralism would have to become less formal and less inclusive, i.e. configured on the basis of loose, selective and situational forums such as the already proliferating G groupings. Because it would become increasingly difficult to get all relevant actors to agree on any given subject, the USA would have to cooperate with fewer actors (Haas, 2008). He further suggests establishing a core group of actors committed to multilateralism *à la carte* as a general

paradigm, to help facilitate movement at times of need. Nonetheless, formal forums, such as the UN, would still play a role according to Haas, albeit on a case-by-case basis and when deemed feasible. But, in order to be more effective, multilateral forums, such as the UN Security Council, would need to be reconstituted to better reflect the distribution of power in the world. In contrast, Haas suggests, established alliances, such as the NATO, would lose importance, because they lack the flexibility required to face today's challenges.

Francis Fukuyama presents a more radical and controversial proposal, multi-multilateralism. He starts from the basis that the world today lacks effective multilateral institutions that could confer legitimacy on collective action, quoting the famous example of Iraq (Fukuyama, 2007). In addition, he argues that the world is so diverse and complex that it cannot be managed through one global body. Instead, there is a need for diverse forms of multilateral forums. In particular, Fukuyama calls for establishing new multilateral institutions that could boost effectiveness and legitimacy and hold members accountable for their acts. Most importantly, however, Fukuyama takes an aggressive attitude toward the UN by advocating a kind of competitive multilateralism, where many multilateral forums compete and overlap in working on common subjects, and where the UN is not only treated as one equal platform, but also discredited as an ineffective body that suffers from existential problems and lacks response to these problems. He further argues that the USA should use its power and resources either through the proposed multi-multilateral forums or unilaterally to achieve moral objectives, such as reacting to gross violations of human rights, combating terrorism, supporting development and spreading democracy, as means to further reduce threats to international peace and security.

In general, it seems that theories, such as multilateralism *a la carte* and multi-multilateralism, are meant to draft strategies for the USA to make the best possible use of the current state of world order. In both cases, the underlying principle revolves around the idea that in a world where the USA can no longer do as it desires, it should adopt a flexible multilateral approach aimed at maximizing its influence in order to protect its national interests. And, intrinsically, the two theories appear to make two common, fundamental assumptions; one is that world politics are slowly, but surely,

heading toward anarchy and chaos. While the second is that nation-states are losing ground to non-state actors due to power diffusion and that they can no longer reverse this trend. However, neither of these two assumptions justifies the outcome. On the contrary, with respect to the balance between anarchy and order, one needs only wonder should the world prepare for chaos instead of attempting to prevent it. In fact, this is one of the main objectives of the alternative theory of effective multilateralism. With respect to power diffusion, states do continue to act as repositories of legitimate power and linchpins of international cooperation. Although, globalization does shake the power of states, they remain the most decisive actors in global governance (Zakaria, 2009). Hence, there is an argument that the world needs to return the nation-state to the center stage of world politics in order to help address global challenges in cooperation with all other relevant stakeholders (Luck, 2002).

Several other authors expect the future to look like a loose tapestry of multilateral forums, similar to those of multilateralism *a la carte* and multi-multilateralism. John Ikenberry (2008b) suggests that changes in the global hierarchies of leadership and power may drive more efforts toward reforming existing institutions and establishing new ones, which indicates that the world is likely to see more informal, regional, bilateral and even domestic organizations. And Zakaria (2008) suggests that with the decline of USA's power, the USA will grow less capable of providing superpower solutions to global problems. As a result, order *à la carte*, where problems are being addressed by various structures, is expected to become a dominant trend. There are also arguments that some specific forums, such as the G-20, or new similar forums may come to play more dominant roles in global governance in the future (Alexandroff, 2008). Indeed, over the last few years, one has seen a proliferation of informal multilateral, regional and bilateral structures such as the G-20, BRICS, the Union for the Mediterranean and the G-2. In parallel, one also notices a trend toward avoiding the binding frameworks of formal multilateral institutions by opting for informal and ad hoc forums, including case-specific international conferences and hybrid forms of multilateral cooperation involving international organizations, states and non-state actors.

Thus, in general, informal, selective, subject-specific multilateral forums are expected to be more extensively used in the future. In fact, once more, there is nothing peculiar about the existence of such forums. On the contrary, informal multilateral cooperation is an old mode of world politics, even as old as the nation-state system itself. In addition, the very nature, magnitude and diversity of informal, multilateral forums reflect some of the basic features of international relations, including the keenness of nation-states to work multilaterally and their continuing search for means to overcome the problems of the multilateral system. However, world politics are becoming looser and more anarchic with the proliferation of such forums without a core hub or general framework, together with the increasing marginalization of formal, multilateral institutions. Certainly, the main source of concern here is not the existence of multiple forms of cooperation per se, but the overall degree of coherence and consistence in the system. Notably, theories such as multilateralism *à la carte* and multi-multilateralism seem to ignore the need for some central hub in the system. And there is no organization better qualified to play that role other than the UN, given its unique inclusiveness, legitimacy and expertise. Indeed, informal, multilateral cooperation should be confined to the boundaries of contributing to the effectiveness of formal, multilateral forums, not used as a tool to bypass these latter forums. And this brings us back to the theory of effective multilateralism as a more appropriate conceptualization of how best the world could be governed.

Other than multilateralism *a la carte* and multi-multilateralism, a more careful approach is attempting to strike some delicate balance between considerations of effectiveness and legitimacy. The essence of this approach is that the sole superpower, the USA, needs a robust multilateral system that includes not only formal institutions and agreements at its core hub, but also informal rules and standards of legitimacy (Brooks and Wohlforth, 2009). Because formal institutions, such as the UN, suffer from lack of focus on subjects and lack of pressure on the main actors, there is a need for some kind of principled reform in the latter institutions to bring about more effectiveness without creating paralyzing consequences (Wright, 2009). This reform should rely on a mix of global, regional, bilateral and at times ad hoc tools, used on a case-by-case basis, to create an international order that is appropriate, flexible and effective. In particular, regional, bilateral and ad hoc forums could be used as initial

tools to increase effectiveness in existing global forums. And, in the long run, existing multilateral institutions should be reformed to reflect better balance of powers and new selective forums may need to be established to facilitate cooperation on such challenging issues as arms control, climate change and the world economy. In this context, it is also suggested that having some mini-multilateral forums could guarantee more effectiveness in dealing with some specific subjects, such as sanctions against violators of international peace and security.

### III. The Return of Multipolarity

Unipolarity, multipolarity and other like terms refer to the underlying power balances of world politics, not the dynamics of the multilateral system per se. However, the possibility of resurgence of multipolarity is so significant that it warrants being addressed separately vis-à-vis alternative paradigms such as effective multilateralism and multilateralism *à la carte*. This is particularly essential given the historical fact that multipolarity was usually marked with power concerts that could typically be set up by some great powers to balance against other power concerts, such as the case of world politics from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Alternatively, multipolarity could underlie a chaotic world order, where great powers, whether in concerts or individually, are involved in confrontations, such as the case of world politics during World Wars I and II. Along these lines, one needn't go back to the analysis in Chapter Two on global power shifts. Instead, the basic conclusion that the USA is in decline relative to others and needs more help than before could be a good starting point for addressing the potential of multipolarity in the future. Still, it should be acknowledged, the USA is widely expected to remain the most influential global power for the foreseeable future.

Remarkably, there are authors who argue that multipolarity has already become real or that it is inevitable in the future. For instance, Vasconcelos (2008) contends that we are already living in a multipolar world order, with power distributed asymmetrically throughout the globe. Similarly, Kagan (2008) believes that multipolarity has already taken place since the late 1990s. In addition, Khanna (2008) argues that the world power balance is moving toward three main centers in Washington, Beijing and Brussels. Perhaps even more impressively, the USNIC

predicts that a multipolar world order is in the making, with the rise of such heavy weights as China and India (USNIC, 2008). Furthermore, a study by the EU Institute of Strategic Studies expects multipolarity to become a fact, with the rise of new global and regional players such as China, India, Brazil, Iran and Indonesia (Gnesotto and Grevi, 2006). Other related arguments include that of Mahbubani (2008) who suggests that the current world order is bound to demise with the rise of the Eastern hemisphere. In fact, a fundamental feature of theories of multipolarity is their focus on state power as opposed to the wider, diluted range of state and non-state powers in theories such as multilateralism *à la carte*. However, this narrower focus does not lack rationale, in view of the fact that even with the rise of non-state actors, nation-states remain the sole repositories of sovereign power and the main engines of change in international relations.

If scenarios of multipolarity turn true, then talk of multilateralism, whether effective or *à la carte*, would become secondary at best, for in a multipolar world order, power dictates the path, depending on traffic among the great powers involved. In this regard, history indicates that multipolarity could involve great powers joining hands to set rules and keep order, while respecting each other's interests. It is on this background that multipolarity is sometimes advocated as a means to counteract USA's power, resist unilateral policies and a step toward effective multilateralism. Otherwise, lacking agreement, great powers could indulge in confrontations or even wars. In general, however, periods of multipolarity were marked with lack of stability. And this is particularly why there are concerns that a multipolar world order is in the making currently. In fact, great powers crave for further power and fight for it. And in a world divided along power lines, the game becomes a zero-sum one, where the gains of one great power often come at the expense of others. Hence, multipolarity is usually associated with confrontations and clashes.

History also indicates that having more than one dominant power usually gives more space for international cooperation. Indeed, the international political environment is different today, with globalization pulling the strings of the globe tight together and interdependence widening and deepening throughout the world. In addition, and perhaps even more importantly, all major players, traditional and emerging, stand to gain from

globalization. And these are all good reasons for major players to, at least, attempt to maintain the current order (Zakaria, 2009). However, these factors do not rule out the possibility of disorder. For instance, globalization did not prevent Russia from invading Georgia in 2008. In addition, globalization involves subtle wars on natural resources and markets. Thus, there are some fears that when a rising giant like China reaches a more advantageous status in terms of power capabilities, the world might be exposed to turbulent confrontations, mostly between China and the USA (Ikenberry, 2008a). Moreover, terrorist groups and other rogue actors project a doomsday threat to globalization. Hence, to be precise, globalization lessens the potential of disorder, but it definitely does not forestall it altogether.

Now, assuming that a multipolar world order is emerging, one needs to look at the potential main players in that order. For instance, Parag Khanna (2008) argues that the global power balance is slowly but surely moving toward a trilateral balance involving the USA, the EU and China. Obviously, he classifies some other BRICS (Brazil, Russia and India) as second-tier or second-world countries, along with many others. In contrast, several others argue that the latter three countries are also emerging as great powers (Drezner, 2008). In any case, for the first time in history, the dominant power centers in a multipolar world order could be so much heterogeneous in terms of cultural heritage, political regime and foreign policy attitudes. Even in the case of the USA and the EU who belong to the wider West, there are some salient historical and cultural nuances between them. Notably, at the time the USA and India are federal unions, the EU is a regional bloc and all others are unitary sovereign states. In addition, while the USA shows propensity toward forming alliances and coalitions, the EU works more through consensus-building, especially at the internal level, and advocates the establishment of an effective multilateral system. At the same time, Russia seems to struggle to recuperate some of its lost power and other emerging power centers tend to defend the old legacy of multilateralism. Thus, the emerging multipolar balance seems unique in its complexity and internal contradictions, which is one more reason for concern. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how these divergent powerhouses could strike a peaceful balance.



While multipolarity would serve the interests of emerging powers, it is not welcome in almost all other circles, including of course the USA. Remarkably, fears about the decline of the USA are rampant in USA's thought circles, although some deep believers in the USA's power continue to rule out the possibility of multipolarity (Joffe, 2009). In addition, fears about the resurgence of multipolarity are clearly reflected in European thought circles. This is understandable given the EU ambition for an effective, rule-based multilateral system that recognizes the rising role of regional blocs, as opposed to a system dominated and steered by multiple state powers, especially at the time the EU continues to suffer from lack of internal cohesion and project a mixed picture of global power capabilities. Though less obvious, middle-size and small states are also strong advocates of a multilateral system capable of managing global power shifts and restraining great powers, and this is repeatedly reflected in statements by these states before multilateral forums. In particular, it is feared that multilateralism could be stalled by the dynamics of the transition toward multipolarity (Vasconcelos, 2008). Indeed, the world today requires collective reactions to global problems not individual or selective ones. In contrast, in a multipolar world order, the involved great powers would be naturally interested in their own good and motivated by desire for more power, which does not help global or regional causes.

#### IV. Some Other Extreme Scenarios

In addition to potential scenarios highlighted above, there are two other scenarios that seem more theoretical than realistic, global government and global chaos. In a way, these two scenarios are causally linked under one common framework, where global government is proposed to maintain world order and prevent global chaos. Indeed, it is argued that the world has been suffering from lack of order since the end of the Cold War (Kurth, 2007). Notably, in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the vacuum that resulted from the collapse of the former Soviet Union gave rise to chaos in several parts of the World. More recently, September 11 attacks and the war on Iraq and their later tremors marked some serious breaches of order accompanied with some grave violations of international law. Currently, with the relative decline of the USA, it has become clear that the unipolar world order proclaimed in the early 1990s cannot persevere for long. Thus, we are living in a world in transition. Nevertheless, this state of affairs does not justify speaking of the two aforesaid scenarios as potential ones, for



there seems to be little witness in support of them. Instead, a more careful calculation indicates that excluding the use of mass destruction weapons by terrorists, unexpected global natural catastrophes or grave strategic miscalculations on the side of great powers, global chaos remains a remote possibility and global government to contain it remains an unrealistic scenario.

Historically, the idea of global government has deep roots in utopian works such as those of Immanuel Kant, Dante and Alfred Tennyson. Recently, the end of the Cold War, the lack of order that followed it and the relative decline of the USA seem to have given further fuel to this line of thinking. Thus, there is visible support to this idea in the academia today. In particular, the absence of another power or combination of powers believed to be capable of replacing the USA in the global leadership seat portrays global government as a possibly plausible scenario. Such a government could carry priority tasks such as maintaining peace and security, promoting overall wellbeing and responding to the accountability demands of global public opinion, especially those of NGOs in their capacity as global public opinion champions. Along these lines, there are some calls for a globally elected parliament, disbanding the UN Security Council and transforming the UN General Assembly into a world government (Monbiot, 2004). Similarly, there is an argument that a global government along nation-state governance guidelines is inevitable (Wendt, 2008). However, on the opposite side, it is argued that the idea of a global government is impractical (Craig, 2008). It is also argued to be both unfeasible and undesirable (Slaughter, 2004a). In essence, it is a remote, unsubstantiated possibility that nation-states would be willing to give up their sovereign authority to a supra-national global body. And recent experiences, including in the yet most successful regional integration model of the EU, suggest that nation-states remain generally reluctant to concede sovereign prerogatives to supra-national authorities.

The other theoretical scenario is that of falling into global chaos. Again, here, the relative decline of the USA over the last few years, together with its consequential relative withdrawal from the global leadership seat and the relative rise of emerging powers that share very little with the USA, shape the rationale behind this ominous prediction. In particular, it is feared that with the gradual emergence of new great powers, especially China, the world might relapse into global economic failures and

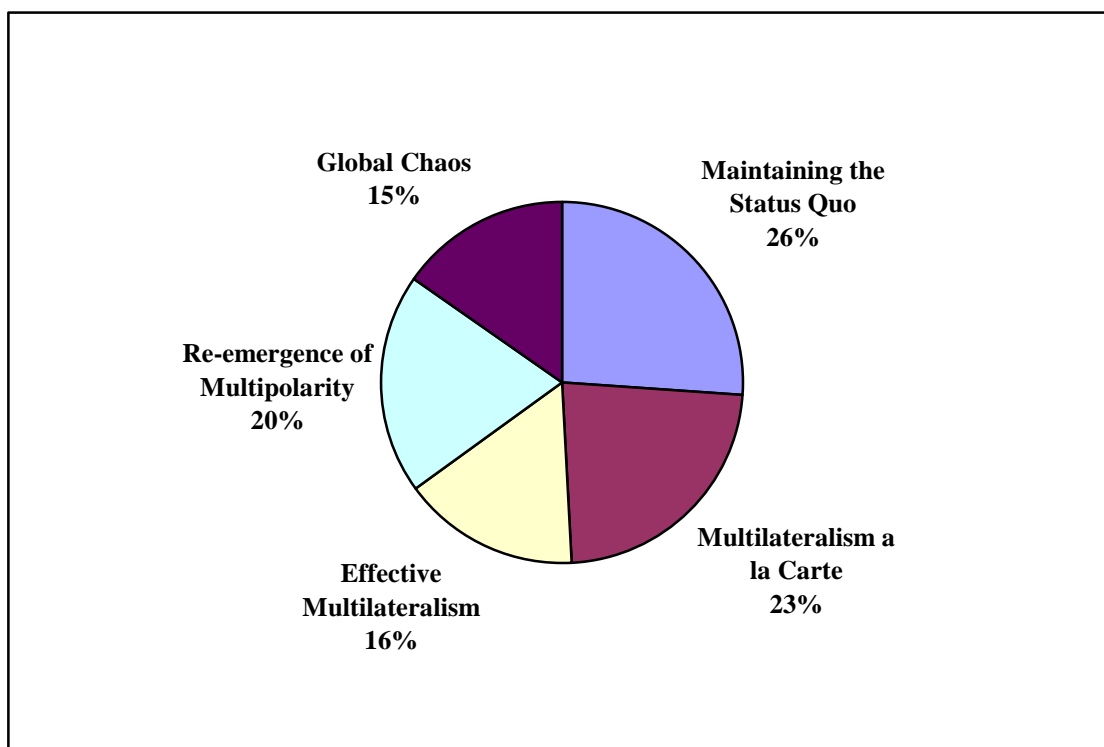
violent confrontations such as those of the 1930s and 1940s (Ikenberry, 2008a). An even worse scenario would be that of terrorists having access to mass destruction weapons and using them on a wide a scale. Yet, one of the most pessimistic scenarios is that of the so-called clash of civilizations, where the nation-state system gets overtaken by divisive cultural identities that lead the world to violent confrontations along cultural and religious lines. Notably, there are also some regional-specific chaos theories, especially for conflict-stricken regions such as the Middle East, East Asia and North-West Asia. Indeed, the current transition of world order is not secure and modern technology transforms non-state actors into potent players at the global level. In such an environment, the absence of a global power capable of maintaining order could lead to chaos. However, on the contrary, the transition the world is going through needn't be violent, especially that the main players at the current stage stand to gain from globalization and have significant interests in world stability (Zakaria, 2009 and Khanna, 2008). In addition, although non-state actors are emerging more powerful, their roles remain by and large secondary to those of nation-states. And even in the case of terrorist groups that could be meant to take the world back to the dark ages, the threat remains mostly hypothetical and there are already efforts underway to prevent it.

The field questionnaire undertaken as part of this research was also used to draw some practical insights on the subject of this chapter. Notably, that questionnaire was addressed to a sample of 50 contributors in the fields of diplomacy, academia and international organizations, drawn from 32 different countries (please refer to the Appendix). The participants were asked to arrange, in ascending order according to probability, five suggested potential scenarios of the multilateral system: maintaining the *status quo* or lack of clear direction; multilateralism *à la carte* or multi-multilateralism; effective multilateralism; re-emergence of multipolar international politics; or global chaos. Obviously, these scenarios start from the present state of the system and move on to scenarios suggested by some authors or defended by some players, such as multilateralism *à la carte* or multi-multilateralism, effective multilateralism and multipolarity. To allow for proportionality, the answers were given weights ranging from five for coming first, four for second, three for third, two for fourth and one point from coming fifth (please refer to Chart 4 below). The results show maintaining the *status quo* or lack of clear direction to be the most probable scenario

with 193 out of 738 overall points or around 26% of the total. The next three scenarios in order were multilateralism *à la carte* with 170 points or around 23%, multipolarity with 147 points or about 20% and effective multilateralism with 116 points or about 16%. Expectedly, the worst-case scenario of global chaos came last with 112 points or around 15%. Here, it should be noted, three participants chose not to tick this last scenario at all, indicating their viewpoint that it is not possible. Indeed, current trends indicate that the multilateral system is more likely to take some form of multilateralism *à la carte* or, failing that, return to multipolarity. Though valiantly defended in Europe, effective multilateralism seems to be a weak scenario. While global chaos is more of a ghost to avoid, because it could inflict massive damage on all.

Chart (4)

Potential Future Scenarios of Multilateralism



Source: Own elaboration based on the results of a field questionnaire (see the Appendix).

**IV. Major Determinants for the Future**

After articulating potential scenarios of multilateralism over the foreseeable future, it appears of essence to attempt to map and examine the major determinants that

could decide which scenario is closer to reality. Of course, this is another risky exercise, given the complexities and uncertainties involved. Hence, for the sake of clarity, one needs to exclude some external factors such as large-scale military confrontations and disasters, whether natural or manmade. Although such factors could interfere in the course of multilateralism, they are only exceptional ones that should not guide the discussion here. Instead, this subsection will start with the foreign policy attitudes of the USA, the yet greatest global power, toward the multilateral system. Afterwards, it will consider the influence that other great powers, both traditional and emerging, could have on the system. It will also address the roles of non-state actors, with especial focus on NGOs as catalytic forces of change.

#### A. The United States of America

There seems to be a consensus that the USA's foreign policy will be the most decisive factor with regard to the future of the multilateral system. In fact, this is only logical, given the fact that the USA remains the most powerful actor on earth. Even with the decline in USA's power relative to others, it is still widely agreed that it possesses the power it takes to lead the world further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Zakaria, 2009 and Ikenberry, 2008b). Furthermore, it seems doubtful that any other power or combination of powers could substitute for the vital leadership role of the USA or even challenge this role over the foreseeable future (Joffe, 2009). However, the role of the USA in this regard is in fact double-edged. On one side, if the USA assumes a global leadership role in favor of multilateral cooperation and the global common good, the future perspective would look positive. On the other side, if it withdraws from the leadership seat or focuses on achieving narrow self-interests, the multilateral system would be exposed to stumbles and world peace might become at stake. Hence, it is vividly hoped that the USA would play the role of an enlightened leader that harnesses world efforts to build a safer and better future for all.

In fact, adopting a foreign policy approach based on an effectively functioning multilateral system is not only in the interest of the world, but also in the best interest of the USA. Especially after the unilateral policies of the USA's Bush administration alienated its strategic allies and eroded its influence, the USA needs a robust foreign policy based on multilateralism (Lyons, 2007). In addition, now that the global power

balance is undergoing significant changes, the USA is becoming less capable of pursuing hegemonic policies and needs more help from others. In this light, Brooks and Wohlforth (2009) suggest some general principles to help the USA spearhead an effort to build a better multilateral system, including making sure that reforms give rise to reciprocal gains and carry benefits for all, ensuring that reforms provide global public goods, relating proposed reforms to widely accepted components of the current system as opposed to speaking of a complete overhaul of the system, strategically exploiting inconsistent objections to proposed reforms and entering in dialogue with other actors to try to persuade them of the need for change. Similarly, Niblett (2009) recommends that the USA fosters a more constructive dialogue with others, recognizes new constraints on its foreign policy, attempts to understand its opponents and to accommodate its allies, focuses on governance and processes more than rulers and groupings, strengthens multilateral cooperation as a necessity and seeks leadership by example. Nye (2002) also suggests that the USA should maintain international rules and institutions, promote global commons, preserve the balance of power in important regions, form coalitions and mediate disputes, foster an open world economy and help economic development.

However, theories such as multilateralism *à la carte* and multi-multilateralism inherently imply that the USA should seek its self-interests in the first place and even if this comes at the expense of the common good. Of course, focusing on narrow national interests is a sovereign right of any country, but it could carry serious implications on the external front, especially if the country involved is such a great power that the USA is today. Moreover, USA's focus on seeking its national interests implies a deal of withdrawal from the global leadership seat. And it is this possibility of withdrawal that worries the rest of the world most, especially in view of its potential costs in terms of stability. In contrast, even if we look at the state of world affairs from a narrow USA's perspective, it seems that reforming the multilateral system to make it more responsive to USA needs helps achieve USA's national interests more than marginalizing or ignoring the system altogether. In fact, multilateral institutions help great powers more than they restrict them, for these institutions offer some indispensable advantages, including in terms of legitimacy, outreach, coordination, burden-sharing in addition to their large pools of knowledge and expertise (Brooks, 2009). Historically, these institutions were designed to protect the interests of great powers and have been used by

them more than anyone else. And in the current age, where state boundaries are growing irrelevant, threats come from state as well as non-state actors and opportunities are scattered throughout the globe, no state can go it alone and any actor might need help from any other.

No doubt, the Obama USA's administration has been working hard to repair the image of the USA in the world. It has also taken a foreign policy line favoring diplomacy over violence and conciliation over confrontation. In particular, the 2010 USA's national security strategy marked a welcome shift toward multilateralism in comparison with its two preceding strategies of 2002 and 2006 (USA, 2010). Most importantly, the new strategy focuses on soft power, i.e. nonviolent power tools such as diplomacy, development and culture. It also conditions preemptive defense against imminent threats on exhausting diplomatic means beforehand and limits the use of military power to combating Al-Qaeda and its affiliates. In addition, the new strategy emphasizes the importance of global alliances and partnerships, including with emerging powers. Nonetheless, real politics throughout the lifetime of the current USA's administration reflect an increasing tendency toward multilateralism *à la carte*. For instance, the renovated G-20 now acts as a central hub of economic global governance. And, in the WTO, the USA has been pushing the slate away from the official course of the Doha Round to bilateral and plurilateral tracks. In contrast, with regard to more politicized issues, such as the files of Iran and North Korea, nuclear proliferation and climate change, there appears to be hybrid USA's approaches, balancing the use of informal and formal multilateral forums.

In general, it appears that although the current USA's administration has acknowledged the vital role of the UN and other multilateral institutions, it does not treat these institutions as central pillars of multilateral cooperation. In other words, the USA's foreign-policy approach toward multilateral institutions has become case-specific, in line with the theory of multilateralism *à la carte*. It seems that besides the enduring USA's ambivalence toward multilateralism, lack of effectiveness in multilateral institutions and barriers to reforms of global governance are giving further impetus to USA's reliance on ad-hoc multilateral forums (Stewart, 2010). Thus, in practice, multilateralism *à la carte* has become a *de facto* line of USA's foreign policy

over the last few years. This approach encourages the proliferation of multilateral forums, formal and informal, and gives rise to problems such as duplication of work, forum-shopping and lack of implementation and enforcement. It also fails to respond to the needs of other countries and the aspiration for a global multilateral system that serves all at equal footing. Instead, the USA needs to strike a balance between formal and informal multilateral forums, and this balance should not undermine the objective of a rule-based multilateral system.

### **B. Other Great Powers**

Some other great powers, traditional and emerging, also play an important role in directing the evolution of the multilateral system. In particular, the foreign policies of these countries and their approaches toward the multilateral system could either reinforce or further marginalize the system. In addition, the relationships between these powers and the USA and the intra-relationships between these other powers themselves could have significant effects in this regard. Notably, the list of other great powers could include Russia and Japan as traditional powers and the EU, China, India and Brazil as emerging ones. Fortunately, to varying degrees, the foreign policies of all these powers reflect a strong support to multilateralism. While the EU spelled out an elaborate vision in support of effective multilateralism, China, India and Brazil are known for their traditional advocacy of a fair and effective multilateral system. And now that Russia is struggling to reassert itself as a global power, it shows more inclination toward multilateralism. Notably, India and Brazil are vigorously seeking permanent seats in the UN Security Council, the EU is seeking special recognition in the UN and Russia is doing its best to join the WTO. However, it is still worth investigating how the rising profiles of these countries could impact on their foreign policies and to what extent their support to multilateralism is sustainable.

Reading through official state discourses, it is clear that some traditional and emerging powers, in particular Russia and China, seek a multipolar world order, as a means to counteract USA's hegemony (Vasconcelos, 2008). Remarkably, the former president of Russia and current president of China, Vladimir Putin and Hu Jintao, issued a statement in 2005 advocating the development of a multipolar world order, with a view that such an order is an important means to better multilateralism (Jintao, Hu and



Putin, Vladimir, 2005). In practice, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, established in 2001 by China and Russia with Central Asian States, has been poised as a platform for coordination against the dominance of the USA in that region. However, it seems that Russia, in particular, is aggressively reasserting itself and seeking a role in a multipolar world order (Trenin, 2009). In contrast, China takes a more subtle approach and its leaders tend to underestimate the catch-up propaganda, which helps reassure the USA and the West about China's intentions. Even in academic circles, Chinese strategists speak of their expectation that the USA's global dominance will continue in the foreseeable future (Kagan, 2008).

As for India and Brazil, apart from issues of global economic governance, multipolar power politics are less evident in the foreign policies of these two countries. While India is indeed asserting itself as a great power, it continues to have security concerns, especially with neighboring China and Pakistan, which make it more dependent on the USA's security umbrella (Zakaria, 1998). Notably, the two countries signed a unique nuclear deal in 2005 and there is support in Indian and USA's circles to the idea that India could be a natural ally of the USA, in view of their shared democratic values. However, India continues to take a cautious foreign policy approach that limits its participation in global governance (Matussek, 2010). Even with regard to subjects with regional dimensions, such as Afghanistan and Iran, India is generally reluctant to take more assertive stances. This reflects a lack of clarity inside India as to which road its foreign policy should take and whether it should join the ranks of great powers or keep on the side of developing countries. Concerning Brazil, it is indeed asserting itself as the superpower in Latin America and vigorously seeking a diversified set of strategic partnerships across the globe. However, Brazil's foreign policy remains principally focused on its region (Vaz, 2009). In essence, as a country between the center and the periphery on the world power map, Brazil's current foreign policy is focused on two main pivots, development and multilateralism (Femesh, 2010).

Besides individual moves, most emerging powers also use different groupings to assert themselves and promote their increasing interests in global governance. Examples of this include the BRICS, RIC (Russia, India and China) and IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa). While RIC has been overshadowed by the BRICS, given the membership



overlap between the two forums, IBSA is poised more as a platform of trilateral and wider South-South cooperation than a global power bloc. Nonetheless, one of the main pillars of IBSA is coordination on international issues, such as the reform of the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions (Sotero, 2009). Notably, the three IBSA member countries seek permanent seats in the UN Security Council. In contrast, the BRICS' forum is widely touted as a forum reshaping world politics. Historically, the term BRIC (before the inclusion of South Africa in December 2010) emerged in a Goldman Sachs' report in 2001, before the launch of the BRIC' forum in 2006 with a meeting of foreign ministers, in the footsteps of similar RIC meetings. Later on, the BRIC introduced annual summit-level meetings as of 2009. Notably, the heated controversy around the bloc goes back to a 2003 Goldman Sachs's estimate that the BRIC' economies could bypass the world's richest economies (G-8 minus Canada and Russia) by 2041, before this same estimate was updated in 2009 to predict that they could bar with the G-7 by 2032 (Goldman Sachs, 2009).

No doubt, over the last few years, the BRICS' forum has grown into a successful body with significant influence vis-à-vis older Western forums such as the G-8. Most importantly, the final communiqué of 2010 BRICS Summit stated that “We underline our support for a multipolar, equitable and democratic world order, based on international law, equality, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision-making of all States” (BRICS, 2010). Thus, multipolarity figures strongly on the agenda of the BRICS, as a fundamental pillar of their vision of multilateralism. In general, BRICS' statements also reflect strong emphasis on sharing experiences, coordinating policies and promoting a more representative and effective multilateral system, with special focus on global economic governance. However, there continues to be doubts about the future potential of the BRICS, especially given the fundamental differences between its members, including in terms of cultural backgrounds, political regimes and economic performance. In addition, relations between the two most important members, China and India, have witnessed increasing tension over the last few years because of their historical border dispute. In fact, apart from objecting to some elements of the current world order, the BRICS does not present a concrete vision of how the future should look like (Weiss, 2009). By and large, this reflects the transitory phase that these countries are undergoing, besides their reluctance

to assume more responsibilities in global governance at the time they dedicate most of their attention to meeting domestic challenges. Even China, the best performer in this group, still vociferously insists that it is yet a developing, indebted country.

On another level, the grooming of the G-20 to replace the G-8 as the hub of global economic governance stands as evidence to the evolution of global power balances. In fact, this step looks only logical, given the membership of all the BRICS in the renovated G-20. And its timing was also revealing, as it was in the midst of the current international economic crisis, which has mostly been blamed on the West and the USA in particular. For obvious reasons, the BRICS feel more accommodated in the G-20, although it is an informal, loose forum that lacks clear legal framework or adequate enforcing mechanisms. In contrast, in the UN, several countries with G-20 membership claims and many other developing and poor countries are outspoken against the G-20. As a result, talk of the indispensability of the UN is in force in different corners of the world today, including in the UN, where the theme of 2010 general debate in the General Assembly was focused on reaffirming the central role of the UN in global governance. Noticeably, there seems to be a rising rivalry between formal multilateral institutions, such as the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions, and the G-20 and other G groupings, the fuel of which is a feeling that such G groupings lack representativeness and legitimacy and usurp functions legally mandated to formal multilateral bodies (Jones, 2010).

To a lesser extent, the G-2 is also an important forum that could have significant influence in world politics, as it includes the current superpower and a predicted future superpower. Similar to the G-20, the G-2 reflects a new emerging pivot of power balancing. However, the G-2 seems a lot more welcome than the G-20, partially due to the interest of the USA and the wider international community in guaranteeing a peaceful rise of China as well as the contribution that this forum could have to bettering multilateral cooperation on a host of subjects. Still, the G-2 embodies a love-hate relationship that is advancing on the basis of interests. And although the positions of the two sides seem finely balanced, this balance is prone to easy breakdowns due to the complexity and sensitivity of the issues at stake (Prasad and Gu, 2009). If not controlled, such breakdowns could escalate and cost the world dearly in terms of

stability and wellbeing. Hence, like typical of cases of power balance, the emerging balance between the USA and China could either motivate better global governance or instead hasten and exacerbate potential damage.

Overall, the foreign policy orientations of emerging and traditional powers other than the USA could have a significant impact on the future course of multilateralism. In this regard, whether the EU could secure the support of other powers to its elaborate vision of effective multilateralism or not is an important question, particularly in view of the rising role of the EU as a unique supranational regional institution. In addition, for emerging and traditional powers to reinforce and enhance the performance of the multilateral system, it is necessary to steer foreign policies that, firstly, heed the call for help from the USA in a way that does not undermine the role of formal multilateral institutions. In other words, these powerhouses should be forthcoming in assuming bigger roles in support of global governance, while at the same time resisting the increasing informal trend of USA's foreign policy. Otherwise, the current proliferation of multilateral forums, with the noticeable increase in the reliance on informal ones, may gain further momentum, which could further marginalize formal multilateral institutions such as the UN. Secondly, these powers need to manage their internal and external conflicts and avoid would-be divide and rule tactics in order to come out with a common front and ensure against strains on their resources and ascent to power. In contrast, if conflicts, such as those between China and both India and Japan, exacerbate, this will only serve elongating the current transitory phase and may even change the emerging world power map.

Thirdly, emerging powers should maintain their traditional support to effective multilateralism, though this may require them to forego some immediate temptations and benefits. While the USA and the West at large recognize the need to accommodate the interests of emerging powers, if these powers fall for immediate palliatives, such as special recognition in formal multilateral forums or special status in informal ones, this would send a signal that they view multipolarity as an end not as a means to better multilateral cooperation. In turn, the gains emerging powers have achieved this far, such as in the reinvigorated G-20 and the Bretton Woods institutions, should not dilute their demands for effective global governance. Notably, reforming the multilateral system to

meet the aspirations of emerging powers is faced with resistance from both rival developing countries and traditional great powers (Weiss, 2008). However, emerging powers should persevere in their struggle for a holistic reform of the multilateral system, for this is the most secure and sustainable form of reform, especially at the time these powers are in transition and their ascent is surrounded with challenges. In contrast, leaning toward multipolarity could cost emerging powers the support they currently have from states supportive to their causes, which might as well deal a serious blow to the case for reform. Fourthly, the global power status of all powerhouses depends to a large extent on their ability to face their respective internal challenges. Notably, emerging powers, such as China, India and Brazil have daunting internal challenges ahead. The success or failure and the speed at which these powers manage those internal challenges will certainly impact on the evolution of the global power map and the related transformation of world order.

### C. Secondary Players

In addition to the roles of the USA and other traditional and emerging powers, there are two sets of secondary players that could affect the future course of multilateralism. Specifically, the participation of regional powers, developing and poor countries and the net impact of non-state actors could both play important catalytic roles. Firstly, regional powers, developing and poor countries are indeed more concerned about their own problems and immediate needs than what could be called high-traffic politics between the great powers. In addition, the intellectuals of these countries are largely absent from the ongoing debate on the evolution of the multilateral system. Nevertheless, some of them are better engaged in the system, especially in institutions such as the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions. This is particularly the case of regional powers such as Turkey, Iran and Egypt in the Middle East; South Africa and Nigeria in Africa; Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela in Latin America; and Australia, Indonesia and South Korea in Asia Pacific.

For logical reasons, the great majority of what could be called second-tier countries should even have more interest in the betterment of the multilateral system than great powers, due to the formers' relative lack of power to impose their will. Indeed, some small countries even depend on multilateral institutions, such as the UN

and its system, for their political and economic viability (Weiss, 2008). However, on the other side, political and developmental problems in these countries, together with other problems in the multilateral system expose them to the wills of rich and powerful countries and do not usually allow them adequate action on the international level. This is even more the case today that the level of official development assistance (ODA) is falling short of achieving the MDGs. Nevertheless, one sees the role of developing countries increasing in a multilateral institution such as the WTO. And although this has been a source of further impasses, it gives a clear indication that developing world is getting closer together in this specific field (Laidi, 2008). Similarly, some of these countries contribute to the blockage in the UN on such critical issues as UN Security Council reform. This is particularly true for those who view as detrimental any special status achievement by emerging powers seeking permanent membership. Ultimately, the great majority of developing countries are translated into a great majority of voting rights in institutions such as the UN and the WTO. And if these countries manage to better coordinate their positions, they would constitute a stronger bargaining force that could be used to protect their interests, including their need for rule-based, effective multilateral institutions.

Secondly, although non-state actors, such as NGOs and TNCs, do not participate as basic players in the multilateral system, they are growing more capable of influencing the system and world politics at large. On one side, NGOs are contributing to what could be called emerging global public opinion, which has an increasing influence on states domestically and internationally. In essence, they are acting as external accountability agents that combat perceived negative policies and motivate and support better multilateral cooperation in a variety of fields (Keohane, 2005). For instance, NGOs active in the environmental field form lobbies that are increasingly influential. In contrast, TNCs have a different agenda, advocating more global economic integration, resisting more controls on their activities and putting pressure on states to achieve these objectives. However, it is technological and economic integration that is bringing the world together more than anything else. In this sense, and whatever the differences in agendas are, TNCs constitute a significant force, especially in the global economic field. And although their influence does not necessarily lead to better multilateral cooperation, it is one that stimulates more liberalization and more multilateralism. Hence, it is argued

that TNCs are an emerging force of privatization in world politics, with resources that could help rectify the failures of the multilateral system (Bull et al, 2004).

To sum up, the future course of the multilateral system principally depends on the actions of the yet superpower, the USA, as well as those of other traditional and emerging powers. Indeed, there is a great deal of uncertainty in this analysis and there are no clear cutting lines between the aforementioned potential scenarios, due to the many, different and sometimes even contradictory dynamics of the current momentous transition of world order. However, based on current trends and the reading of the foreign policies of the major players, effective multilateralism does not seem any near in the horizon. One fundamental reason behind this is that there continue to be intractable difficulties blocking the road to reforming the multilateral system. Hence, on one side, the USA shows an increasing propensity to multilateralism *à la carte*, among others as a means to bypass the complications of the system and as an approach to help extend and maximize the projection of its remaining power. On another side, emerging powers are demanding deeper institutional reforms in the system, with special focus on accommodating their rising global weights. In parallel, these powers are also seeking multipolarity as a means to force their multilateral reform demands ahead. Unfortunately, it is not in the interest of traditional powers in general nor in the interest of the great majority of states to concur with the reform demands of emerging powers, for this would cost them directly in terms of relative status in multilateral institutions. As a result, the world seems closer to multilateralism *à la carte* and multipolar power politics than to effective multilateralism.

Most importantly, unless the USA lends its support to the vision of adequate reform in the multilateral system, while emerging powers join hands with such other supportive powers as the EU and come up together as a strong, coherent and persistent force behind this vision, historical multilateral institutions, such as the UN, would be sacrificed and the whole world would have to bear the consequences. It needn't be overemphasized here that the best approach to address global problems should be predicated on reforming the formal multilateral system and making it the central hub of all forums addressing global governance. In this regard, it is incumbent on middle-size and small states to support effective multilateralism; for it is in their best interest in the

long-run. Perhaps blocking needed institutional reforms could serve the interests of some of these states in the short-run. Nonetheless, lack of reform in the multilateral system is in turn contributing to the proliferation of informal multilateral forums, where these states do not even have voices. Thus, blocking needed reforms does not stop the powerful current of change; it only diverts it and makes it more detrimental to all. Finally, though not basic players in the nation-state system, non-state actors, most particularly NGOs, could play an important catalytic role in support of more effective and accountable multilateralism. In addition, TNCs have been so far the main beneficiaries of globalization, and as such they should be brought onboard and requested to contribute their share to better global governance.

## **Chapter Five**

### **The United Nations and the International Multilateral System**



### **Abstract**

The UN emerged from the debris of the League of Nations. Its founders took the experience of the League of Nations as a starting point. They chose to maintain the same basic structure and transplanted the notion of collective security. However, they changed the decision-making mechanism significantly, most importantly by abolishing the general rule of unanimity and replacing it with a carefully designed great-power unanimity rule. In addition, the UN Charter marked an augmentation in the authorities of the council at the expense of the assembly, thus making the Security Council the powerhouse of the organization. Remarkably, it is widely argued that it is mainly due to these differences that the UN is still alive today. Yet, throughout its life, the world body has suffered from lack of effectiveness. The main reasons behind this include lack of political will of member states, lack of equity and consistency in the system, democracy deficit, lack of enforcement, political and administrative inefficiency and lack of resources. Nevertheless, as the core embodiment and prime symbol of the international multilateral system, the UN is being staunchly advocated as an indispensable body. Notably, it offers a stable platform for addressing the challenges of globalization, represents international legitimacy in its most salient form, is the only international organization of its kind enjoying global membership, has already developed some kind of institutional resilience in serving its members, functions on the basis of burden sharing, undertakes a vital developmental mission, sets rules of order in international relations and acts as a repository of world conscience. As for the future outlook of the organization, it is argued here that it will largely depend on developments in two main areas: one is the crisis of representative legitimacy that has been dividing the organization, and the other is the trend of increasing marginalization that risks rendering the world body irrelevant.

## Chapter Five

### The United Nations and the International Multilateral System

The UN is the prime symbol of multilateralism and the most representative embodiment of its achievements, challenges and setbacks. It is, as Paul Kennedy sees it, the parliament of man, which, as Shashi Tharoor sees it, was invented to save humanity from hell. In effect, the origins of the current international multilateral system date back to the establishment of the UN in 1945. Since then, the multilateral system has outgrown the UN and its wide system of specialized agencies, programs and funds. Nonetheless, the system remains so UN-centered that its very survival is dependent on it. Along these general lines, this chapter starts with a short historical background of the UN. Then, it moves on to analyzing its mission, structure and functions; its main strengths, along with the reasons why it could be seen as indispensable; and its main weaknesses, along with the factors behind lack of effectiveness. Finally, the chapter analyzes two main challenges that the UN is facing today, namely the questions of legitimacy and relevance.

#### I. Historical Background

The forces of human propensity to conflict and human quest for peaceful coexistence are two contradictory forces that have largely shaped the history of mankind since humanity itself started. This is clearly reflected in the relics of early civilizations such as the Pharaonic, Mesopotamian, Greek and Roman civilizations. More recently, the Great War, the thirty-year war in Europe that ended up with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, had given rise to a plethora of calls, most of which were in fact rhetorical, to put an end to repeated bloody struggles and find a way to lasting peace (Kissinger, 1994). The nation-state concept that emerged from the Treaty helped to reduce conflicts, but fell short of providing a sustainable environment for peaceful coexistence. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> through the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Napoleonic wars ravaged Europe and left atrocities and agonies throughout the continent. Several other smaller-scale wars followed, including the Crimean war, the Prussian-Austrian and

Prussian-French wars. Ultimately, the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed two of the bloodiest wars in the history of mankind, World Wars I and II.

The eruption of World War I was clear evidence that ad-hoc balances and concerts of powers that marked the 19<sup>th</sup> century could not constrain the tendency to use military power to accomplish national expansionist objectives at the expense of others. The war left unprecedented devastation, as it employed modern mass warfare tools. It further shook the pillars of the modern Western civilization and uprooted communities and regions throughout the world. Ultimately, the war led to moving the center of world power, especially in its economic aspects, across the Atlantic to the USA, along with newly emerging powers such as Japan and Australia (Kissinger, 1994). In the aftermath of the war, world's governments, most particularly victor powers, launched the first significant attempt in the history of mankind to establish a formal association of nation-states, the League of Nations. The founding document, the Covenant of the League of Nations, drafted by a special commission, was later on adopted as the first part of the Treaty of Versailles of 28 June 1919.

The Covenant of the League of Nations contained a set of rules constraining the use of force, binding all its member states to peaceful settlement of disputes and providing that the League of Nations would take collective action against any state that violates these rules. Its doors were opened to all states after removing a short-lived ban on the defeated Central Powers that was imposed by the victor Allied Powers. Indeed, the Covenant was engineered around the same old concept of power concerts and did not otherwise bring about any fundamental alteration to usual world politics at the time (Kennedy, 2006). This was clearly reflected in the structure of the League of Nations, with an Assembly that includes all but colonized states meeting in neutral Geneva, while the central decision-making body, the Council, began with four victor powers (Great Britain – France – Italy – Japan) as permanent members, then changed several times, most importantly to include Germany as a fifth permanent member and introduce non-permanent membership, on a rotating regional basis.

The League of Nations made some notable successes, including in encouraging international cooperation in technical fields such as postal communication, civil aviation, drug trafficking, labor standards...etc. It also helped resolve several territorial

conflicts in Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere. In addition, it introduced a novel system for the protection of the rights of minorities and was inspecting the situations in colonies through reports made by imperial powers. Yet, the League of Nations was suffering from pitfalls that ultimately led to its clamorous collapse. Most importantly, the powerhouses in the center stage, Great Britain and France, had fundamental differences about the mission of the organization. In addition, the other powerhouses in the Council, Japan, Italy and Germany, had perilous territorial ambitions that undermined the credibility of the organization. Furthermore, other would-be balancers, especially the USA and the USSR (with the exception of the period from 1934 to 1939), were out for different reasons (Kennedy, 2006). Thus, although the League of Nations was based on the same old concept of power concerts, its power base was suffering from grave imbalances and complications.

Although the League of Nations marked a metamorphosis in world political thinking and setup and its establishment gave rise to optimism and idealistic aspirations, less than two decades later, it turned out to be an inadequate exercise in the face of war mongering and ideological hatreds. As a result, a domino effect of failures led to the outbreak of World War II, starting with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Had the powerful states stood firmly against that incidence from a permanent member in the Council of the organization, perhaps would-be violators, Italy and Germany, could have been deterred (Kissinger, 1994). After the Nazi party took power in Germany in 1933, it seemed determined to obliterate the Treaty of Versailles. In the same year, Japan joined Germany in walking out of the League of Nations. Shortly afterward, Italy delivered another severe blow to the system by invading Ethiopia in 1934 and walking out to join the ranks of Germany and Japan. In the meantime, talks on disarmament collapsed and the international scene was set for weapon buildups that amassed war clouds.

A number of other similar incidents preceded the outbreak of World War II, including the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, followed by the forced welcoming of Nazi forces in Vienna in 1938, then Germany's annexation of Czechoslovakia in the same year. Ultimately, World War II erupted with the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939. In the course of the war, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands,

France, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece all fell under the control of the Axis powers. But, in a move that changed the course of events, the USA joined the war after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. By April 1945, Benito Mussolini was assassinated and Adolf Hitler had committed suicide, and both Germany and Italy surrendered. Only Japan did not surrender until the USA's nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

World War II is thought to be the most devastating and fatal in the history of mankind. It is estimated that around 60 million human-beings were killed in that war. It also marked the first and last time nuclear weapons were used offensively, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This unfortunate incidence has been a subject of debate ever since, especially with respect to its ethical justification and whether it was practically necessary to defeat Japan (Kennedy, 2006). The war also had some far-reaching implications on the distribution of power in the world, as European traditional powers were violently displaced, and shortly afterwards Europe became divided by the so-called iron curtain between the West led by the USA and the East led by the USSR. Thus, the USA and the USSR emerged as the two most powerful states. Due to its geographical exclusiveness and relatively larger power base, Great Britain continued to play a leading role in power politics for several years, before ultimately succumbing to the USA as the sole Western pole.

Obviously, the League of Nations failed to act to prevent or to stop the war, except on one last symbolic move against the Soviet invasion of Finland in winter 1939. Subsequently, it collapsed completely and was formally wound up in 1946, with an intrinsic belief that it was part of the problem. Until the end of the war, world leaders had no time to reflect on the failed organization, as all efforts were focused on the war machinery. Nonetheless, thinkers, internationalists and politicians in different countries started contemplating the postwar world order as early as shortly after the outbreak of the war. Notably, USA president Franklin Roosevelt delivered a historical speech in 1941, in which he proposed four freedoms that he thought everyone should be able to enjoy: freedoms of speech and expression, religion, from want and from fear. This historical concept found its way through to the Charter of the UN in 1945 and continues to resonate today (Kissinger, 1994).

The concept of united nations appeared officially for the first time in the 1942 Declaration of the UN, signed by the 46 states that formed the Allied camp, which declaration also stated the aims of the Allied powers in World War II. From August to October 1944, representatives from the USA, USSR, UK and China, meeting at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, formulated the first official proposal for a new world organization, the “General International Organization,” to replace the League of Nations. In February 1945, the leaders of the USA, USSR and UK met in Yalta, Crimea, where they finalized plans for defeating and occupying Germany and coordinated their respective positions on voting in the then future Security Council and on membership in the then future General Assembly, especially with regard to the 16 constituent republics of the USSR. The essence of the deal was for the great powers (USA, USSR, UK and China) to enjoy permanent membership and a great-power unanimity rule, the veto power, while the USSR withdrew its demand of membership for all its constituent republics, except Ukraine and Belarus (Kennedy, 2006).

From 25 April to 26 June 1945, representatives from the 46 states that had signed the 1942 Declaration of the UN met in San Francisco to draft the Charter of the UN. Discussions were open-ended, but naturally the foreign ministers of the big four powers (USA, USSR, UK and China) played a dominant role. Most heatedly was the issue of the extent of powers that the permanent members in the Security Council were to be granted. Small states tried to restrict the exercise of veto power and expand the role of the General Assembly at the expense of the Security Council. However, the will of power prevailed, as the big four managed to enforce their essential demands at the end. In addition, at pressure mainly from Great Britain, France was granted a fifth permanent seat in the Security Council. On 26 June 1945, the San Francisco conference concluded with signing the UN Charter by 51 states, including five additional states that were invited to participate in its proceedings.

Expectedly, the negotiations in San Francisco were highly influenced by the yet ongoing mass devastation of World War II. In particular, the approach of big powers in the negotiations reflected a common understanding that the League of Nations was too liberal and too democratic and that these were major reasons behind its failures (Kennedy, 2006). Consequently, as it appeared from the Yalta conference, the big

powers were intent on making the Security Council a powerful club and on carving a privileged status for themselves in this club. Hence, they insisted that the new organization should be designed in line with the criteria of power distribution and the need for effectiveness. Most importantly, they were keen to build a new international security system that provides reliable guarantees for the immediate future. In turn, it was a high imperative for all participating states to have all the great victor powers, including the USA and the USSR, join the new organization at any price, otherwise the new security system would again lack the needed power backing as was the case with the League of Nations.

No doubt, the founders of the UN used the League of Nations as a starting point. They chose to maintain the basic structure of the League of Nations, with an assembly and a council. In addition, they transplanted the notion of collective security from the League of Nations. However, on the other hand, they changed the decision-making mechanism significantly, abolishing the general rule of unanimity of the League of Nations and replacing it with a carefully designed great-power unanimity rule. Over and above, the UN Charter marked an augmentation in the authorities of the council at the expense of the assembly, which applies for example to the power of imposing economic sanctions (Grigorescu, 2005). Hence, the Security Council has come out as the highest-profile and most powerful formal intergovernmental structure in the history of mankind. In short, one could say that at the time the League of Nations relied more on egalitarian notions, the UN, though it maintained the notion of sovereign equality of states, is based more on the notion of power. Yet, it is widely argued that it is mainly due to these differences that the UN survived until today, while the League of Nations was doomed to failure.

In fact, the UN Charter provided for a new international security system that made a clear distinction between big, powerful states and small, weak states, with big states granted exclusive prerogatives in exchange for special responsibilities toward small states. Although all the great powers at the time were somehow convinced of the need for a new security system that can save humanity from recurrent aggressions, they wanted to keep exclusive margins of freedom in case their interests come in conflict with Charter's commitments. Thus, it was implicitly understood, if a permanent state



decides to challenge the system, there would be little to do to constrict its behavior. In such a case, the only way to act would be for the remaining permanent states to come together against the violator, which scenario might lead to an exacerbation of instability or even devastating wars if the violating state does not give in.

Overall, one could say that the UN Charter has three main pillars (Kennedy, 2006). One is the new international security system based on peaceful settlement of disputes, using collective efforts in the fields of diplomacy, arbitration and if necessary military force to deter aggressions and/or defeat the aggressor. The second pillar derives from the understanding that economic development is needed to enhance stability and security. Accordingly, the UN, together with the Bretton Woods institutions, has important roles in backstopping development and fostering the world economy. Thirdly, the Charter provides for promoting the dialogue of cultures and civilizations and the amity among different peoples. This third pillar is based on the premise that humanity has a common destiny, that war begins in the minds of human-beings and that, if they wish, different strands of mankind can coexist in peace and have constructive and mutually beneficial exchanges.

## II. UN Mission, Structure and Functions

It is a risky exercise to attempt to summarize any of the articles in the UN Charter, but, for convenience, one could provide brief references and reflections on some articles, especially those related to the purposes and principles, the structure, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the ECOSOC. The first chapter of the Charter elaborates on the purposes and principles of the organization in a lucid manner. The list of purposes starts with the maintenance of international peace and security through measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace, the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace and the settlement of disputes that might lead to breach of peace through peaceful means, in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. Here, the language reflects the center stage of peace and security in the world body and a strong resolve to ensure against all kinds of threats to international peace. The list also includes developing friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, achieving international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural and



humanitarian problems and promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

The first chapter also states seven guiding principles for the organization and its members in the pursuit of the aforementioned purposes. The leading principle is the sovereign equality of all member states, a principle that was tempered by the great-power unanimity rule from the outset and that has increasingly come under challenge due to the weakness of some states and the infringement of globalization on national sovereignty. The six other key principles include a commitment by all states to fulfill their obligations under the Charter in good faith, to settle their disputes peacefully, to refrain from the threat or use of force in international relations in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the organization, to give the organization every assistance in any action it takes and refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the organization is taking preventive or enforcement action. Finally, in an attempt to strike a balance between the organization and its building blocs, the last principle provides that, with the exception of the enforcement measures under Chapter VII, nothing in the Charter shall authorize the organization to intervene in the internal affairs of its member states. Noticeably, new concepts, such as the responsibility to protect, a concept already endorsed by General Assembly, and human security, have risen against the principle of noninterference in internal affairs.

The third chapter of the Charter identifies six principal organs of the organization: The General Assembly, the Security Council, the ECOSOC, the Secretariat, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Trusteeship Council. The last organ was meant to oversee the governance of colonies, but has already become obsolete after decolonizing all areas under its consideration. Particularly, the General Assembly and the Security Council occupy central positions and play pivotal roles in the machinery of the UN. The membership of the Security Council started out with the current five permanent seats as well as six non-permanent seats occupied by the general membership on the basis of geographical rotation as well as contribution to international peace and other UN purposes. In 1965, and with the increase in the UN general membership due to decolonization, the Charter was amended to increase the non-permanent membership to 10 seats. As for its mandate, the Charter invests in the

Council prime responsibility on the maintenance of international peace and security. Over and above, the Council has been playing an increasingly bigger role in international relations since the end of the Cold War. Notably, there has been a gradual augmentation in the mandate of the Council, as it has been adopting resolutions widening the scope of its functions and addressing, in more detail, issues such as human rights, humanitarian law, gender, energy and climate change.

Usually, the Security Council is in the center of focus in the UN. One could attribute this focal status to three main reasons (Luck, 2003). The first is that the Council, by the very nature of its functions, is the UN organ addressing the most sensitive security and political issues in international relations. In this respect, positions taken by the Council, or lack thereof, could make or break peace and stability in any part of the world. Secondly, the Council is truly the central powerhouse of the UN, especially in view of its limited two-tier and highly selective membership and its mandate to issue resolutions that are binding on all member states. Moreover, the resolutions of the Council under Chapter VII, on threats and breaches of peace and acts of aggression, could include sanctions and legitimize the use of force. Thirdly, the voting procedures of the Council include the infamous permanent-five unanimity rule on substantial issues. This rule has been a source of contention and objection since the preparatory proceedings of the San Francisco conference. Ironically, the rationale behind this provision in Article (27) on voting in the Security Council was meant to ensure that no great power could go it alone, but it has been misused and transformed in practice into a prerogative of any individual permanent member to block the system, which is corroborating the shortcut name of this rule, the “veto power.” Until 2008, the veto power was used in 263 cases, all of them raised by individual permanent states, which further confirms its image as an obstacle to maintaining international peace and security. Perhaps more vexatious, the veto power poses a quasi-insurmountable obstacle to reforming the UN, as the Charter states that any amendment to it has to be agreed by the permanent five. Fortunately, however, the tendency to use this power has been on decline since the 1995 (please refer to Table 2 below).

Table (2)

The Number of Times the Veto Power Was Used

<b>Period</b>	<b>China</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>USSR/Russia</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total	7	18	32	82	124	263
2008	1	-	-	-	1	2
2007	1	-	-	-	-	2
2006	-	-	-	2	-	2
2001-2005	-	-	-	8	1	9
1996-2000	2	-	-	2	-	4
1986-95	-	3	8	24	2	37
1976-85	-	9	11	34	6	60
1966-75	2	2	10	12	7	33
1956-65	-	2	3	-	26	31
1946-55	1*	2	-	-	80	83

\* This veto was made by the Republic of China (Taiwan).

Source: *Global Policy Forum*, [www.globalpolicy.org](http://www.globalpolicy.org)

On the other side, the General Assembly was meant to be a forum for the general membership. It could be assimilated to a world parliament with membership from governments (Kennedy, 2006). The Charter authorizes the Assembly to discuss any matter within its scope and to make recommendations that are included in documents called resolutions. These resolutions lack binding force, because they lack enforcement mechanisms similar to those available for the Security Council. Nonetheless, Assembly's resolutions set normative grounds for international relations and enjoy a significant moral authority. The Charter also requires all UN organs to present annual activity reports to the Assembly and authorizes the latter to consider and adopt the annual budget of the organization and to make recommendations for promoting international cooperation in political, legal, economic, social and cultural fields. In particular, the Assembly has a special mandate in economic and social matters. Still, it does not enjoy any kind of monopoly on these issues, as it addresses them in cooperation with the ECOSOC. Furthermore, the Bretton Woods institutions, and the WTO more recently, have been intentionally distanced from the UN from the outset.

And, especially since the end of the Cold War, the role of the UN system in economic matters has become all the more marginalized.

Although the General Assembly may call the attention of the Security Council to situations that are likely to threaten international peace and security, the Assembly cannot make any recommendations concerning matters on the agenda of the Council. Thus, under normal circumstances, the Assembly can discuss but not decide on issues of peace and security. There is only one exception to this general rule, by virtue of the General Assembly's resolution 377 of 1950, the "uniting for peace" resolution. This resolution authorizes the General Assembly in cases where the Security Council fails to exercise its primary responsibility on maintaining international peace and security, usually because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, to consider the matter and make appropriate recommendations to member states, including the use of force when necessary. The first and most famous case where the uniting for peace procedure was used was during the Korean War. This far, the Assembly held 10 emergency special sessions under this procedure, most of which dedicated to the Arab Israeli conflict.

The ECOSOC is another important UN organ, made up of 54 states elected by the General Assembly on geographical rotation basis. The ECOSOC's main focus is on coordination and policy dialogue with respect to economic, social and cultural issues. It reports to and takes instructions from the General Assembly on its activities. Notwithstanding the differences in mandates, the ECOSOC was created along lines similar to those of the Security Council. However, unlike the Security Council, the ECOSOC largely lies outside the circle of contentious power politics. This is mainly due to the "softness" and "lightness" of its mandate, while the crux of international economic and developmental management is entrusted to the Bretton Woods institutions. Notably, the ECOSOC is unique in its consultative mechanism with NGOs. It is the only UN principal organ that has such a mechanism and remains the main access point for NGOs' contributions to the work of the UN. The ECOSOC's mandate also refers to making recommendations to the General Assembly on promoting the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, after establishing the UNHRC in 2006, to succeed the Human Rights Commission, the main focus of these

issues has moved to the new Council. And, ever since, the UNHRC has come to enjoy more clout and prestige in this area.

Other important organs of the UN include the ICJ, the UN Secretariat and the newly established UN Peacebuilding Commission. The statute of the ICJ is attached to the UN Charter as an integral part of it. The Court is based in the Hague, the Netherlands, and it most importantly offers a judicial resort for UN member states that agree to take their disputes to it, thus serving an important role in maintaining international peace. The UN Secretariat is the administrative organ in charge of overseeing the daily functioning of the organization. The Charter states that the Secretary General, the highest-ranking international servant, is to be appointed by the General Assembly upon recommendation from the Security Council, which largely puts this important position in the hands of the five permanent members. Most outstanding among the functions of the Secretary General is the authority to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter that could threaten international peace and stability. Finally, the Peacebuilding Commission is a new subsidiary organ that was established in 2005, as one of the outcomes of the 2005 UN Millennium Review Summit, to serve as an advisory body on post-conflict peace consolidation, recovery, reconstruction and development. Most importantly, the Commission is intended to prevent countries rolling out of conflict from relapsing into chaos.

Over the years, the UN has developed a wide and complex network of specialized agencies, programs and funds that are sometimes referred to as the UN system or family. This network includes such components as the IAEA, the FAO, the WHO and the UNESCO. It also includes programs and funds such as the UN Development Program, the UNEP and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). A quick look at this network reflects the extensive scope and range of activities in which the UN is involved as well as the overwhelming bureaucratic structure of the world organization. It is common knowledge that the UN system suffers from overlapping missions, heavy reliance on donors and competition for limited resources (Weiss, 2008). Nonetheless, this prolific network serves a clear indication to the centrality of the development task in the UN, as most of its agencies, programs and funds are mainly development-initiated and oriented. No doubt, the UN system has played a vital role in

helping newly independent countries establish more practical independence. And it has always been a critical element in building the capacities of developing countries in political, economic, administrative and other areas.

### III. Is the UN Indispensable and Why

The UN came to existence at a time humanity at large were determined to put strict controls on the use of force in international relations. Today, there is hardly any doubt that the UN has carried out a unique role in advancing international peace and cooperation throughout its life. Thus, on one side, there is strong support to the idea that the UN is indispensable (Tharoor, 2003). On the other side, there are arguments to the contrary, the most extreme of which is that the UN should be killed and replaced by another organization more responsive to the needs of some states (Piccone, 2008). Notably, one could trace such anti-UN voices in both academia and politics. They were at an all-time height in the period preceding the USA's war on Iraq, on the ground of lack of effectiveness and reform (UN reform and effectiveness will be dealt with in further detail later on). Later on, similar voices resurged during the USA's presidential election campaign in 2008, where Senator John McCain, backed by neoconservatives and a number of thinkers, such as Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer and Ted Lindberg, campaigned with a foreign policy program aiming at establishing a new international organization to be called the league or concert of democracies, which organization would only include democratic states and would act when the UN fails, especially in humanitarian crises. The main driving force behind this thinking is to give the USA a free hand to use military force when it deems necessary, which could somehow blow the collective security concept on which the UN is based and could ultimately lead to killing the UN itself (Piccone, 2008).

There are also other less radical voices calling for another world organization to work side by side with the UN or putting the UN under pressure of competition from other international organizations, in what they call "competitive multilateralism" (Wedgwood, 2005). Other voices call for the UN to be used as a tool on a case by case basis when deemed feasible (Wright, 2009). The rationale of such calls is that there are many international and regional organizations that could substitute for the UN. Actually, these organizations are already playing an increasing role in partnership with

the UN in all kinds of activities, especially conflict resolution, peacekeeping and human rights. They also contend that using parallel paths to international cooperation could help the UN itself. The list of candidate organizations includes the NATO, the CoD, humanitarian organizations, regional organizations and informal coalitions such as the G-8 and other ad-hoc informal forums.

Richard Haas, the President of the Council on Foreign Affairs in the USA, thinks that as the unipolar world order is reaching its end, the world is increasingly becoming nonpolar and that “multilateralism *à la carte*” is most likely to be the order of the future (Haas, 2008). This basically indicates that multilateral cooperation could become less formal, more selective, more ad-hoc and based on a case by case basis. According to this theory, there could also be some kind of core group of nation-states and non-state actors that could somehow call the shots in international affairs. This vision is also shared by some others who think that the most effective approach to regulate international relations is through a concert of great powers (Rosecrance, 2008). Along similar lines, Francis Fukuyama proposed the idea of “multi-multilateralism” (Fukuyama, 2007). He argues that the world is too diverse and complex to be dealt with by a single world organization. Rather, it needs comparably diverse organizations to provide global governance in security, environment, development and other areas.

In contrast, there is the viewpoint that the UN is indeed indispensable, which viewpoint is shared by a great majority of politicians and academics in both the South and the North. One important starting point to consider the indispensability of the UN is the recognition that it is relatively manageable to agree on the necessity of change, but very demanding to reach a mutually acceptable consensus on the parameters of needed change. Clearly, there are several factors why the UN could be seen as indispensable. Firstly, as interdependence among countries intensifies due to the forces of globalization and as the list of international problems and challenges increases, the benefits of the UN become all the more important. In other words, there are many problems currently being tackled by the UN and that can hardly be addressed by any other organization, because they require continuous attention. Even if some actors would think that they are less vulnerable to the problems of globalization than others, there is no doubt that it is in the best interest of the whole international community to coexist in a world where such



problems are being dealt with in a holistic and consistent manner by such a unique organization as the UN.

Secondly, as the only world organization of its kind, the UN represents formal international legitimacy in its most salient form. Resolutions and decisions issued by UN organs and affiliates enjoy the power of this legitimacy, whether or not they are practically enforceable. For all its perceived imperfections, the UN sets norms and contributes to setting laws that respond to our need for an ordered world (Weiss, 2008). In effect, the UN demonstrates a collective will made up of the individual wills of its members and expressed in UN formal communications and its day-to-day activities. Accordingly, agreements reached in the UN entail collective responsibilities on implementation as well as legal and/or moral implications for lack of commitment to them. Nonetheless, at times, some member states manipulate the legitimacy coverage of the UN to achieve their own interests, while at others they treat the world body with contempt. This is particularly true for leading member states, although they are the ones that benefit most from the UN. In fact, institutions such as the UN enable great powers more than they constrain them (Brooks, 2009). Take for example the case of the five permanent states in the Security Council, they are privileged by the UN Charter, and if they decide to move against wills expressed in the UN, they can do so without fearing the repercussions. Even more, some of the most severe blows to the UN come from these privileged states.

Thirdly, the UN is the only overarching international organization with global membership. Its 193 members bestow upon it a unique degree of inclusiveness. Besides states, the UN system is home for a sophisticated and at times overlapping network of specialized agencies, programs and funds. It also gives space for participation and partnership in all kinds of fields, with regional organizations, NGOs, humanitarian organizations, the international business sector and other stakeholders. In particular, the UN Charter contains a separate chapter on cooperation with regional organizations. This kind of cooperation is most apparent in areas of peace and security, where the Charter authorizes regional organizations to undertake efforts to achieve pacific settlement of regional disputes, either voluntarily or after reference from the Security Council, while keeping the Council fully informed of these efforts. In fact, the UN is a network of



networks that include other international, regional and national organizations and stakeholders. In its own right, this inclusiveness enhances the legitimacy of the UN (Tharoor, 2003). Inclusiveness also further bolsters the effectiveness of the UN through offering the largest possible pool of joint resources in political, economic, cultural and other fields. Undoubtedly, this helps member states achieve commonly agreed objectives more easily, which is particularly true with respect to world public goods, such as world peace and the global environment, for which responsibilities and benefits are sophisticatedly intertwined.

Fourthly, usually institutions, such as the UN, develop some kind of institutional resilience, i.e. once an institution is in place, it tends to develop deep roots that cannot be removed easily (Brooks, 2009). Although this kind of resilience could turn into resistance to needed reforms, it gives institutions lively stamina and immunity against threats to their survival. There are several sources of institutional resilience, including the development of rapport and habits for working together by member states. There is also an accumulative side to the UN work, as past programs, experiences and achievements usually make it easier to realize further progress on related subjects. For instance, the experience of the UN in peacekeeping makes it the international organization best poised to undertake further peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, the UN is a huge reservoir of information that is appropriately shared with its member states and partners. This reservoir combines different strands of information from different sources, which offers complementarities that go beyond any individual state. It also saves huge resources through making it possible to avoid duplication of work thanks to the sharing mechanisms.

Fifthly, international organizations, such as the UN, provide stable platforms for burden-sharing (Brooks, 2009). There could very well be some disagreements on how to share these burdens, but not on whether cooperation should take place at all. Thus, having an international organization such as the UN in place offers some immediate gains. In contrast, if a given state wants to launch international cooperation on some specific subject on an informal basis, the issue of participation of other partners comes up as the first most important challenge, besides the details of the type, level and time of participation. In addition, as a standing global association of states, the UN offers stable

platforms for policy coordination and coherence needed to achieve win-win results with respect to almost all kinds of issues. Certainly, the challenges that the world is facing today are too complicated and demanding for any individual state to face them on its own or using spontaneous ad-hoc platforms.

Sixthly, it is hard to imagine that least-developed and developing countries could let go of the UN (Weiss, 2008). Soon after their independence, these countries became UN members on equal footing with other member states. Practically, new member states lacked many of the basic requirements needed to exercise true independence and sovereignty. In response, the UN has played a vital developmental role in support of Third-World countries since the early decolonization years. Today, especially the UNDP is playing an important UN-wide coordinating role in this domain at the domestic level, which helps achieve needed complementarities and avoid duplication of resources with other UN-System members. In fact, the UN has been doing a vital job at the domestic level in least-developed and developing countries, especially in areas such as institutional building, development and economic reform. In some extreme cases, the UN existence at the domestic level seems even vital for the survival of state authority and stability.

Seventhly, a flash back on the state of world affairs before World War I reveals a clear history lesson: the world is in need of an association that sets rules of order in international relations. The UN was established at a time the world had been torn by war and strife, after two consecutive devastating World Wars. Before the UN, the world was infested with horror caused by, among others, recurrent violent conflicts, fascism, racism, genocide and nuclear destruction. With the UN, the world has become a much better place, thanks to the rules of the UN Charter regulating international behavior and setting the floor for international cooperation for the common good. In particular, the UN marked a qualitative advancement from the League of Nations on further strengthening the notion of collective international security thanks to managing a delicate balance that all states subscribed to. Thus, the UN came to existence as the best possible international organizational structure to save humanity from hell (Tharoor, 2008). It is true that the UN has been facing challenges and receiving the brunt of

criticism for international problems, but it remains the only means within hands to face up to future uncertainties and seek a peaceful, just and prosperous tomorrow.

Eighthly, the UN serves as a repository of world conscience, thanks to including every country on earth and integrating partners from everywhere (Tharoor, 2003). It is, as Paul Kennedy likes to call it, a world parliament of state governments. Every newly independent country seeks the membership of the UN, as the most fundamental confirmation of independence and the formal gate to join the comity of nations. Though often slammed as ineffective, the UN General Assembly is a unique place for airing national viewpoints and discussing all kinds of world problems. It is also the prime stage entrusted with setting normative rules of global conduct in international relations. The human rights machinery of the UN, with the newly established UNHRC at its core, has developed a sophisticated set of institutional and legal tools to protect human rights everywhere. With notions such as the responsibility to protect and human security, the UN has further consolidated its human face. Thus, although the UN is basically an intergovernmental organization, its value goes beyond governments and touches on the lives of people everywhere. Historically, civil society played a symbolic consultative role at the UN founding conference in San Francisco (Jenkins, 2003). And, currently, NGOs from all over the world participate actively in the meetings and activities of the UN, thus bringing to the world body voices of people from everywhere. These and other voices make the UN the only repository of world conscience.

The sum of these and other would-be factors make the UN such a unique and indispensable organization. It is these factors that stand behind the success stories of the world body since its birth. And it is these factors that motivate wise people from around the world to defend the continuity of the UN. One saw several bouts of aggressive attacks on the organization, but these attacks never prevailed, because they were mostly motivated by short-sighted individualistic interests that overlook the long-term interests of the collective whole. As Dag Hammarskjöld once said, the UN was not created to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell (Tharoor, 2003). No doubt, the UN has succeeded in this as well as many other noble missions for the good of all humanity. However, to serve the whole community of states does not always meet the expectations of some individual states. And this is why an intrinsic part of the UN mission is to

restrict the freedom of movement of individual states for the betterment of the collective whole, as mandated by the UN Charter itself. Besides, the value of the UN is, in fact, much more than its material value as a world organization. It is also, and perhaps even more importantly, its moral value as a repository of world conscience and symbol of mankind's hopes for a better future.

A field study undertaken as part of this research largely supports this conclusion (please refer to the Appendix). This field study revolved around a questionnaire to a sample of 50 respondents in the fields of diplomacy, academia and international organizations, coming from 32 different countries. In response to a question about how the participants see the future role of the UN in world order, six of them or 12% expected it to play a very significant role and 25 participants or 50% expected it to only play a significant role. In contrast, 10 participants or 20% were neutral, while nine participants or 18% expected it to be insignificant and no one expected it to be very insignificant. In other words, 62% of the sample participants were of the view that the UN could play an important role in global governance in the future. In contrast, only 18% suggested that its role could be dispensable. Clearly, these results reflect strong faith in the UN, in spite of its past failures and daunting future challenges. They also indicate expectations, or probably hopes, that the UN could boost its effectiveness and have a more tangible impact on international cooperation. Knowing the nationalities of the participants, the results also attest to the indispensability of the UN for many small and medium-size powers hoping for more equitable participation in global governance.

#### IV. What and Whose Problems: Lack of Effectiveness or Lack of Means to Effectiveness

In the final analysis, the UN is an intergovernmental organization. It has no will of its own. Instead, its will is the sum of wills of its individual member states. However, UN's critics seem to often overlook, on purpose or by mistake, this fundamental characteristic of the world organization. The general public also tends to fall in this same trap. In contrast, one should differentiate between the roles of the UN as a stage and as an actor (Tharoor, 2003). On one hand, the UN is a stage on which member states are the main actors driving the organization. From this perspective, member states discuss, agree or disagree and ultimately bear the responsibility for the orientation the

organization takes. On the other hand, the UN is also an actor, through its Secretary General, staff and agencies. The job of the UN as an actor is to execute the policies agreed on its stage. Thus, mistakes of action or lack thereof are those of the UN membership, while mistakes of implementation and follow-up could fall on the shoulders of the Secretariat. Unfortunately, member states themselves sometimes contribute to this confusion by blaming the UN for their own mistakes and using it as a scapegoat for their own failures.

It should be clear that when the UN lacks effectiveness, it is mostly because it lacks the means needed for effectiveness (Jaguaribe, 2002). From among these means, the first and most important is the political will of the membership. Throughout its life, the UN has been struggling to strike a balance between sovereignty and power, between state prerogatives and international cooperation. This is also a struggle between unilateralism and multilateralism, and it is intrinsic, persistent and unavoidable (Kennedy, 2006). In fact, one salient paradox of the UN is that since it was created, it can function effectively only when it has the support of its member states, especially the great ones. However, to varying degrees, member states tend to violate the rules of the Charter, if they see contradiction between their own interests and the interests of the whole membership. Most unfortunately, the organization gets paralyzed when a great power, such as a permanent state in the Security Council, uses the veto power to block draft decisions that otherwise enjoy majority support. Though this often comes at a price, it is usually affordable from the perspective of the violator. For instance, this was the case of the USSR with regard to the Korean War in 1950 and the USA with respect to the war on Iraq in 2003. In contrast, when a smaller member state violates the rules, it is more vulnerable to pay a higher price. The damage done could be huge in either case, but great violators usually cause as great damages.

Secondly, the UN is sometimes accused of lack of equity. Although the UN Charter established the principle of "sovereign equality of all its members," the UN is, in fact, made up of countries that are very unequal in size, wealth and power. This is not likely to change soon. In response, the UN attempts its best to bridge these gaps and its life has been a constant struggle to strike a balance between the considerations of realism and the need to address these gaps or at least compensate for them by making

the voice of the small, poor and weak more audible (Annan, 2002). Nonetheless, it is becoming increasingly common to dismiss the notion of sovereign equality, and instead advance the notion of relative power, be it military, economic or political, thus making some states more equal than others and putting the basic principle of sovereign equality in doubt (Boutros-Ghali, 2005). Particularly, the end of the Cold War was a turning point in this regard, as the West-East rivalry subsided and was replaced by a North-South divide, where the South feels increasingly marginalized. In a way, the end of the Cold War brought about an international system where there is the USA and there is the rest (Thakur, 2005).

Especially, Southern countries and NGOs from throughout the world tend to use the injustice rhetoric more often to object to what they argue to be lack of equity in the system and bias in positions of other member states, especially those with veto power. In fact, the ongoing debate about the Security Council revolves around charges of injustice and inequity (Luck, 2003). However ruthless this might seem, politics in general, and international politics in particular, are dictated by practical interests, not considerations of justice. Hence, as the practice goes, there is no space for justice if it comes at the expense of concrete national interests. Still, to have problems of inequity in the system or bias or inconsistency in state actions does not help the UN respect its principles or achieve its objectives. In fact, these problems tarnish the legitimacy of the organization, which in turn further reduces its effectiveness. And, although questions of justice are always relative, the sense of injustice on the side of affected countries and their peoples produces negative implications on the credibility of the world body and on international cooperation at large.

For instance, newly emerging powerhouses describe the current structure of the Security Council as inequitable and demand that the permanent membership cluster be enlarged to include them. In response, permanent members express agreement to enlarging the non-permanent membership cluster as well as adding a few new permanent members without veto power. Lacking a compromise, the membership structure of the Security Council continues in odds with real power distribution in the world. For another example, the Security Council has issued many resolutions to force North Korea to give up its nuclear weaponry program and took similar positions against

a suspected similar Iranian program, while ignoring the case of the Israeli nuclear arsenal. Usually, the justification made for this kind of exceptions revolves around differences in geostrategic environments or special circumstances. Admittedly, such differences should be taken in consideration, but they should not compromise the ultimate objective of global nuclear disarmament and should not showcase greater member states as road blocs in the face of international order based on law.

Thirdly, and strongly related to the issue of equity, is the issue of democracy in UN governance. Perhaps the main difference here is that this is more about calls for an outright abrogation of the veto power. Besides, it is also about the criticism that the UN lacks legitimacy, effectiveness and accountability (Keohane, 2006). Hence, the UN needs to be reformed according to the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with more focus on democratic principles than on the legacy of sovereignty. No doubt, it seems convoluted that an organization that lacks democracy intervenes in the internal affairs of its member states on democratic grounds, against this organization's own rules on noninterference. As a result, there are demands for more democracy in the multilateral system, and this is a challenge that the UN has been attempting to address (Annan, 2002). In a similar vein, the world body needs adaptation to the underlying power realities and imperatives of globalization (Boutros-Ghali, 2005). Some of the most outspoken in this regard are the NAM and the AU, as both call for a gradual erosion of the veto power. However, this kind of calls comes in contradiction with the power-balance philosophy around which the UN was configured. In addition, some of those standing behind these calls lack credibility, as they themselves are not truly representative of their own peoples.

More radical democratization calls include calls for establishing a democratically-elected global parliament to ensure that all peoples are represented in the international arena directly, for disbanding the Security Council and for moving the authorities of the Council to a democratically-reformed General Assembly (Monbiot, 2004). This kind of calls comes from such groups as anti-globalization activists, communists and anarchists, and it seems to completely lack touch with real politics. Other more realistic calls for democratization come from a big majority of member states and resonate in the UN ongoing reform agenda. These calls include the need to enlarge the Security Council, revitalize the General Assembly and reform the working



methods of UN organs, especially the Security Council, to allow for more transparency and participation. Fortunately, there has been some progress with respect to working methods lately, including in the Security Council.

Fourthly, there is the problem of lack of enforcement in UN organs, including its powerhouse, the Security Council. Although Article (25) of the Charter is very clear on the responsibility of all member states on implementing the resolutions of the Security Council, as it states that “the members of the UN agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter,” implementation is, in practice, usually subject to practical considerations that could curtail it. This is because the Charter gives the Security Council huge formal powers, but does not give it enough control over the tools required to translate these powers to reality (Hurd, 2002). In practice, the power of the Council is contingent on cooperation of member states in terms of contribution in peacekeeping forces, enforcement of sanction regimes, contribution in military and financial resources...etc (Monteiro, 2002). In other words, implementation of Council's resolutions depends to a large extent on individual member states' perceptions of the legitimacy and usefulness of these resolutions. The stronger these perceptions are, the more the resolutions are implementable.

Notably, Brahimi report on UN activities in peace and security indicates that the organization is ill-equipped to wage war. And when enforcement action is needed according to Chapter VII of the Charter, the mission is usually subcontracted to coalitions of states willing to take action under UN authorization. Instead, the UN is better at alternatives other than using force, including long, slow processes of mediation, negotiation, litigation, peacekeeping and reconciliation (UN, 2000). In addition, because the Charter gives the five permanent states a privileged status together with higher responsibilities, the conduct of these states could either enhance or reduce the symbolic power of the Council. Particularly, when permanent states resist the temptation to do as they desire and show commitment to go through the UN legitimacy, they strike good examples for the rest of the membership and motivate them to contribute more to the purposes of the UN and vice versa. Unfortunately, rogue practices do take place in real life from both great and small member states.



The General Assembly, the ECOSOC and other UN organs are in a much worse situation with regard to implementation and enforcement. Although the General Assembly is the only global forum in which all states have equal voices, with the exception of the UN budget, resolutions of the Assembly only carry a recommendatory weight that does not guarantee implementation and lack any power of enforcement. In addition, there has been a huge build-up of Assembly's mandates, some of which are overlapping, while some others are outdated. In response, the Assembly has launched a mandate-review process aiming at rationalizing its activities. The ECOSOC, UNHRC and other organs are not in any better position. In general, decisions of UN organs act more as recommended guidelines than binding statements. And they are usually subject to the political consideration of individual member states, with the end result that these decisions are only implemented to the extent that member states wish.

Fifthly, a criticism usually directed at the UN is inefficiency, be it political or bureaucratic. Usually, the General Assembly faces charges of political inefficiency, because of its unwieldy inclusiveness and rules of procedures. In fact, the main reason why some states, especially greater ones, think that it is better to do business outside the UN is because they think that a universal forum such as the General Assembly wastes time, suffers from conflicting interests and distracts the attention from core issues to other less important ones (Wright, 2009). In addition, taking global problems to a forum such as the General Assembly gives space for countries that hardly contribute to their solutions, while diluting the pressure on the major players who have the capabilities to make a difference. In fact, the rationale of some theories about the future of multilateralism, such as “multilateralism *à la carte*” and “multi-multilateralism,” is based on this very argument of inefficiency. For instance, some writers contend that having mini multilateral institutions to address international security issues related to Afghanistan, Iran or North Korea could be better than resorting to the UN (Brooks, 2009). And it is not only in theory that one notices this kind of thinking, rather it is already taking shape in practice with respect to various international issues, including peace and security in specific countries, nuclear nonproliferation, global climate and the international economy. Arithmetically, this approach could be more effective in addressing pressing challenges in the short-run, but certainly it is less democratic and undermines the authority and effectiveness of the UN in the long-run.

Sixthly, the bureaucratic inefficiency of the huge UN administrative machinery is one of the main problems of the world body. The causes and syndromes of this problem are manifold and deep-rooted. This is not unique to the UN, as big organizations and old institutions in general suffer from this same problem to varying degrees. However, the bureaucratic problems of the UN seem intractable, given the unparalleled huge structure of the organization as well as the trend of erosion of its independence and competence over time (Thakur, 2003). In response, several Secretary Generals drafted reform plans, including Kofi Annan who proposed two packages of structural reforms in 1997 and 2002. Unfortunately, some of these reform proposals were undermined and some others never saw daylight. The Outcome Document of the 2005 UN Millennium Review Summit gave further impetus to efforts by the Secretary General in this area, paved the way for the creation of an Ethics Office upon a proposal from the USA and strengthened the capacity and independence of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Nonetheless, more remains to be done in order to address the many ailments of UN management.

In this regard, one critical problem is lack of authority and leadership, as the top UN official, the Secretary General, usually has his hands tied up by member states (Weiss, 2008). On the contrary, for the UN to work effectively and efficiently, the Secretary General should be allowed more flexibility in the management of the organization under the supervision of the General Assembly (UN, 2004). Running huge machinery such as the UN requires the authority to take quick decisions, the lack of which could incur irreparable harms. Thus, delegating more authority and investing more confidence in the Secretary General could make a difference. In addition, the General Assembly should play a bigger role in the appointment of the Secretary General to guarantee the independence and integrity of the appointee. Article (97) of the Charter authorizes the Security Council to nominate the Secretary General to the General Assembly for appointment. However, what happens in practice is more of a selection of the Secretary General by the Security Council, which the General Assembly cannot but accept (Weiss, 2008). Hence, the Secretary General is usually exposed to the political manipulation of the five permanent states from the very outset. In particular, whether a Secretary General could renew his/her term is usually dependent on the satisfaction of the permanent states with his/her performance.

Another problem is lack of coordination among the organs of the UN system, especially with regard to development activities. In fact, the post-World War II international order was designed on the basis of decentralization and organizations, such as the UN and organs of its system, were meant to serve as wide columns connected with thin rows, not as one integrated matrix (Ruggie, 2003). Thus, the UN chart is more of an organized confusion than a sound system, and it reflects an image of a feudal kingdom with feudal barons (Weiss, 2008). This is partly because different UN organs and affiliates have been established and are being governed by different national authorities in UN member states such as foreign affairs, justice, health, education and labor authorities. The main driving force behind this structure was a need to maximize the scope of technical expertise, while minimizing politicization. It was believed that such a structure would be more deeply rooted in domestic societies and would buy the UN stronger public support, which was a major concern for countries such as the USA at the time of UN birth.

In this regard, the end result is having a UN system that seems destined to suffer from fragmentation. The report of the High-Level Panel of the Secretary General on System-Wide Coherence states that the work of the UN system on development and the environment suffers from fragmentation, inefficient and ineffective governance, unpredictable funding, policy incoherence, duplication and operational ineffectiveness. In addition, the report adds, cooperation inside the system is hindered by competition for funding, mission creep and outdated business practices (UN, 2006a). Article (63) of the UN Charter authorizes the ECOSOC to enter in agreements with specialized agencies to bring them in relationship with the UN and to coordinate their activities, in consultation with the General Assembly. However, this article does not provide an effective recipe to the problem of lack of coherence, does not authorize merging or consolidating agencies and does not refer to the role of the Bretton Woods institutions or the more recent WTO, which organizations lie at the core of global economic governance today.

Of course, there are institutional structures that are meant to ensure effective coordination and policy coherence between the UN and its network of specialized agencies at national, regional and global levels. Most importantly, these structures

include the Chief Executives Board (CEB) that brings together the heads of the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO and all other UN programs, funds and specialized agencies. Nonetheless, given the rigid structural design of the UN and the complex nature of global issues, there remains a strong need for more coordination and policy coherence. Member states, especially donor countries, usually complain about these problems. In addition, developing countries stand to pay a price for duplication of procedures and lack of policy coherence. Nonetheless, proposals to the effect of more consolidation of activities are usually met with fierce opposition, mostly coming from developing and poor countries. Ironically, some major donor countries have also at times blocked moves for more consolidation of the system, because of having nationals, serving as barons of some would-be affected organs (Weiss, 2008).

Seventhly, lack of resources figures strongly as one of the main administrative problems of the UN. The world body does not only lack material resources, such as those needed for maintaining international peace and security, as has been mentioned earlier, it also lacks financial resources needed for internal management and for delivering on its various mandates. And the larger UN system lacks resources needed to deliver on its very demanding developmental tasks. Specialized agencies, programs and funds in general strive on donor funds and compete fiercely for them, which subjects them to donor preferences and conditionalities (Weiss, 2008). In response, the report of the High-Level Panel of the Secretary General on System-Wide Coherence suggests that for the UN system to be better equipped to achieve the MDGs, the organization needs sustained funding at the national level and secure central funding for the UN bodies that demonstrate commitment to reform (UN, 2006a).

The UN Secretariat lacks adequate financial resources needed to do its job. Even more, some countries are repeatedly in arrears to the world body, including some of the main contributors. To face up to this challenge, the Outcome Document of the 2005 UN Millennium Review Summit contains a pledge by member states to provide the organization with adequate funds on a timely basis, stresses that member states have to meet their obligations toward the expenses of the organization and urges the Secretary General to make the best and most efficient use of resources (UN, 2005). However, shortly afterward, member states were bitterly divided over management reforms

proposed by the Secretary General. Consequently, and in a historical move, major contributing states imposed spending caps in the 2006 biennial budget. Thus, for the first time in its life time, budgeting has even become an area of power politics inside the world body (Frohlich, 2007).

As for human resources and staff quality and ethics, the Charter attempts to guarantee the highest possible standards of international public service in the world body. The Secretary General is required to seek the best qualified personnel, while respecting the equitable distribution of staff quotas among member states. Member states are required to respect the impartiality of UN staff. Nonetheless, lacking needed resources, the Secretariat finds itself forced into staff shortages, including in some of the most important departments such as that of peacekeeping (UN, 2000). In addition, the moral quality of UN personnel has been repeatedly tarnished by such incidents as the Oil for Food Program scandal and the legal and ethical violations of some members of UN peacekeeping missions. In fact, audits and investigations over the last few years have revealed substantial mismanagement, fraud, corruption in administering peacekeeping missions and widespread sexual abuse by members of these missions (Schaefer, 2009). However, the Oil for Food case was particularly damaging, as the UN faced historical accusations of corruption, incompetence and lack of accountability. In this regard, the 2005 Volcker Commission report concluded that the Iraqi government siphoned around USA \$ 11 billion through smuggling and received illicit payments amounting to around USA \$ 1.8 billion in oil surcharges and inland transportation fees (Gordon, 2007).

In response to these problems, the Outcome Document of the 2005 UN Millennium Review Summit provided for creating an Ethics Office that was established shortly afterward. In addition, the Office of Internal Oversight Services has been enhanced and an independent Audit Advisory Committee has started its work in early 2008. Furthermore, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has taken additional measures to ensure the enforcement of its zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse. These are some of the constructive reform moves, but further measures remain to be taken by all concerned, including the Secretariat and member states, to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the Secretariat. In fact, the Secretary General, in his report on

investing in the UN, admits that although previous reforms have generated some significant improvements, they addressed the symptoms rather than the causes of UN administrative problems. He further indicated that the UN today is vastly different from its early stages and that its expanded range of activities necessitates an equally expanded overhaul of the Secretariat if the organization is to deliver on its ever increasing and demanding mandates (UN, 2006b).

#### V. Today's Main Challenges: The Questions of Legitimacy and Relevance

From all the challenges facing the UN, the question of legitimacy based on representation seems to be especially intractable, while the issue of relevance given new developments in the surrounding environment seems to be substantially existential. This is mostly because the UN, as it stands today, reflects the parameters of the world at the time it was established more than 65 years ago. Over the last few decades, the distribution of power in international politics has shifted eastward and southward, with newly emerging powers, such as China, India, Brazil and South Africa, playing an ever increasing role in global governance. Still, these newly emerging powers are more or less excluded from formal global governance structures, most particularly the UN Security Council. In addition, at the time forces of globalization have unprecedentedly increased the level of interdependence among all states, these forces have carried along global opportunities and challenges that are substantially different, more and bigger and that require global approaches yet hardly in place in the UN or elsewhere.

#### A. The Question of Legitimacy

For a multilateral institution to be considered legitimate, it has to satisfy three basic criteria: inclusiveness, effectiveness and accountability (Keohane, 2006). Critics of the UN often lambast it for lack of representative legitimacy, i.e. lack of equitable representation. Since the inception of the UN more than 65 years ago, world politics have undergone radical changes. In parallel, calls for changes in the membership of the Security Council and the ECOSOC have been resurfacing throughout. Lately, calls to enlarge the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent classes have become a salient feature of the debate on UN reform. At the time the UN was established, the Security Council was carefully configured to be the power hub of the organization and of multilateralism at large, with prime responsibility on maintaining

international peace and security. It was agreed that great powers at the time would assume disproportionate responsibilities, and so they should receive exclusive privileges, i.e. the right to veto power. Most influential great powers at the time included Great Britain, France and Germany, while emerging powers included the USA, USSR, China and Japan. Ultimately, an exclusive approach prevailed, as it was decided that powers on the losing side in World War II would not be granted the same privileges, thus Germany and Japan remained outside the core club.

As the number of newly independent countries multiplied due to decolonization between the 1940s and the 1960s, the South came to play a more dominant role in world politics. Being vulnerable former colonies, newly independent countries rushed for UN membership and followed through by establishing two main platforms for projecting their collective power in the world body, the NAM and the G-77 in the 1960s. Thus, in addition to the East-West rivalry of the Cold War, another dichotomy became increasingly dominant in the world arena, the so-called North-South divide. And, while the East-West rivalry subsided with the collapse of the former USSR, the North-South divide survived and further consolidated itself in spite of the interconnecting forces of globalization. Today, the North-South divide has become a vivid fact in the UN system, including in the most technical organs such as the WHO and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) (Weiss, 2008). This divide is also prevalent in almost all multilateral forums, where the NAM and the G-77 play the role of coordinating the positions of the poor South vis-à-vis the rich North.

Throughout its life, the UN Charter was amended three times, including two times to enlarge the membership of two out of its six main organs, the Security Council and the ECOSOC, with the last time in 1973, i.e. around 37 years ago\*. In the early 1960s, the South rallied for expanding the membership of the Security Council to reflect the new world realities, where the number of developing countries more than doubled from 51 in 1945 to 113 in 1963. Notwithstanding the resistance from great powers, the South successfully passed resolution 1991 (XVIII) in the General Assembly in 1963.

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\* There have been five amendments of the UN Charter, the first three on 31 August 1965 to increase the membership of the Security Council from 11 to 15, increase the voting majority required from 7 to 9 and enlarge the membership of the ECOSOC from 18 to 27. The fourth amendment was on 12 June 1968 and related to Article (109) on amending the Charter. The fifth and last amendment was on 24 September 1973 to enlarge the membership of the ECOSOC from 27 to 54.



Part A of this resolution related to the expansion of the Security Council from 11 to 15 members, increasing the required voting majority from seven to nine and specifying the regional distribution of the 10 non-permanent seats. Remarkably, Part A of the resolution was opposed by France and the USSR, while the USA and the UK abstained and only China supported it.

Resolution 1991 (XVIII) set the floor for an irreversible course toward the enlargement of the Security Council. None of the five permanent states could assume the political cost of blocking an amendment that had been endorsed by two-thirds majority in the General Assembly. By 31 August 1965, the four permanent states, other than China, ratified the amendment, and the threshold of 76 ratifications needed for the amendment to enter into force was secured. Besides the collective pressure of the great majority of Southern states and other non-veto member states, the politics of the Cold War, lack of a common position on the side of the great powers and the precarious financial situation of the world body at that time all contributed to the success of this move. Remarkably, the financial crisis of the UN at the time was mostly due to default on budget contributions from countries including the USSR and France. Nonetheless, the main driving force behind the move was the equity rationale of the call for better representativeness, and considerations of effectiveness or real power distribution could not stand in the way (Luck, 2003).

Shortly afterward, calls for further changes in the membership of the ECOSOC emerged. In 1971, the question of doubling the ECOSOC membership gained further momentum, at the behest of the South, with outstanding support from the USA. In fact, the USA was the only permanent state to support this move in both the ECOSOC and the General Assembly, while France and the USSR were again the staunchest objectors. The USA accepted the rationale that the membership of the ECOSOC was yet disproportionate to the UN general membership, 135 member states at the time. On the other side, France held that the ECOSOC's authority is not necessarily a function of its membership and distribution of seats and that the ECOSOC's membership was already too large. Similarly, the USSR contended that the concept that ECOSOC's work can be improved through enlargement was unfounded. However, once more, by 24 September



1973, the move to double the membership of the ECOSOC was appropriately in force (Luck, 2003).

After the end of the Cold War, and by 1993, the membership of the UN further increased to 184 from 113 in 1963. In the meantime, calls for further enlargement of both the Security Council and the ECOSOC had continued, but the end of Cold War significantly shifted the focus toward the Security Council. As has been mentioned in Chapter One, the end of the Cold War seemed to have ushered in a revitalization of the UN in particular and of multilateralism at large. Most conspicuously, the Security Council made some audacious and swift moves, among others, on liberating Kuwait after its invasion by Iraq in 1990. Consensus, under enhanced USA's leadership, became the order of the day (please refer to Table 2 above on the use of the veto). In addition, the notion of sovereignty came under revision and suffered from withdrawal in the face of the USA-sponsored new notion of humanitarian intervention, which notion largely shaped the debate on the international intervention in Somalia in 1992. Consequently, member states outside the Council felt a stronger impulse to get onboard, among others, to promote their distinct interests and share in the fruits of the new successes (Weiss, 2003).

As a result, the General Assembly established the so-called Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (hereafter the Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform) in 1993. Discussions in this Group have so far focused on two main clusters, one on membership, expansion, the veto and voting and the other on working methods and decision-making procedures. Ever since, the group has not been able to break the deadlocks of discussions, especially those in the first cluster, because of the wide gaps in positions and procedural complications in the process. Fortunately, however, with regard to the second cluster, the debate has induced the Council to voluntarily introduce some improvements on its working methods, particularly to enhance transparency and participation in its activities.

The war on Iraq is commonly quoted as a landmark in the course of multilateralism at large and of the UN in particular. While the UN was significantly

paralyzed during the Cold War, the military action against Serbia without UN authorization in 1999, together with the war on Iraq in 2003 in contempt of the world body, are two major indications to the marginalization of the UN in the post-Cold War era (Kochler, 2006). Notably, as has been mentioned in Chapter One, the war on Iraq has been used by many writers and politicians to proselytize a new new world order, where the new world order is considered the one proclaimed after the end of the Cold War. One central pillar of this argument is the decline of USA's power, especially in its soft aspects. Another important pillar is that the war motivated other powerhouses and even USA's allies to attempt to constrain USA's power (Weiss, 2003). Indeed, the war on Iraq was so grave that it continues to give credibility and impetus for newly emerging powerhouses to project their power and seek a more leveled playing field in the UN Security Council in particular and in global governance at large.

Henceforth, the climate was conducive to establishing the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which, among others, contributed to further moving the debate on Security Council reform. In an attempt to help reach a breakthrough in the debate, the panel proposed two models of reform. Model A provides for six new permanent seats without veto and three new two-year term non-permanent seats to be shared by the regional groupings. In contrast, Model B provides for no new permanent seats, but proposes a new category of eight four-year renewable-term seats and one new two-year non-permanent and non-renewable seat. Although the panel regarded the veto as an anachronistic vestige of the past, it concluded that there is no practical means of changing the *status quo*, obviously because of the assumption that the five permanent countries would not give it up (UN, 2004). Instead, the panel proposed limiting the use of this right to cases where vital interests are at stake and invited the veto powers to refrain from using it in cases of genocide and large violations of human rights.

The Outcome Document of the 2005 Millennium Review Summit stated that “we support early reform of the Security Council as an essential element of our overall effort to reform the UN in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent, and so to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions.” In 2007, and after several further reports, it was decided to launch negotiations on the subject in due time. Ultimately, negotiations

started in February 2009, with focus on five key issues: categories of membership, veto power, regional representation, size of an enlarged Council and its working methods, together with the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. According to its agreed schedule, the final stage of the negotiations should be text-based, a move that indicates approaching the more arduous task of inking down a consensus agreement.

Throughout the debate and negotiations, there have been several key deadlocks, especially with regard to the veto power, the size of the Council and conflicts of interests among member states. Historically, the veto power has received the brunt of criticism from non-veto member states as a symbol of an undemocratic and unjust world order. On the other side, veto proponents contend that it is a major factor behind the survival of the UN until today (Luck, 2003). In any case, there is very little hope to reach agreement on whether the veto right should be abolished, extended to new members or even restricted in use. As for the size of an enlarged Council, the main bargain seems to be between legitimacy and effectiveness. And there seems to be two camps, one advocating the viewpoint that enlarging the Council to reflect the growth of the membership and the new world realities could enhance its legitimacy, which in turn could further bolster its effectiveness (Hurd, 2002). On the other side, there is the viewpoint that though enlargement of the Council is plausible to reflect better diversity and enhance its legitimacy, it should be kept to minimum, should be measured against the effectiveness of the Council and should reflect the real distribution of power in the world (Weiss, 2003). Some member states also oppose the permanent membership bids of some others, such as in the case of Italy with respect to Germany. In general, positions held by different member states and groupings seem irreconcilable, which indicates that serious negotiations would be virtually immovable, especially given the practice of divide-and-rule tactics by reform opponents (Thakur, 2005).

#### B. The Issue of Relevance

There is an argument that we need a new UN for this new century (Slaughter, 2006). The reasons behind this kind of argument are many, but most importantly include the implications of globalization on the UN mission, the ailments of the Westphalian notions of nation-state and sovereignty, the proliferation of actors in

international relations and the ramifications of the current unipolar world order on the UN. With respect to the implications of globalization, it is doubtless that the last wave of globalization has changed the world landscape and forced a redefinition of global opportunities and challenges. As has been detailed in Chapter One, the change in the global landscape has also been driven by change in paradigms, with neo-liberal capitalism and democratic governance becoming the dominant ones. On one hand, neo-liberal capitalism has gradually deprived the UN of its development mission, as it has undermined its endeavors to promote a more just world economic order (Boutros-Ghali, 2005). On the other hand, the prevalence of democracy as a universal value comes in contrast to democracy deficits in the UN and other institutions of global governance (Keohane, 2006). As a result, the UN and its organs have been losing ground and credibility and suffering from lack of support.

Globalization has also brought about an unprecedented degree of interdependence among states, thus creating torrents of new opportunities and challenges. The Report of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change states that “the UN was created in 1945 above all else to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war - to ensure that the horrors of the World Wars were never repeated. More than 65 years later, we know all too well that the biggest security threats we face now, and in the decades ahead, go far beyond states waging aggressive war. They extend to poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation; war and violence within states; the spread and possible use of nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons; terrorism; and transnational organized crime. The threats are from non-state actors as well as states and to human security as well as state security” (UN, 2004). The perceived inability of the UN to effectively address new pressing international challenges has resulted in a loss of confidence in the world body (Wright, 2009). And although the UN has somehow managed to develop some innovative approaches to the challenges of globalization, the world body has only succeeded in so doing by maneuvering around its constitutional constraints, not through addressing these constraints upfront (Ruggie, 2003).

The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 laid down an international system based on the notion of sovereign nation-states, which notion was enshrined in the UN Charter.

Accordingly, the UN and the larger international order are based on nation-states as the building blocs and basic players, while today the most chronic problems facing mankind require transnational approaches that are short of supply in the UN (Weiss, 2008). This lack of action was often referred to by former Secretary General Kofi Annan as “problems without passports.” In essence, it reflects some kind of tension between intergovernmentalism and transnationalism (Cronin, 2002). It also indicates a deficit of global governance and stands as one root cause behind recurrent failures of the UN and other global forums on several fronts. Righteously, the UN was not intended to meet modern transnational challenges such as terrorism, global warming and nuclear proliferation. Nonetheless, if the UN fails to adapt itself to these new challenges, it will risk fading into irrelevance (Thakur, 2003). In other words, the price of continued relevance and survival for the UN is reform, the burden of which, in fact, falls on member-states not the UN as a distinct entity.

A second set of challenges facing the UN occur within national boundaries such as national strife, civil wars and mass violations of human rights. These problems could very well affect peace and security across borders and undermine basic human values. They also raise controversy about the Westphalian notion of sovereignty, which is enshrined as one of the most essential principles of the UN Charter, “sovereign equality of all its members” as spelled out by Article (2) of the Charter. As a result, since the end of the Cold War, the notion of sovereignty has been subjected to gradual erosion. Instead, new notions, such as humanitarian intervention, the responsibility to protect and human security, have been gaining ground. In reflection of this trend, the Report of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change states that “whatever perceptions may have prevailed when the Westphalian system first gave rise to the notion of state sovereignty, today it clearly carries with it the obligation of a state to protect the welfare of its own peoples and meet its obligations to the wider international community” (UN, 2004).

Paradoxically, the redefinition of the notion of sovereignty violates the letter of the same Charter Article (2) on “noninterference in domestic affairs.” In an attempt to resolve this conflict, some authors make the argument that the Westphalian system as it stands today is profoundly flawed and needs fixing. Thus, the world is left with one of

two options: either replace the old system with a new one responsive to the need of globalized governance or fix it in a way that could bind countries to respect their external as well as internal obligations (Simons et al, 2007). Another more startling argument is that to govern effectively, states need to cooperate with each other and at the same time to reserve the right to intervene in the affairs of other states (Slaughter, 2004c). In the UN, this far, there has been a polarization on issues related to humanitarian intervention and there is hardly any hope that member states could reach a consensus reconciling humanitarian intervention with state sovereignty (Evans and Sahnoun, 2001). Consequently, the UN is bogged down in paralysis vis-à-vis mass violations of basic human rights inside member states and at the same time ambivalence toward acts of aggression on the sovereignty of these member states on the pretext of humanitarian responsibilities.

A more balanced approach toward the contentious issues of state sovereignty and intervention is that the multilateral system has to transform in order to adapt to the need to prevent instability and conflicts inside states (Acharya, 2006). Here, it is argued that multilateral institutions are, among others, engines of normative change. Historically, the current multilateral system has led the process of defining and legitimizing a set of sovereignty norms, including territorial integrity, equality of states and nonintervention, which are all norms enshrined in the UN Charter. But, as the normative environment evolves, the system needs to keep pace with this evolution. Since the establishment of the UN, the world setting has changed significantly, with increasing global interdependence, the emergence of new trans-national challenges, systemic changes affecting global power distribution, the increasing importance of human rights, the rule of law and the expansion of the global civil society. These changes invite collective approaches from multilateral institutions. Hence, the system is naturally coming under increasing pressure to move beyond some of the sovereignty norms it itself promoted, especially that of nonintervention. Whether or not the system is capable of responding to the impulse of change is a decisive question for its future.

A third set of challenges relates to qualitative and quantitative shifts in the size of global stakeholders. Remarkably, the last two decades have witnessed a proliferation of actors in the international system, which is infringing on the role of nation-states as

the basic players at the international, regional and domestic levels. This development could be assimilated to a return of “medievalism,” when authority was shared among many different players inside individual geopolitical spheres (Slaughter, 2003). The new rising actors include NGOs that have exploded in number and have come to advance distinct interests, through monitoring, challenging and at times confronting with governments. NGOs are also involved in a fierce quest to further consolidate their legitimacy and secure more recognition as independent players at the international level. TNCs are also new powerful actors that lead a global economy where national barriers have subsided in the face of transnational economic activities, especially those related to capital flows. States attempt to regulate and direct the activities of TNCs, but cannot control them. In some extreme cases, TNCs possess unparalleled power in the face of some small and least-developed countries. Other actors in the international system include regional organizations, international networks of state officers, local authorities and illegal actors such as dissident and terrorist groups.

In response, the UN has been striving to accommodate non-state actors in its system. In addition to the imperative of these efforts on practical grounds, they also contribute to promoting the notion of democratic global governance. Historically, the participation of NGOs in the UN commenced with the UN birth at San Francisco conference (Jenkins, 2003). Henceforth, the role of NGOs in the international system has been developing, which has become especially clear since the end of the Cold War. This historical relationship brings to the UN an important civil-society approach to global challenges. As a result, there is a large and growing network of NGOs in the ECOSOC today. In 2004, a UN panel of eminent persons published a report on the relationship between the world body and NGOs. This report recommended wider participation by NGOs in all aspects of UN activities at headquarters and national levels. In addition, former Secretary General Kofi Annan pioneered the establishment of the Global Compact, the first partnership of its kind between the UN and the global business community. The Compact was launched in 2000 on the basis of the notion of global corporate citizenship, which indicates that with rights to operate at the global level come responsibilities toward the global community (Annan, 2002). All these efforts notwithstanding, there continue to be difficulties related to the vast number of NGOs and their diverse agendas as well as constitutional and legitimacy dilemmas



related to the participation of non-state actors in the international system. Moreover, there seems to be a subtle confrontation between state and non-state actors on legitimacy and authority. In fact, this confrontation is one important dimension of the UN ongoing struggle to develop true, mutually beneficial partnerships with non-state actors for better global governance.

A Fourth and final set of challenges relates to changes in world power politics. Former Secretary General Boutros-Ghali argues that the crisis of the UN is not connected with September 11 or the war on Iraq, it actually started with the end of the Cold War and was mainly driven by changes in power distribution and the emergence of one superpower, which caused difficulties for the international community in managing the new order (Boutros-Ghali, 2005). In the midst of American pride, in his famous 1990 article, “*The Unipolar Moment*,” Charles Krauthammer described the talk about the UN as a guarantor of a new post-Cold War order as mistaken, adding that the UN is a guarantor of nothing and can hardly be said to exist (Krauthammer, 2003). Notwithstanding the initial shock, September 11 and its developments further showcased the USA’s supremacy militarily, economically and politically. In contrast, the Iraq episode was significantly damaging, as the USA provoked a crisis of UN authority and legitimacy, and the world body was pictured as having betrayed its fundamental objective of preventing military aggressions, especially by major powers (Thakur, 2005). In fact, the USA seems to exercise ambivalent engagement with the rest of the world. And its foreign policy reflects a tug of war between championing universal values such as democracy and human rights and protecting its distinct national interests by all means (Jaguaribe, 2002).

As has been mentioned earlier, while the UN suffered from paralysis during the Cold War, it has been suffering from marginalization since the end of that war (Kochler, 2006). The emergence of coalitions of the willing at the behest of the USA, such as those used for Iraq and to a lesser extent Afghanistan, is a clear indication to this effect. Also attesting to the increasing marginalization of the world body is the tendency of the USA, the current global superpower, to address global challenges through informal forums such as the G-20, G-8 and more recently the G-2. Major factors behind this trend include the desire to avoid the binding nature and unwieldy bureaucracy of formal

structures such as the UN. Unfortunately, this marginalization is expected to continue in the future, as proselytized by theories such as “multilateralism *à la carte*” of Richard Haas, President of the USA’s Council on Foreign Relations, and “multi-multilateralism” of Francis Fukuyama. The crux of responsibility in this regard falls on the shoulders of UN member states. If they manage to renovate the world body, insist on going through it and fulfill their commitments toward it, then there will be little space for any individual state to undermine rule-based multilateral cooperation.

How would the future of the UN look like? This is a question that concerns everyone. Historically, the UN was created for the post-war world and this is deeply rooted in its constitution, structure and working culture. Today, however, the world has significantly changed, with power shifts and the new imperatives of globalization putting increasing pressure on the world body. In particular, this research contends that the challenges of representative legitimacy and relevance to the surrounding global environment are expected to have particular decisive impacts on the future of the UN. Lack of power balance in the world body deprives it of much of its legitimacy and effectiveness, and developments in the surrounding environment are outdoing its rules and capabilities, which is increasing the marginalization of the organization. Thus, firstly, the UN needs to put the representation in its power structures in line with real power distribution in order to protect its legitimacy and enhance its effectiveness. The ongoing exercise for this purpose falls short of finding a clear path. However, amendment to membership happened in the past, is needed today and could very well impose itself in the future depending. It is argued here that unless new powerhouses are fully integrated and accommodated in the UN system, the future of the system will remain unpromising.

Secondly, the governing rules and working methods in the UN need to be revisited to enable the world body to face up to the challenges of the day. This exercise has to take into consideration four main factors. First, increasing global interdependence has brought about new global challenges that necessitate transnational approaches. Thus, there is a need to empower the UN with the mandate and means required to effectively address the new challenges. Second, the notions of sovereignty and noninterference in internal affairs have to be reconciled with the imperative of

preventing mass atrocities and grave violations of human rights at the domestic level. In fact, the legitimate prerogatives of state authority and the universal values of human life and dignity are not, and should not, be taken as mutually exclusive. Third, the role of non-state actors in the international system has been increasing. Although states and intergovernmental institutions have been developing new partnerships with these actors, there remain significant practical and legal difficulties that need to be squarely addressed, so as to ensure the optimum use of these partnerships. Finally, the UN was engineered around the concept of power concerts. Today, however, the prevailing world order is unipolar and this is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. Consequently, the world body should be reconfigured to manage this new world order, including by holding all states accountable for their acts or lack thereof. Of course, these are all major challenges that require vision, will and a lot of effort and time. However, sooner or later, the international community will have to face them, otherwise problems of the UN would further foment and its role and contribution to global governance would continue to decrease. In fact, it is the future of the UN that is at stake, and to secure this future, such major challenges as legitimacy and relevance have to be faced in a holistic manner.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Case Study of the United Nations General Assembly**

### **Abstract**

The UN General Assembly is no doubt a unique forum of international cooperation, particularly in view of its representativeness and status as the main deliberative, norm-setting and policy-making organ of multilateral cooperation. However, apart from the moral weight, the Assembly lacks any reliable power of enforcement. Moreover, over the last few years, it has been losing ground to other forums inside as well as outside the world body. Notably, the current reform process of the Assembly, launched in 2005, is predicated on the so-called "revitalization", i.e. reform within the basic dimensions of the current chartered powers and functions. Unfortunately, the reform process has not made any difference on the ground. Even more, the very resolutions the Assembly has issued in this regard lack implementation and follow-up. Furthermore, paradoxically, some of the other UN reforms have contributed to further marginalization of the Assembly. In contrast, it is argued here that the role of the Assembly in global governance should be enhanced through a number of means, including enabling it to perform its mandate to the letter and spirit of the Charter, providing it with a mechanism to enforce its resolutions on all member states without exception and concluding the current reform process as soon as possible. Along these same lines, a field questionnaire conducted as part of this research reveals strong support to empowering the Assembly to serve a bigger role in global governance, including with respect to issues of international peace and security if the Security Council fails to act timely and appropriately. In an attempt to pinpoint the best-fit role for the Assembly, the results of the questionnaire indicate preference for it to serve as the highest hub of global governance, as opposed to a clearing-house of international cooperation or a parliament of man.

## Chapter Six

### Case Study of the United Nations General Assembly

The UN General Assembly, hereinafter the Assembly, is a unique body of multilateral cooperation. It is the only forum with a holistic mandate, covering political, security, economic, social and cultural subjects of international cooperation. It also enjoys a global membership with 193 member states, besides observers and partners from throughout the world. Another intrinsically fundamental feature of the Assembly is its leveled membership, where all members have equal status, rights and obligations. Not least, it enjoys unique esteem from the international community at large, particularly in view of its representative legitimacy and even membership. Nonetheless, the Assembly is generally viewed as a body without teeth, lacking binding force and enforcement mechanisms. In fact, reading the UN Charter, it seems that the Assembly was designed to be a platform for the public, whereas the UN Security Council, hereinafter the Council, was designed to be a club for the powerful. This differentiation is also reflected in the academia, where the Assembly receives very little attention compared to the Council. This chapter will attempt to shed more light on the Assembly. It will start with a background on the powers and functions of the Assembly, with focus on the provisions of the Charter and the major later alterations. Afterwards, it will take a closer look at the structure and working culture at the Assembly. Subsequently, there will be an analysis of the main dimensions of the current reform process and its outcomes. Finally, this chapter will address the question of what could be the optimum role of the Assembly in global governance, drawing upon the results of a field study on a sample of 50 respondents in the field of international relations.

#### I. Basic Background

The Assembly could be assimilated to a world parliament with membership from governments (Kennedy, 2006). In fact, a close look at the Assembly reveals that it is more a parliament of world governments than an executive body. In this regard, the UN Charter articulates the powers and functions of the Assembly in detail (please refer

to Annex 1). Article (10) grants the Assembly a sweeping mandate with respect to all matters within the scope of the Charter, including those related to the powers and functions of other organs, together with the right to make recommendations to member states and/or the Council, with the exception of issues pending on the agenda of the Council. Notably, Assembly's recommendations are called resolutions, just as those of the Council. However, as the terminology reflects, recommendations are pronouncements of positions that lack binding force, while the resolutions of the Council enjoy binding force on all member states. Remarkably, the Charter does not even refer to the implementation of Assembly's resolutions and does not grant it any enforcement tools similar to those at the hands of the Council such as sanctions and military action. Nonetheless, Assembly's resolutions are generally viewed as morally binding, especially in the light that all member states own them on equal footing. Even if some states take positions against some resolutions in the course of their debate, these resolutions are ultimately issued by the Assembly at large and should, at least theoretically, be implemented by all member states. In addition, Assembly's resolutions set norms of international relations, which in turn make up one of the main sources of international law, as rightfully acknowledged by the statutes of the ICJ.

With respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the Assembly has the right to consider the general principles and make recommendations to member states and/or the Council. The Assembly can also consider any specific question of international peace and security and make similar recommendations. Nonetheless, Article (12) prevents it from issuing recommendations on any such questions while they are under Council's consideration. Even more, in case the Assembly considers specific questions that are not on the agenda of the Council and on which action is deemed necessary, these questions should be referred to the Council either before or after Assembly's consideration. The only waiver to this prohibitive rule is if the Council itself refers a dispute or a situation to the Assembly. It should be stressed, however, that the language of Article (12) does not forestall the right of the Assembly to debate subjects on the agenda of the Council. In addition, Article (11) empowers the Assembly to call the attention of the Council to situations that are likely to endanger international peace and security. In general, the Charter sets a clear division



of work between the Assembly and the Council in the area of peace and security, with the Council charged with the prime responsibility in this area and the Assembly only performing a supportive role, unless when the Council itself chooses to invite the Assembly for a bigger role.

Notably, there is only one exception to this general division of work, which is the so-called “uniting for peace” procedure, introduced by the Assembly's resolution 377 in 1950 (please refer to Annex 2). In essence, this resolution authorizes the Assembly, in cases where the Council fails to discharge its primary responsibility on addressing cases of threat to peace, breach of peace or act of aggression, often due to lack of unanimity by the permanent members, to consider the matter and make appropriate recommendations to member states. These recommendations could include the use of force if necessary in cases of breach of peace or act of aggression. In addition, the resolution attempted to address calls at the time for better military readiness in the UN. While acknowledging the primary responsibility of the Council in this area, resolution 377 invited member states to contribute standby military resources to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Council or the Assembly for the maintenance of international peace and security. The resolution also established two subsidiary bodies; the Peace Observation Commission and the Collective Measures Committee, which both only short lived and did not make any significant contribution.

Remarkably, resolution 377 was proposed by the USA and adopted on 3 November 1950 with 52 votes with and only five votes against (the then USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the USSR's semi-independent republics of Ukraine and Belarus). The backdrop to this move was that with the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 and the assignment of China's permanent seat to the defeated Republic of China (Taiwan), the USSR started boycotting Council's meetings through the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. This was done with a legal interpretation that the absence of the USSR would paralyze the Council in cases requiring the concurrence of the permanent members. Nonetheless, the Council issued resolution 83 of 1950, authorizing the use of force against North Korea in the absence of the representative of the USSR. Consequently, there was a lot of controversy about the legality of the resolution. However, resolution 83 was put to practice with support from the USA along with a

great majority of member states. Ultimately, the USSR resumed its participation in the Council to block any further moves against North Korea. Afterwards, the USA sought a blanket mechanism to ensure that differences with the USSR would not deprive it of achieving its targets with respect to North Korea in particular and international peace and security in general, which mechanism took the form of resolution 377.

Any member state can invoke the uniting for peace procedure with support from seven members of the Council or a majority of the UN membership. Consequently, the Assembly gets seized with the matter immediately, and if not in session, an emergency special session is convened within 24 hours. The first and most successful case of resort to this procedure was during the Korean War, where the Assembly passed resolution 498 of 1 February 1951 on the interference of the People's Republic of China in Korea, against the opposition of the then USSR. Notably, this case involved an enforcement action against China, with resolution 498 inviting military intervention against what it qualified as Chinese aggression against Korea. Afterwards, the Assembly held 10 emergency special sessions under the same procedure. The first such session was held against the objections of France and Great Britain after Egypt suffered a trilateral Israeli, British and French attack on its soil, in what came to be called the Suez Canal crisis of 1956. This session passed resolution 1000 of 5 November 1956 establishing the UN Emergency Force to monitor the frontline between Egypt and Israel. The nine other emergency special sessions handled situations in Hungary (1956), Lebanon (1958), the Republic of Congo (1960), the Arab Israeli War of 1967, Afghanistan (1980), Palestine (1980-1982), Namibia (1981), the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights (1982) and finally the still ongoing 10<sup>th</sup> session on the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories (1997 to date). Notably, the last special session is particularly different, as it has dragged on for too long and has even been unlimitedly extended in 2006, still without taking any material action to date, which makes it more like a special forum with intermittent meetings to examine escalations related to the Israeli occupation of the occupied Arab territories.

Clearly, the uniting for peace resolution was driven by the USA in the context of its Cold War rivalry with the then USSR, with the aim of better ensuring the ability to secure legitimate UN coverage for intervention in cases of threat or breach of

international peace (Kranso and Das, 2008). Ultimately, a great majority of member states supported this move, for the obvious reason that they wanted the extra insurance it provides against paralysis in the Council. In fact, this resolution provides a unique guarantee that differences among permanent members would not paralyze the UN as a whole. It also stands out as the most prominent move ever toward shifting the balance between the Assembly and the Council (Kennedy, 2006). Perhaps even more importantly, resolution 377 contains important de facto Charter amendments that evolved in use to become a last-resort window of opportunity for the great majority of states. Although the procedure was introduced by a superpower, less powerful states make up a big majority of those that have invoked it to date thanks to the overwhelming representation. Nevertheless, the procedure was not integrated in the Charter through its established amendment process. Instead, it was produced in an Assembly's resolution that lacks the constitutional power of the Charter and the enforcement tools of the Council. Hence, resolutions issued under this procedure do not enjoy any extra weight compared to standard Assembly's resolutions. And this means that recommendations issued through the uniting for peace procedure could only be implemented to the extent member states want. In other words, this procedure cannot help face threats to international peace and security, unless the general membership and most importantly the permanent members come together for this end. And, of course, this is even more the case if the violator is itself a permanent member or a great power.

Apart from the area of peace and security, the Assembly holds special power with respect to the budget of the organization. It could even be said that this is the area where the Assembly plays its most influential role at all, due to the relative monopoly of the Assembly in this regard and the material importance of financial aspects to UN activities. All member states contribute shares to the UN regular biennial budget according to a formula that integrates the basic concept of the capacity to pay, as reflected by the relative shares of member states in world GNI, with adjustments for factors such as per capita income, external debt and a maximum ceiling and a minimum floor. Hence, member states participate in the budget process on equal footing with a general sense of collective ownership. And the outcome of the process is usually adopted by consensus, rather than being voted. Besides the regular budget, the

Assembly also adopts other separate budgets for peacekeeping operations and ad-hoc international tribunals, with the former employing a modified scale of assessments that classifies member states into levels of income, assigns higher shares to permanent members and allows for voluntary contributions by wealthy states.

Notably, the scale of assessments used for budget contributions was amended in 2000, taking the ceiling down from 25% to 22%, which ceiling only applies to the USA. This step was welcomed by states favoring the reduction of USA's influence in the world body. Over the last few years, however, the scale of assessments was subject to calls for further revisions to ensure that it reflects actual, real capacity to pay. In addition, the UN has been suffering from large budget arrears, including from some of the significant contributors. Even the USA, the highest budget contributor, is sometimes in arrears, due to internal complications that reflect some lack of support to the world body. Perhaps even more importantly, the budget process usually pits the wealthy member states against the less developed ones, with the former expressing dissatisfaction with the one state, one vote rule of the Assembly at the time they contribute most of the budget, while the latter accuse the former of attempting to dictate the budget guidelines and to deprive them of programs that support their development plans. As a result, a former USA permanent representative to the UN has suggested that the UN scale of assessments should be replaced by voluntary financing (Bolton, 2010). At the time the budget process is almost the only domain where the great majority of developing countries can coordinate positions to achieve some material gains, this kind of suggestions come as an indication that there are some who would like to dominate the process in a way that might even render the UN less united and less meaningful to the great majority of its members.

Other than the budget, Article (15) of the Charter requires all UN organs to present annual activity reports to the Assembly. This, in fact, reflects the general mandate granted to the Assembly in article (10) with respect to all areas within the scope of the Charter. Naturally, the general membership seizes the procedure established by Article (15) to present their positions, appraisals and misgivings about the work of all UN organs, especially those where they are not participating. However, it should be highlighted, this is more a procedural than a substantive exercise. And this

has been particularly the case with respect to the Council's reports, which tend to make brief listings of items on its agenda for the bare sake of informing the Assembly, while avoiding indulging into much substance, so as not to open the door for the Assembly to play a bigger role in supervising Council's activities. In addition, given the fact that Assembly's resolutions lack any binding force, UN organs' reports to the Assembly are more invitations to talk than means to make a real difference.

The Charter also authorizes the Assembly to initiate studies and make recommendations for the promotion of international cooperation in political, legal, economic, social, cultural, educational and health fields. Particularly, Chapters IX and X detail specific Assembly's powers and functions in the areas of international economic and social cooperation. Generally, the Charter reflects a strong focus on the mandate of the Assembly in these matters. Still, the role of the Assembly here is precisely to address these matters in cooperation with the ECOSOC. And, it should be highlighted, although the latter is a subsidiary body of the Assembly, it can make direct recommendations to member states and specialized agencies or work directly with the Council. Notably, there have also been calls for reform in the ECOSOC, including expanding its mandate, enlarging its membership and enhancing its effectiveness.

With respect to human rights, the Assembly is required by the Charter to assist in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. In the past, the Assembly used to discharge this task through its subsidiary Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). But, in 2006, and as one of the outcomes of the 2005 Millennium Review Summit, the UNCHR was upgraded to a subsidiary organ of the Assembly, the UNHRC. No doubt, this move has given human rights more importance and visibility in the world body. However, it has also deprived both the Assembly and the ECOSOC of parts of their Charter powers and functions. It should also be noted that, today, member states that stood behind this move criticize the nascent UNHRC for several reasons, especially its record of admissibility to states that have poor records of human rights and the strong lobbies of these states inside it.

As for the Bretton Woods institutions, they precede the UN in existence and, together with the more recent WTO, have been intentionally distanced from the UN

from the outset. Of course, there are channels of coordination between the two sides, but these three institutions of global economic governance are recognized to be primary authorities in their respective areas, whether development, finance or international trade. Notably, this division of work has always hinged on the controversial premise that there should be a separation between the political and technical areas of international cooperation. Over and above, lately, the G-20, revamped in late 2008, has come to the fore as the main platform of global economic decision-making. Expectedly, this move has been raising criticisms in the UN. In addition to being an additional channel of international authority, the nature of the G-20 as a selective, informal forum further kindles objections and raises questions about its potential value-added.

Remarkably, the 2006 report of the High-Level Panel of the Secretary General on System-Wide Coherence suggested that for the UN system to achieve the MDGs, the organization needs to deliver as one. Consequently, the report set the floor for needed reforms to ensure more coherence and sustainable funding at the national and central levels (UN, 2006). The main driver of these reforms is the UNDP, with its national offices throughout the world. And one has already started to see the outcomes of this reform process be it in human-resources development, technical assistance or gender activities. No doubt, UN development activities need more coherence and better funding, but the increasing influence of the UNDP due to this reform process has further chopped off some of the competences of the Assembly and the ECOSOC. And this was somehow meant by donor countries, as they have better control on their funding in the UNDP than in the Assembly or the ECOSOC.

On another front, the Assembly elects non-permanent members of the Council and the ECOSOC, in addition to taking decisions on the admission, expulsion and suspension of members. Notably, decisions on the election of non-permanent Council members receive a lot of clamor. Although the Council is largely dominated by the permanent five members, the general membership still views non-permanent membership as a sublime objective of national esteem and pride, which in fact is an important source of legitimacy to the Council, notwithstanding its failures and shackles. In addition, the Assembly selects the UN Secretary General. But, more precisely, the Assembly only plays a marginal role in this regard, confined to appointing the Secretary

General upon recommendation from the Council. In contrast, the Council almost monopolizes the process, which is also subject to the concurrence of the five permanent members. As a result, this process has usually been subject to criticism from the general membership on grounds of lack of transparency and lack of inclusiveness.

## II. Working Culture

This section will attempt to depict a picture of typical work at the Assembly, drawing on the researcher's past experience and an overlook of the resolutions issued by the Assembly in its 64<sup>th</sup> session. When one visits the Assembly, especially during the main part of its regular session from September to December of each year, one finds the premises of the UN headquarters usually bustling with life, including formal meetings, side meetings and press conferences. Given its quasi-global membership, the agenda of the Assembly is usually expansive and the number of resolutions it issues is overwhelming. In general, member states seize these sessions in earnest to present their views on the state of world affairs, with particular focus on issues of special interest to them. They also attempt to promote their foreign policy agendas and give them international endorsements at the Assembly. In terms of output, discussions provide grounds for consensuses on issues of international cooperation, coordination of policies, burden sharing and solidarity. In addition, in view of its status as the highest UN policy organ, an integral part of the work of the Assembly is providing guidelines for the work of the other UN organs. To a lesser extent, these guidelines also apply to external stakeholders, including other international and regional organizations. And, in the process, discussions usually feature intense negotiations, lobbying, formation of blocs, convergence of positions and exchange of support.

Given the large scope of Assembly's agendas, member states typically undertake extensive prior preparation and coordination at the domestic level, involving their national institutions and stakeholders. Consequently, representatives of member states would indeed be speaking for their whole countries at the Assembly. And, naturally, different member states could have different approaches to the same issues and some of them could even take hostile attitudes toward others. Thus, in the midst of debate, there could be elongated disagreements and even deadlocks, with the bargaining balance



usually involving blocs taking positions against others, including the EU, the NAM, Latin America, the African, Asian and Arab groups. It should also be noted that apart from the dividing lines of these blocs, member states are officially divided into five main regional groups: Western European and others, Africa, Asia, Eastern European and Latin America and the Caribbean. Besides, there are some great individual powers that usually play decisive roles, such as the USA, the UK, France, Russia, China and India. Such member states act as linchpins within their groups and could influence the general membership. Other member states tend to take less assertive approaches and to keep lower profiles for reasons that range from limited power of influence to lack of expertise and qualified personnel.

Notably the Assembly has many subsidiary organs, including committees, commissions, boards, councils, panels and working groups. But, most importantly, it has six main open-ended, subsidiary committees on: disarmament and international security; economy and finance; social, humanitarian and cultural issues; special political and decolonization issues; administrative and budgetary issues; and legal issues. Each of these committees has a cluster of multilayered meetings, where discussions usually start at an informal-informal level, then move on to a formal-informal level, before ultimately reaching a final formal-formal level. All through, member states have the chance to express their positions with respect to items on the agenda. However, not all member states attend committee meetings, especially at the early levels. Moreover, only a limited number of them usually participate actively in the discussions, which are usually dominated by great powers, regional powers, member states holding the rotating presidencies of regional groups and those with specific interests at stake. In the process, member states could submit draft resolutions and seek co-sponsorship or support for them from other member states. Consequently, draft resolutions would have to undergo extensive examination and refinement, before ultimately being adopted by the respective committees. Afterwards, committee resolutions are communicated to the Assembly, which could affirm, decline or endorse them with amendments.

Taking the work of the Assembly in its 64<sup>th</sup> session from September 2009 to September 2010 as a sample could provide some useful insights. In particular, a close look at the agenda and the resolutions issued during that session gives indicators of the

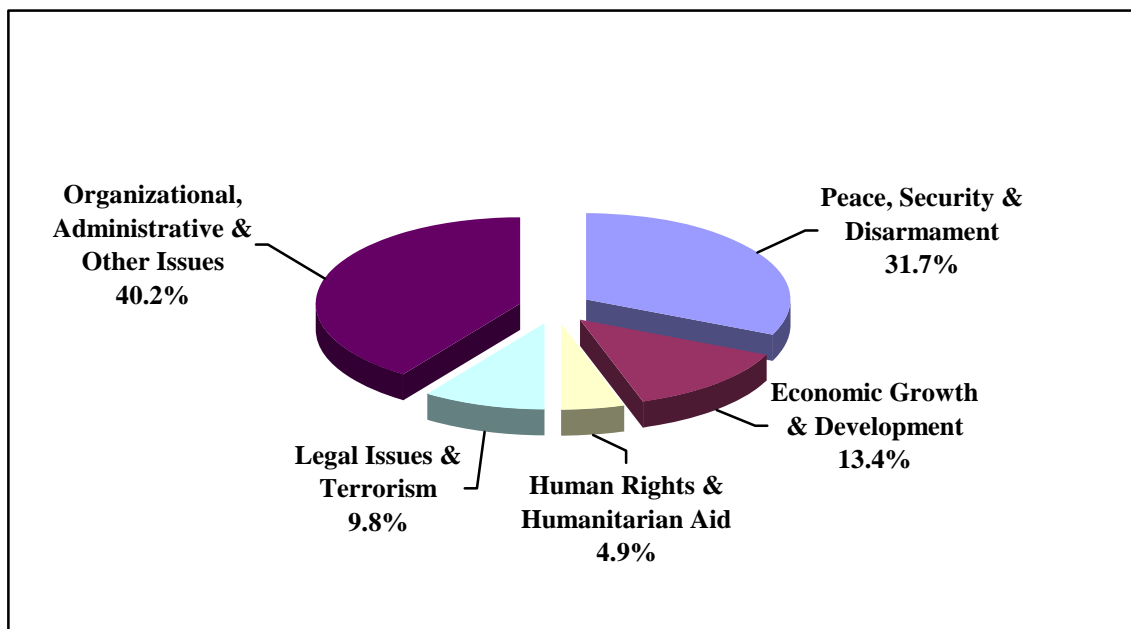


nature of the items considered and how the Assembly pronounces itself on them. The agenda of the 64<sup>th</sup> session included 172 items that were classified under nine clusters: international peace and security; economic growth and sustainable development; development in Africa; human rights; humanitarian assistance; justice and international law; disarmament; drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism; and organizational, administrative and other matters. Those agenda items were allocated to the plenary session of the Assembly and its six main committees according to the substantive nature of each item as well as past practice. Notably, there could be several subsidiary items under each main agenda item. And, in the context of preparing the agenda, the main question is usually where a given subject fits, not whether or not it should be discussed at all. In other words, the Assembly serves as a platform for considering any issue of relevance to international relations, which in fact is a feature established by the Charter and customary practice. .

Chart (5) below reflects the division of the aforementioned 172 agenda items on five consolidated clusters, excluding the first eight items, which are mostly procedural in nature. For logical reasons, organizational, administrative and other related issues feature as the widest section of the agenda, with 40.2% of its total size. Second in line is the compilation of the two clusters on international peace and security and on disarmament, with 31.7%. Notably, peace and security issues are mostly a prerogative of the Council. However, some specific issues and conflicts are usually kept outside the Council on purpose for political reasons, such as the Middle East conflict, which has been for several decades dominated by individual USA's brokerage. In contrast, disarmament issues are considered indirect peace and security issues, and as such they fall more within the mandate of the Assembly as well as the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, which is organically linked to the Assembly. In general, and notwithstanding the primary responsibility of the Council on peace and security issues, these issues usually harness utmost attention from member states in the Assembly, due to their political sensitivity.

Chart (5)

Distribution of the United Nations General Assembly's Agenda Items  
 (64<sup>th</sup> Session)



Source: Own elaboration, based on official documents and data on the UN website.

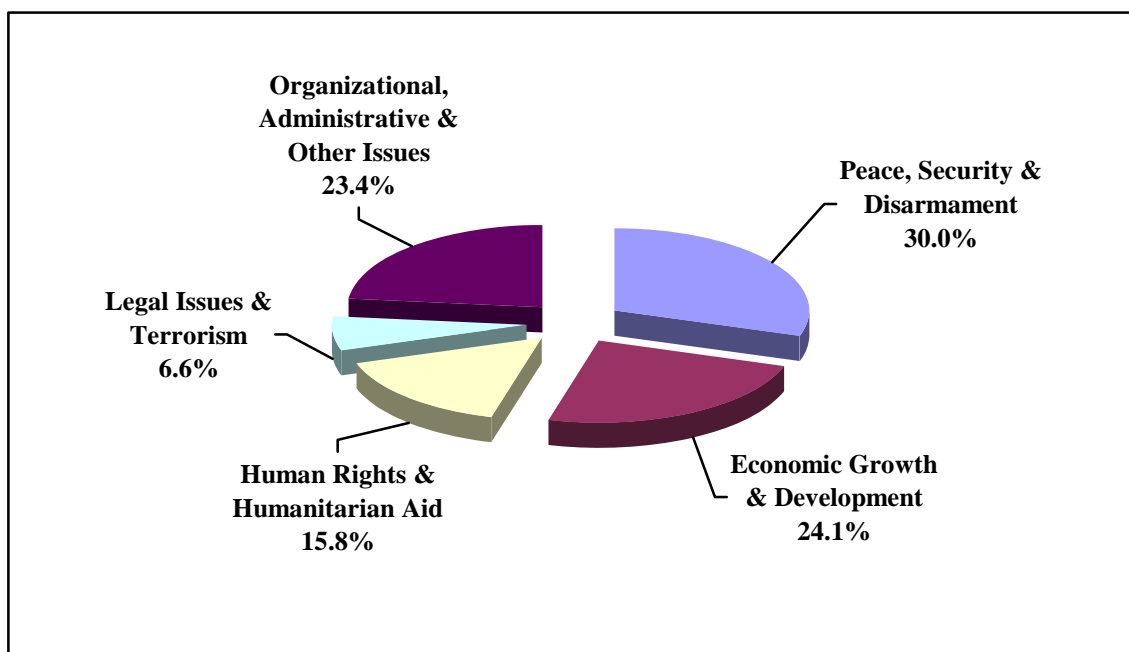
The third largest section, with 13.4%, is that of economic growth and development, including a single-item cluster on African development, a theme that enjoys cross-cutting differentiation in the work of the world body. As has been previously noted, most of the work of the Assembly in these areas is done in tandem with the ECOSOC, and both organs struggle to assert themselves in a world overtaken by free-market dynamics. International legal issues, including international law and justice, cross-border crimes and terrorism come fourth with 9.8% of the total size. Remarkably, international terrorism comes under international legal issues, which reflects the main focus of the Assembly's work in this area, whereas the political aspects of terrorism are mostly handled by the Council. International cooperation in the areas of human rights and humanitarian assistance comes in the fifth and last rank with 4.9% of the total. This meager size relative to the importance of these issues owes in part to the establishment of the UNHRC, as a subsidiary organ of the Assembly, in 2006. Admittedly, Chart (5) employs a quantitative approach that does not reflect the sensitivity of some specific subjects here and there. Nonetheless, this chart presents a

reasonably sound picture of the usual relative weights that the different clusters of issues usually occupy on the agenda of the Assembly.

The resolutions that the Assembly issued during the 64<sup>th</sup> session amounted to 301 resolutions, which is a little less than double the number of the main agenda items. These resolutions are either issued by the plenary session immediately or through recommendations from the aforesaid six subsidiary committees. And they could fit under one, two or more agenda items. Chart (6) below reflects the distribution of the 301 resolutions on the same substantive clusters in Chart (5) above. It should be noted, however, that there were three resolutions each falling under two different clusters and a fourth resolution purely procedural in nature. Subtracting the procedural resolution and adding three extra references, the number of resolutions translates into 303 references to substantive agenda items. At face value, the distribution in Chart (6) is different from that in Chart (5). One major factor behind this is that some agenda items do not produce any resolutions, whether because they are meant only for member states to take note or because they involve specific actions such as elections. But, this is also a reflection of the interests of member states, as some states would be more willing to propose resolutions on some items more than others. Consequently, unlike in Chart (5), peace, security and disarmament issues jump up to the first rank in Chart (6) with 30% of the total number of resolutions. This is slightly lower than the 31.7% these issues occupied in terms of agenda items. In particular, items related to the Middle East, independence of colonized territories and disarmament produce many resolutions, most of which pass through voting. Indeed, this corroborates the idea that peace and security issues usually feature as top priorities for member states, given their strategic, political and sometimes even existential value to some member states.

Chart (6)

Distribution of the United Nations General Assembly's Resolutions  
 (64<sup>th</sup> Session)



Source: Own elaboration, based on official documents and data on the UN website.

Resolutions on economic growth and development, including the environment, come second with 24.1% of the total number of resolutions, up from 13.4% of the total number of agenda items. Notably, for around two decades, these issues have been subject to a tug of war between developed and developing countries over their inclusion on the agenda. But the great majority of developing countries usually manages to force its will to some extent and keep most of these issues on the agenda, especially those related to economic and sustainable development. In response, however, developed countries attempt to dilute resolutions in these areas as much as possible, notwithstanding the common knowledge that they usually end up making no difference on the ground. Organizational, administrative and other issues come third with 23.4% of the total. While some agenda items under this cluster are used as bases for more than one resolution, this is the cluster where the majority of items that do not produce any resolution exist, and this is mostly why 40.2% of the agenda items produce only 23.4% of the resolutions. Nonetheless, these issues are clearly of significant importance to the general membership. Particularly, items related to UN reform, the budget and finance of

different UN missions, offices and international tribunals receive paramount attention from the general membership.

Resolutions on human rights and humanitarian issues figure fourth with 15.8% of the total number of resolutions, which is more than three times the 5% size of these items on the agenda. After peace and security issues, this is the second highest cluster in terms of resolutions passed through voting. In particular, resolutions related to human rights in specific countries and some other general, but contentious issues, such as the right to development, defamation of religions, racism and xenophobia, are significantly politicized and involve too wide divergences to pass by consensus. Although the establishment of the UNHRC has partially downsized the importance of these issues in the Assembly, they remain visible on the agenda, raise a lot of interest and sometimes even kindle public confrontations. Finally, international legal issues, including terrorism, moved down one step to the fifth rank with 6.6% of all resolutions, comparing to the fourth rank in terms of agenda items with 9.8%. Concerning terrorism specifically, the Assembly only issued one resolution during the 64<sup>th</sup> session, and it was adopted by consensus. In fact, the role of the Assembly in this area is mostly concentrated on negotiating the draft comprehensive anti-terrorism treaty, while the Council is considered the main UN authority on combating terrorism. From a wider perspective, however, global counter-terrorism efforts are marked with national, regional and global measures that fall completely outside the reach of the UN.

Remarkably, out of 301 resolutions, only 69 were subject to voting, i.e. less than a quarter of all resolutions, while the rest passed by consensus, i.e. without any single state objecting to them. Indeed, according to the working culture at the Assembly, consensus is the favorite way of doing business. However, the principal side-effect of this approach is that the sponsors of any resolution would have to accommodate all objections to the best possible extent, which ends up diluting the content and perhaps even distorting the original message. In contrast, resolutions that are considered unacceptable to any member state are destined to voting. And, usually, the sponsors of any resolution would not agree to submit it to voting, unless they are sure it would pass. Thus, the major advantage of voting is lessening the dilution of resolutions and helping preserve their focus. In general, the decision-making process is usually subject to trade-

offs and deals that could include exchange of support, besides political pressure and carrot-and-stick tactics.

### III. Reform Agenda

The current reform agenda in the Assembly was launched by the UN Millennium Review Summit in 2005. It has “revitalization” as its key word, which implies that the Assembly was vital at some point of time in the past and needs to be made more vital today. Indeed, the Assembly was more vital before the end of the Cold War, but this is only a relative fact, for the Assembly has always been a toothless forum. In any case, revitalization has been on the agenda of the Assembly since the end of the Cold War. In the latest episode, the 2004 report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change described the Assembly as a universal body of unique legitimacy that should be better used to reach global consensus on issues of great contemporary importance (UN, 2004). Most importantly, the panel identified two main keys to strengthening the role of the Assembly: focus and structure. In more detail, the panel thought that the main areas of Assembly’s reform should be reviewing its mandates in the light of current world realities, streamlining its agenda to keep focus and avoid repetition and reforming its committees to make them more efficient in terms of structure and more focused in terms of agenda. Partially, this comes in response to the misgivings of some of the powerful states about what they describe as pointless debates and redundancy in the Assembly. The panel also endorsed a recommendation by a preceding similar panel on establishing a better mechanism to enable systematic engagement with NGOs.

Afterwards, the Outcome Document of the 2005 UN Millennium Review Summit reaffirmed the central role of the Assembly as the main representative, deliberative and policymaking body of the UN as well as its role as a standard-setter and codifier of international law (UN, 2006). The document also called for the full and speedy implementation of previously agreed measures on strengthening the role and authority of the Assembly and its president and strengthening the relationship between the Assembly and the other principal UN organs. In addition, the document reflected the demands of many member states to exploit the full potential of the supervisory role of

the Assembly over all the other UN organs, and in particular to put an end to the so-called encroachment of the Council on the Assembly. In general, the reform process in the Assembly has been limiting itself to making it more visible, efficient and effective in discharging its mandate as prescribed by the Charter, without any reference to making it more powerful or expanding its mandate. At face value, this reflects satisfaction on the side of the general membership with the main dimensions of the current role of the Assembly. At the bottom, it also reflects the limits of feasibility of real politics of member states.

In light of the reform process, there are two themes of significant importance for the revitalization of the Assembly: its working methods and its role and authority, including the role of its president, the role of the Assembly in the appointment of the Secretary General and the relationship between the Assembly and other principal organs in general and the Council in particular. Firstly, and though mostly procedural in nature, the working methods of the Assembly seem to take a central stage in its current reform process. The most important dimension in this regard is the so-called mandate review. The 2005 Summit Outcome Document called for a review of all the mandates that are older than five years, whether originating from resolutions by the Assembly or other UN organs (UN, 2005). The main rationale behind this was the need for more focus on the most relevant issues, besides the imperative of optimizing the use of UN resources. Consequently, a working group was set up and undertook a comprehensive review of all those mandates during the 60<sup>th</sup>-62<sup>nd</sup> sessions of the Assembly. And one major contribution of this working group was the establishment of an online registry of the relevant mandates.

Ultimately, an inconclusive resolution was adopted in September 2008, acknowledging the difficulty of differentiating which mandates are associated with which budget resources, because of the inter-linkages of mandates and resources. As a result, the general membership could not decide on which mandates should be abolished. Over and above, the process did not lack politicization, as some member states showed tendency to take advantage of it to abolish the mandates that they oppose, including some mandates related to the Middle East conflict, economic development and human rights. Given this problem, it is clear, the political will is the most important



determinant, as member states are the ones that propose items on the agenda, adopt the agenda, sponsor resolutions with specific mandates and renew these mandates. Thus, whether or not the review process could have been concluded successfully, achieving any tangible progress would always depend on the political will of the general membership. On the positive side, however, ever since the 2005 Millennium Review Summit, the general membership has become more mandate-conscious and the issue has become a standing additional factor in Assembly's discussions, albeit within the known limits of what is acceptable and achievable.

As for the role and authority of the Assembly, the reference to this subject in the 2005 Summit Outcome Document encapsulates the more substantive aspirations of the general membership. There are three elements of special importance in this regard: the role of the president of the Assembly, the role of the Assembly in the appointment of the Secretary General and the relationship between the Assembly and the other principal organs in general and the Council in particular. Firstly, there has been a strong drive toward enhancing the role of the president of the Assembly and providing his/her office with the means required for this end. Notably, the Charter only refers to electing the president for each session, without any further clarifications. However, the president plays an important de-facto role in directing the work of the Assembly and representing it before the other organs and the outside world. With respect to the current reform process, among the tasks that the general membership seems to support vehemently are the organization of thematic debates at the initiative of the president and convening periodic meetings joining the presidents of the Assembly, the Council and the ECOSOC. For this purpose, the Assembly issued resolution (A/RES/64/301) in October 2010, which welcomed the establishment of a voluntary trust fund to support the office of the president, besides the regular resources of the budget.

With respect to the role of the Assembly in the appointment of the Secretary General, the current practice is such that after considering different candidates, the Council usually recommends a low-profile personality to the Assembly for appointment. Because this is considered a substantive issue, the candidate nominated by the Council must have the support of the five permanent members. Hence, these five states practically dominate the process, with even other Council's members barely

playing a marginal role. In turn, and due to political considerations, the Assembly never declines to appoint the single recommended candidate, which limits its role to rubber-stamping the choice of the Council. The debate about this issue has been resurfacing throughout the UN lifetime. In this regard, member states seem to have different interpretations of Article (97) of the Charter, which states that “the Secretary General shall be appointed by the Assembly upon the recommendation of the Council.” While a great majority of member states think that Article (97) is not fully respected in real practice, the permanent five members insist that the established practice is consistent with the article. During the current reform process, a great majority of member states has come anew to call for a bigger role for the Assembly in the process. More specifically, they demand that the process be all-inclusive, more transparent and respect the rules of regional rotation and gender equality. As a result, in October 2010, resolution (A/RES/64/301) of the Assembly invited its president to consult with member states to identify potential candidates and then ultimately forward the results of these consultations to the Council. The resolution also called for ensuring that the Assembly has sufficient time for considering the candidates ahead of the due replacement date. It remains to be seen, however, if this resolution will be put to practice in the next selection process and how.

Finally, strengthening the relationship between the Assembly and the other principal organs is perhaps the most contentious demand of the great majority of non-permanent member states. Notably, the Charter states that there are six principal organs: the Assembly, the Council, the ECOSOC, the defunct Trusteeship Council, the ICJ and the Secretariat. On one side, non-permanent member states call for the full implementation of Charter provisions on the supervisory role of the Assembly over all the other organs. On the other side, the permanent members insist that the Charter did not subordinate any organ to the other. Resolution (A/RES/64/301) of October 2010 reflected the least common denominator in this regard. Most importantly, the resolution reaffirmed the role and authority of the Assembly, including with respect to issues of international peace and security, as prescribed by the Charter. In addition, it called for more cooperation, coordination and exchange of information among the principal organs, including through periodic meetings among the presidents of these organs. It

also encouraged the Secretary General to report more often to the Assembly on his activities, in an attempt to assert the authority of the Assembly over the Secretariat.

Normally, the main focus of the controversy over the relationship between the Assembly and the other organs is the Council, where non-permanent member states denounce what they describe as the encroachment of the Council on the Assembly. In contrast, the permanent members stress that the mandates of the two organs are distinct and that there is no room for enhancing the role of the Assembly at the expense of the Council. In fact, one has seen an expansion of the scope of work of the Council over the last few years. This is particularly obvious with respect to new challenges that are considered to be related to international peace and security in fields such as human rights, humanitarian aid, gender equality, energy and climate change, which are all fields that fall most directly within the mandate of the Assembly. In contrast, in the core area of peace and security, the Assembly can hardly make any difference in cases where the Council fails to act. There is no doubt that the Charter distinguishes the Council as the primary authority in this area, but it also provides windows for the Assembly to complement the role of the Council. Unfortunately, these windows are rarely allowed, even in cases where the Council is paralyzed, because of the tendency of the five permanent members to avoid going to the Assembly as opposed to doing business in their favorite, permanent club. Even more, the Council is accustomed to ignoring Assembly's resolutions reflecting the will of the general membership on some specific issues. The reluctance of the Council to give more space for the Assembly and its tendency to ignore the latter's resolutions alienate the general membership, while failing to act discredits the UN as a whole, not only the Council, before the world.

After more than five years from launching the last reform process in the Assembly, many resolutions have been passed, but the main points of disagreement remain unresolved. Although issuing resolutions indicates general agreement on elements of reform and entails responsibilities as to implementation, many member states continue to complain about lack of implementation of Assembly's resolutions, including some of the very resolutions on its revitalization. In an attempt to address these complaints, a working group was established to investigate the matter. In May 2008, this working group issued a chart of the revitalization resolutions' provisions that

have not yet been put to practice. And resolution (A/RES/64/301) of October 2010 requested this working group to undertake a comprehensive review of that chart and invited the Secretary General to provide updates on the implementation of the provisions addressed to the Secretariat. In fact, this whole saga brings up the problems related to the large size, endless debates and lack of binding force in Assembly's resolutions. But even more importantly, it indicates a clear lack of political will on the side of some member states to indeed revitalize the Assembly.

Moreover, paradoxically, the current reform process itself has led to some erosion of the authority of the Assembly, due mainly to the creation of new organs and newly introduced reforms in development activities. For instance, the establishment of the UNHRC in 2006 came in response to demands by many Western countries spearheaded by the USA, in an attempt to better enforce universal human rights. And although the UNHRC was ultimately established as a subsidiary organ of the Assembly, it has in practice chopped off some of the Assembly's authority in this area, human rights. Consequently, today, we see many countries demanding that the subsidiary relationship between the UNHRC and the Assembly be respected. Another example is reforms introduced after the 2006 report of the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence. Most importantly, these reforms include gradual decentralization of the administration and policy guidance of UN development activities (UN, 2006). Accordingly, nation-wide offices of the UNDP have been further enhanced to serve as national coordination hubs of all UN development activities. At the central level, the UNDP headquarters have similarly become the core hub of policymaking and funding of UN development activities throughout the world.

#### IV. Optimum Role

It seems that the Assembly is facing double jeopardy, losing ground to other forums inside as well as outside the world body, while the UN as a whole is facing marginalization at the global level. In particular, this trend has started to gain force with the end of the Cold War. From the outset, the sudden change in global power politics, with the collapse of the former Soviet Union, led to imbalances in the world body (Boutros-Ghali, 2005). After a short-lived euphoric stage, new political realities started

to take root and the dominance of one superpower turned out to be detrimental to the UN. Now that there is a lot of controversy about the decline of the USA and whether the world order is still unipolar and for how long more, there is an obvious fact: a less than unipolar world order could leave more space for multilateral cooperation. Unfortunately, even the relative decline of the USA does not help the UN much. Instead of relying more on the only global multilateral forum of its kind, the UN, the USA seems to favor new informal, selective multilateral forums that could help achieve its objectives at the lowest possible cost.

On the economic level, the collapse of the philosophy of central economic planning opened the way for a sweeping victory by the counter philosophy of free-market economy, which led to radical changes in the rules of global economic governance. Ever since, the whole world, the UN and its Assembly included, has been moving gradually toward further reliance on free-market mechanisms. Along the way, wealthy member states have been pushing for further whittling away at the mandate of the Assembly in economic and social areas to the benefit of external forums. Notably, this readjustment of roles serves the interests of wealthy member states in several ways, including moving the focus of development issues to forums where they have a better bargaining balance, rationalizing development programs and minimizing the financial resources they have to deploy for them. In contrast, developing member states have been resisting further marginalization of the role of the Assembly in these areas, using their overwhelming voting majority. Nonetheless, this resistance has been largely ineffective due to, among others, the fact that from the practical point of view, it is the wealthy minority that provides financial lifelines for development programs. In the meantime, globalization has been accelerating and its divides between the haves and have-nots have been widening and sharpening, thus posing dangers to globalization itself and to international stability.

Nonetheless, the Assembly remains one of the most highly esteemed organs of the UN, second in line only to the Council. While membership in the Council is limited to 15, the Assembly enjoys a quasi-global membership with 193 member states. Thus, for the great majority of UN member states, the Assembly is the highest-profile global forum of its kind. Hence, each member state sends some of its best diplomats to

represent it before the UN headquarters in New York. And each of them considers its contribution to the work of the Assembly with maximum interest and care. They all know that resolutions issued by the Assembly lack any reliable power of enforcement, but they continue to view the Assembly as an indispensable platform for the expression of state positions and views about issues of international cooperation. In fact, the Assembly is considered to be the most supreme source of international legitimacy. In particular, the process of examining resolutions attests to this fact, with member states resorting to different tools and means in earnest in order to pass the resolutions that they sponsor, co-sponsor or consider worthy of support, while at the same time attempting to block those that they consider unacceptable or detrimental.

Of course, the political will of UN member states, as reflected in UN official documents, is what matters most at the end. In other words, it is member states that steer the path of the UN and chart its future development. However, member states move within the boundaries of political feasibility, which usually forces them to apply least common denominators rather than the best possible remedies to problems. In addition, unlike business corporations, political organizations, such as the UN, are generally slow in responding to external change impulses. Furthermore, historical experience indicates that reform in the UN is usually a complicated process that could possibly end up failing to resolve some of the most critical issues. Nonetheless, reform remains a must if the world body is to adapt to the evolution of the surrounding environment. And, sooner or later, the forces of change may impose themselves and feed into some kind of action. Attempting to look at how the Assembly could contribute to addressing the current challenges of global governance, one may use a perspective that is different from the political one of the general membership. Indeed, this is a luxury of research, but it is also about how research contributes to change in the real world and why politicians listen to intellectuals.

It is clear that powerful countries do not favor such large forums as the Assembly. In contrast, these countries prefer to do business in smaller forums, such as the Council, or selective, informal forums such as the G-20. In this regard, it is indeed worth pondering why these countries continue to encourage democratic schizophrenia between national and international structures. Claims against such forums as the

Assembly often include time waste because of its huge size and dilution of agreements because of the need to reconcile the positions of more parties. In contrast, smaller forums, especially those where powerful countries enjoy unparalleled privileges, help do business swiftly and more effectively. However, one could have strong rebuttals to these claims. First, marginalizing such global forums as the Assembly defies the credibility of calls for universal democratic values. While applying state democracy at the international level does not seem feasible, a greater deal of democratization is demanded by a great majority of states and this could make a substantial shift in global governance. Certainly, all states are affected by decisions on global governance to varying degrees and all of them have legitimate rights to participate in these decisions. Second, this phenomenon is also counterproductive in terms of effectiveness. One major advantage of the UN is burden-sharing and this could only be best guaranteed in the Assembly. Third, as for time waste, it seems sufficient to say that if national problems deserve enough investment in terms of time and effort, then global problems deserve the same kind of treatment at least. Fourth, admitting that agreements reached in informal forums could be more practical, they are not as legally secure as those reached in formal forums such as the UN. Fifth, the Assembly offers otherwise excluded members the chance to raise problems that they face. And there is ample evidence that in our globalized world today, no single country is negligible in terms of its potential negative impact on its neighbors or even the whole world. Sixth, the UN at large has some expertise and experiences that are hard to find anywhere else.

Hence, it is contended that the role of the Assembly in global governance should be enhanced. Contrary to common wisdom, this does not necessarily require Charter amendment. Rather, it needs political will, which if in place could easily pave the way for any necessary Charter amendment. In any case, enhancing the role of the Assembly could be realized through a number of basic means. First, the Assembly should be enabled to perform its mandate to the letter and spirit of the provisions of the Charter. Thus, powerful member states, such as the permanent five, should cease to block elements of the Assembly's legitimate mandate to protect individual or selective interests. In particular, the Assembly should be better empowered to intervene in cases of peace and security if the Council fails to act timely and appropriately. Second,



member states should commit to enforce the Assembly's resolutions on all without exception. The moral value of these resolutions is indeed well-grounded, but this needs to be complemented with binding force. Third, the current laggard reform process in the Assembly should be concluded as soon as possible in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Ultimately, if need arises, Charter amendment to enhance the role of the Assembly should be considered.

As part of this research, there was a field study on a sample of 50 professionals in the fields of diplomacy, international organizations and academia, drawn from a diversified set of 32 countries, including some of the permanent five and some of the least developed countries (please refer to the Appendix). The field study was undertaken through a questionnaire that sought the personal views of the sample participants in response to eleven questions about the current multilateral system. Six of these questions are about the UN and three deal exclusively with the Assembly. For the moment, the three questions about the Assembly are worth consideration. Firstly, asking the participants if they think the Assembly should play a bigger role in global governance, 38 participants or 76% agreed, while eight participants or 16% were undecided and only four participants or 8% disagreed. Indeed, these results reflect a strong cross-cutting support to the notion that the Assembly should be enhanced. Notably, 18 participants or 36% even expressed strong agreement to this suggestion, while 20 participants or 40% were satisfied with unqualified agreement. On the negative side, only one participant strongly disagreed with the idea, i.e. 2% of the sample, while three participants or 6% simply disagreed.

Secondly, moving on to the more specific theme of peace and security, the sample participants were asked for their views on whether the Assembly should be further empowered to step in if the Council fails to deliver. The support to this proposition was less than that to the previous general one, with 32 participants or 64% in support. Still, this remains a clear majority in support of such a controversial suggestion. And, remarkably, strong support to it came from 20 participants or 40%, while 12 participants or 24% were in simple agreement. On the other side, seven participants or 14% were neutral, and the number of those disagreeing was 11 participants, including eight or 22% in disagreement and three or 6% in strong



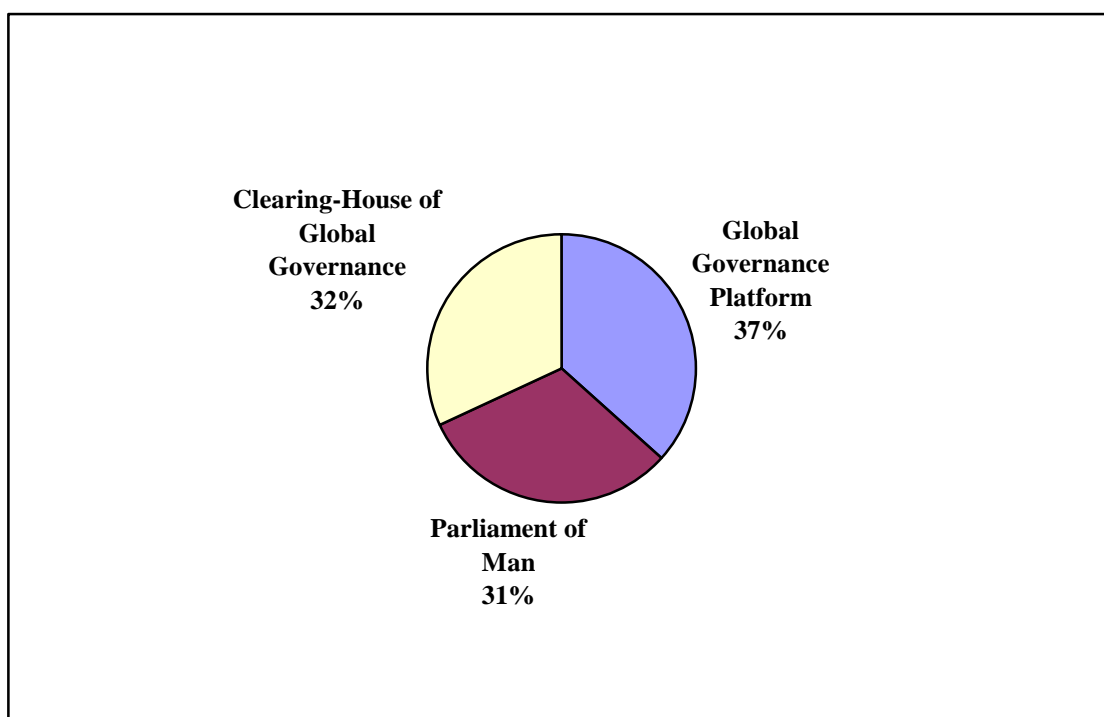
disagreement. The reading of these results indicates strong overall support to empowering the Assembly to play a bigger role in the area of peace and security, while respecting the primary responsibility of the Council. To some extent, this reflects the positions of the permanent five members, especially their insistence that authorization of sanctions or use of force in cases of breach of peace should remain within the strict confines of the Council. In particular, the 40% of participants in strong support to a bigger role for the Assembly in this area reflects larger despair on the side of a wide range of stakeholders with the Council. Expectedly, this is the case of participants coming from countries with acrimonious conflicts that the Council has failed to resolve so far, whether because of complexity or lack of means. It is also the case of those coming from less powerful or marginal countries that feel some sort of double standards or lack of justice in the work of the Council.

Thirdly, the questionnaire sought the views of the sample participants on what role they consider most appropriate for the Assembly by asking them to put in order three suggested alternatives: global governance platform, i.e. the highest global decision-making forum; parliament of man, i.e. a parliament of states with legislative and supervisory powers; or a clearing house of global governance, i.e. a mechanism to enforce the necessary complementarities in international cooperation. Notably, these options reflect the historical debate on the Assembly and the more current arguments on transforming the UN into a world government. It should also be noted that one fundamental assumption in this regard is that all member states would fully implement the pronouncements of the Assembly under any of the three alternative scenarios. Hence, there is no need to speak of Charter amendment. To allow for proportionality, the answers were given weights ranging from three for coming first, two for second and one for third (please refer to Chart 7 below). The analysis of the results indicates that being a global governance forum is the most appealing alternative, with 108 out of 294 overall points or about 37% of the total. The alternative of clearing house of global governance came second with 94 points or about 32%, while that of global parliament came last with 92 points or around 31%. Clearly, the differences between the three alternatives are very tight, which reflects some deal of confusion, albeit understandable given the interference between the alternatives and the complexity of the subject. It is

also worth noting that although the alternative of a clearing house of global governance came second, two sample participants only ticked it, indicating that they think it is the only viable alternative.

Chart (7)

Roles of the United Nations General Assembly



Source: Own elaboration based on the results of a field questionnaire (see the Appendix).

Looking at the results in more detail, the alternative of global parliament received the least points, although the functions of the Assembly today significantly resemble those of parliaments. Perhaps this is because the main problem of the world today is lack of effective governance, not parliamentary supervision per se. Besides, the parliamentary aspects of the Assembly's work are not visible enough, with its supervisory role over other UN organs mostly low-profile and bureaucratic, and its semi-legislative, norm-setting role fairly technical in nature. On the contrary, the alternative of global governance platform received the strongest support, in spite of the obvious lack of enforcement power in the Assembly and the wide dismissal of the idea of global government as an infeasible and undesirable one. Hence, it is clear, the

Assembly continues to be viewed as a governance platform rather than a parliamentary one. Finally, the second most popular alternative, clearing-house of global governance, is obviously closer to governance than parliamentary functions. However, it is softer in nature than the two other alternatives, given the fact that coordination of international policies is already one of the important tasks of the Assembly today, albeit without tangible difference on the ground.

Notably, the above three questions imply a need for some enhancement in the powers and functions of the Assembly. And this is particularly the case with respect to the three aforementioned alternatives on its optimum role. Of course, any enlargement in the mandate of the Assembly would require amending the Charter, and this is perhaps the most secure way to ensure that the desired results would take root. However, those three questions were intentionally drafted in a general language, without any reference to amending the Charter. There are three main justifications for this approach: one is that amending the Charter for the purpose of enhancing the role of the Assembly does not really figure on the agenda of the world body today, neither does it seem to receive reliable support from the general membership. Second, and perhaps even more importantly, the decisive determinant here is indeed the political will, not the legal imperative. To put it otherwise, if there is a will, there is a way. And if there is enough will to reform the Assembly and make it a powerful central stage of global governance, then amending the Charter would not stand in the way. Third, enhancing the role of the Assembly does not always have to go through Charter amendment. On the contrary, some of the most critical demands in the current reform process are already covered either by the Charter or specific resolutions, including with respect to the intervention of the Assembly in cases where the Council fails to act, the supervisory role of the Assembly over all the other UN organs and its role in the selection process of the Secretary General.

The field research also revealed some additional comments on the predicaments of the Assembly and how they could be treated (please refers to the Appendix). In addition to supporting the need for a strong Assembly, some participants underlined the problems of lack of binding force in Assembly's resolutions and consensus voting in the UN in general. And, in response, one participant suggested that all Assembly's

resolutions be made binding on all member states without exception. Another participant proposed that the application of consensus decision-making be limited to areas of utmost importance such as use of force and imposing sanctions. Once more, these comments echo the calls for enhancing the role of the Assembly in global governance. In particular, they assert the argument that the Assembly should be made more effective by ensuring the implementation of its decisions and streamlining its decision-making process.

To sum up, the Assembly is no doubt a unique forum of international cooperation, particularly in view of its representativeness and status as the main deliberative, norm-setting and policy-making organ of multilateral cooperation. Respect for the Assembly is clearly reflected in the attitudes of the UN general membership, whether in terms of participation or esteem. By virtue of the Charter, the Assembly has mandate on all issues of international cooperation, including peace and security. However, apart from the moral weight, the Assembly lacks any reliable power of enforcement, whether internally or externally. Moreover, over the last few years, it has been losing ground to other forums inside as well as outside the world body. Notably, the current reform process in the Assembly, launched in 2005, is predicated on the so-called "revitalization", i.e. reform within the basic dimensions of its current chartered powers and functions. Indeed, this reflects the least common denominator of real politics inside the Assembly. Unfortunately, the reform process has not made any tangible difference on the ground. Even more, the very resolutions the assembly has issued on revitalization lack implementation and follow-up. Furthermore, paradoxically, some of the other UN reforms have contributed to further marginalization of the Assembly, including the establishment of the UNHRC and reforms related to system-wide coherence.

In contrast to current trends, a field questionnaire as part of this research reveals strong support to empowering the Assembly to serve a bigger role in global governance, including with respect to issues of international peace and security if the Council fails to act timely and appropriately. And, in an attempt to envisage what role could be best-fit for the Assembly, the results of the questionnaire indicate preference for it to act as a central hub of global governance, as opposed to a clearing-house of international

cooperation or a parliament of man. Indeed, the Assembly has the basic characteristics of a would-be effective platform of global governance, if member states commit to making it so. The basic steps on such a road could be to enable the Assembly to exercise its whole mandate, empower it with enough tools to enforce its decisions on all member states without exception and conclude the current reform process as soon as possible. Admittedly, the vast size of the Assembly restricts its pace of movement. It could also lead to dilution of decisions because of consensus-building compromises. But, the outcomes of its often cumbersome decision-making process certainly reflect the collective will of the international community better than in most other forums, which makes these outcomes more democratic and legitimate. In practical terms, such legitimate outcomes would also enjoy the widest possible support in terms of implementation, which helps boost the effectiveness of global governance.

### Afterword

The international multilateral system has been facing challenges ever since its inception after World War II. One could even say that the system has been always in some kind of crisis. Yet, since the end of the Cold War, the system has been witnessing some tectonic metamorphoses, together with some unprecedented challenges. And, especially over the last few years, these metamorphoses have accentuated, mainly due to driving forces such as the consequences of the war on Iraq and the latest international economic crisis. The main motivation behind this research is to examine in detail the current state of the system, with a view to shedding light on its main determinants and drawing some practical recommendations for the future. Naturally, to undertake this task, one has to underline the basic elements of the historical legacy of the system. And because this is a dynamic subject, one also has to highlight the main trends of evolution. This afterword is principally intended to recapitulate the main arguments and suggestions presented in the research. And, in order to be concise, this will take a numbered form as follows:

First, the technological revolution has brought about unprecedented connectivity and interdependence. In parallel, there has been globalization of challenges and opportunities. And, in particular, there has been proliferation of transnational challenges, increasing sense of common human destiny, globalization of values and paradigms and an evolving global public opinion. Consequently, global governance has become a sophisticated exercise and the world has become a place marked with chronic problems, including lack of governance and lack of order. Moreover, globalization has brought along strong antagonists, whether at the international level, such as anti-globalization movements, or at the national level such as nationalistic movements. Undoubtedly, these movements challenge the core of globalization, highlight its malfunctions, put its benefits at risk and some of them even threaten of plunging the world into chaos.

Second, as stated earlier, the world setting today is fraught with problems in all areas of international relations. In security, not even the most powerful of countries feel

reasonably safe and the notions of national and collective security have undergone shocks that mandated their redefinition to address new challenges, such as terrorism, besides old festering challenges such as weapons of mass destruction, increasing internal conflicts and intractable interstate ones. In the economic domain, vicious circles of financial and economic crises have been haunting the world, which has led to reversals and retreats in economic globalization in some areas. In addition, globalization continues to create sharp divides between haves and have-nots, and its promise of better living standards for all has turned out to be futile, which further puts globalization at risk. Another major problem area is that of global environmental degradation, caused mostly by irresponsible depletion of vital resources and continuing growth of population. As a result, the world seems to be going along an ominous course, especially with the cycles of natural disasters accelerating and accentuating.

Third, national interests always come first and only after satisfying them to the best possible level, can come international or global interests. In fact, this is only natural, as the private always comes before the public. Even inside countries, local interests usually have priority over national ones. Thus, more precisely, the problem in international politics is the lack of a system similar to state systems, one that is capable of delimiting the lines between what is private and what is public and ensuring overall wellbeing. Perhaps even more importantly, it seems that no one wants to move first and strike good example for others, even at the level of super and great powers. However, global interests do not have to come at the expense of national ones. Indeed, this is a problem of process not principles. In other words, global governance can be improved to serve global causes better without contradicting with national interests, if the necessary political will is in place. And, while multilateral institutions lack wills of their own, member states make up the collective will of these institutions. Thus, it is clear, the responsibility on lack of effective global governance falls on nation-states. Unless nation-states provide adequate backing to multilateral cooperation in any specific area, there can be no progress in this area.

Fourth, multilateral institutions, such as the UN, are the most sublime embodiment of the human aspiration for mutual security, stability and prosperity. And, in practice, all countries benefit from the system somehow. While powerful countries



are the main players and tend to view the system as a tool to promote their interests, marginal countries form a far bigger mass and tend to view it as a means to protect their fundamental rights and middle-size countries form some kind of middle class with mixed interests. Hence, all countries have interest in the continuation of the system and all of them show some keenness to maintain it and enhance its effectiveness. Nonetheless, the system has been in some kind of crisis ever since its establishment. And, today, it is facing many more dire challenges, including problems related to lack of representative legitimacy, growing irrelevance and lack of order in the surrounding political environment.

Fifth, given the current state of affairs in the multilateral system, there are several imperatives of change. First, the world has seen some significant shifts in power over the last two decades. Emerging powerhouses, such as the so-called BRICS and some other prominent regional powers, demand bigger stakes in the system. These powerhouses should be accommodated or the system will continue to lack legitimacy and effectiveness. Second, power has become diffuse among state and non-state actors such as NGOs and TNCs. These new actors are playing an increasingly influential role in world politics and are challenging state authority and the legitimacy of the multilateral system. Thus, the system needs to find a consensual formula for the integration of these actors, one that ensures the maximization of their positive contributions and the minimization of any related drawbacks. Third, the very nature of international challenges has changed. Today, globalization has brought along proliferating challenges that are truly global. In the meantime, the business as usual practice of improvising partial means to address these challenges has proven ill-advised. The multilateral system needs to undertake a holistic review of its approach to the challenges of the day and, where necessary, to amend its governing functional and legal frameworks for that purpose.

Sixth, the UN is the core hub of the multilateral system, and it is largely viewed as an indispensable organization. Over its lifetime, it has had many successes and has managed to survive many shocks. However, the UN was created for another world, that of post World War II. This is still clear in the distribution of power inside the world body and its rules and working methods. Ultimately, today, it is facing bitter criticisms

and even some existential attacks. Its recurrent failure to address serious challenges have discredited it, forced it into increasing marginalization and imposed high costs in terms of overall global wellbeing. But from all the challenges facing the UN today, there are two that seem particularly decisive for its future. One is the challenge of representative legitimacy, where shifts in real power distribution in the world are rendering the power formula inside the UN outdated and untenable. And the other is the challenge of relevance to the current world setting, given the sophisticated nature of globalization and the ongoing shifts in world order. It is feared that unless the UN manages to face up to these challenges with adequate political will, it would face further marginalization over the coming years. Hence, the world body is in the focus of calls for reform today.

Seventh, reform has been a lasting item on the agendas of all the major multilateral institutions since their establishment, which appears to be an ongoing struggle to catch up with developments in the surrounding environment. Unfortunately, by nature, reform in the multilateral system is a complicated, time-consuming and resource-consuming process. In the meantime, the forces of globalization have been evolving fast, which further widens the gap between the system and the real world. In addition, reform processes are subject to the test of the political will of member states, which usually forces these processes into a least-common-denominator approach. The conventional preference for consensus on reform decisions usually dilutes reform agendas and could even leave out some of the most essential elements of needed reforms. Across the board, this applies to the UN system, the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO. Moreover, the tendency of opponents to suggested reforms to employ divide-and-rule tactics, together with the propensity to tie several reform elements in packages, could easily derail or stall whole reform processes.

Eighth, in parallel to reform processes in different multilateral institutions, talk of reform has been gaining new ground in academic circles over the last few years. However, most academic work focuses on needed reforms without tackling the more challenging question of how to implement them. In contrast, there are three noteworthy suggested reform approaches: the trans-governmental networks approach, the power club/executive committee approach and the twin proposals of concert of democracies

and “global NATO.” Each of these approaches attempts to steer a path to effective global governance. Nevertheless, none of them presents a convincing case. It is true that trans-governmental networks are playing an increasing role in global governance, but the proclamation of a new world order driven by such networks seems exaggerated and it is even doubtful that they could lead to significant change in world politics. In turn, power clubs or executive global committees could get more things done faster, but such forums snag on lack of inclusiveness and sustainability, which are also basic foundations for effectiveness. Finally, the proposals of concert of democracies and “global NATO” are principally driven by exclusive, parochial ideology, raise more controversy than support and even suffer from lack of coherence and relevance to the current global environment.

Ninth, so far, practical responses to evolving world politics have taken trends that do not augur well for the multilateral system. Most importantly, there has been an increasing propensity to rely on selective, informal multilateral forums such as the G-20. And this has been principally driven by the USA, the yet sole superpower. Faced with its decline relative to others, the USA seems to have readjusted its foreign policy in favor of informal multilateral cooperation. This approach helps raise support for the USA from capable partners, while preserving and prolonging its supremacy. In fact, this goes in line with theories such as multilateralism *à la carte* and multi-multilateralism, which are most likely to shape the future. Another potential scenario would be a relapse into multipolar power politics. This scenario is mainly driven by emerging powers from the South, especially the BRICS who openly seek a multipolar world order as a means to better multilateralism. While this could be a feasible approach to effective multilateralism, it risks getting stalled at the intermediate stage of multipolarity, especially with the continuing unwillingness on the side of traditional great powers to accommodate emerging ones in multilateral forums such as the UN Security Council. A third alternative scenario would be effective multilateralism, sought most vehemently by the EU. Basically, this is a scenario of inclusive, formal and more responsive multilateralism. It is also one where the UN occupies the central stage and one that accommodates regional organizations. However, this appears to be more a hope than a

realistic scenario given the fact that current trends impose intractable difficulties on the way to constructing such a system.

Tenth, nation-states are the principal players in the multilateral system. Accordingly, the potential future course of the system depends in the first place on the policies of member states. In particular, the policies of traditional powerhouses, such as the USA and Russia, and those of emerging ones such as the EU, China and India, are crucial in this regard. The policies of these powerhouses are also decisive to better ensure against the potential of global chaos and harness globalization for common good. But, one needs to distinguish the role of the USA. Notwithstanding its relative decline recently, the USA is expected to remain the sole superpower in the foreseeable future. Hence, it is the most qualified player to lead the world into the future. Besides nation-states, non-state actors, such as NGOs and TNCs, also play important catalytic roles. These actors have been further consolidating themselves over the last few years, and their future relationships with nation-states and the multilateral system will undoubtedly influence the potential course of global governance.

Eleventh, it is widely accepted that a global government along the lines of state governments is neither desirable nor feasible. What is needed instead is to reform the multilateral system so that it satisfies three basic criteria: effectiveness, representativeness and accountability. Effectiveness is needed to address the challenges of the current age and to capitalize on its opportunities for overall good. It is also a foundation for what is called the functional legitimacy of the system, i.e. its ability to make a difference on the ground. In turn, representativeness is essential to ensure that the power formula inside the system conforms with real power distribution, which is a prerequisite for sufficient formal legitimacy. Representativeness is also a basic requirement for the stability, sustainability and effectiveness of the system, as its lack exposes it to counterbalancing acts and deprives it of some of the contributions of the disaffected actors. Finally, accountability is necessary to guarantee that the system works for all the stakeholders on equitable footing and to provide checks and balances on its performance. In particular, mechanisms of accountability include the integration of NGOs in the system, with these organizations relaying the voices of world public

opinion and putting pressure on nation-states and multilateral institutions to act more responsibly and transparently.

Twelfth, the UN General Assembly is a unique multilateral forum, in view of its quasi-global, even membership and its status as the main deliberative, norm-setting and policy-making organ of multilateral cooperation. However, the Assembly is largely viewed as a talk-shop that lacks enforcement tools. In addition, its current reform process is confined to the so-called revitalization, i.e. reform within the existing parameters. Still, this process has not yielded tangible results, if not counterproductive ones. In turn, the UN Security Council, the club of the powerful, has recurrently suffered from paralysis and failure and continues to face intractable hurdles on its way to reform. In this regard, reform in the Assembly could be the key to addressing problems of global governance more effectively, including those related to peace and security. More specifically, the role of the Assembly should be enhanced through such means as enabling it to discharge its full mandate, committing all member states to implementing its decisions without exception and concluding its current laggard reform process as soon as possible. If the world manages to effect these changes, it will have laid down a strong foundation for the way forward with reform.

Thirteenth, the UN General Assembly is undoubtedly the best available multilateral forum against the standard of representativeness. This representativeness provides it with unique legitimacy, which is essential for effectiveness. And the wide participation of state and non-state actors in its work makes it a better accountable forum. Nonetheless, some great powers show propensity to avoid the Assembly in preference for such smaller forums as the UN Security Council and the G-20, where it is relatively easier and more efficient to do business. Besides being prejudicial, this kind of attitudes is also unjustifiable. Marginalizing such a unique forum as the Assembly defies the values of democracy and equality and deprives the multilateral system of better burden-sharing and effectiveness. In addition, informal forums, such as the G-20, do not provide legally secure outcomes and do not guarantee sustainable progress. However, it should be highlighted, this is not to argue against the roles of multilateral forums other than the Assembly. On the contrary, it is acknowledged, each of these forums could contribute a share in its specific area. Instead, the main argument here is

that we need a properly ordered multilateral system, where the UN, and especially its Assembly, acts as a core hub.

Fourteenth, a field questionnaire, administered on a sample of 50 participants related to the subject of this research from 32 countries, reveals a number of indicative results. First, it reflects general dissatisfaction with both the performance of the multilateral system and its current reform efforts. Second, the participants thought that the main challenges to the system are, in order, the complexity of current challenges, lack of political will, global power shifts and the proliferation of actors. Third, concerning the most likely future course of the system, the participants considered maintaining the *status quo*/lack of clear direction as the most probable scenario, followed, in order, by multilateralism *à la carte*/multi-multilateralism, re-emergence of multipolarity, effective multilateralism and global chaos. Fourth, though controversial, there was a simple majority in agreement with the possibility of adapting state democracy to the international setting. Fifth, most participants expected the UN to play a significant role in global governance in the future. Sixth, with respect to the UN General Assembly, most participants were of the view that its role should be enhanced, including in the area of peace and security if the UN Security Council fails to act. Seventh, it was also clear that the Assembly continues to be largely viewed as a global governance body, rather than as a parliamentary forum or a coordination hub. More specifically, the participants thought that the Assembly should serve as the highest global decision-making platform. Eighth, a big majority were in support of enlarging the Security Council. Ninth, choosing from three suggested options for dealing with the veto right, there was a clear preference for abrogating it outright, followed by extending it to potential new permanent members and keeping the *status quo*.

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## **Annexes**

### **Annex (I)**

#### **United Nations Charter Articles on the General Assembly**

##### ***CHAPTER IV***

##### **THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

##### **Composition**

###### ***Article 9***

1. The General Assembly shall consist of all the Members of the United Nations.
2. Each member shall have not more than five representatives in the General Assembly.

##### **Functions and Powers**

###### ***Article 10***

The General Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter, and, except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters.

###### ***Article 11***

1. The General Assembly may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments, and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both.
2. The General Assembly may discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security brought before it by any Member of the United Nations, or by the Security Council, or by a state which is not a Member of the United Nations in accordance with Article 35, paragraph 2, and, except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations with regard to any such questions to the state or states concerned or to the Security Council or to both. Any such question on which action is necessary shall be referred to the Security Council by the General Assembly either before or after discussion.



3. The General Assembly may call the attention of the Security Council to situations which are likely to endanger international peace and security.

4. The powers of the General Assembly set forth in this Article shall not limit the general scope of Article 10.

### ***Article 12***

1. While the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it in the present Charter, the General Assembly shall not make any recommendation with regard to that dispute or situation unless the Security Council so requests.

2. The Secretary-General, with the consent of the Security Council, shall notify the General Assembly at each session of any matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security which are being dealt with by the Security Council and shall similarly notify the General Assembly, or the Members of the United Nations if the General Assembly is not in session, immediately the Security Council ceases to deal with such matters.

### ***Article 13***

1. The General Assembly shall initiate studies and make recommendations for the purpose of:

a. promoting international cooperation in the political field and encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification;

b. promoting international cooperation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields, and assisting in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

2. The further responsibilities, functions and powers of the General Assembly with respect to matters mentioned in paragraph 1(b) above are set forth in Chapters IX and X.

### ***Article 14***

Subject to the provisions of Article 12, the General Assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations, including situations resulting from a violation of the provisions of the present Charter setting forth the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.

### ***Article 15***

1. The General Assembly shall receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council; these reports shall include an account of the measures that the Security Council has decided upon or taken to maintain international peace and security.



2. The General Assembly shall receive and consider reports from the other organs of the United Nations.

### ***Article 16***

The General Assembly shall perform such functions with respect to the international trusteeship system as are assigned to it under Chapters XII and XIII, including the approval of the trusteeship agreements for areas not designated as strategic.

### ***Article 17***

1. The General Assembly shall consider and approve the budget of the Organization.

2. The expenses of the Organization shall be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly.

3. The General Assembly shall consider and approve any financial and budgetary arrangements with specialized agencies referred to in Article 57 and shall examine the administrative budgets of such specialized agencies with a view to making recommendations to the agencies concerned.

## **Voting**

### ***Article 18***

1. Each member of the General Assembly shall have one vote.

2. Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council, the election of members of the Trusteeship Council in accordance with paragraph 1(c) of Article 86, the admission of new Members to the United Nations, the suspension of the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the trusteeship system, and budgetary questions.

3. Decisions on other questions, Composition including the determination of additional categories of questions to be decided by a two-thirds majority, shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting.

### ***Article 19***

A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The General Assembly may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.

## **Procedure**

### ***Article 20***

The General Assembly shall meet in regular annual sessions and in such special sessions as occasion may require. Special sessions shall be convoked by the Secretary-General at the request of the Security Council or of a majority of the Members of the United Nations.

### ***Article 21***

The General Assembly shall adopt its own rules of procedure. It shall elect its President for each session.

### ***Article 22***

The General Assembly may establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

## Annex (II)

### The Uniting for Peace Resolution

#### Resolution 377 (V)

##### A

#### *The General Assembly*

*Recognizing* that the first two stated Purposes of the United Nations are:

"To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace", and

"To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace",

*Reaffirming* that it remains the primary duty of all Members of the United Nations, when involved in an international dispute, to seek settlement of such a dispute by peaceful means through the procedures laid down in Chapter VI of the Charter, and recalling the successful achievements of the United Nations in this regard on a number of previous occasions,

*Finding* that international tension exists on a dangerous scale,

*Recalling* its resolution 290 (IV) entitled "Essentials of peace", which states that disregard of the Principles of the Charter of the United Nations is primarily responsible for the continuance of international tension, and desiring to contribute further to the objectives of that resolution,

*Reaffirming* the importance of the exercise by the Security Council of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and the duty of the permanent members to seek unanimity and to exercise restraint in the use of the veto,

*Reaffirming* that the initiative in negotiating the agreements for armed forces provided for in Article 43 of the Charter belongs to the Security Council, and desiring to ensure

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that, pending the conclusion of such agreements, the United Nations has at its disposal means for maintaining international peace and security,

*Conscious* that failure of the Security Council to discharge its responsibilities on behalf of all the Member States, particularly those responsibilities referred to in the two preceding paragraphs, does not relieve Member States of their obligations or the United Nations of its responsibility under the Charter to maintain international peace and security,

*Recognizing* in particular that such failure does not deprive the General Assembly of its rights or relieve it of its responsibilities under the Charter in regard to the maintenance of international peace and security,

*Recognizing* that discharge by the General Assembly of its responsibilities in these respects calls for possibilities of observation which would ascertain the facts and expose aggressors; for the existence of armed forces which could be used collectively; and for the possibility of timely recommendation by the General Assembly to Members of the United Nations for collective action which, to be effective, should be prompt,

A

1. *Resolves* that if the Security Council, because of lack of unanimity of the permanent members, fails to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in any case where there appears to be a threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, the General Assembly shall consider the matter immediately with a view to making appropriate recommendations to Members for collective measures, including in the case of a breach of the peace or act of aggression the use of armed force when necessary, to maintain or restore international peace and security. If not in session at the time, the General Assembly may meet in emergency special session within twenty-four hours of the request therefore. Such emergency special session shall be called if requested by the Security Council on the vote of any seven members, or by a majority of the Members of the United Nations;

2. *Adopts* for this purpose the amendments to its rules of procedure set forth in the annex to the present resolution;

B

3. *Establishes* a Peace Observation Commission which, for the calendar years 1951 and 1952, shall be composed of fourteen Members, namely: China, Colombia, Czechoslovakia, France, India, Iraq, Israel, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay, and which could observe and report on the situation in any area where there exists international tension the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. Upon the invitation or with the consent of the State into whose territory the Commission would go, the General Assembly, or the Interim Committee when the Assembly is not in

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session, may utilize the Commission if the Security Council is not exercising the functions assigned to it by the Charter with respect to the matter in question. Decisions to utilize the Commission shall be made on the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting. The Security Council may also utilize the Commission in accordance with its authority under the Charter;

4. *Decides* that the Commission shall have authority in its discretion to appoint sub-commissions and to utilize the services of observers to assist it in the performance of its functions;

5. *Recommends* to all governments and authorities that they co-operate with the Commission and assist it in the performance of its functions;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the necessary staff and facilities, utilizing, where directed by the Commission, the United Nations Panel of Field Observers envisaged in General Assembly resolution 297 B (IV);

### C

7. *Invites* each Member of the United Nations to survey its resources in order to determine the nature and scope of the assistance it may be in a position to render in support of any recommendations of the Security Council or of the General Assembly for the restoration of international peace and security;

8. *Recommends* to the States Members of the United Nations that each Member maintain within its national armed forces elements so trained, organized and equipped that they could promptly be made available, in accordance with its constitutional processes, for service as a United Nations unit or units, upon recommendation by the Security Council or the General Assembly, without prejudice to the use of such elements in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized in Article 51 of the Charter;

9. *Invites* the Members of the United Nations to inform the Collective Measures Committee provided for in paragraph 11 as soon as possible of the measures taken in implementation of the preceding paragraph;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to appoint, with the approval of the Committee provided for in paragraph 11, a panel of military experts who could be made available, on request, to Member States wishing to obtain technical advice regarding the organization, training, and equipment for prompt service as United Nations units or the elements referred to in paragraph 8;

### D

11. *Establishes* a Collective Measures Committee consisting of fourteen Members, namely: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Burma, Canada, Egypt, France, Mexico, Philippines, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the

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United States of America, Venezuela and Yugoslavia, and directs the Committee, in consultation with the Secretary-General and with such Member States as the Committee finds appropriate, to study and make a report to the Security Council and the General Assembly, not later than 1 September 1951, on methods, including those in section C of the present resolution, which might be used to maintain and strengthen international peace and security in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter, taking account of collective self-defense and regional arrangements (Articles 51 and 52 of the Charter);

12. *Recommends* to all Member States that they co-operate with the Committee and assist it in the performance of its functions;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to furnish the staff and facilities necessary for the effective accomplishment of the purposes set forth in sections C and D of the present resolution;

### E

14. *Is fully conscious* that, in adopting the proposals set forth above, enduring peace will not be secured solely by collective security arrangements against breaches of international peace and acts of aggression but that a genuine and lasting peace depends also upon the observance of all the Principles and Purposes established in the Charter of the United Nations, upon the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and other principal organs of the United Nations intended to achieve the maintenance of international peace and security, and especially upon respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and on the establishment and maintenance of conditions of economic and social well-being in all countries; and accordingly

15. *Urges* Member States to respect fully, and to intensify, joint action, in co-operation with the United Nations, to develop and stimulate universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to intensify individual and collective efforts to achieve conditions of economic stability and social progress, particularly through the development of under-developed countries and areas.

### ANNEX

The rules of procedure of the General Assembly are amended in the following respects:

1. The present text of rule 8 shall become paragraph (a) of that rule, and a new paragraph (b) shall be added to read as follows:

"Emergency special sessions pursuant to resolution 377 A (V) shall be convened within twenty-four hours of the receipt by the Secretary-General of a request for such a session from the Security Council, on the vote of any seven members thereof, or of a request from a majority of the Members of the United Nations

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- expressed by vote in the Interim Committee or otherwise, or of the concurrence of a majority of Members as provided in rule 9."
2. The present text of rule 9 shall become paragraph (a) of that rule and a new paragraph (b) shall be added to read as follows:
- "This rule shall apply also to a request by any Member for an emergency special session pursuant to resolution 377 A (V). In such a case the Secretary-General shall communicate with other Members by the most expeditious means of communication available."
3. Rule 10 is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:
- ". . . In the case of an emergency special session convened pursuant to rule 8 (b), the Secretary-General shall notify the Members of the United Nations at least twelve hours in advance of the opening of the session."
4. Rule 16 is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:
- ". . . The provisional agenda of an emergency special session shall be communicated to the Members of the United Nations simultaneously with the communication summoning the session."
5. Rule 19 is amended by adding at the end thereof the following:
- ". . . During an emergency special session additional items concerning the matters dealt with in resolution 377 A (V) may be added to the agenda by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting."
6. There is added a new rule to precede rule 65 to read as follows:
- "Notwithstanding the provisions of any other rule and unless the General Assembly decides otherwise, the Assembly, in case of an emergency special session shall convene in plenary session only and proceed directly to consider the item proposed for consideration in the request for the holding of the session, without previous reference to the General Committee or to any other Committee; the President and Vice-Presidents for such emergency special sessions shall be, respectively, the Chairman of those delegations from which were elected the President and Vice-Presidents of the previous session."

302nd plenary meeting  
3 November 1950



## Appendix

### Questionnaire Results

As part of this research, there was a field questionnaire administered on a sample of 50 professionals in the fields of diplomacy, international organizations and academia. The prime focus of the questionnaire was on the international multilateral system, and more specifically the UN, the core hub of the system. Its main purpose was to draw some practical insights from professionals in fields of direct relationship with the subject. Notably, the area of international relations is largely dominated by some governments and think tanks. In contrast, the voices of the great majority of the concerned stakeholders are rarely heard. In response, the questionnaire attempts to provide some real gauge of opinions through a reasonably wide spectrum of participants. It adopts an opinion-poll approach and its results are analyzed using simple arithmetic rules, as compared to quantitative models (Cochran, 1977). In part, this is due to the high risk of quantifying variables in the area of international relations. In addition, the opinion-poll approach is more common in this specific area and offers some advantages in terms of flexibility and practicality. It should also be noted that although the sample was meant to reflect the opinions of reasonably diverse participants in a balanced manner, it is not argued to be adequately representative of all the concerned stakeholders. In this regard, the political sensitivity of the subject imposed some restrictions. In response, the researcher attempted to use direct contacts in the diplomatic community in Portugal and other familiar circles to improve the input.

The distribution of the 50 participants is as follows: 44 diplomats, three officers of international organizations (two from the AU and one from the LAS) and three academics (two from Universidade Nova de Lisboa and one from Instituto Português de Relações Internacionais (IPRI)). Clearly, there was a focus on diplomats, which is partially due to the nature of the subject, where diplomats are usually well informed. In addition, diplomats represent sovereign states, which are the main building blocks and decision makers in multilateral institutions. As for the geographical distribution of the sample, 10 participants were drawn from each of Egypt and Portugal, while the

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remaining 30 were drawn from 30 other countries (please refer to the list underneath). The geographical focus on Egypt and Portugal is mainly due to the relative easiness of research in both countries, given the Egyptian nationality of the researcher and undertaking the research in a Portuguese institution, Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Nonetheless, together with the 30 other countries, this makes up a moderately diversified set with sources from the five continents of the world. In addition, the sample reflects opinions from different kinds of countries, with participants from permanent members in the Security Council, Western countries, emerging powers, developing countries and least-developed countries (LDCs).

**List of Respondents**

	<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Fields of Participants</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Argentina</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Botswana</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Chile</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Colombia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8 Government and 2 International Organization</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Ghana</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Libya</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Luxembourg</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Maldives</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Mauritius</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Mexico</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Nepal</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Palestinian Territories</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7 Government and 3 Academia</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>

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<b>23</b>	<b>Senegal</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Sudan</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>International Organization</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Tanzania</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>Turkey</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Government</b>

The field questionnaire was carried out during the year 2010. And it included meetings with 10 persons from Egypt, Portugal and the USA, both in Egypt and Portugal, in addition to forty questionnaires administered by correspondence. It should be highlighted that the participants were asked for their personal – as opposed to official – views. And out of 50, 27 participants requested that their names remain confidential. However, the completed questionnaire forms will be made available to the supervisors and the jury, with due regard to the demands for confidentiality. The questionnaire form is copied underneath. It has 12 questions: one for basic data, five on the multilateral system at large and six on the UN in particular, with special focus on the General Assembly and the Security Council.

**Questionnaire Form**

**1. Basic Data:**

- Name (Optional):
- Nationality:
- Professional Field: Government ( ) Academia ( ) Civil Society ( ) Other ( )

**2. What Do You Think about the Performance of the Current Multilateral System:**

- Very Satisfied ( )
- Satisfied ( )
- Neutral ( )
- Unsatisfied ( )
- Very Unsatisfied ( )

**3. What Do You Generally Think about the Current Reform Agendas in the UN, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization:**

- Very Satisfied ( )
- Satisfied ( )
- Neutral ( )
- Unsatisfied ( )
- Very Unsatisfied ( )

**4. Please Arrange the Following Challenges to Multilateralism in Ascending Order (1-2-3...etc.):**

- Complexity of Current Challenges ( )
- Proliferation of Actors in the International System ( )
- Global Power Shifts ( )
- Lack of Political Will ( )
- Others: Please Specify:

**5. Please Arrange the Following Potential Scenarios of the Multilateral System in Ascending Order According to Probability (1-2-3...etc.):**

- Maintaining the *Status Quo*/Lack of Clear Direction ( )
- Multilateralism *à la Carte*/Multi-Multilateralism<sup>1</sup> ( )
- Effective Multilateralism<sup>2</sup> ( )
- Re-emergence of Multipolar International Politics ( )
- Global Chaos ( )

**6. Do You Think that State Democracy Could be Adapted to the Global Setting:**

- Strongly Agree ( )
- Agree ( )
- Neutral ( )
- Disagree ( )
- Strongly Disagree ( )

**7. How Do You See the Future Role of the UN in World Order:**

- Very Significant ( )
- Significant ( )
- Neutral ( )
- Insignificant ( )
- Very Insignificant ( )

<sup>1</sup> i.e. resorting to the UN only when deemed necessary on a case by case basis, while relying more on informal multilateral cooperation.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. effective functioning of the international multilateral system, with a reformed UN at its core.

**8. Do You Think that the UN General Assembly Should Serve a Bigger Role in Global Governance:**

- Strongly Agree ( )
  - Agree ( )
  - Neutral ( )
  - Disagree ( )
  - Strongly Disagree ( )
- 

**9. Do You Agree that the UN General Assembly Should Be Further Empowered to Step in if the UN Security Council Fails to Deliver on International Peace and Security Issues:**

- Strongly Agree ( )
  - Agree ( )
  - Neutral ( )
  - Disagree ( )
  - Strongly Disagree ( )
- 

**10. Please Arrange the Following Argued Roles of the UN General Assembly in Ascending Order According to your Approval (1-2-3):**

- Global Governance Platform<sup>3</sup> ( )
  - Parliament of Man<sup>4</sup> ( )
  - Clearing House of Global Governance<sup>5</sup> ( )
- 

**11. Do You Think that the UN Security Council Should Be Enlarged:**

- Strongly Agree ( )
  - Agree ( )
  - Neutral ( )
  - Disagree ( )
  - Strongly Disagree ( )
- 

**12. Please Arrange the Following Reform Options of the Veto Power in Ascending Order (1-2-3):**

- Should Be Abrogated ( )
- Should Keep the *Status Quo* ( )
- Should Extend to New Permanent Members ( )

**Please Add Any Further Comments Here:**

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<sup>3</sup> i.e. serving as the highest global decision-making forum.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. becoming a global parliament of states with legislative and supervisory powers.

<sup>5</sup> i.e. being empowered to enforce complementarity of all efforts in any specific area.

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Questionnaire Results  
Questions 2-6

	Country	Field	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Argentina	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	2-3-4-1	1-2-5-3-4	Neutral
2	Botswana	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	1-4-3-2	3-2-5-4-1	Agree
3	Chile	Gov.	Satisfied	Neutral	3-2-4-1	1-2-3-4-5	Disagree
4	Colombia	Gov.	Neutral	Unsatisfied	3-2-4-1	1-3-4-2-5	Disagree
5	Egypt	Gov.	Neutral	Neutral	1-3-2-4	2-1-4-3-5	Neutral
6	Egypt	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Neutral	2-3-1-4	2-1-3-4-5	Strongly Agree
7	Egypt	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	4-3-1-2	1-3-4-2-5	Agree
8	Egypt	Gov.	Neutral	Unsatisfied	1-3-2-4	3-1-4-2-5	Agree
9	Egypt	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	1-2-3-4	2-4-5-3-1	Disagree
10	Egypt	Gov.	Satisfied	Satisfied	3-2-1-4	1-3-4-2-5	Agree
11	Egypt	Gov.	Neutral	Satisfied	3-2-1-4	2-3-4-5-1	Disagree
12	Egypt	Gov.	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	3-4-2-1	1-2-5-3-4	Disagree
13	Egypt	Int'l Orgs.	Unsatisfied	Neutral	1-3-2-4	5-4-2-3-1	Disagree
14	Egypt	Int'l Orgs.	Satisfied	Satisfied	2-4-1-3	5-3-1-4-2	Agree
15	France	Gov.	Neutral	Satisfied	3-1-4-2	1-3-4-2-5	Agree
16	Germany	Gov.	Neutral	Neutral	2-1-3-4	2-1-4-3-5	Disagree
17	Ghana	Gov.	Neutral	Unsatisfied	1-3-4-2	1-3-4-5-2	Neutral
18	Japan	Gov.	Neutral	Satisfied	1-3-2-4	3-5-2-4-1	Disagree
19	Latvia	Gov.	Neutral	Neutral	2-4-1-3	3-2-4-1-5	Neutral
20	Libya	Gov.	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	2-3-4-1	1-3-4-2-5	Satisfied
21	Luxembourg	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Neutral	1-3-4-2	2-1-3-4-5	Disagree
22	Maldives	Gov.	Satisfied	Satisfied	3-4-1-2	2-5-4-3-1	Agree
23	Mauritius	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	2-4-3-1	3-2-4-1-5	Agree
24	Mexico	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	2-3-4-1	1-2-4-3-5	Neutral
25	Nepal	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Neutral	2-3-4-1	1-2-3-5-4	Disagree
26	Netherlands	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Neutral	1-2-3-4	3-5-2-4-1	Neutral
27	Nigeria	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Satisfied	2-4-1-3	2-3-4-1-5	Agree
28	Palestinian Territories	Gov.	Neutral	Unsatisfied	2-4-3-1	1-3-4-5-2	Disagree
29	Poland	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	1-3-2-4	2-1-4-3-5	Agree
30	Portugal	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Neutral	2-3-4-1	1-2-5-3-4	Strongly Agree
31	Portugal	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	2-3-4-1	4-5-2-3-1	Disagree
32	Portugal	Gov.	Satisfied	Neutral	1-4-3-2	2-4-3-1-5	Strongly Disagree
33	Portugal	Gov.	Neutral	Neutral	4-2-3-1	5-2-3-4-1	Strongly Agree
34	Portugal	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Neutral	4-3-1-2	3-2-4-1-5	Disagree

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35	Portugal	Gov.	Neutral	Unsatisfied	3-2-4-1	1-2-4-3-5	Agree
36	Portugal	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	3-1-2-4	4-5-2-3-1	Disagree
37	Portugal	Acad.	Satisfied	Neutral	3-1-2-0	2-1-4-3-0	Strongly Agree
38	Portugal	Acad.	Satisfied	Neutral	3-2-1-0	2-1-4-3-0	Disagree
39	Portugal	Acad.	Satisfied	Satisfied	2-3-4-1	4-5-3-2-1	Strongly Agree
40	Russia	Gov.	Satisfied	Neutral	1-2-3-4	1-4-2-5-3	Strongly Agree
41	Senegal	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	2-3-4-1	4-1-5-2-3	Strongly Agree
42	Slovakia	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	3-4-2-1	4-3-5-2-1	Agree
43	South Africa	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Satisfied	4-2-3-1	3-2-1-4-5	Strongly Agree
44	Sri Lanka	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	4-3-1-2	5-3-4-2-1	Disagree
45	Sudan	Int'l Orgs.	Unsatisfied	Satisfied	1-3-4-2	2-3-4-5-1	Strongly Disagree
46	Tanzania	Gov.	Neutral	Unsatisfied	3-4-2-1	3-1-5-4-2	Disagree
47	Tunisia	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Neutral	1-4-3-2	1-3-5-4-2	Neutral
48	Turkey	Gov.	Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	2-3-1-4	1-2-4-3-5	Agree
49	UK	Gov.	Neutral	Unsatisfied	1-2-4-3	1-2-4-3-5	Agree
50	USA	Gov.	Satisfied	Satisfied	2-3-4-1	1-2-4-3-0	Neutral

**Question (2)**

Measuring the level of satisfaction with the performance of the current multilateral system, the results are as follows:

- 0 Very Satisfied
- 12 Satisfied
- 14 Neutral
- 24 Unsatisfied
- 0 Very Unsatisfied

**Question (3)**

Measuring the level of satisfaction with the current reform agendas in the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, the results are as follows:

- 0 Very Satisfied
- 11 Satisfied
- 17 Neutral



- 20 Unsatisfied  
2 Very Unsatisfied

**Question (4)**

Asking the participants to arrange four assumed challenges to multilateralism in ascending order, besides asking them if they consider other challenges, the results were calculated using weighted summations on the basis of the following formula:

Coming 1 <sup>st</sup>	4 Points
Coming 2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 Points
Coming 3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 Points
Coming 4 <sup>th</sup>	1 Point

Using this weighted formula and the orders elaborated in the above table, the results are as follows:

Complexity of Current Challenges	142 Points (1 <sup>st</sup> )
Proliferation of Actors in the International System	108 Points (4 <sup>th</sup> )
Global Power Shifts	118 Points (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Lack of Political Will	131 Points (2 <sup>nd</sup> )

It should be noted here that two participants thought that the last challenge, lack of political will, is not relevant and did not tick it at all, and as a result this challenge was give zero score in both cases.

In addition, eight participants indicated additional challenges as follows:

- 1- Lack of equitable representation of small states in some of the most important organs (Colombia).
- 2 Power politics (Egypt – Gov.).
- 3- Lack of accountability on local and international levels, and cultural differences (Egypt – Gov.).
- 4- Proponents of multilateralism do not apply gradualism (Egypt – Gov.).
- 5- The consensus rule in multilateral institutions (Luxembourg).
- 6- North/South divisions (Nepal).

- 7- Informal multilateralism, global interdependence and fragile leaderships (Portugal – Gov.).
- 8- New or recent problems, organized crime, climate change and the international financial architecture (Portugal – Gov.).

**Question (5)**

Asking the participants to arrange five potential future scenarios of the multilateral system according to probability, the results were calculated using similar weighted summations on the basis of the following formula:

Coming 1 <sup>st</sup>	5 Points
Coming 2 <sup>nd</sup>	4 Points
Coming 3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 Points
Coming 4 <sup>th</sup>	2 Points
Coming 5 <sup>th</sup>	1 Point

Using this weighted formula and the orders elaborated in the above table, the results are as follows:

Maintaining the <i>Status Quo</i> /Lack of Clear Direction	193 Points (1 <sup>st</sup> )
Multilateralism <i>à la Carte</i> /Multi-Multilateralism	170 Points (2 <sup>nd</sup> )
Effective Multilateralism	116 Points (4 <sup>th</sup> )
Re-emergence of Multipolar International Politics	147 Points (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Global Chaos	112 Points (5 <sup>th</sup> )

It should be noted here that three participants thought that the last scenario, global chaos, is not possible and did not tick it at all, and as a result this scenario was given zero score in the three cases.

**Question (6)**

Measuring the level of approval of the possibility of adapting state democracy to the international setting, the results are as follows:

- 8 Strongly Agree
-

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13	Agree
8	Neutral
17	Disagree
2	Strongly Disagree

**Questionnaire Results**  
**Questions 7-12**

	Country	Field	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
1	Argentina	Gov.	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Agree	1-3-2	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
2	Botswana	Gov.	Insignificant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	1-3-2	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
3	Chile	Gov.	Insignificant	Agree	Disagree	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	3-2-1
4	Colombia	Gov.	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	1-3-2	Disagree	1-2-3
5	Egypt	Gov.	Significant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	3-1-2	Agree	1-3-2
6	Egypt	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Agree	2-3-1	Strongly Agree	2-3-1
7	Egypt	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Strongly Agree	2-1-3	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
8	Egypt	Gov.	Significant	Strongly Agree	Agree	2-3-1	Strongly Agree	3-2-1
9	Egypt	Gov.	Insignificant	Agree	Disagree	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	2-3-1
10	Egypt	Gov.	Significant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	2-3-1
11	Egypt	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Agree	3-1-2	Strongly Agree	3-1-2
12	Egypt	Gov.	Significant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	1-2-3
13	Egypt	Int'l Orgs.	Insignificant	Agree	Strongly Agree	3-2-1	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
14	Egypt	Int'l Orgs.	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	3-2-1	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
15	France	Gov.	Significant	Neutral	Disagree	1-3-2	Agree	1-2-3
16	Germany	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Agree	2-1-3	Strongly Agree	2-3-1
17	Ghana	Gov.	Significant	Neutral	Neutral	2-1-3	Agree	3-2-1
18	Japan	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Disagree	1-3-2	Agree	1-2-3
19	Latvia	Gov.	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	1-3-2	Strongly Agree	2-1-3
20	Libya	Gov.	Very Significant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	2-3-1	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
21	Luxembourg	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Neutral	2-1-3	Agree	1-3-2
22	Maldives	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Strongly Agree	1-3-2	Strongly Agree	2-1-3
23	Mauritius	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Agree	2-3-1	Strongly Agree	1-2-3
24	Mexico	Gov.	Very	Strongly	Agree	1-3-2	Agree	1-3-2

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			Significant	Agree				
25	Nepal	Gov.	Neutral	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	3-2-1	Agree	2-1-3
26	Netherlands	Gov.	Significant	Neutral	Neutral	2-3-1	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
27	Nigeria	Gov.	Significant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	2-3-1
28	Palestinian Territories	Gov.	Insignificant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	2-3-1	Agree	3-2-1
29	Poland	Gov.	Insignificant	Neutral	Disagree	3-2-1	Agree	1-3-2
30	Portugal	Gov.	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	2-1-3	Neutral	1-2-3
31	Portugal	Gov.	Significant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	2-1-3	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
32	Portugal	Gov.	Neutral	Agree	Agree	1-3-2	Agree	1-3-2
33	Portugal	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Neutral	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	3-2-1
34	Portugal	Gov.	Significant	Neutral	Disagree	2-1-3	Strongly Agree	2-3-1
35	Portugal	Gov.	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	2-3-1	Strongly Agree	3-2-1
36	Portugal	Gov.	Insignificant	Agree	Agree	2-3-1	Strongly Agree	3-1-2
37	Portugal	Acad.	Insignificant	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	3-1-2	Disagree	3-1-2
38	Portugal	Acad.	Significant	Disagree	Neutral	0-0-1	Strongly Agree	0-0-1
39	Portugal	Acad.	Significant	Agree	Agree	2-1-3	Agree	3-1-2
40	Russia	Gov.	Very Significant	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	1-2-3	Agree	1-3-2
41	Senegal	Gov.	Very Significant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
42	Slovakia	Gov.	Significant	Disagree	Neutral	3-1-2	Strongly Agree	1-2-3
43	South Africa	Gov.	Very Significant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
44	Sri Lanka	Gov.	Significant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	1-3-2	Disagree	1-3-2
45	Sudan	Int'l Orgs.	Insignificant	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	3-2-1	Strongly Agree	2-3-1
46	Tanzania	Gov.	Significant	Agree	Agree	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
47	Tunisia	Gov.	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	1-2-3	Strongly Agree	1-3-2
48	Turkey	Gov.	Neutral	Agree	Agree	2-1-3	Strongly Agree	3-2-1
49	UK	Gov.	Very Significant	Agree	Disagree	2-1-3	Strongly Agree	1-2-3

50	USA	Gov.	Significant	Neutral	Disagree	0-0-1	Neutral	3-1-2
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**Question (7)**

Measuring the expectations about the future role of the UN in world order, the results are as follows:

- 6 Very Significant
- 25 Significant
- 10 Neutral
- 9 Insignificant
- 0 Very Insignificant

**Question (8)**

Measuring the level of support to enabling the UN General Assembly to serve a bigger role in global governance, the results are as follows:

- 18 Strongly Agree
- 20 Agree
- 8 Neutral
- 3 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

**Question (9)**

Measuring the level of support to further empowering the UN General Assembly to step in if the Security Council fails to act on international peace and security, the results are as follows:

- 20 Strongly Agree
- 12 Agree
- 7 Neutral
- 8 Disagree
- 3 Strongly Disagree

**Question (10)**

Asking the participants to arrange three argued roles for the UN General Assembly in ascending order according to their approval, the results were calculated using weighted summations on the basis of the following formula:

Coming 1 <sup>st</sup>	3 Points
Coming 2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 Points
Coming 3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 Point

Using this weighted formula and the orders elaborated in the above table, the results are as follows:

Global Governance Platform	108 Points (1 <sup>st</sup> )
Parliament of Man	92 Points (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Clearing House of Global Governance	94 Points (2 <sup>nd</sup> )

It should be noted here that two participants thought that the first two argued roles, global governance platform and parliament of man, are not relevant and did not tick them at all, and as a result these two choices were given zero score in both cases.

**Question (11)**

Measuring the level of support to enlarging the UN Security Council, the results are as follows:

33	Strongly Agree
12	Agree
2	Neutral
3	Disagree
0	Strongly Disagree

**Question (12)**

Asking the participants to arrange three suggested reform options of the veto power in ascending order, the results were calculated using weighted summations on the basis of the following formula:



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Coming 1 <sup>st</sup>	3 Points
Coming 2 <sup>nd</sup>	2 Points
Coming 3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 Point

Using this weighted formula and the orders elaborated in the above table, the results are as follows:

Should Be Abrogated	113 Points (1 <sup>st</sup> )
Should Keep the <i>Status Quo</i>	80 Points (3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Should Extend to New Permanent Members	104 Points (2 <sup>nd</sup> )

It should be noted here that one participant thought that the first two suggested options, abrogation and keeping the *status quo*, are not possible and did not tick them at all, and as a result these two options were given zero score in this case.

**Additional Comments**

Some participants made additional comments as follows:

- 1- The UN Security Council should be enlarged and the veto power should be abrogated, as a sign of a new, more realistic and democratic world order. However, this is improbable, because neither the old superpowers nor the newly emerging ones are showing interest in that (Argentina).
- 2- One problem of multilateralism is the lack of balanced representation of countries in the system. Other problems include the veto power and the excessive importance of the UN Security Council. These are features of the Cold-War world that hardly work for our world today (Colombia).
- 3- Cultural diversity should be stressed and reflected as a factor in the study, and the role and behavior of medium powers should not be discarded. The level of education and good governance are also important (Egypt – Gov.).
- 4- The major challenge before the multilateral system is the continuation of the supremacy of national interests over global challenges, at the time no one wants to move first (Egypt – Gov.).
- 5- The Peace and Security Council of the AU could be a reliable example for the reform of the UN Security Council (Egypt – Int'l Orgs.).

- 6- The veto power in the UN Security Council is unfortunately a necessary evil serving the interests of mainly three permanent members, i.e. Russia, China and the USA. However, these nations are not ready to give up their veto power. In addition, reaching consensus on matters like Iran, the Middle East peace process or North Korea gravely dilutes the content and hampers the effective work of the Security Council and sometimes even ridiculizes its role, especially when weeks are needed in an urgent crisis situation (Luxembourg).
- 7- The application of consensus decision-making should remain limited to areas of utmost importance such as the use of force and the imposition of sanctions (The Netherlands).
- 8- Multilateralism is the only hope for all countries. However, the veto power remains a cause of contention and hinders speedy progress on urgent issues. In contrast, UN reform efforts should be based on democratic options and the UN General Assembly should be further empowered to address conflicts and wars if the Security Council fails to yield any definite solution. In addition, UN development efforts should be focused on major projects and aim at making recipient countries self-reliant for sustainable development (Nepal).
- 9- Emerging regional powers in Africa, Asia and Latin America should be accommodated in the UN Security Council. In addition, resolutions of the General Assembly must be binding on all members without exception (Nigeria).
- 10- The UN Security Council is an obsolete body and should disappear in the long run. Meanwhile, it should be enlarged to new emerging powers such as Brazil (Portugal – Gov.).
- 11- There is a need for a functional and issue-wise approach to global governance, which goes far beyond the central unit of nation-state on which the whole UN architecture is based. Thus, effective global governance is going to look differently and involve a different set of diverse actors in different issue-areas, from hardcore security to migration and environmental issues (Portugal – Acad.).
- 12- The UN Security Council should definitely be reformed to make it more representative of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but it also needs to be effective and able to take decisive action in a timely and responsible manner. Unfortunately, the 193 countries are not expected to do that. Thus, a representative Security Council

backed up by a strong General Assembly and, of vital importance, reformed and well-functioning UN agencies seems to be the best answer (UK).