

STUDY

Reforming the United Nations: State of Play, Ways Forward

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Abstract

The need to reform the United Nations to adapt the organisation to new global power configurations has been widely recognised. Yet these reforms have often been hampered by a lack of global consensus on how they could be carried and what they would entail. The UN 'reform agenda' touches upon virtually all areas of the organisation's activities, including peace support, development and human rights. The proposals also concern institutional issues, including budgetary and management reforms of the UN system. This paper takes stock of progress in key areas of reform and outlines possible ways forward.

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1 Reforming the UN: Key topics in the debate

While the need to reform the UN has been universally recognised, the 'reform agenda' has often been hampered by a lack of consensus amongst UN Members.

UN reform proposals have reflected the geopolitical priorities the organisation's Member States. Some reforms have been successfully delivered, while others have lagged behind or stalled.

The EU has staunchly supported the UN, applying the guiding principle of 'effective multilateralism' to strengthen the UN as a pillar of global governance.

The need to reform the United Nations to adapt the organisation to new power configurations in the world has been widely recognised. Yet reforms have been hampered by a lack of global consensus on their details and how they should be implemented. The UN 'reform agenda' touches upon virtually all areas of its activities, including peace support, development and human rights. Reform proposals also concern institutional issues, including budgetary and management reforms of the UN system.

The trajectory of the UN reforms reflect the *zeitgeist* of the moment in which they were proposed, as well as concrete events that highlighted the need for action and galvanised the international community. For example, the debate on reforming the UN Security Council was most intense in the early stages of UN operations (the 1950s and 1960s), subsequently reaching a plateau and then losing momentum (due to well-known differences amongst UN Member States).

In contrast, institutional reforms to make the UN more effective, responsive and transparent have accelerated since the 1990s, and are currently widely supported. Reforms of the UN development, human rights and peace support architecture have steadily advanced over years – along with reforms of peace support system – heavily conditioned by shifting political realities, power configurations and the evolving nature of global conflicts and threats.

The EU and its Member States, staunch supporters of the UN and effective multilateralism, have focused on and influenced a number of debates on the UN reform agenda. While the EU has been divided on the reform of the UN Security Council, it has pushed for revitalising the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and for streamlining existing structures and procedures to make the UN system more rapid, responsive and effective.

As the largest financial donor to the UN budget, the EU and its Member States have pushed for budgetary reforms to increase budgetary transparency and to allocate resources more effectively. The EU has driven the UN's efforts to improve the quality of its actions in the fields of human rights, gender, development, climate change, peacekeeping, democracy and mediation support. The European Parliament has also demonstrated its interest in the issue, expressing views in its annual reports on the UNGA, the Common Security and Foreign Policy/Common Security and Defence Policy (CFSP/CSDP) and human rights, and has addressed specific issues including peace support, human rights, development, transparency and effectiveness.

This paper takes stock of the UN reform agenda, focussing on a number of current initiatives in the fields of peace support, crisis response and institutional reforms¹. The current reform priorities of the EU are described, with the views of the European Parliament highlighted. Finally, the paper examines possible avenues for future UN reform, anticipating ways the UN system can evolve in the fields of institutional reform, peacekeeping and financial/personnel management.

2 Reforming the UN peace support architecture

Reforms of the UN peacekeeping system have been design so the UN can better respond to crises and address shifting geopolitical realities and forms of warfare.

Why the need for reform?

Peace support has been considered the United Nations' core business of since the institution's inception. The UN's activities in this field have evolved from monitoring and observation missions to modern multidimensional peace-support operations. Since the end of the Cold War, the UN has been particularly active with peacekeeping missions and special political missions².

UN Member States' level of engagement in peace support operations has been rather uneven: the nations of the 'global south' have provided most peacekeeping operations' personnel, while the 'global north' countries have reduced their personnel contributions, while continuing to provide generous financial support.

The UN has experienced some gaps in core military and civilian capabilities (both in terms of properly trained staff and high-quality equipment) known as the 'strategic enablers' – those elements necessary for conducting missions, including crucial transport and communication capabilities.

As new regional actors increasingly undertake similar roles to the UN's, the UN has had to rethink some of its practices to ensure its peace support operations remain meaningful on the ground. Some of the key past and present initiatives that will be described later aim to enhance the UN's capabilities in peace support, including operations and gender considerations.

2.1 Key historic reform initiatives

Reforming the UN's peace operations has been important to several consecutive UN secretaries-general, who produced a number of reports reflecting on the nature of global threats and the UN's vision of its role and business in the field. Three key initiatives shaped the way UN conducts peace

¹ It leaves out an issue of the reforms of UN's development agenda, as it has been recently robustly analysed elsewhere, including Manuel Manrique Gil's policy briefing 'Beyond 2015: Reconciling development and climate change goals,' September 2013,

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2013/491516/EXPO-DEVE_SP\(2013\)491516_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2013/491516/EXPO-DEVE_SP(2013)491516_EN.pdf)

² Within the UN Secretariat, the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is responsible for the planning and conducts of the UN's peacekeeping operations. The special political missions are managed by the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA).

UN secretaries-general have pushed to reform peace support operations and structures.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 'Agenda for Peace' provided a blueprint for a providing peace support during the peak of international interventions in the 1990s.

The 2000 'Brahimi Report' Commissioned by Kofi Annan to advance the 'Agenda for Peace' focussed on institutional and procedural shortcomings, and recommended ways to address them.

support: the 1992 'Agenda for Peace', the 2000 'Brahimi Report' and the 2005 'In Larger Freedom' report. Currently, the UN is taking stock of its track record in peace support activities, through a 'High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations'.

The 'Agenda for Peace' (1992)

The 'Agenda for Peace' (full title: 'An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping')³ was an initiative of the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The UN Security Council then requested the paper to evaluate the UN's practices in the field and recommend ways to streamline operations, given the changes of the post-Cold War world. The 'Agenda for Peace' report outlined the need for the UN to engage more deeply in peace support operations. The report also recognised that peacekeeping does not ensure lasting peace and recommended that the UN boost its capabilities in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction.

The 'Brahimi Report' (2000)

The 'Brahimi Report' (officially called the 'Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations'⁴) was written in 2000 by a commission of high-level independent experts, led by senior Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi. The commission had been created on the recommendation of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in order to review UN peace and security activities and recommend ways to improve UN practices. The report pointed to UN Member States' unwillingness to commit personnel or financial resources as the key impediment to the UN's peace support. The report also noted the failure to collect proper information and the lack of the UN secretariat's analytical capacity and field presence, and recommended that these be addressed as a matter of priority.

While recommendations in the section of the report regarding the secretariat's capabilities have since been addressed, its key recommendation – that the UN have the capacity to deploy military and police forces – has never been fulfilled.

The 'Brahimi Report' also highlighted the importance of the UN's cooperation with regional organisations. This has since been put to practice on multiple occasions, including through a close EU-UN and UN-African Union (AU) partnerships, as well as a range of *ad hoc* working arrangements with other regional and sub-regional organisations (particularly in Africa).

³ 'An Agenda for Peace' can be retrieved on http://www.unrol.org/files/a_47_277.pdf.

⁴ The 'Brahimi Report' can be retrieved on <http://www.unrol.org/doc.aspx?n=brahimi+report+peacekeeping.pdf>.

The 2005 'In Larger Freedom' report argued the UN should be better equipped to tackle new and emerging threats.

The 'In Larger Freedom' report (2005)

'In Larger Freedom' (full title 'In Larger Freedom: Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for decision by Head of State and Government in September 2005'⁵) was a progress report written by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and presented to the UN General Assembly. The report evaluated the implementation of the UN's commitments contained in the 2000 Millennium Declaration at the World Summit. The document comments on all key fields of the UN activities, including security, development and human rights.

The second part of the report (entitled 'Freedom from Fear') pointed to international terrorism, proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the spread of irregular conflicts as the chief transnational threats that the UN needed to counter with better tools. One of the principal recommendations was to revise the mandates authorising missions, particularly those authorising missions to use force, in order to ensure they could fulfil their mandates on the ground. While not explicitly stated in the report, this request was underpinned by the desire of many Member States to avoid the glaring omissions and double standards (such as the UN's failure to act in Rwanda and in Bosnia and Herzegovina) that had hampered previous operations and damaged the reputation of the UN.

Current Debates on Peace Support Reform

Current policy debates on reforming the UN peace support architecture focus on both geopolitical and operational issues. Specialised literature on the subject matter, which has flourished in recent years, similarly revolves around these two types of issues.⁶ On a geostrategic level, the recent policy debates have focused on the evolving nature of global threats, and on how well the UN's peace support architecture is suited to address these.

Current debates on reforming UN peace support architecture focus on geopolitical and operational issues.

In the current global security environment, asymmetric threats (piracy, terrorism, organised crime) have gained prominence at the same time that a number of relatively 'traditional' conflicts have arisen between great powers (in Europe and Asia for example).

While there appears to be global consensus on the nature of contemporary security threats, agreement is elusive on the usefulness of the UN's peace support tools and their political/practical feasibility. UN peacekeeping missions have been given increasingly broad mandates, partly in recognition of new security challenges. However, their success in fulfilling these mandates continues to be a subject to debate, with most voices rather

⁵ An official summary of the key proposals made in the 2005 'In Larger Freedom' document can be retrieved on

http://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/larger_freedom_exec_summary.pdf.

⁶ A noteworthy report offering a succinct overview of the UN peace support state of play has recently been produced by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 'The Future Peace Operations Landscape: Voices from Stakeholders around the Globe,' (authors: Jair van der Lijn and Xenia Avezov),

http://www.sipri.org/research/conflict/pko/other_publications/npf-final-report.

critical. In particular, the UN's lack of exit strategies has been repeatedly identified as a factor hampering UN peacekeeping's general effectiveness.

The importance of conflict prevention has been increasingly recognised.

The preventive tools the UN has at its disposal (including early warning, mediation and good offices) have gained prominence, and they could, observers note, make the UN's intervention more timely, successful and cost-effective. Similarly, the importance of coordination – both within the UN system and within the global and regional security architecture – has been repeatedly emphasised in recent debates. What would constitute an optimal global division of labour between the UN and other key regional organisations (the EU and AU in particular, as well as some sub-regional organisations in Africa) has been widely discussed.

Recent discussion about operational reforms of the UN peace support architecture have centred on the need to improve the ways that peacekeeping is carried out and synchronised with the UN's other peace support tools.

The lack of 'strategic enablers' (specialised personnel and high-tech equipment) continues to hamper an effectiveness of UN peacekeeping.

There is also, according to critics, a need to re-balance the relationship between the states contributing troops and those contributing funds, who tend not to provide troops. As the first category of states is in the 'global south' and the second in the 'global north', the division establishes worrisome power dynamics and erodes geographic balance amongst the 'blue helmets.'

The UN's force generation procedures have also been criticised as in need of reform, as the lack of specialised personnel, high-tech equipment and 'enablers' (for example, transport and communication equipment to ensure proper surveillance, intelligence, protection, medical evacuation equipment, etc.) have consistently slowed down missions' deployment.

2.2 Review of the Independent High-Level Panel on Peace Operations

To mark the 15-year anniversary of the 'Brahimi Report' and review UN peace operations, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established the High-Level Independent Review Panel.

Fifteen years after the publication of the seminal 'Brahimi Report', current UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon decided to take stock of the current UN peace support architecture and its achievements, to assess what has worked and whether the key recommendations of the Brahimi report have been implemented. On 31 October 2014, Secretary-General Ban established the 'High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations'⁷, nominating former President of Timor Leste José Ramos-Horta to lead it.

In addition to a comprehensive assessment of the state of UN peace operations, the panel was charged with assessing emerging needs. The past and current missions to be examined included both peacekeeping ones (run by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, DPKO) and special political missions (run by the Department of Political Affairs, DPA). All stages of

⁷ Statement of the UN Secretary-General on the appointment of the High-Level Panel on Peace Operations, 31 October 2014, <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=8151>.

The Panel has been endowed with a robust mandate to examine the activities of both peacekeeping and special political missions.

The Panel is currently carrying out extensive internal and external consultations, and will produce recommendations for further reforms.

missions are to be assessed – planning, creation, operating and winding down. As the panel compiles its recommendations and best practices, it must consider the following elements:

- Changing nature of conflicts;
- Evolving mandates of peacekeeping missions and special political missions;
- Good offices, mediation, peacebuilding;
- Administrative arrangements, planning and partnerships;
- Human rights and the protection of civilians;
- Uniformed civilian and military capabilities for peacekeeping operations and performance⁸.

The 14-members of the panel are currently consulting with the relevant parts of the UN and key partners, including the European Union. The report should be released by the autumn of 2015.

2.3 Reform of peacekeeping budget

The UN's peacekeeping activities have been marred by budgetary difficulties – the late payments and failures to pay of some Member States.

The UN's peacekeeping budget for the year of 1 July 2014-30 June 2015 is around USD 7 billion, which includes operational costs (such as transport and logistics) and staff costs (salaries)⁹. The annual budget cycle for peacekeeping, which runs from 1 July till 30 June, is prepared 12 months in advance. Peacekeepers are paid by their individual governments according to their national rank and salary scale, and countries providing uniformed personnel to peacekeeping operations are reimbursed by the UN at a standard rate (currently a little over USD 1 000 per month)¹⁰.

The principal problem with the peacekeeping budget is that Member States' compulsory contributions (known as the 'assessments') are often late or fail to arrive at all. The level of non-payment to the peacekeeping budget is even greater than that to the UN general budget, making it difficult to pay troop-contributing countries on time. At present, Member States owe the UN around USD 3.5 billion (there are no EU Member States in this group)¹¹. On the other hand, some UN Member States top up the rate of their annual compulsory 'assessments' with additional financial resources to fill the existing gaps as needs arise (most of the countries doing so are in the EU).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ The United Nations General Assembly, resolution A/C.5/69/17 on 'Approved Resources for Peacekeeping Operations for the Period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, 14 January 2015, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/C.5/69/17.

¹⁰ United Nations Peacekeeping website, 'Financing Peacekeeping,' <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

¹¹ Daily Mail, 'UN member states owe world body about \$3.5 billion,' 9 October 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2786993/UN-member-states-owe-world-body-3-5-billion.html>.

The three top countries contributing to the UN peacekeeping budget are the United States (28 %), Japan (10 %) and France (7 %) ¹².

2.4 Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office

The Peacebuilding Commission and its Peacebuilding Support Office were created to streamline the UN's peace support activities in the most sensitive and conflict-prone places.

Despite its limited resources, the Peacebuilding Commission has achieved some positive results in focus countries.

In order to implement recommendations contained in the reports mentioned above, a series of UN reforms have been carried out. Notable efforts have been made to adjust the organisation's peace support architecture to facilitate coordination efforts and increase the UN's effectiveness. One such effort was the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) in 2005.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is an inter-governmental advisory body that supports peace efforts in countries experiencing conflict or at risk of conflict, and is mandated to coordinate all relevant actors, international financial institutions, national governments and troop-contributing countries to help ensure adequate resources, highlight gaps, identify potential 'spoilers' and devise strategies to neutralise them. Countries that the PBC are currently examining include Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Central African Republic ¹³.

The Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) is responsible for coordination at the UN and international levels for conflict-affected countries. The Office also supports the Peacebuilding Commission and administers the Peacebuilding Fund. It is based in the UN headquarters in New York, with no presence in the field. Currently, the PBSO is contributing to the review of peace operations by the Independent High-Level Panel. The Office is also responsible for developing knowledge management products, including handbooks on measuring the impact of peacekeeping and gender in peacebuilding ¹⁴. As a structure mandated to help the UN's peacebuilding activities remain coherent through coordination efforts, publications and training, the PBSO serves as a reference point for its partner regional and international organisations.

2.5 Enhancing the UN's monitoring and early warning capabilities

One recommendation resurfaced in various reports on improving the UN's peace support architecture: enhancing the organisation's internal monitoring and early-warning capabilities. In response, the UN secretariat has taken concrete steps. In 2010, the DPKO established the Peacekeeping Situation Centre, which operates 24/7 to ensure a constant flow of information related

¹² United Nations Peacekeeping website, 'Financing Peacekeeping,' <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/financing.shtml> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

¹³ More on PBC mandate, activities and focus countries can be retrieved on <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/>.

¹⁴ Some of the flagship PBSO publications can be retrieved on <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pbresources.shtml>.

To ensure the availability of reliable information and data, the UN has created a monitoring and early warning process with dedicated structures.

to missions' and delegations' security. The Centre has research and analysis capabilities to coordinate political and situational information from multiple UN sources. In crisis situations, the Centre acts as a facilitator and can activate a crisis response mechanism, serving as a critical link between the UN Secretariat and UN field operations¹⁵.

To enhance the UN's conflict prevention and mediation capabilities, the secretariat and field missions are adequately staffed and possess relevant expertise; more information on this is provided in Section 3.3.

2.6 Review of implementation of the Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

The importance of women, peace and security has grown in the UN's work over the years, and gender has been acknowledged as a missing dimension in peacebuilding.

Why the need for reform?

Women's role in peace and security has been an important focus of the UN's peace support activity throughout much of the organisation's history. Politically, the UN Security Council has occupied the driver's seat on this issue, mandating consecutive Secretaries-General to take concrete steps – on one hand, to bolster women's participation in UN's peace support activities, and on the other, to ensure a gender-sensitive approach to conflict management and peace support.

The UN Security Council laid out the UN's political framework for dealing with matters of women, peace and security in the following seminal resolutions:

- Resolution 1325 (issued in 2000)¹⁶, discussed in more detail below;
- Resolution 1889 (issued in 2009)¹⁷ on strengthening women's participation in peace processes;
- Resolution 1820 (from 2008)¹⁸ on sexual violence as tactic of war;
- Resolution 1888 (from 2009)¹⁹ on protecting women and children from sexual violence during armed conflict.

¹⁵ More on the UN Peacekeeping Situation Centre can be retrieved on <http://unterm.un.org/dgaacs/unterm.nsf/8fa942046ff7601c85256983007ca4d8/5bf4df39d3b87f3d852569fa0000bb1e?OpenDocument>.

¹⁶ United Nations Security Council, resolution S/RES/1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security,' 31 October 2000, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>.

¹⁷ United Nations Security Council, resolution S/RES/1889 on 'Women's Participation in Peace Processes,' 5 October 2009, <http://www.unrol.org/files/4acdd8512.pdf>.

¹⁸ United Nations Security Council, resolution S/RES/1820/2008 on 'Sexual Violence as Tactics of War,' 19 June 2008, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CAC%20S%20RES%201820.pdf>.

¹⁹ United Nations Security Council, resolution S/RES/1888/2009 on 'Protection of Women and Children from Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict,' 30 September 2009, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/WPS%20SRES%201888.pdf>.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 provides a blueprint for addressing the issues of women, peace and security.

Resolution 1325

Security Council Resolution 1325 has served as a blueprint for approaching gender issues in peacekeeping. The text advocates that women serve as active agents in peacekeeping processes and that they play a greater role in decision-making in conflict prevention and resolution. It also addresses the issue of sexual violence towards women during armed conflicts²⁰. Resolution 1325 underscores the need to implement international humanitarian and human rights instruments to better protect women and girls in conflicts and afterwards²¹. The resolution requests UN peacekeeping missions cooperate more with host-governments, bilateral and multilateral partners and other stakeholders to address gender issues. Additionally, the text notes, more attention should be paid to women's participation in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) – which is usually conducted by national authorities – as well as gender-sensitive principles in legal and judiciary reforms²².

Practical difficulties and slow implementation

While political consensus on recognising the importance of gender in peacekeeping has been nearly universal, translating the policies into reality has taken time.

While there has been wide political consensus and institutional support for implementing Resolution 1325, progress has not been rapid. In 32 years, from the beginning of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in 1957 until 1989, only 20 uniformed women served as UN peacekeepers²³. In 1993, only around 1% of all uniformed UN peacekeeping personnel were women²⁴. The first female police unit was deployed only in 2007.

While slow, there has been progress: in 2014, the number of female staff deployed in UN peacekeeping missions reached its highest level: female peacekeepers constituted 29% of the international civilians recruited for peacekeeping and political missions²⁵. Most female peacekeepers come from the global south – with female military personnel most often from Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana and Uruguay, and female police personnel most often from Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Nigeria and Rwanda²⁶

²⁰ United Nations, Women in Peacekeeping, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/wps.shtml>

²¹ United Nations, Resolution 1325, 2000, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325\(2000\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325(2000))

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Better World Campaign, 'Women in Peacekeeping,' <http://www.betterworldcampaign.org/un-peacekeeping/get-involved/women-in-peacekeeping.html> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

²⁴ United Nations Peacekeeping website, 'Women in Peacekeeping Data', <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ United Nations Peacekeeping website, 'Women in Peacekeeping a Growing Force', <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/women/womeninpk.shtml>

In order to implement Resolution 1325, a series of reforms were implemented, with action plans and structures to oversee progress.

A global study is currently being developed by a panel of experts to evaluate implementation of Resolution 1325. The study will be presented during a high-level event in New York in October 2015.

Systemic push to better implement Resolution 1325

To ensure implementation of Resolution 1325, the UN has over the years put in place an elaborate inter-agency coordination system to execute its key recommendations. In 2003, this inter-agency coordination mechanism advanced an action plan, initiating the Secretary-General's annual implementation reports on women, peace and security. A monitoring and reporting system was developed with agreed benchmarks²⁷.

More recently, the UN's 'Strategic Framework on Women, Peace and Security 2011-2020' specified further deliverables to track implementation²⁸.

The 2015 high-level event and global study on implementation of Resolution 1325

Secretary-General Ban has designated 2015 as the year to evaluate implementation of Resolution 1325 with a '2015 High-Level Review Initiative'. The review should culminate in a high-level event, to be held in New York in October 2015. As part of the review, the Secretary-General commissioned a global study on the implementation of Resolution 1325.²⁹ The study (currently in preparation) will highlight good practices, implementation gaps and challenges. Expected to be published by mid-2015, the study is led by Radhika Coomaraswamy, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflicts and former Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. She and her team have conducted consultations and country visits to meet with key stakeholders, while the relevant UN services have assisted by organising broader consultations, public events and outreach activities across the globe.

2.7 Enhancing the UN's conflict prevention and mediation capabilities

To boost the UN's conflict prevention tools, the UN's mediation capabilities, both at headquarters and in the field, have been expanded and professionalised.

Why the need for reform?

While the UN's early focus was on traditional peacekeeping activities, the shifting nature of transnational threats – combined with a growing recognition of the ever-increasing human, political and financial costs of international intervention – has pushed the organisation to increasingly focus on conflict prevention and mediation. The UN's preventive diplomacy has traditionally involved the 'good offices' of senior political figures (envoys). More recently, the technical mediation capabilities within the secretariat and in the field have been significantly increased.

²⁷ In this respect, the seven-point action plan on women's participation in peacebuilding has been of particular importance, http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven_point_action_plan.pdf.

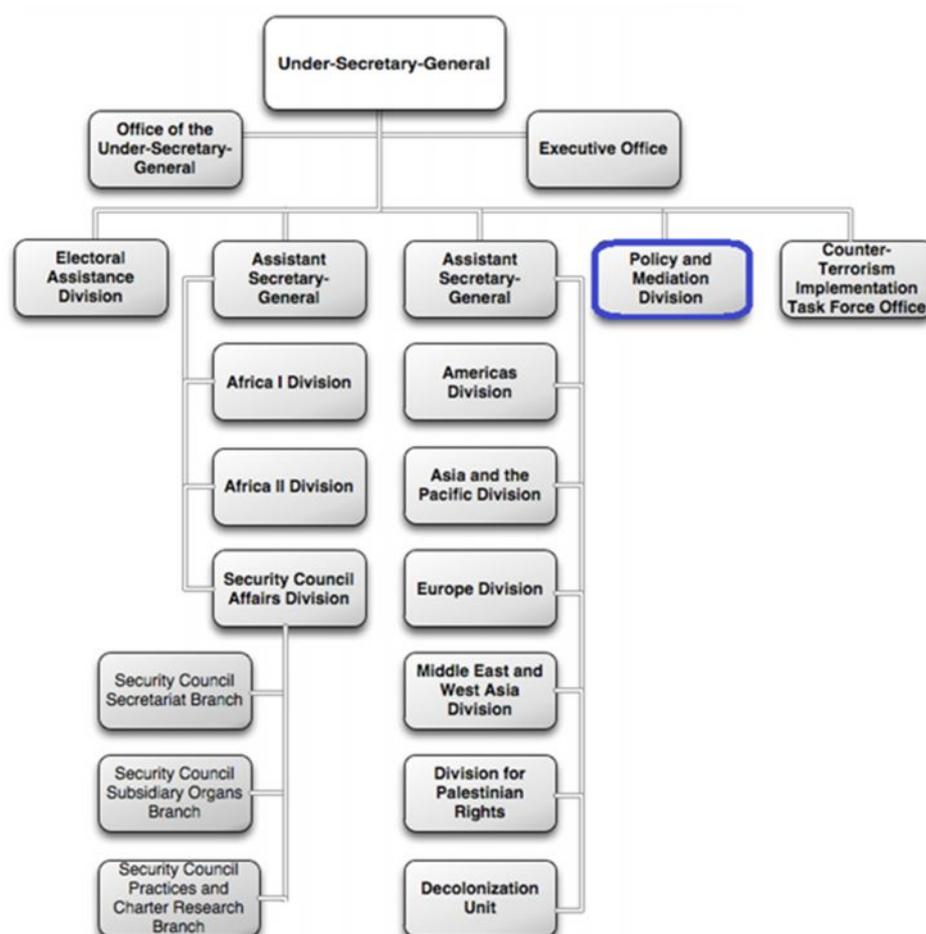
²⁸ The UN Strategic Framework on Women, Peace and Security can be retrieved on http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/wps/Strategic_Framework_2011-2020.pdf.

²⁹ UN Women, 'Preparations for the 2015 High-level Review and Global Study,' <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-peace-security/1325-review-and-global-study>, (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

Development of the UN's mediation support machinery

Within the UN, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) remains the principal body responsible for conflict prevention and mediation. Its Mediation Support Unit (MSU) plays an overarching policy and coordination role, providing expertise through its standby team of mediation experts, supplemented by external experts recruited for shorter terms from a mediation roster³⁰.

Figure 1:
Structure of the United Nations Secretariat's Department for Political Affairs.



Source: United Nations (2015)

During the past few years, the DPA and UNDP have also jointly managed 'peace and development advisors' (PDAs), who are recruited for varied periods and deployed on the ground to provide expertise to UN high officials operating there (UNDP Resident Coordinators or UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General/SRSG). The aim is to develop a coherent approach to conflict prevention, dealing holistically with the political and developmental dimensions of conflicts. Peace and development advisors report directly to

³⁰ More on the responsibilities of the UN MSU and DPA more generally can be retrieved on the UN thematic website at http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/mediation_support.

Within the UN secretariat, the Department of Political Affairs – and specifically its Mediation Support Team – takes the lead on this dossier.

Other parts of the UN system also offer important contributions to UN mediation efforts.

the UNDP Resident Coordinator of an SRSG, with general periodic reports being circulated to the UNDP and DPA Headquarters. Within the DPA headquarters, the Mediation Support Unit is divided into geographic and thematic elements, with thematic expertise focused on gender, elections and constitutional reforms.

In addition to the tasks described above, the MSU is responsible for organising high-level training programmes on mediation (including a specialised module on gender approaches to mediation) and developing knowledge management products. Any part of the UN system – or, on occasion, UN Member States – may ask the MSU's Policy Unit to prepare thematic analyses and reports, or to organise training sessions on a particular, mediation-related issue.

While the DPA plays a key role in conflict prevention and mediation, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) follows its activities, particularly in places where a 'classic' DPKO peacekeeping mission is being phased out and replaced by a DPA political mission (or *vice versa*). The two cooperate closely, at headquarters and in the field, at all stages.

One area receiving increasing attention is the prevention of electoral violence – a topic considered a nexus of the UN's conflict prevention, mediation, electoral and democracy support activities. The UNDP and its Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) have closely collaborated with various UN entities (including the MSU and field-based experts) to provide a comprehensive response to the issue³¹. Preventing electoral violence is a high priority for the UN secretariat, and the DPA is actively engaged with various parts of the UN to develop its toolbox to this end and bolster democratic reform processes.

3 Developing better response to human rights atrocities

Why the need for reform?

While human rights have been a focus of the UN since its inception, the UN human rights architecture has been criticised as selective and ineffective.

The UN's failures to prevent serious human rights violations – particularly in Rwanda, Srebrenica, South Sudan, Sri Lanka and, most recently, Syria – have been much publicised. A lack of political will has often been identified as the key culprit for these failures, although the UN's chaotic institutional setup, hubris and lack of coordination have also been blamed. The need for the UN to enhance its credibility and effectiveness in responding to human rights atrocities has been repeated in debates on the organisation's reform. The two key criticisms usually mentioned are, on the one hand, perceived double standards stemming from political biases and the power configurations of UN members, and, on the other, the institutional and procedural inefficiencies of the UN human rights apparatus. Then UN has also been criticised for not being able to properly oversee and ensure implementation

³¹ More on the UN electoral assistance activities can be retrieved on <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/issues/elections>.

of its own actions and recommendations.

Regarding the former, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework (analysed later in this chapter) aims to eliminate double standards and protect against the worst crimes and atrocities. The framework attempts to forge global consensus on standards for international protection, including defining the conditions for international intervention when all peaceful efforts to resolve a conflict have been exhausted.

Concerning the second criticism – the UN's internal inefficiencies – the Secretary-General's recent 'Rights Up Front' initiative aims to create a coherent approach to human rights emergencies, with a timely, strong, and synchronised response. Reforms have focused primarily on the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Council, although the UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures – as well as some New York- and Geneva-based structures – have also been examined for improvements.

A series of institutional reforms transformed this architecture and created useful frameworks and concepts for its thematic work.

3.1 Human Rights Council

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is the main UN body responsible for human rights, established in Geneva in 2006 to replace the UN Commission on Human Rights. The creation of the UNHRC was seen as a victory for those who had long advocated reforming its predecessor, which was often criticised for not fulfilling its mandate. Rather than discussing human rights issues and advancing the promotion and protection of human rights across the globe, critics said, the UN Commission for Human Rights was a forum for politically-motivated finger-pointing, and turned a blind eye to the gross human rights violations taking place in many Members' territory.

While not completely free from shortcomings, the UN Human Rights Council is today seen by many as an improvement in the UN's human rights architecture. Composed of 47 UN Member States elected for a three-year mandate (renewable once), the Human Rights Council promotes the universal respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, addresses situations in which human rights are violated, and supports effective coordination and mainstreaming human rights within the UN system. The HRC oversees the Universal Periodic Review and the UN Special Procedures. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) acts as the HRC's secretariat.

In accordance with its mandate, the work of the HRC was reviewed in 2011, five years after its establishment. UNGA Resolution 16/21 on the 'Review of the Work and Functioning of the Human Rights Council'³² confirmed the status of the HRC, introduced some changes in procedure (starting the membership cycle in January and introducing new speaking procedures for the Universal Periodic Review), created the position of President of the HRC,

The UN Human Rights Council – together with its Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures – is seen as an improvement over its predecessor, the UN Commission on Human Rights.

³² United Nations General Assembly, Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council thematic website, www.un.org/en/ga/president/65/issues/hrcouncil.shtml.

and settled the modalities of future reviews. Such changes were criticised by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for being largely bureaucratic and too limited. The resolution's section on the UN Special Procedures, on the other hand, was lauded for its more substantive elements (see below).

HRC review did not address the problematic membership issue, i.e. how to ensure a competitive process that would prevent states with poor human rights records from being elected. In February 2013 the European Parliament passed a resolution on the 22nd session of the HRC³³ in which it expressed concern. The Parliament noted that the phenomenon of 'bloc politics', in which regional groups of countries arrange uncontested elections, damaged the credibility of the HRC.

Human rights organisations campaigned intensively ahead of the HRC elections, held in November 2012, and asked candidate countries to demonstrate transparency and to submit concrete and measurable pledges. Another issue has been that of the increasing workload of the HRC; addressing that problem was one of the priorities of the EU for the 68th UNGA.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a peer review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. It occurs once every four years and provides an opportunity for all states to declare what they have done to improve their human rights situation³⁴. While the UPR offers a unique platform to discuss the human rights situation of all UN Member States, its weaknesses are widely acknowledged: as the UPR is a peer review, its reliability relies entirely on the good will of the reviewing countries and the countries under review – which is not always adequate.

While not without critics, the Universal Periodic Review has provided an opportunity for a more systematic assessment of the global human rights situation.

3.2 Strengthening the UN Special Procedures

The reform of UN Special Procedures aimed to ensure that mandate holders can undertake their work without facing political intimidation or interference, and with sufficient resources to pursue their mandates.

UN Special Procedures are mechanisms established by the HRC to address either specific country situations or thematic issues. Currently, there are 36 thematic and 14 country mandates³⁵. Mandate holders are either an individual (a 'Special Rapporteur' or 'Independent Expert') or a working group, usually composed of five members (one from each world region). They serve in a personal, independent and impartial capacity, and do not receive salaries or any other financial compensation for their work³⁶.

The UNGA thematic resolutions point to a number of challenges relating to UN Special Procedures, including cases of intimidation or reprisals targeting

³³ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0055+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

³⁴ The European Parliament's resolution on the 22th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, 7 February 2013, <http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/upr/pages/BasicFacts.aspx>.

³⁵ See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Themes.aspx> (thematic mandates), and <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Countries.aspx> (country mandates).

³⁶ See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcompage.aspx>.

the mandate holders, a lack of adequate resources for a meaningful follow-up, and the need to better embed the Special Procedures within other UN structures dealing with human rights.

The EU has raised many of these concerns. It has underlined the need to coordinate the UN Special Procedures with the work of the UNGA Third Committee³⁷, as well as the need to link the UN funding and programmatic activities to the UN Special Procedures' recommendations. The EU has also favoured making the selection process of the Special Procedures' mandate-holders more transparent and inclusive by involving civil society and ensuring that clear selection criteria are used.

3.3 Strengthening the UN human rights treaty bodies

Reforms of the bodies overseeing international treaties have increased these bodies' independence, while ensuring they are supported professionally and can effectively report on treaty compliance.

Besides the UN Charter-based bodies and mechanisms (HRC, UPR, Special Procedures), a number of specific expert bodies have been established by core international human rights treaties to monitor implementation of the treaties. The bodies verify that legal commitments are respected, review participating states' legislation and policies on the basis of periodic reporting, and provide advice and recommendations.

The development of this treaty body system, which reflects the increasing weight of human rights in the international legal system, has not been entirely efficient. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights delivered a report on the matter in June 2012, following three years of consultations with stakeholders. Recommendations included taking measures to enhance the independence of treaty bodies' members and to improve states' reporting and compliance with treaty obligations. In 2014, the UNGA responded by establishing an open-ended intergovernmental process to strengthen the human rights treaty body system³⁸.

3.4 Systemic coherence: New York structures vs. the 'Geneva system'

Human rights issues are primarily treated through the UNGA's Social, Humanitarian Cultural Affairs Committee (the Third Committee). The Third Committee considers thematic and country-specific human rights resolutions. It also monitors major human rights conferences and submits drafts of international human rights conventions to the plenary session. The Third Committee has a responsibility to promote coordination between UN institutions in New York and the Geneva-based Human Rights Council and its

³⁷ UNGA's Third Committee deals with social, humanitarian and cultural matters. The UNGA is divided into the six committees, with other ones being in charge of disarmament and security (first committee), economic and financial affairs (second committee), special political and decolonisation matters (fourth committee), administrative and budgetary affairs (fifth committee) and legal affairs (sixth committee).

³⁸ The United Nations General Assembly, resolution A/RES/68/268 on 'Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system,' 21 April 2014, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/TB/HRTD/A-RES-68-268_E.pdf.

associated mechanisms. The Committee also maintains links with the HRC and examines Special Procedures reports. In response to criticism about insufficient contact between New York and Geneva, coordination has been stepped up.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, which is part of the UN Secretariat, also plays a crucial role in mainstreaming human rights across the UN system. Based in Geneva and led by High Commissioner Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein from Jordan, it has an office in New York headed since 2010 by an assistant secretary general for human rights.

The OHCHR acts as the secretariat of the HRC, supports the work of Special Procedures, engages with other UN entities and provides assistance and expertise to governments, including through its field presence. It has imposed itself as a force in the UN system. Strengthening the OHCHR and preserving its independence remain key objectives of the EU and the EP.

To break down the silos dividing the UN's human rights divisions, coordination between the New York- and Geneva-based systems has been strengthened over the years.

3.5 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P)

Development of the R2P doctrine

In recent years, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) has become one of the most recognisable frameworks for responding to genocide and other serious human rights atrocities. R2P emphasises the responsibility of each state to protect its population against human rights crimes, and the international community's obligation to assist each state in fulfilling this responsibility. The R2P framework justifies the use of coercive measures, including military ones, as the last resort in cases on persistent non-compliance. Borne of the international community's failure to stop the genocide in Rwanda, and supported within the UN, the R2P framework was advanced by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in a 2001 report titled 'The Responsibility to Protect'³⁹. The report described building blocks for legitimate intervention, including 'just cause', 'right intention', last resort, proportionality, 'reasonable prospects' and the 'right authority'. The report was unanimously adopted by world leaders during the 2005 World Summit in New York.

The UN has since embraced, fleshed out and institutionalised the concept, although not all its Members support the project equally. In his 2009 report, 'Implementing the Responsibility to Protect'⁴⁰, Secretary-General Ban proposed a three-pillar approach to R2P, with the first pillar focused on protection, the second on capacity-building and the third on the international community's responsibility to prevent and halt atrocities.

To provide a framework for comprehensive peace support action and redress problems of selective justice and an uneven response to global human rights atrocities, the concept of a 'Responsibility to Protect' has been developed. This draws on previous attempts to forge a global consensus for a 'humanitarian intervention' doctrine.

³⁹ International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), 'Responsibility to Protect,' December 2001, <http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf>.

⁴⁰ United Nations Secretary-General, Report to the United Nations General Assembly A/63/677 on 'Implementation of Responsibility to Protect,' 12 January 2009, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/63/677.

While R2P has been embraced and institutionalised within the UN system, its acceptance varies globally.

A number of UN Security Council resolutions explicitly refer to R2P. The fact it was invoked during NATO's intervention in Libya eroded international support for the principle.

Since the intervention in Libya, the preventive 'pillar' of R2P has been emphasised. Brazil's 'Responsibility while Protecting' concept reflects the growing importance accorded to prevention.

R2P has been invoked in a number of Security Council resolutions, including on Darfur, Libya, Côte d'Ivoire, Yemen, Mali, Sudan and South Sudan. The framework has also appeared in numerous UNGA resolutions and UN Secretary-General thematic reports. Two high-level posts created in 2007 – Special Representative for Responsibility to Protect and Special Representative for Prevention of Genocide⁴¹ – enhanced the UN's internal coordination of the framework's implementation. The Special Representatives, supported by a small secretariat (comprising six policy officers), are directly involved in a number of conflict prevention and mitigation activities in priority countries. They conduct high-level dialogues with national authorities, liaise with international organisations and civil society, and coordinate UN thematic actions internally.

Sovereignty and double standards: Criticisms of R2P

R2P has been criticised by some as a norm infringing on national sovereignty. More recently, it has also been attacked for double standards in its implementation (Libya and Syria are frequently juxtaposed as examples of two countries in which the concept has been applied differently). After NATO was perceived to have overstepped its mandate during the Libyan conflict, some countries – Brazil in particular – advanced a concept of 'responsibility while protecting'⁴², to prevent future 'misuses' of the R2P concept.

As proposed by the Brazilian authorities, 'responsibility while protecting' includes four basic recommendations:

1. intervening militarily only as a last-resort after all peaceful means have been exhausted;
2. thoroughly analysing the potential consequences of military action prior to engagement;
3. ensuring that force to be 'legal, operational and temporal';
4. not allowing intervention that would generate more harm than it was intended to prevent.

Moreover, the Brazilians asked that the UN Security Council procedures be developed to 'monitor and assess the manner in which resolutions are interpreted and implemented to ensure responsibility while protecting.' While much of this proposal reiterates earlier concerns, the request to enhance the monitoring of the UN Security Council was novel and useful. This issue is being reportedly explored in an independent panel's on-going review, which may formulate recommendations for implementation.

⁴¹ More information on the work of the Special Representatives can be retrieved on the UN thematic website <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/>.

⁴² While much has been published on the issue of the Brazilian concept of 'Responsibility while Protecting', there have not been a conclusive assessment of its potential utility for advancing further the R2P framework. While some have been pointing out the value of its emphasis of the preventive aspects, some others have labelled it as unhelpful and watering down the doctrine.

3.6 'Rights Up Front'

'Rights Up Front' is an initiative of the current UN Secretary-General to systematise the UN's assessment of and response to human rights emergencies.

The 'Rights Up Front' initiative rests on six recommendations for goals and actions.

The 'Rights Up Front' initiative

Following the UN's failure to prevent mass atrocities during the Sri Lankan government's assault on Tamil-held areas in 2009, the UN Secretary-General put forward an idea called 'Rights Up-Front' to prevent or mitigate serious human rights violations through early and coordinated preventive action⁴³. The initiative is aimed at forging closer cooperation within the UN system to synchronise inter-agency approaches to nascent human rights emergencies, facilitate sharing inter-agency information on potential and on-going crisis situations, and ensure that the various UN institutions and structures (at the headquarters and on the ground) possess adequate information on developments on the ground.

Six Pillars of 'Right Up Front'

Various parts of the UN Secretariat collaborated on the 'Rights Up Front' to produce a joint document formulating recommendations for the UN secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes. The text outlined what each must do to improve the UN's collective response to serious human rights violations in the future. Six broad rules applied to common action:

1. Mainstream human rights into all activities of the UN to enhance understanding of the organisation's human rights obligations;
2. Provide Member States with candid information about people at risk of, or subject to, serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law;
3. Ensure coherent action strategies on the ground and leverage the UN system's capabilities to respond in a concerted manner;
4. Clarify and streamline procedures at headquarters to enhance communication with the field and facilitate early, coordinated action;
5. Strengthen the UN's human rights capacity, particularly through better coordination of its human rights entities;
6. Develop a common UN system for managing information on serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law⁴⁴.

Periodic inter-agency meetings (in which all major agencies and programmes participate) should signal potential crises, establish a common understanding of potential flash points and coordinate action.

⁴³ More information on the 'Rights Up Front' initiative can be found on <http://www.un.org/sg/rightsupfront/>.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

The record of 'Right Up Front' has been mixed.

While still a young initiative, the 'Rights Up Front' is generally considered to have produced mixed results.⁴⁵ It was hailed for catalysing action on the ground in some cases (as in the 'open gate' policy in South Sudan, which led to enhancing protection of civilians), but also criticised elsewhere (in Darfur, for example, in part, due to weaknesses in the UN's human rights reporting and a perceived lack of transparency). One of the prescriptions to strengthen 'Rights Up Front' is to link it more explicitly to the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine.

4 Improving the effectiveness of the system

The UN's institutional structure has been frequently criticised as overcomplicated and redundant. In response, various reforms have been adopted to streamline its structures and financing.

Why the need for reform?

The UN's fragmented presence on the ground has been criticised as limiting its effectiveness. In addition to the six principle UN bodies, there are currently 15 specialised UN agencies and another six funds and programmes⁴⁶. With responsibilities for a particular topic spread across numerous entities, funds and programmes, the UN is perceived as failing to deploy its resources effectively.

The way the UN manages its financial resources and its often cumbersome budgeting rules have also been perceived as hampering effectiveness. (In fact, other factors, not fully controlled by the UN secretariat – such as some UN Member States' persistent non-payment of dues – have also created financial problems and budgetary gaps.)

Reforms have been adopted to streamline UN structures, make them more accountable and transparent, and to simplify budgetary and financial rules.

4.1 'Delivering as One' and financing/budgetary reforms

The 'Delivering as One' initiative

The 'Delivering as One' reform has streamlined the UN presence on the ground, with 'UN Houses' led by 'Resident Coordinators'.

Improving the overall coordination and coherence of the UN system has been a *leitmotif* in recent decades. While various secretaries-general have addressed the issue, concrete decisions were only taken in 2005. During that year's World Summit, participating leaders called on Kofi Annan to take concrete steps. His response included the 2006 creation of the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence, whose final report recommended the 'Delivering as One' (DAO) framework to address this issue.

Under DAO, UN agencies operating in a specific country adhere to the 'one budget, one leader, one office' principle, with the UN presence – called the 'UN House' – led by the 'Resident Coordinator'. The UN launched the

⁴⁵ International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, 'Rights Up Front and Civilian Protection: An Uneven First Year,' 25 November 2014, <http://icrtopblog.org/2014/11/25/rights-up-front-and-civilian-protection-an-uneven-first-year/>.

⁴⁶ UN organisational chart can be retrieved on <http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/structure/>.

'Delivering as One' pilot initiative in 2007, with the governments of eight countries – Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Vietnam – volunteering as pilots.

An independent evaluation of the pilot phase, with 'moderate positive results', was completed in 2012.⁴⁷ High-level intergovernmental conferences on DAO have been organised annually to evaluate the outcome; these have taken place in Maputo (2008), Kigali (2009), Hanoi (2010), Montevideo (2011) and Tirana (June 2012). In its Resolution 67/226, the UNGA requested that the UN system build on the best 'Delivering as One' practices and consolidate the process by outlining the core elements. At the time of this writing, DAO is in second implementation stage, focussed on ensuring implementation of the recommendations of the independent evaluation in the pilot countries – with the future of the initiative widely expected to be determined by the outcomes of the current stage.

Financing/budgetary reforms

Proposals for UN financial/budgetary reforms have traditionally revolved around creating better financial oversight and ensuring more efficient use of funds. The Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly has been a driving political force for this. The Fifth Committee has also faced the issue of membership dues and has encouraged members lagging with their payments to honour their obligations. Finally, the committee is in charge of adjusting membership dues according to inflation and currency fluctuations.

The UN budget is based on both mandatory and voluntary contributions from its 192 Member States, and currently is estimated at around USD 26 billion (annually) (for bodies, agencies, programmes and funds worldwide)⁴⁸. The level of compulsory annual contributions is determined by the UNGA every three years. For developed countries it is based on the country's GDP average from the previous six years. The US is currently the highest individual payer, with its contribution accounting for 22 % of the UN budget. (The calculated joint contribution of the EU and its Member States makes the group the biggest donor⁴⁹.) Other important individual donors to the UN budget include Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, China, Spain, Mexico, Australia and Brazil. The contribution rate for a least developed state (LDC) is 0.001 % of the UN budget⁵⁰.

The UN budget has steadily but slightly risen in recent years, with the trend

Various stakeholders have advocated budgetary reforms to make the UN more transparent and accountable.

The UN budget is based on both mandatory and voluntary contributions. The current annual budget is estimated at around USD 26 billion.

⁴⁷ United Nations General Assembly, Note by the Secretary-General A/66/859 on Independent Evaluation of Lessons Learned from 'Delivering as One,' 26 June 2012, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/66/859.

⁴⁸ United Nations General Assembly, Committee on Contributions, Status Reports, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/contributions/status.shtml>.

⁴⁹ United Nations Secretariat, 'Assessment of the Member States' Contributions on the UN General Budget,' 29 December 2014, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=ST/ADM/SER.B/910.

⁵⁰ Better World Campaign, 'The UN Budget Process,' <http://www.betterworldcampaign.org/issues/funding/the-un-budget-process.html> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

The US has been particularly critical of the way UN spends its resources and has proposed a series of changes. The country vetoed the UN budget in 2007 until some of its demands were met.

The 60th UNGA Summit in 2005 addressed the issue of UN accountability and transparency in detail. An outcome document outlined reforms to be adopted.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) was created in 1994 to fight corruption and mismanagement within the UN system.

causing many contributors to call for more accountability and efficiency.

The US has perhaps been the strongest critic in this regard, pointing to concrete instances of waste, mismanagement and corruption. Dissatisfied with the UN's progress towards greater accountability, in 2007 the US voted against the 2008-2009 budget until some of the country's demands were met. (Today the current rules mean that unanimity is no longer required for the UN budget to be adopted⁵¹.)

The 2005 World Summit at the 60th UNGA session examined details of proposals from a number of UN Members for greater accountability and transparency in the UN budget. Since then, the steps taken include:

- Biennial publication of UN financial reports, outlining UN system-wide revenues and expenditures. Similar reports are produced on the agency- and programme-levels.
- Specialised website by the UN Chief Executive Board (CEB) with user-friendly statistical data on UN revenues and expenditures (this website includes data from 2010 only).
- Improved system of internal audit (more on this below), with findings of internal audits available online⁵².

The UN's internal financial control capabilities are largely the work of its Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The OIOS was created in 1994 to respond to calls for budgetary transparency and effectiveness. As an 'operationally independent office', the OIOS oversees monitoring, internal audit, inspection, evaluation and investigation. The Office is mandated to initiate and carry out investigations and to report any cases of financial malpractice and other misconduct in the UN system.

To date, the OIOS has undertaken a number of important steps to identify, assess and mitigate risks, and has actively proposed measures to improve transparency and sound management, thereby promoting a culture of change within the UN. Nevertheless, the OIOS has been criticised in the media for failing to pursue cases of alleged corruption involving UN officials. Many of these cases were reportedly inherited from the Effective Procurement Task Force (PTF), which was, according to the reports, terminated after uncovering cases of graft involving UN employees from influential Member States⁵³.

⁵¹ United States Mission to the United Nations, 'Leading for Reform of the United Nations,' <http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/182296.htm>, (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

⁵² Council of the European Union, 'EU Priorities for the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly,' 22 July 2005, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/85816.pdf.

⁵³ The Heritage Foundation, 'The United Nations: Urgent Problems that Need Congressional Action,' <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/2011/02/united-nations-urgent-problems-that-need-congressional-action> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

While some progress in this area has been made, a number of outstanding issues remain to be tackled.

While the UN budget has arguably been made more transparent and accountable in recent years, a number of further improvements are still being discussed. Some of these echo the proposals advanced by the US in the 2007 'United Nations Transparency and Accountability Initiative' (UNTAI)⁵⁴ – namely:

- Availability of internal audits and other reports (evaluations, investigative reports, etc.) to the UN Member States and, when appropriate, the wider public;
- Public access to all relevant budget and procurement documentation;
- Whistleblower protection policies;
- Financial disclosure policies;
- Effective UN Ethics Office;
- Truly independent financial oversight bodies;
- Transparent administrative support costs for voluntarily funded activities.

Phase II of the UNTAI was launched in 2011, with a focus on expanding the New York-based funds and programmes in the 2007 pilot phase to other parts of the world⁵⁵.

4.2 Reforming the UN's institutional setup: Selected issues

Why the need for reform?

The UN institutional architecture has evolved to better reflect political needs and tackle global challenges. New structures have been created to address peacekeeping and gender matters, while the older, fundamental structures, including the UN General Assembly, have undergone reforms to streamline operations and gain new vitality.

The most powerful UN institution, the UN Security Council, has, however, proved resilient to reform. As a reflection of an outdated, Cold War order, the Security Council today has many important players complaining about being left out and unduly marginalised.

⁵⁴ United Nations Development Programme, <http://undpwatch.blogspot.be/2008/01/united-nations-transparency.html> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

⁵⁵ United States Mission to the United Nations, http://usun.state.gov/about/un_reform/tran_acc_init/ (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

4.2.1 UN Security Council reforms

Calls for reforming the UN's structure have focused on the UN Security Council, the key body responsible for global action on peace and security.

With its structures are seen by many as relics of the Cold War, the UN has been the subject of various reform proposals over the years. Those of the 'G4', 'Uniting for Consensus' and the 'Ezulwini Consensus' have gained some prominence.

Amongst the issues surrounding UN institutional reform, the reform of the UN Security Council is the most difficult to achieve. The first debate on the UN Security Council's enlargement started in early 1950s, with various African, Asian and Latin American countries pushing for the institution to be expanded to better reflect the diverse and expanding membership of the organisation and to enhance legitimacy of the Council's decisions.

A few dates define the debate on this reform:

1946 - The first session of the UN Security Council.

1965 - The number of non-permanent members of the Security Council increases from six to ten.

1992 - A 'G4' group is created. Comprised of Germany, Japan, Brazil and India, all demand a permanent seat at the Council. Another group, called 'Uniting for Consensus' and initially including Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Egypt, Italy, Mexico and Pakistan, demands a fairer global representation at the Security Council, instead of the expansion demanded by the G4. African countries simultaneously request two permanent seats to make up for historic injustices and respond to the fact that most of the UNSC agenda at the time pertained to developments on the African continent; this initiative is known as the 'Ezulwini Consensus'⁵⁶.

2005 - Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan calls on the UN to reach a consensus that would allow the UNSC to be expanded to 24 members. Two possibilities are advanced: Plan A would create six new permanent seats and three non-permanent seats; Plan B would create one non-permanent seat and eight other new seats for a new class of Members elected for a period of four years, subject to renewal.

2005 - The 'Uniting for Consensus' group proposes adding 20 non-permanent seats to the UNSC, while maintaining the existing five permanent seats.

Since then, various more modest proposals and configurations have been advanced. The three largest groups still divide along the lines of the G4, the 'United for Consensus' group and the Ezulwini Consensus⁵⁷. While there appears to be broad agreement that the Security Council's current formation is not sustainable in the long run, there is no agreement on how to move forward, and no agreement on the criteria that would allow further work on

⁵⁶ While the 'G4' and the 'UfC' groupings have prevailed as more influential reform groups to date, a number of other ideas for UNSC reforms have been put forward by other groupings, including the so-called 'L69' group (comprising 41 countries from the Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific region), the 'C10' group (comprising ten of the African Union states), and the 'S5' group (comprising Costa Rica, Singapore, Jordan, Lichtenstein and Switzerland).

⁵⁷ United Nations University, 'The United Nations Security Council's Reforms,' <http://ourworld.unu.edu/en/united-nations-security-council-reform> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

this issue to be done. The most popular criteria advanced are population size, GDP, military capabilities, financial contribution to the UN (including to its peacekeeping budget), record on counterterrorism and non-proliferation, functional rule of law, and commitment to human rights and democracy⁵⁸.

While reforming the UN Security Council has become something of a fixture on the UN agenda, progress has been elusive due to a lack of global consensus on the issue.

The UN General Assembly has been involved in deliberations on this topic, establishing an open-ended working group on the matter in 1993. While political sensitivities surrounding this issue have effectively prevented progress, the working group has managed to carry out extensive consultations with UN Members and other stakeholders on the issues of increasing the Security Council's number of seats (both permanent and rotating ones) and limiting or discontinuing the use of veto in the Council. Some of the working group's activity reports and key documents are public⁵⁹. Most recently, the discussion on abolishing the veto system has resurfaced prompted by the UN SC's failure to respond to the war in Syria. Nevertheless, no tangible progress on these issues has been made, due to the well-known political and structural obstacles (any modification of the UNSC's membership requires the UN Charter to be amended. This in turn requires the support of two thirds of the UNGA's votes. Ratification must be supported by at least two thirds of UN members, including the 'permanent five'.)

4.2.2 Revitalisation of the United Nations General Assembly

The UN General Assembly is rightly seen as the world's most representative forum for deliberation and policy-making. Its 'revitalisation' agenda aims to ensure that it is not bogged down by overly-complicated structures, that its agenda is not overloaded, and that its representativeness is not hampered by inadequate rules of procedure.

Considered the most representative global structure, the UN General Assembly is the main deliberating, policy-making and representative organ of the UN. Through its committees and other supporting structures, it deals with political, economic, humanitarian, social and legal matters. While decisions on global peace and security, the admission of new members and budgetary matters require a two-thirds majority, other decisions are taken by simple majority (with each country having one vote). To exercise its mandate effectively, the UNGA has revised its structures, working methods and procedures – all part of a broad agenda of 'revitalising' its work. Some themes discussed in recent years include 'rationalising' the UNGA agenda (to avoid duplicating discussions taking place in parallel in other fora, notably the ECOSOC), streamlining the UNGA support structures (to avoid excessive proliferation of working groups and *ad hoc* arrangements), increasing geographic representation (especially for the rotating chairs of the main committees), creating equality for all UN languages and, last but not least, revising the process of selecting the UN Secretary-General (a much-politicised issue).

The revitalisation of the UNGA has been championed by a number of UN

⁵⁸ Amnesty International has very recently echoed some of these concerns in its proposal to remove the possibility of the UN Security Council veto on matters pertaining to most serious crimes, including genocide <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-31617141>.

⁵⁹ United Nations General Assembly, 'Report of the 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,' 10 September 2007, <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/follow-up/scr/SC-draft-10Sept2007.pdf>.

Member States and supported by the EU, whose goal is to improve the working methods of the UNGA, its committees and subsidiary organs. This is a slow-moving area of reform, but some progress has been made in recent years. On 29 August 2014, the UNGA adopted by consensus the 'Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalisation of the Work of the General Assembly', which includes a resolution on the issue⁶⁰. The resolution was negotiated during six rounds of informal consultations, skilfully carried out by the Permanent Representative of Egypt, acting as the sole facilitator in a flexible, impartial and transparent manner. As documented in various progress reports issued since, the implementation phase appears to be yielding some concrete results in a number of areas, particularly in streamlining support structures and 'de-clogging' the UN agenda by shifting some debates elsewhere, notably to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

4.2.3 Creation of UN Women

UN Women was created in 2010 to adopt a gender-sensitive approach to UN activities in all fields of activity. UN Women replaced UNIFEM and consolidated thematic work done by a number of other structures and agencies.

The topics of gender and women's empowerment have always featured high on the UN agenda. Nevertheless, fragmentation and the lack of proper coordination have for years prevented the institution from achieving better results in this field. Thanks to the acknowledgment of past shortcomings, a consensus has been reached over the years to consolidate the UN's fragmented thematic actions and programmes into one, powerful agency. In July 2010 the UNGA created UN Women - the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. Initially led by former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet (who stepped down in spring 2013), UN Women is currently led by Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngucka⁶¹. In June 2011, UN Woman approved a strategic plan to guide the agency's work until the end of 2015. The plan outlines six goals for the next six years:

1. Increase women's leadership and participation in all areas affecting their lives;
2. Increase women's access to economic opportunities and empowerment;
3. Prevent violence against women and girls and expand access to survivor services;
4. Boost women's leadership in peace and security and humanitarian response;
5. Strengthen the responsiveness of national budgets and development plans to gender equality; and
6. Ensure a visible link between agreements and operational plans to increase attention to gender equality.

⁶⁰ The UNGA resolution A/RES/68/307 on revitalization of the UNGA can be retrieved on http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/307.

⁶¹ More information on the UN Women's mandate, structures and activities can be retrieved on <http://www.unwomen.org/en>.

UN Women has had a positive track record so far, particularly in the field of prevention of sexual violence and in 'gendering' the UN's peace support activities.

Since its inception, UN Women has focused on mainstreaming gender issues in the UN's work, including in peace and security, the rule of law, transitional justice, human rights and sustainable development. The body has forged structured partnerships within the UN family (UNDP, DPKO, the International Criminal Court, the UN Special Representative on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Against Women and Children⁶²), as well as externally. Its contributions have been widely assessed as positive and successful in incorporating gender into all fields of the UN's work. UN Women has commissioned a number of independent audits of UN activities pertaining to gender and women – including on women, peace and security – to evaluate work in these fields and explore ways to further mainstream gender considerations.

4.2.4 The reform of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Reforms of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) are driven by a desire to ensure that it is sufficiently equipped to fulfil its coordination role and drive the sustainability agenda forward, bridging persistent disagreements on this issue.

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) remains the organisation's central platform for reflection, debate and policy making on issues of sustainable development. The ECOSOC has a mandate to coordinate the thematic activities of the UN system, including the UN specialised agencies, and to supervise work of the UN subsidiary and expert bodies in the economic, social and environmental fields⁶³. The ECOSOC has also been widely criticised for not being effective, with some even calling to abolish it.

Since the establishment of the UN in 1946, more than a dozen proposals have been advanced to reform the ECOSOC. In recent years there has been mounting international support for strengthening the role of the ECOSOC, both within the UN system of governance and within global economic governance. The effort reflects some stakeholders' attempts to fill what they perceive as a 'global leadership gap' on the issue of sustainability, and to facilitate difficult dialogues and bridge the geographic, ideological and cultural divides that hamper global action.

There has been progress over the last years in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the ECOSOC and in strengthening its role as a central body coordinating elements of the UN. Nonetheless, calls to further strengthen the ECOSOC have been made. At the 2005 World Summit, heads of state and government responded to this call, adopting resolution 61/16 in the General Assembly on 'Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council' on 20 November 2006⁶⁴.

In June 2012, the final communiqué for the UN's 'Rio+20' Conference on Sustainable Development reaffirmed that the ECOSOC serves as the principal body for policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for the follow up to the

⁶² This post has been occupied since 2012 by Zainab Bangura of Sierra Leone.

⁶³ More on ECOSOC can be retrieved on <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/>.

⁶⁴ United Nations General Assembly, resolution A/RES/61/6 on 'Strengthening the Economic and Social Council,' 9 January 2007, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/cdp_res_dec/ares61_16.pdf.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As work on the MDGs wraps up and a post-2015 development agenda is developed, the ECOSOC must be adequately prepared to shepherd global efforts. In this regard, the ECOSOC has been under-utilised: all post-2015 discussions have taken place in an *ad hoc*, special forum. Activities related to the global partnership for effective development are also occurring beyond the ECOSOC (with OECD and UNDP taking lead).

5 The EU's input to the UN reform agenda

The EU's stance on effective multilateralism underpins its support for the UN.

The US has also been an active supporter of the UN and its reform agenda.

The EU's policy on reforming the UN

Support for the UN remains a cornerstone of EU policy, and the Union's unwavering political and financial support of the UN is an expression of its commitment to effective multilateralism. As an observer within the UN, the EU has no vote but is a party to – and the only non-state participant in – more than 50 UN multilateral agreements and conventions. The EU has obtained a special 'full participant' status in a number of important UN conferences. With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009, the European Commission's Delegation in New York was transformed into an EU delegation to the UN.

The EU has actively supported the UN reform agenda, participating in various bodies, including the UN Security Council, the General Assembly and all key agencies and programmes. The EU has expressed its political views on the UN agenda during consecutive UNGA sessions.

While the EU recognises the need to make the UN system better suited to new global power configurations, its pursuit of these reforms has been somewhat hampered by the lack of a common position among Member States. This is particularly true when it comes to international peace and security architecture, and has contributed to – or at least not resolved – the current impasse regarding reform of the Security Council.

For other UN reforms, the current situation is pronouncedly better. The EU promoted revitalising the General Assembly to enhance its transparency and effectiveness. The EU is also committed to ensuring that UN financial resources are managed transparently and effectively. The EU supports enhancing system-wide coherence, through the organisational reform adopted as part of 'Delivering as One'.

5.1 EU priorities for the 69th UNGA: EU's 'wish list' of UN reforms

EU priorities for the 69th UNGA: The EU's 'wish list' of UN reforms

The EU's current priorities for the 69th UNGA session have been clustered in five themes: peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, strengthening the UN and humanitarian issues. As part of 'strengthening the UN', the EU is focusing on the following reforms:

7. Reforming of the methodology of assessing the UN regular budget;

The EU's priorities for UN reforms have been expressed during preparations for the 69th UNGA session.

8. Calling for further action on the 2012 General Assembly's mandate for reviewing potentially redundant activities and staff requirements;
9. Reconsidering agreements to avoid unnecessary increases in resources for low priority areas;
10. Further revitalising the UN General Assembly, including by improving its working methods, committees and subsidiary organs to achieve greater efficiency;
11. Seeking a restructured, more coherent and cost-effective process for proclaiming international days, years and decades, and resisting the proliferation of new ones;
12. Continuing to promote the reform of the UN system, including the comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council and the ECOSOC under the 'Delivering as One' model;
13. Continuing to support the UN system's efforts to work more effectively with gender equality and women's empowerment issues, including by implementing the System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and incorporating the plan into 'Deliver as One';
14. Further supporting the UN Secretary-General's efforts to reform the UN's management system;
15. Encouraging the UN Secretary-General to implement managed mobility of UN staff within the scope and timescale agreed by the UNGA;
16. Encouraging the UN Secretary-General to improve human resources, including by improving performance management and simplifying staff remuneration packages;
17. Reminding the UN Secretary-General of the need to report fully on long-term staff accommodation needs and to carefully examine all options;
18. Reinforcing cooperation between the UN and regional organisations⁶⁵.

The EU's priorities reiterate the Union's long-standing demands that the UN streamline its structures, budget and working methods, without shying away from difficult topics such as the reform of the Security Council.

⁶⁵ European Union Delegation to the United Nations, 'EU Priorities for the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,' http://euun.europa.eu/articles/en/article_15238_en.htm (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

5.2 EU positions on UN peace support reforms

The EU remains the largest financial contributor to the UN budget, and the second-largest contributor to its peacekeeping budget. On the other hand, the Union's contribution of personnel to peacekeeping operations has diminished in recent decades.

EU support for UN peacekeeping: Facts, figures and structures

Collectively, the EU and its Member States remain the largest financial contributor to the UN⁶⁶, providing almost 50 % of all contributions to the UN, through regular funding (the EU Member States contribute around 40 % of the UN's regular budget) and voluntary/project-based funding. While the EU is the second largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping⁶⁷, its personnel contributions to peacekeeping missions have dwindled over the past decade. At the same time, EU-UN cooperation on crisis management and peacekeeping has strengthened.

EU-UN cooperation in crisis management was formalised in the Joint Declaration of September 2003. It was complemented and re-enforced in June 2007 by a joint statement. A few years later, the 'Plan of Action to Enhance CSDP Support to UN Peacekeeping' was adopted by the EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC) in July 2012.⁶⁸

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations cooperate with the UN's Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The DPA-led missions have been active in many theatres, including Somalia, Iraq and Libya. A joint consultative mechanism, called the 'EU-UN Steering Committee on Crisis Management', was created in 2003. It meets twice a year at (executive-, senior executive-, DG- or similar level), with additional *ad hoc* meetings as required.

Within the UN, the DPKO is the EU's principal interlocutor on matters related to peace and security. However, as the DPA leads many operations, its active involvement EU-UN coordination is crucial. For the EU, the European External Action Service (EEAS) represents the Union, while the Commission is also invited to these meetings. The Steering Committee has focused on cooperation in the planning and implementation of operations, as well as on joint learning and sharing best practices.

⁶⁶ EU is followed by the US in the second place, and Japan in the third.

⁶⁷ EU's and its Member States contribute to the UN peacekeeping through a plethora of instruments at their disposals, including the obligatory contributions to the UN peacekeeping budget, the African Peace Facility (financed by the European Development Fund (EDF), multi-donor trust funds and other forms of bilateral support.

⁶⁸ Council of the European Union, ARES(2012)805155, 'Plan of Action to Enhance EU CSDP Support to UN Peacekeeping,' 14 June 2012, <http://www.euun2014.eu/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/eu-eeas-csdp-un-peacekeeping-june-2012.pdf>.

5.2.1 Current priority issues in EU-UN peace support cooperation

EU-UN institutional cooperation has intensified recently, with a focus on cooperation in peacebuilding and crisis management.

UN leaders would like the EU Member States to 'return to peacekeeping'. They consider the EU a key provider of 'strategic enablers' – military capabilities that make operations possible.

The EU and its Member States' support for UN peacekeeping and other peacebuilding activities has been maintained despite a worsening financial crisis at home.

The UN has two principal requests of the EU: peacekeeping personnel and 'strategic enablers' (military capabilities contributing to operations' success, including helicopters, satellite communication equipment, etc.) With the exception of the recent UN mission to Mali, many EU Member States have diminished their direct engagement in traditional UN peacekeeping, preferring instead to support regional efforts – implemented, for example, under the auspices of the African Union or through regional economic communities (RECs) such as ECOWAS – or to manage crises through the EU's CSDP, or even NATO.

As for the strategic enablers (here taken to refer only to equipment), the EU is experiencing its own shortages. Various initiatives, such as 'pooling and sharing' programmes, are intended to develop these capabilities for the European Defence Agency (EDA). Providing the UN with rapid reaction forces or helicopters has been difficult for the EU. On the other hand, the EU and its Member States have generously supported UN peace building activities, financing peacekeeping operations, political missions and mediation-related activities, despite the strains of an on-going financial crisis at home. The EU has also assisted the African Union, in the hope that the organisation will become more professional and evolve into a true first responder on the African continent.

Inter-institutional cooperation between the EU and the UN has been strengthened; political and working-level meetings are frequent. The fruit of the collaboration is increasingly visible on the ground, including in some very strategic and volatile theatres, such as Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. Nevertheless, more progress could be achieved by streamlining mission planning procedures, amplifying opportunities for joint training and ensuring that the CSDP and UN missions are better coordinated. Despite the occasional hiccup, however, the cooperation has arguably never been better. The High-Level Independent Panel's consultation work is expected to lead to a thorough analysis of these issues, and to help formulate concrete recommendations for the future.

5.2.2 The EU-UN cooperation in the field of conflict prevention and mediation

The EU has strongly supported the UN's mediation activities, while simultaneously developing its own capabilities in this field.

Over the years, the DPA has developed robust relations with the EEAS, particularly its Mediation Support Team. Structured working-level meetings within the twice-yearly EU-UN Steering Committee are supplemented with more frequent desk-to-desk dialogues (through video-conferencing) as well as regular, high political-level meetings (between EEAS Deputy Secretary-General Helga Schmid and UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman).

The EU and its Member States have supported the UN's efforts to bolster its capacities in all of the fields mentioned above. The EU has provided financial support to the MSU and its activities, and actively liaises with the UN secretariat and field offices. Finland has been particularly active on the issue of UN-EU coordination and has driven the thematic work at the UN General

Assembly forward. Turkey has sponsored the third thematic UNGA resolution on mediation⁶⁹, which focuses, among other things, on the role of regional and sub-regional organisations. The EU has simultaneously developed its own capabilities and activities in the field of mediation and preventing electoral violence. The EEAS has pushed for institutional evolution and thematic activities. The European Parliament, led by its Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG), has also demonstrated its commitment to these issues.

5.3 EU views on UN Security Council reforms

There is no consensus within the EU on how to reform the UN Security Council.

While the EU agrees on the need to reform the UNSC, it does not have a common position on the specificities of the reform. The discussion in the UNGA on equitable representation and an expanded membership of the UNSC, as well as related matters, will continue during the 68th UNGA session. Because EU Members are divided among the 'G4' group, the 'Uniting for Consensus' group and an Eastern European group, each trying to alter the configuration of the Security Council in a different way, the EU as a whole has not specified how the reform should occur.

5.4 The EU's enhanced status at the UN General Assembly

As of May 2011, the EU enjoys greater status at the UNGA, which enhances the Union's participation in UN work and increases EU visibility in this forum.

Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and the adoption, on 3 May 2011, of the UN's Resolution 65/276 on the 'Participation of the European Union in the work of the United Nations'⁷⁰, the EU secured the implementation of provisions allowing it to participate in the UN.

Resolution 65/276 ensures the EU plays a role in the UNGA, its committees and preparatory bodies, UN conferences and international conferences held under UN auspices. At the same time it facilitates the collective and active representation of the EU and its Member States at the UN. The resolution represented a significant step for the EU to become an observer – with its own right to speak on behalf of the Union and Member States.

⁶⁹ The United Nations General Assembly, resolution A/RES/68/303 on 'Strengthening the Role of Mediation in the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, Conflict Prevention and Resolution', 13 August 2014, http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GA_ResolutionMediationARES68303_English_0.pdf.

⁷⁰ United Nations General Assembly, resolution A/65/856 on the 'Participation of the European Union in the Work of the United Nations', 1 June 2011, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/856.

After the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU intensified its role of coordinating EU Member States, with the EU Delegation in New York aptly helping in this effort.

The resolution allows the EU 'to be inscribed on the list of speakers among representatives of major groups, in order to make interventions.' In the general debate opening the 68th session of the UNGA, the President of the European Council delivered – for a third time – the EU's statement. The EU's new rights are now broadly accepted at the UN. Internal debates on the matter have largely subsided, although implementation requires the attention of the EU Delegation in New York.

EU internal coordination occurs primarily in New York. This is done through direct, daily contacts between the EU Delegation in New York and the Permanent Representations of Member States at the UN. Ambassadors or experts from the EU and its Member States meet and exchange information continuously.

Coordinating work is also a subject of discussions in Brussels at the Council working group dealing with UN matters (CONUN) Member States are invited to contribute to the work undertaken in New York regarding the whole spectrum of UN activities (e.g. peacekeeping operations, development, scale of assessments, rule of law, etc.). Similar discussions are also held in other Council working groups whose subject matter is relevant to the UN; an example is the Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM).

5.5 Views of the European Parliament on the UN reforms

The European Parliament has actively scrutinised the EU's political and financial support to the UN, while also developing its own direct links to the UN system.

Over the years, the European Parliament has developed strong, direct relations with the United Nations and has monitored EU-UN cooperation and scrutinised the Union's political and financial support to the United Nations. Through the work of its committees, delegations and other structures, the EP has kept an eye on developments in important fields of UN activity, including peace and security, development and human rights. In the field of external relations, the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee has played a leading role, creating a thematic working group to facilitate staff contacts. The EP President and other important EP figures routinely hold high-level bilateral meetings with senior UN officials. High-level UN officials have frequently visited the EP, and the EP delegations have visited UN structures in New York, Geneva and the field.

Too many EP resolutions mention elements of the UN reform agenda to be summarised: all significant foreign policy resolutions point to some aspects of the issue, including those passed on the occasion of the annual reports on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the annual reports on the UNGA's priorities. Specific reports are also produced on flagship reform initiatives – such as the 'Responsibility to Protect'.

The EP's reports contain its opinions on reforming the UN. The Parliament's annual reports on the UNGA sessions constitute a regular stock-taking and policy-shaping exercise on the matter.

A recent report, which proposes recommendations that the European Parliament could make to the Council regarding the UNGA's 69th session (2014/2017(INI), Rapporteur Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, ALDE/DE), focuses on a number of issues pertaining to UN reforms. The recommendations aim to, *inter alia*, strengthen UN action on human rights, democracy, rule of law, peace and security and the role of women, as well as the UN's awareness of what needs to happen to ensure progress towards the post-2015 development agenda⁷¹.

6 Reforming the UN: Ways forward

Other than reforming the UN Security Council and the General Assembly, proposals to streamline the UN have included abolishing structures and practices – particularly ECOSOC, the Trusteeship Council and the second term of the Secretary-General.

UN reforms have proved both a favoured and elusive topic for experts to write about. According to some, 'UN reform is like the weather – everyone talks about it but nothing is ever accomplished'.⁷² While perhaps a bit harsh, the statement captures a widespread scepticism about meaningful UN reform for politically sensitive issues.

The remainder of this paper describes key themes in the debates – held, to a large extent, among non-state actors, including NGOs, think tanks and academia – about how the UN could evolve in the long run. While some prescriptions are widely considered unrealistic – and in some cases outlandish – others provide food for thought, with creative proposals for breaking current stalemates and, in the process, radically changing the UN.

...on the future reform of the UN institutional architecture

In addition to the reforms of the UN Security Council and the UNGA discussed earlier on in this paper, more radical changes have been proposed. Some involve abolishing structures, including the ECOSOC, which has often been criticised as redundant and ineffective and one reason why large public surveys rate the UN's socioeconomic development work as its the least valued (when compared to other activities, such as peace and security or human rights)⁷³. The elimination of the UN Trusteeship Council has also been proposed, as all trust territories have now reached independence⁷⁴.

Finally, some have advocated changing the way the UN Secretary-General is selected, and disallowing the possibility of holding a second term to avoid having incumbents use offices and resources to campaign for re-election.

⁷¹ Full file pertaining to this report is available on the Legislative Observatory (OEIL) website, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2014/2017\(INI\)&lang=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2014/2017(INI)&lang=en) (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

⁷² Keith Suter, 'Australia and UN Reform,' <http://globaldirections.com/Articles/Global%20Politics/UNReform.pdf> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

⁷³ Paul Kennedy and Bruce Russett, 'Reforming the United Nations', Foreign Affairs, September/October 1995 Issue, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/51398/paul-kennedy-and-bruce-russett/reforming-the-united-nations>.

⁷⁴ United Nations, press release L/2755 'Trusteeship Council Has Fulfilled Mandate, Should be Abolished, Special Committee on Charter Told,' 28 February 1996, <http://www.un.org/press/en/1996/19960228.L2755.html>.

(This proposal is sometimes accompanied by a request for the term to be lengthened⁷⁵.) All these changes would entail amending the UN Charter, which would in turn require an approval by two thirds of the UNGA and ratification in Member States. All permanent members of the Security Council would also need to agree to changes.

...on the future of the UN peace support architecture

With some short- to medium-term reforms of the UN peace support architecture have already been discussed in this paper, it is worth flagging a few ideas for deeper reform in this field. One idea is to create UN 'battle groups' (i.e. UN forces under the UN command, paid through the UN peacekeeping budget); another is to endow the UN with rapid-reaction forces composed of UN Member States' forces⁷⁶.

The first option raises a number of questions regarding its feasibility, including its prohibitive costs and logistical obstacles (where such 'UN troops' would be permanently stationed, for example). The other option also appears politically difficult, with the level of the UN Member States' enthusiasm towards this option comparable to EU Member States' enthusiasm for EU Battlegroups.

...on the future of UN budget

Over the years, a number of creative ideas have been put forward for alternative sources for the UN budget. Some of them entail a 'global tax' (for example, a small levy on international airline flights, business or tourist transactions) or a global lottery system⁷⁷. Some link UN Security Council membership to regular payment of UN 'assessments', with some even stipulating punitive measures for late- and non-paying members, including being knocked out of the Security Council (which could potentially affect the memberships of both the United States and Russia)⁷⁸. Proposals also have been made to devise a better way of assessing the level of individual financial contributions, with alternative methods of calculation to better account for the economic realities of UN Members and not excessively burden certain of them. (This has been the position of the US, which considers its bill disproportionate⁷⁹.)

Some far-reaching reform proposals of UN peace support structures involve creating a UN force or a standby rapid-reaction force with personnel from UN Member-States.

Various alternative proposals for funding the UN have been floated, including a global tax and global lottery.

Another proposal has involved punitive measures for UN Members' non-payment of dues.

⁷⁵ Foreign Policy, 'The Race for UN Secretary-General is Rigged,' 14 November 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/14/the-race-for-u-n-secretary-general-is-rigged/>.

⁷⁶ Paul Kennedy and Bruce Russett, 'Reforming the United Nations', Foreign Affairs, September/October 1995 Issue, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/51398/paul-kennedy-and-bruce-russett/reforming-the-united-nations>.

⁷⁷ Global Policy Forum, 'Global Taxes and Charges, May 1998, <https://www.globalpolicy.org/global-taxes/46030-global-taxes-and-charges.html>. See also Los Angeles Times, 'Global Lottery to Fund UN Gains Momentum,' 4 August 2002, <http://articles.latimes.com/2002/aug/04/world/fg-briefs4.5>.

⁷⁸ Keith Suter, 'Australia and UN Reform,' <http://global-directions.com/Articles/Global%20Politics/UNReform.pdf> (retrieved on 27 February 2015).

⁷⁹ Heritage Foundation, 'UN Dues: Obama Lets American Taxpayers Down', 6 January 2010, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2010/01/un-dues-obama-lets-american-taxpayers-down>.

...on the future of UN human resources

While some strides have been made in recent years to attract and retain qualified staff, much remains to be done. Staff turnover particularly in the field, is high, and there is a prevalence of short-term contracts, which is not conducive to institutional continuity and memory. Women remain underrepresented on senior- and mid-managerial levels, and geographic balance remains a problem⁸⁰.

Many observers have advocated reforming the UN's human resource management, with calls for greater staff impartiality, professionalism and gender balance. Better career paths for the UN staff have been a *leitmotif* of this debate.

Some observers have suggested that the UN should devise career management system allowing staff to develop a UN career over time. This would entail, on one hand, further streamlining the existing contracting system and investing more in human resource management (both in terms of finances and further professionalisation of the *cadres*), and, on the other, implementing measures to facilitate career development (training, balancing work with private life) to attract and retain talent.

Women remain underrepresented in the UN's senior positions. The organisation's employment policies should actively look for suitable female candidates for senior positions, while UN Member States should consistently seek out qualified female nominees⁸¹.

As analysts have repeatedly argued, UN senior managers must ensure that the UN secretariat remains a truly international civil service, with UN staff representing the interests and positions of the service, rather than individual governments.

UN member states should carefully consider all their nominations, critics suggest, particularly senior nominations, to avoid appointments that appear based not on merit, but on other factors (pre-retirement arrangements for politicians, nepotism, clientelism, etc.)

...on the future ways to tackle transparency and accountability...

The UN system has faced allegations of wrongdoings such as corruption, maladministration and abuse. Observers have argued that the OIOS should be reinforced (in terms of staff and presence/outreach in the field), that better procedures should be implemented to protect whistleblowers, and that internal accountability mechanisms should treat all allegations with diligence and seriousness.

Increased transparency and accountability would involve improving internal oversight and victim redress, protecting whistleblowers,

⁸⁰ Most of less-developed countries remain heavily underrepresented in the UN.

⁸¹ The Guardian, 'Poll: Is it Time for a Women to Lead the UN?', 10 November 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poll/2014/nov/10/poll-time-for-woman-to-lead-united-nations>.

cooperating with national authorities and sharing information with the public.

The UN, its critics say, must further develop ways to redress any wrongdoings and actively cooperate with national jurisdictions to transmit and follow up on information on pertinent criminal proceedings in Member States. Immunity should only be waived after carefully consideration and justification, to avoid perceptions of impunity. The UN should also enhance the transparency of its information, making data and reports publicly available whenever possible.

...UN reform 'spoilers' and 'catalysers'

While national interests and bureaucratic hubris have been identified as potential 'spoilers', the activism of non-state actors and pressure from regional and sub-regional organisations gives hope for further reforms.

The potential reform 'spoilers' that are most frequently mentioned include deeply entrenched national interests defending the *status quo*, organisational bureaucracy and organisational hubris. Nevertheless, various developments have improved prospects for reform. Today there is an urgent sense that the UN should be better equipped to face modern threats (irregular conflicts, global pandemics, etc.), a growing political consensus on many aspects of reform, an increasingly influential activism from non-state actors (including NGOs, think tanks, religious communities and academia), and the expectations of other regional and sub-regional partners that the UN could better define its role and find synergies when mandates overlap.

The EU is likely to continue exerting significant pressure on the UN in this respect. For all its flaws, the UN remains the most representative, legitimate and global structure, uniquely suited to serve as a forum for mitigating the world's problems.

Annex I: Reforming the UN: selected dates and events

- **1950s and 1960s** – Intense discussions amongst UN Member States on reforming the UN Security Council to better reflect the UN’s growing membership.
- **1986** – The UN General Assembly establishes a high-level group to review administrative and financial matters.
- **1992** – UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issues ‘An Agenda for Peace’, a seminal report on improving UN peace support operations.
- **1994** – UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali issues ‘An Agenda for Development’, outlining the need to overhaul the UN’s development arm.
- **2000** – The Millennium Summit in New York addresses the need for comprehensive reforms of the UN system. Participating leaders agree on the framework for the Millennium Development Goals, outlining specific targets for 2015.
- **2003** – UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appoints a high-level panel on ‘Threats, Challenges and Change’ to examine how the UN’s institutional structures and procedures could better respond to the changing nature of global threats.
- **2004** – Following a UN enquiry into the possible corruption of high UN officials (in the UN-led ‘Oil for Food’ Iraq programme), the independent, high-level ‘Volcker Commission’ recommends enhancing internal controls and oversight mechanisms.
- **2005** – Secretary-General Kofi Annan issues a report titled ‘In Larger Freedom: Toward Development, Security and Human Rights for All’, proposing a series of reforms to improve the work of the United Nations, focusing on streamlining the institutional organisation to make it more functional, ensure adequate financial resources and sound financial management, and enhance the system’s transparency and accountability.
- **2005** – The World Summit in New York takes stock of the UN reforms, recommending a number of institutional changes, particularly in the fields of peacebuilding, democracy promotion and human rights. Other recommendations are made to enhance coordination, transparency and accountability.
- **2006** – Secretary-General Kofi Annan establishes the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence to examine how the UN could become more efficient in the fields of development, climate action, gender issues and humanitarian assistance. The Panel recommends a new coordination framework known as ‘Delivering as One’ and establishes ‘UN Women’ to consolidate the UN’s work on women.
- **2006** – A UN General Assembly resolution approves the transformation of the UN Human Rights Commission into the Human Rights Council, thereby responding to long-standing criticisms about the effectiveness of the organisation’s human rights structures.
- **2007** – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon proposes an administrative reform agenda to improve the support system for UN staff based in the field and to revitalise the UN’s non-proliferation agenda.
- **2008** – The UN General Assembly adopts a resolution on better human resource management in the organisation, recommending a series of measures to enhance human resource management, including by streamlining the complicated contracting system, enhancing its transparency and improving career paths for existing UN staff.

Annex II: On-going UN Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions

Table 1:
Current peacekeeping missions led by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

Year Launched	Location	Name of Mission
1948	MIDDLE EAST	UNTSO — UN Truce Supervision Organization
1949	INDIA/PAKISTAN	UNMOGIP — UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
1964	CYPRUS	UNFICYP — UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
1974	SYRIA	UNDOF — UN Disengagement Observer Force
1978	LEBANON	UNIFIL— UN Interim Force in Lebanon
1991	WESTERN SAHARA	MINURSO — UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
1999	KOSOVO	UNMIK — UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
2002	AFGHANISTAN*	UNAMA— UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
2003	LIBERIA	UNMIL— UN Mission in Liberia
2004	CÔTE D IVOIRE	UNOCI — UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
2004	HAITI	MINUSTAH — UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti
2007	DARFUR, SUDAN	UNAMID —AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur
2010	THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO	MONUSCO — UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
2011	ABYEI, SUDAN	UNISFA – UN Interim Security Force for Abyei
2011	SOUTH SUDAN	UNMISS – UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
2013	MALI	MINUSMA - UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
2014	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	MINUSCA - UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in the Central African

Table 2:

Current special political missions led by the Department for Political Affairs (DPA).

Location	Name of Mission	
In Africa		
	MENUB	United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi
	UNIOGBIS	United Nations Integrated Peace-building Office in Guinea-Bissau
	UNOCA	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
	UNOWA	United Nations Office for West Africa
	UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
	UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
In Central Asia		
	UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
	UNRCCA	United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia
In the Middle East		
	UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
	UNSCO	Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process
	UNSCOL	Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon