

Renewing Our Global Values: A Multilateralism for Peace, Prosperity, and Freedom

Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai*

INTRODUCTION: A MORAL VISION FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Our multilateral institutional heritage is rich. Sixty years ago, in the aftermath of global conflict, the United Nations Charter established a complex global institution to secure the peace. Numerous organizations with a more technical “specialized” focus on everything from health and food to civil aviation and intellectual property joined the U.N. institutional family. At the same time, the world’s leaders established an equally complex institutional system to stabilize the global economy and liberalize world trade. The years that followed saw the creation of still further institutions dedicated to economic development. In the last decades, these many institutions have been joined by an enormous variety of non-governmental bodies—religious communities, advocacy groups, citizens’ initiatives, foundations, multinational corporations, and many more—promoting human rights, environmental protection, and social progress.

But the U.N. Charter aspired to become more than a complex institutional system. It spoke eloquently of the human values to be affirmed by the global community: human rights, “universal peace,”¹ the “dignity and worth of the human person,”² “equal rights of men and women,”³ “economic and social advancement of all peoples,”⁴ and the aspiration for “better standards of life in larger freedom”⁵ for all mankind. The Charter was to be the instrument not only of global governance, but of social progress and moral affirmation. Aspiring for “friendly relations among nations,”⁶ the Charter endorsed the

* Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai is the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand and has been nominated by his government, and the leaders of ASEAN, as a candidate for the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations. See <http://www.surakiart.com>.

1. U.N. CHARTER art. 1, ¶ 2.
2. *Id.* pmbl.
3. *Id.*
4. *Id.*
5. *Id.*
6. *Id.* art. 1, ¶ 2.

“fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”⁷

We are now embarked on what I hope will be a deep and enduring reform of the U.N. system. As we go forward, we are right to focus on the U.N.’s role in peace and security and on the institutional work of the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Secretariat, just as we are right to strengthen the technical contributions of the U.N.’s many specialized programs and affiliated institutions in the fields of health, education, human rights protection, transportation, humanitarian relief, and more. Management reform, financial reform, and institutional reform are all urgently needed to strengthen and preserve our capacity to address these social and economic issues effectively at the multilateral level.

But as we move forward, we must also ask how the U.N.’s moral vision can be affirmed, deepened, and brought effectively into the changed world of the twenty-first century. Universal respect for human rights remains the unwavering core of our global moral vision. Much has been achieved since 1945 to articulate those rights and give them institutional expression. The catalog of human rights to which all nations are committed has expanded exponentially.

Looking forward, how can we extend and deepen the Charter’s moral vision, and that of the many human rights treaties and declarations which have followed? We would each surely distill the core values of this common moral heritage in different ways. Indeed, over the last sixty years, the moral vision and promise of our common global heritage has been expressed and affirmed in different ways. For me, the human rights heritage affirms three crucial hopes: for peace, for prosperity, and for freedom. These are the great dreams for which multilateralism and the diplomacy of the U.N. are but instruments.

I start with peace, with the Charter’s hope that we might avoid the “scourge of war.”⁸ For each of us, this dream is rooted in the deepest human need for security: security for every nation, for every people, and for every human from the violence of conflict or the irrationality of terror. But *peace* is more than security, more than freedom from fear. The promise of peace is also the hope for greater understanding and deeper cooperation among nations, religions, and cultures. Peace is the dream that we can be together, different as we are, without fear; that we can be enriched by one another, secure in the promise that we will be understood; that we can learn from one another; and that we can share the earth in harmony. Peace is the first great hope of multilateralism.

Whatever their culture or nationality, every person aspires to freedom from the closed doorways of poverty and want. Prosperity is the dream that we will be able to provide for ourselves and our families, that we will be free to *prosper*, as individuals and communities. This is the vision that fueled the great struggles for decolonization and development: to be free to determine the

7. *Id.* art. 1, ¶ 3.

8. *Id.* pmb1.

path forward for ourselves, to build the conditions under which our peoples could prosper. The freedom to learn, to work, and to contribute to our society; the freedom to be self-reliant and to share what we have learned with our neighbors—these are the great freedoms I associate with the battle to achieve the full implementation of economic and social rights. So many in our world live with so little. So many remain shut out from literacy and from learning in the age of information. So many perish of preventable diseases. I know we can do better. Poverty alleviation can be more than a dream; it can be our shared project and commitment. Prosperity is the second great hope for an open and cooperative international system.

I express my own hopes for peace and prosperity in the language of *freedom*, echoing so many great statesmen and philosophers, from Franklin Roosevelt to Amartya Sen. Freedom also speaks to how we are governed. The revolutionary promise of democracy is for every citizen to share in the freedom to participate in the decisions that affect his or her life. It is the promise of an accountable government, under law, respecting the rights of every person to think, speak, and associate freely.

The “larger freedom” of which the Charter speaks encompasses the aspiration for social justice, for equality, and for social progress. That freedom demands that peace, prosperity, and democracy be equally available to all, regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or nationality. For me, “larger freedom” is precisely this aspiration that *all* people share in the world’s peace, prosperity, and freedom.

These three dreams—to live in peace, to prosper, and to live in freedom—are our common moral heritage. All face new threats today. We are right to ask whether our multilateral institutions can any longer be entrusted with these shared commitments and hopes. We know much more about one another than we did when the Charter was signed, but this has not brought peace. Decolonization brought self-determination to dozens of nations, but it has not brought prosperity. The vocabulary and institutions of democracy have never been as widely embraced, but this has not brought freedom or good governance.

The global forces that have brought prosperity to so many in the last decades have brought all of us much closer to people with different cultures, affirming different creeds. But intolerance and fear remain widespread. The international economic order has lifted many millions from poverty, but far too many have been left behind. Social exclusion has stoked the embers of ethnic conflict and political extremism, threatening vulnerable young democracies while rendering even the world’s oldest democracies uneasy. The challenges of social and economic dualism within and between nations raise new questions about the meaning of the Charter’s commitment to social progress for all. No nation-state any longer has a monopoly on public authority. All are vulnerable to global social and economic pressures, and all share power with economic actors and the institutions of civil society.

The aspirations that fueled the struggle for self-determination and decolonization must be carried further. We must deepen our commitment to good government and to building democratic institutions that take our commitment to freedom, self-determination, and social inclusion to all the stakeholders in global governance. Governance, whether global or local, is only good when it responds to the needs and voices of the people it serves. Ultimately, the U.N. and our global governance system must also answer to each of us as citizens of the world.

The Charter's vision of "larger freedom" calls us to affirm a deeper democratic vision of individual freedom, social tolerance, and the human dignity that comes from economic self-sufficiency. We must affirm the aspiration of all to self-reliance and self-respect. To do so, we must strengthen democratic public capacity at all levels—the neighborhood, the city, the nation—in partnership with civil society and private enterprise. Only then will we achieve the Charter's vision of justice, social progress, and respect for human rights and human dignity.

In these and other ways, our global ethical vision must be renewed with every generation. As we do so, it is right to ask whether the U.N. can remain the institutional focal point for a robust global ethic. In the years since the Charter was signed, other institutions have emerged—non-governmental bodies and private networks, religious institutions and corporate enterprises—that can seem far more potent, reliable, and user-friendly. The U.N. was designed primarily to facilitate diplomatic conversation. It now finds itself mounting large-scale administrative, humanitarian, and military operations across the globe. But neither diplomatic conversation among states nor local field operations seem appropriate sites for global moral or spiritual affirmation.

It would be easy to conclude that our great international institutions have grown complacent, daunted by the formidable complexity of the issues they face, at once locked in time and vulnerable to the micromanagement and meddling of actors least likely to rise to the challenge of a new global ethic. We all know our global institutions have been far better at articulating and announcing goals than at implementing and achieving them.

In the development field, the U.N.'s many programs and initiatives often remain invisible in the glare of dramatic proclamations and declarations that have remained unfulfilled. It is no secret that the U.N.'s performance in defending the most basic human rights has often fallen far short. The U.N. has not been able to ensure that genocide would "never again" be tolerated. It has been tolerated: in Cambodia, in the former Yugoslavia, and in Rwanda. We have not put ethnic cleansing or ruthless killing on the basis of religion, nationality, gender, or ethnicity behind us. We have not been able to bring peace to Sierra Leone and Cote D'Ivoire, or the many other lands where conflicts still rage. We have so far proved unable to stop the atrocities under way in Darfur.

To be sure, in each of these cases, the U.N. has made a contribution. In each case, the blame for inaction could, and should, also be laid at the door

of the Member States. But is it altogether wrong for observers also to blame the U.N.? Member States have not acted. Nations have failed to live up to their Charter commitments. But the U.N. has also been a place where governments notorious for their human rights abuses have been entrusted with oversight of the human rights records of others, and where paper majorities and powerful minorities alike have applied double standards when denouncing the human rights violations of friend and foe. There is no question that the U.N.'s inability to respond more effectively when lives and cultures are threatened has undermined its moral authority in the world. It is right to ask how an organization of "Member States" can rise to the governance challenges posed in the era of public-private partnerships and the rising authority of civil society.

Most importantly, we must recognize that the U.N. has not itself lived up to the highest standards of good governance. Unethical conduct and cronyism have eroded the U.N.'s moral and political authority. U.N. peacekeeping troops have not always lived up to the standards of humanitarian law. The most profound finding of the Volcker inquiry into the Oil-for-Food Programme was not the smoking gun of this or that misallocated fund, but a broad culture of mismanagement. To be an effective voice for democracy and human freedom, the U.N. must itself be a paragon of good governance: accountable, effective, and transparent.

I believe that it is right to ask whether the U.N., without deep reform, can be entrusted with our moral aspirations and hopes for justice. My own answer is no. Without serious, long-term reform, the U.N. cannot and should not be entrusted with our ethical aspirations for a more democratic and equitable global order of "larger freedom."

But the real need for significant institutional reform does not in the least detract from the significance of the Charter's ethical vision. We must not allow our criticism of the U.N.'s performance to derail the opportunity to renew that moral vision and rearticulate those fundamental human values for this century.

We must remember that the U.N. is, first and foremost, a human creation, and it will remain imperfect. Our institutions cannot exceed our nature. But mankind can also glimpse the higher truth of a better nature. We must insist that the instruments by which we are governed grasp those possibilities with us: the dignity and worth of every person; the capacity for cooperation, understanding, and tolerance; and the energy released when human beings have the political, economic, and social security to live in the "larger freedom" the Charter so well articulated.

I. HUMAN RIGHTS: THE INALIENABLE LEGACY OF HUMAN FREEDOM

Any global moral vision must begin with human rights. The development of a universal vocabulary affirming our commitment to human dignity and freedom is the greatest ethical and political legacy of the twentieth century.

The human rights legacy began with the articulation of rights and their codification as fundamental, international legal obligations. Over the years, an astonishingly broad community of activists, scholars, politicians, and ordinary citizens has risen to their defense. The human rights movement has raised the standards by which governments judge one another, and expanded the opportunities for citizens to bring their own leaders to account.

Human rights do more than articulate a collective aspiration; they transform that yearning into an obligation and offer both a mechanism for redress and a broader community of witness and affirmation. We will never know all that has been achieved through the energy released among the world's poor and dispossessed by the availability of human rights as a terminology and institutional path for collective self-expression. But we do know of the many prisoners of conscience released, the torture chambers closed, and the many violations of civil and political rights terminated. And we know of the many local and global struggles initiated in the name of economic and social rights that have contributed so significantly to the pursuit of social justice.

While we recognize these achievements, we must not allow the human rights visions of the past to limit our search for a future of social equality, justice, and freedom. The language of human rights can be misused and can limit our vision of what humanity might achieve. It is no surprise that great injustice, even the senseless violence of war, can sometimes be defended in the rhetoric of human rights. We should not be surprised that a rising generation may sometimes seek new language to articulate its aspirations for freedom and social justice. As we have expanded the human rights vernacular, we have sometimes settled for vague and noble-sounding words rather than engaging in the difficult social and political work necessary to build justice on the ground where rights often conflict and hard choices must inevitably be made.

As we think about a world of "larger freedom," however, the human rights tradition must remain our starting point. When we hear affirmations of the right to fresh drinking water alongside the right not to be tortured, a right to vote, or even a right to entrepreneurship, we are hearing the surface echoes of a deeper human yearning for freedom and dignity.

Looking ahead, we must listen for the beat of this deeper core. There, we will find broad goals: for the justice and security of lasting peace, for sustainable and shared economic development, and for effective and accountable government. There, we will find not only the desire to be free from injustice, from illegitimate authority, and from unnecessary restraint, but also the freedom to thrive and flourish. Human rights have rightly been seen as the beginning—the background conditions necessary for human flourishing. The freedom to flourish requires food, health, and the capacity to support oneself and one's family. It requires that one be confident of social inclusion in one's community. It requires good governance and the political freedom to hold one's leaders accountable. And it requires freedom from what the Charter termed "the scourge of war."

The leaders assembled at the U.N. World Summit in the autumn of 2005 recognized the range of threats facing the international community. An effective response will require integrated efforts in three broad domains: peace and security, poverty and development, and democratic governance. A holistic approach to human freedom recognizes that these challenges are interrelated. We know that a day's warfare can wipe out a generation's economic progress. At the same time, sensible economic development and the alleviation of poverty can provide a strong foundation for peace. Neither is sustainable without effective and accountable public institutions at all levels. Indeed, without basic democratic protections, it is all too easy for narrow interests to capture the gains from development and derail the wider community's interest in a secure peace.

Our multilateral institutions, suitably reformed, can and must be the vehicle for deepening our collective moral commitments to peace, to shared prosperity, and to freedom. Before turning to the institutional reforms necessary for them to continue to play that role, let me flesh out more clearly the broader elements of each, if only that our institutional reforms be guided by our ethical vision, rather than the reverse.

II. PEACE: PREREQUISITE TO HUMAN FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY

The ethical lodestar for our multilateral institutions must be the maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter rightly places it first among the enumerated purposes of the U.N. Peace is more than the absence of conflict, and it requires more than cooperation among nations. In my own Buddhist heritage, peace begins within each of us. For each of us, the path is open to seek peace within ourselves. As we do, we can find peace with our neighbors, family, and community. True peace is rooted in understanding: understanding ourselves—our limits, our humanity, the ephemeral nature of our desires; and understanding one another—listening, hearing, seeing, and coming to know one another within our common humanity. Only when we are fully conscious of the need for such understanding, however, can it begin to be meaningful and sustained.

Internationally, the peace we seek will not be the peace of the status quo. Dramatic change is already upon us. We must rekindle the aspiration for *both* collective security and peaceful change. To manage peace, we must learn to manage change. Peace will be an ongoing process of listening, adjustment, and understanding. Change has become increasingly difficult to manage as conflicts *within* nations have come to outnumber conflicts *between* nations. Terrorism is now more sophisticated in its destructive capacity and in the threat it poses to a global vision of understanding among the world's diverse cultures and civilizations. The threats are not new, but they are significantly more complex. They demand a response that is equally sophisticated; one that draws on our past experience and on our ability as an international community to mobilize our efforts.

The Charter gives the U.N. a special role when there is a threat to or breach of the peace, or an act of aggression. But as citizens, we cannot wait until conflict threatens. We must build the conditions for a future peace in our ongoing efforts to build communities of tolerance and mutual understanding. We must accelerate our efforts to cultivate a culture of peace through intra and inter-faith dialogue and cooperation. This is the time to learn to embrace the diversity within every culture, alongside differences in faith and belief. This is the time to let diversity enrich and strengthen the world, and to understand that the values of peace, of social equality, and of the sanctity of life are common to all religions. A culture of peace and a dialogue among all faiths can instill values of tolerance, mutual respect, and understanding of diversity and differences. But we must firmly build understanding into our collective consciousness to sustain these values.

Moreover, the peace and security we seek will not be for the elites alone. The world's poorest, neediest, and most powerless have the most to gain should we realize the Charter's eloquent promise of life in "larger freedom." Nor should the desire for peace be used as a pretext for conflict or repressing dissent. Peace cannot be imposed. The peace we seek must be a peace of laws.

The U.N. Charter established a common *legal framework* for analyzing the use of force and *political machinery* for encouraging the multilateral resolution of conflict. I have written elsewhere about how I believe its promises of a universal peace may yet be redeemed.⁹ Within the U.N. system, the Charter places primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security and reacting to threats to the peace with the Security Council. The proper role of the Secretary-General is to work closely with all Member States and with the Security Council to support this legal and political framework for preserving the peace. The tools at his disposal are numerous: public stature; convening authority; good offices as a trusted, and often confidential, mediator; and his power under Article 99 of the Charter to refer "any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security"¹⁰ to the Security Council.

As Dag Hammarskjöld and so many of his successors have demonstrated, the good offices and mediation of an active Secretary-General can often facilitate conflict prevention and resolution before states resort to force. The good offices of the Secretary-General have successfully mediated countless conflicts, more in the past fifteen years than in the previous two centuries. Avoiding recourse to war requires strong and effective leadership at the national, as well as the multinational, level.

The work necessary will not always be visible or make headlines. Peaceful resolution requires consultation, negotiation, and the steady accumulation of trust. To be successful, our multilateral leaders must work in close and steady

9. See Surakiart Sathirathai, *Peace and Security: The Challenge and the Promise*, 41 TEX. INT'L L.J. 1 (2005).

10. U.N. Charter art. 99.

partnership with the world's great powers and with all stakeholders toward a just and peaceful solution. As a result, we should expect that the most effective political and diplomatic work necessary to avert or resolve conflict will be undertaken behind the scenes, and that the most effective multilateral action will rely on innumerable bilateral consultations and close cooperation with the multilateral system's many stakeholders.

These are all powers that must be used wisely, guided by a broader ethical vision of the international peace to which we all aspire and to which the Charter commits all states. The Secretary-General must guard the legitimacy of his office and along with it the power of his bully pulpit, just as he must ensure the trust of all with whom he consults with discretion and a reputation for honest and straightforward communication. Few diplomatic advances are made by surprise or ambush. The trust necessary for peace must be built judiciously and earned by a track record of responsible cooperation and consultation. Where he must speak out to defend the Charter, the Secretary-General must be confident he has pursued every avenue of cooperation and consultation, and he must be persuaded that his public statement may, in fact, be effective.

The U.N. as a whole has a responsibility to be available at every stage of conflict. Prior to armed hostilities, the U.N. can often channel genuine conflicts into less violent forums, both to prevent the outbreak of hostilities and to create lasting and inclusive resolutions. I am very encouraged by the Member States' decision to establish a Peacebuilding Commission able to advise the Security Council, focus attention on key development and institution-building efforts, and advise Member States on ways to avoid armed hostilities. A small, high-quality "Peacebuilding Support Office" within the Secretariat would be a step forward in marshalling the expertise needed for the Peacebuilding Commission's work.

We know that such proactive measures have not always worked. Recognizing this, the World Summit Outcome document makes clear that where states fail in their own "responsibility to protect"¹¹ their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and other crimes against humanity, the international community must step in.¹² This responsibility requires a continuum of response, from the capacity-building efforts referenced above, through Chapter VII enforcement actions and rebuilding efforts.

These institutional innovations are important. They continue a line of innovative thinking and institutional adaptation in the field of peace and security. The history of U.N. peacekeeping and the breadth of current work of the U.N. in this vital area are illustrative. U.N. peacekeeping forces have undertaken sixty operations since 1948, including eighteen currently underway.¹³

11. 2005 World Summit Outcome, G.A. Res. 60/1, ¶ 138, U.N. Doc. A/RES/60/1 (Oct. 24, 2005).

12. *Id.* ¶¶ 138–39.

13. Background Note, Peace and Security Section, United Nations Department of Public Information, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, U.N. Doc. DPI/1634/Rev.56 (Feb. 2006), *available at*

Indeed, today the U.N. has more than 75,000 military, police, and civilian personnel serving in the field.¹⁴ Despite well-publicized shortcomings, the successes of peacekeeping have been manifold. Early in its history, for example, the U.N. provided troops for a peacekeeping mission to guard the border between Egypt and Israel after the Suez-Sinai crisis, providing a crucial buffer zone to maintain stability in the wake of conflict.

As internal conflicts and civil wars have increasingly become a primary concern of the international community, the U.N.'s peace operations have expanded in innovative ways. In El Salvador, the U.N. brokered a peace accord that promoted basic political stability and democracy through free and fair elections and disarmament, while creating a truth commission to investigate that conflict's massive human rights violations. In Sierra Leone, the U.N. assisted in providing security on the ground, cooperated with ECOMOG to promote political stability, and established both a prosecutorial tribunal and a truth commission to investigate human rights violations and punish the worst violators.

The U.N. has neither a standing army nor an independent military force. It must seek funding and military cooperation from the Member States. Most importantly, it is not "the U.N." but the Security Council that has ultimate responsibility for maintaining peace and security. The Charter wisely foresaw that the organization of collective security would continue to depend on close cooperation among the world's great military powers. The framework was never intended to compromise the interests or operate without the consent of those great powers.

But the Security Council is not the only organization with the capacity to contribute to international peace and security. Chapter VIII of the U.N. Charter supports the development of regional organizations that reflect the Charter's values and which can intervene, with U.N. authorization, in conflicts that threaten international peace and security. The conflicts that demand international attention in the coming years will require a wide diversity of responses.

Indeed, responses *must* be tailor-made for each circumstance through careful diplomatic consultation with all affected parties, as well as the Security Council members. It may well be useful to develop a series of pre-negotiated terms of reference for various possible solutions: an array of possible deals among local, regional, national, and multilateral authorities for use in addressing such conflicts. The U.N. can improve its institutional memory in this area by identifying "best practices" from prior campaigns and being careful to obtain objective assessments of what has worked and what has not.

Several recent U.N. peacekeeping operations suggest the range of possibilities. In Afghanistan, East Timor, Kosovo, and Cote d'Ivoire, among others, a multinational force led by a particular state accomplished what the U.N. could not achieve acting alone. Likewise, the African Union participated

<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote010101.pdf>.

14. *Id.*

in several smaller monitoring missions in Rwanda, Burundi, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. Currently, the AU is serving peacekeeping functions in Darfur. Such devolution is politically beneficial, as regional organizations are closer to the conflicts themselves. Furthermore, such work leverages the U.N.'s expertise, enabling peacekeeping that the U.N. may not have had the capacity to undertake alone.

The aspiration for peace is at once the hope for security, prosperity, and empowerment. At its best, the U.N. promotes human rights in precisely this comprehensive spirit. In Darfur, for example, UNICEF has provided emergency health kits to healthcare facilities and mobile teams, and worked to provide 1.4 million people access to primary healthcare.¹⁵ It has ensured safe drinking water for over one million people through borehole drilling and provision of spare parts and training to repair hand pumps.¹⁶ In addition, some 188,000 primary-school-age children caught up in the conflict were able to resume schooling through UNICEF's efforts, with girls constituting almost half of the total enrollment in UNICEF-supported schools in Darfur.¹⁷ These are true manifestations of the right to education and the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of each individual. These are steps towards building the conditions necessary for democracy to be real, and for the promise of human freedom to resonate in our communities.

There is no single moral vision that will guide the way to resolving conflict in human affairs. And that is as it should be. It is to our benefit that communities across the globe experiment locally, learn from one another, and build an inclusive and sustainable peace rooted in their cultural heritage. We are all richer in a world of cultural heterogeneity. Our ability to recognize this truth will pave the way towards making our diverse cultures the vehicles for the realization of human rights, rather than shields that guard against the fulfillment of human dignity.

Globalization has intensified the interaction among cultures at all levels. This has sometimes meant greater understanding and tolerance, but it has also broadened the experience of vulnerability. People everywhere worry that their nation may no longer be able to protect what is culturally important to them. This experience of cultural vulnerability is often understood as a global clash between North and South, or East and West, of Christianity and Islam—or between technology and religion, or “modernity” and “traditionalism.” But these tensions can be found within every society and within every religion. This is a struggle *within* civilization, within each religion, within each nation, over our common future. The solution lies in peace, good governance, and protection for our global political and cultural diversity.

15. UNICEF, Darfur (Sudan/Chad)—Region in Crisis (Jan. 2006), <http://www.unicef.org/emerg/darfur/>.

16. *Id.*

17. *Id.*

Only with a sound global governance regime—a network of overlapping national, local, regional, and international institutions that is accountable, effective, and representative—can we increase public capacity to address common problems while ensuring space for culturally different and politically diverse approaches to our common future. Only if we are committed to an inclusive peace, a peace of laws, can we hope to lay the foundations for a stable peace.

III. PROSPERITY AND THE END OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The facts are horrifying: one-fifth of the world's population, 1.2 billion people, survives on less than one U.S. dollar a day.¹⁸ Eleven million children under the age of five perish every year, more than 1200 children every hour.¹⁹ Preventable death and suffering should shock our conscience. We cannot advance peace or democracy without also attacking global poverty through sustainable economic development.

Poverty alleviation, along with greater peace and democracy, must be part of any global strategy for greater human freedom. Communities trapped in the nightmare of poverty can stoke the embers of ethnic conflict and political extremism. Disease, hunger, and illiteracy block the first move towards developing self-reliance, and impede full participation in self-government and the global economy. Poverty alleviation requires that individuals have basic access to the global economy in the form of jobs and capital. It requires assistance for nations to pursue development that is tempered, but not dominated, by the logic of the global economy. It requires the commitment to help cultivate self-help and "prosper thy neighbor" regional policies to advance development goals.

Democracy and freedom, broadly defined, must evolve under sound development strategies. Conditions for the poor must be improved through local ownership and methodologies for allowing the articulation of their needs and desires. Sound democratic governance at every level offers the hope that the voices of citizens who provide the backbone of the economy and the government be heard consistently. It is only in this way that human capabilities and freedoms can be fully realized. Prosperity must mean the freedom to realize one's potential, make a decent living, have the ability to provide for one's family, and live a life in dignity and in security.

The lifetime of the U.N. has coincided with several remarkable changes in the global economy. At the time of its founding sixty years ago, the Bretton Woods arrangements were only just being established, and nearly every nation maintained extensive controls over their economy: tariff walls, exchange controls, and national macro-economic planning and management.

18. United Nations Population Fund, *Population Issues: Meeting Development Goals, Fast Facts*, <http://www.unfpa.org/pds/facts.htm> (last visited Feb. 7, 2006).

19. United Nations Statistics Division, *Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals, 1990-2005* (June 13, 2005), http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_coverfinal.htm.

Soon afterward, the Cold War prevented true global economic integration for nearly two generations. Since the end of the Cold War, the global community has invested in ever greater economic openness, and has reaped the dividends of greater net prosperity. At the same time, however, globalization has brought an increased economic and social dualism.

One can easily indict the U.N. for failure: international initiatives for economic development have largely slipped to other actors, including the regional development banks, the international financial institutions, bilateral initiatives, private foundations, and private commercial actors. There is no denying that the international community has been better at announcing targets, goals, and commitments than it has been at fulfilling them. Nevertheless, as the only world body that represents all nations and all peoples, the U.N. must revitalize its capacity to be an influential contributor to strategies geared towards promoting development and self-help.

Of course, many U.N. agencies are already hard at work on the ground making social development and economic justice a tangible pursuit. The UNDP has recognized that policy reforms alone are not sufficient to stimulate private growth. To complement policy reform initiatives, it has endeavored to develop better institutional support to help small and medium-scale enterprises grow and enhance their capacity to participate in cross-border trade and investment. It has done this by providing comprehensive entrepreneurship development assistance to owners and managers to improve the competitiveness of their companies. The UNHCR has launched micro-credit schemes fostering self-sufficiency and autonomy for refugees. These proactive efforts should be expanded and spread to other areas.

In my years studying economic development, I have come to appreciate the profoundly creative and destructive force of the global market. To ensure that a people-centered and sustainable development emerges from these forces requires careful attention to the institutions and laws that undergird any market. To get prices right we must get institutions right. Just as a day's warfare can wipe out a generation of economic progress, so can a day's run on capital markets. Stability—and room for sensible national and local economic policy—must be built into our global economic order. Moreover, we have learned that only when prosperity is shared can it remain viable. Social exclusion must give way to individual and collective empowerment. As ever more of the world's population finds productive work in supplying the global marketplace, we must ensure the right of all workers to dignity and security in the workplace. We have long since outlawed slavery and established the legal framework for humane labor standards across the globe. We must continue to press for their full implementation. As citizens must be free to vote and petition their government, so workers must enjoy the freedom of association and the freedom to bargain with their employers on the basis of equality and dignity.

All poverty is local—to the family, the village, the neighborhood, the city. Solutions must also be local. But all local solutions, different as they must

inevitably be, are now also part of the global economy, and must be supported at the national and international level. The U.N. Millennium Development Goals have laid down a framework for poverty eradication.²⁰ They are a strong beginning. We must find the global commitment to redeem their promises and pledges by action. At the same time, we must build the local conditions, the local expertise and knowledge, and the regional and neighborly collaboration necessary to spread the benefits of growth and ensure the stability needed for our poorest citizens, regions, and neighbors to prosper.

Much can be accomplished through South-South cooperation to build the local conditions and share the local knowledge necessary to turn financial resources into shared prosperity. Many countries in the South have gone through successful self-help schemes with effective partnerships and job and income creation programs. Working together, developing nations in many regions have been able to unleash their productive potential. Based on their successes and failures, the U.N., working closely with its agencies and its Member States, can spur tailor-made development initiatives to achieve people-centered sustainable development.

We have learned that people can only provide for their basic needs if we are able to provide the infrastructure and security necessary for them to make their own choices to improve their standard of living. Each country and region has different factors that retard economic growth and development. Some regions, such as the Andes or Central Asia, face geographic isolation. We must build roads, air links, and internet connectivity to help these distant regions create productive ties with the rest of the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, by contrast, the first challenges are disease control, soil fertility, and expanded educational opportunities. Asia contains some of the most advanced economies as well as sixty percent of the world's poor. As neighbors with common borders, common problems, and shared goals for prosperity and security, we must find more effective ways to link complementing markets and industries, pool resources, share know-how, and assist each other in times of need.

Sustainable development does begin at home. But it does not stay at home. To prosper, we must be open to one another and to the world. We must ensure that our neighbors also prosper, and that our neighborhood remains peaceful. By forging strategic economic cooperation in our neighborhood, we hope to find better ways to use our natural resources, share responsibility for infrastructure, develop our products, link our markets, and strengthen our joint participation in the international economy.

We have made a beginning, but the poorest among us will need more, including economic assistance, better governance, and stronger local institutions to provide for health and education. Development cannot be achieved overnight. It takes time to train teachers, nurses, and engineers; to build roads, schools, and hospitals; and to grow the small and large businesses that create

20. See The U.N. Millennium Development Goals, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> (last visited Feb. 7, 2006).

jobs and generate income for the poor. The competitiveness of our small and medium enterprises, as of our agriculture, tourism, and education, cannot be enhanced without building capacity and increasing the quality of our workforce.

We will find that the institutions necessary for successful markets are not everywhere the same. Each society and region must nurture the institutions appropriate for its own prosperity. When poor countries are unable to implement the policies recommended by international financial institutions to improve the business environment, the result can be a worsening of private sector performance. As every good doctor knows, prescriptions must be tailored not only to the disease, but also to the patient.

Prosperity is more than economic performance. It is also a matter of human flourishing and the possibilities for human freedom. International cooperation must enhance our environment as we strengthen our technical and trade partnerships. Targets should be set for integrated water resources management, forest replanting, ecosystem preservation, and curbing pollution throughout various regions. We should build environmental safeguards into our economic strategies for agriculture, fisheries, energy, and transport. Needless to say, regional capabilities for early warning of natural hazards—not just tsunamis and storms, but floods, droughts, landslides, heat waves, and volcanic eruptions—is clearly due.

South-South partnerships are particularly important in development, but they often seem underappreciated in the literature. They come in many shapes and sizes: regional customs unions or other trading blocs; ministerial-level alliances to develop comprehensive and interlocking regional development goals; joint construction of crucial infrastructure; common educational goals to assist in the development of expertise in key industries; small and medium-sized enterprises cooperating in innovative joint venture projects; micro-credit facilities working closely with community organizations; and even increasing financial coordination.

The key to such efforts remains keeping them focused on people, the ultimate beneficiaries. The relatively recent concept of “human security” provides a window into integrated approaches to protecting and empowering individuals. Efforts must take account of the goals of peace and democracy as well as poverty eradication. Regional and multilateral organizations must take care not to become unaccountable to the people they serve, and must not place the interests of a few private investors or political leaders over those of the many.

Furthermore, development policies must not ignore the importance of basic health and welfare protections. It should be our global shame that so many suffer from diseases that can now be so easily prevented or treated. My diplomatic career has made this abundantly clear to me, as I have helped build transnational efforts to address barriers to development and human freedom, such as HIV/AIDS and anti-personnel landmines. Both of these human tragedies exact huge costs on human well-being, human capital, and national and

international resources. These costs will only grow if the international community, individual nations, and civil society fail to effectively address them as powerfully, rapidly, and effectively as possible.

Kofi Annan made HIV/AIDS his personal priority with good reason: the three million lives it claims directly every year and the 14,000 new infections each day should be enough to demand our most urgent attention.²¹ But it is only when we consider the almost incalculable social and economic costs in decimated communities— orphaned children and plummeting productivity, often in societies already struggling for cohesion and subsistence— that the true magnitude of HIV/AIDS becomes apparent. A staggering ninety-five percent of those infected with HIV live in the developing world.²² If we are serious about building paths to prosperity, we cannot ignore this disease. We must remain firmly committed to fighting the social stigma and discrimination associated with the disease, and to promoting effective HIV/AIDS education in our families, communities, and nations. In combating HIV/AIDS, we must remember three principles. First, it is global in its causes, effects, and solutions. Second, prevention is incomparably cheaper than treatment, in part because the effects of epidemics are so unpredictable. Third, official acknowledgment is a prerequisite to prevention.

These are but a few ideas. Many more have been articulated by development economists, academics, and elected officials. Many others have been voiced but never heard because they arise from the poor and underprivileged themselves, a group that does not falter for lack of ideas or creativity, but rather for lack of power. The U.N. can play a proactive role in encouraging South-South learning, experimentation, and sharing of best practices. It is easy to overlook the significance of ideas in the global struggle to alleviate poverty. But ideas matter. The world is changing rapidly, and we do not have all the answers. Only by encouraging new thinking and by experimenting and learning from our mistakes can we hope to achieve the prosperity and social and economic justice envisioned by the Charter.

IV. FREEDOM: PROTECTION AND EMANCIPATION UNDER DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

A. Democracy as Human Freedom

Democracy is the institutional expression of human freedom and is as close to a universal value as one could identify. For generations, even the most authoritarian governments have purported to represent their citizens, and have often called themselves “democratic.” But democracy is more than a name or slogan. Democracy is realized when every citizen has the right to be

21. World Health Organization, Global AIDS Epidemic Shows No Sign of Abating, Nov. 25, 2003, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2003/prunaid/en/print.html>.

22. *Id.*

heard on the decisions that affect his or her future, and when government at every level is accountable and transparent.

That said, the meaning of “democracy” changes between contexts and peoples to such a degree that the word can obscure more than it enlightens. Nations, communities, and citizens disagree vigorously on what democracy means. That is how it should be; democracy is not a recipe or a straightjacket. We can affirm the spirit and promise of democracy without worshipping its current institutional forms and without abandoning the aspiration to experiment and remake our public institutions. Heterogeneous government is no threat to democracy. Indeed, with greater democracy we would hope to see the human spirit generate ever new institutional forms for this enduring hope.

I believe we must advance a richer, more substantive version of democracy than most global citizens know today. Our moral vision for democracy and for the freedom it must bring cannot stop at elections. It must embrace the opportunity for all citizens—for women, for minorities, for the poor and the dispossessed—to participate equally in the public life of their nation and the public life of the broader world. It must include freedom of expression, association, and religion. And it must affirm the freedom that comes with the social and economic means—education, health, security—to participate meaningfully in public life.

There is much the U.N. can do to support the right of every society to seek its own democratic path. Election support is a start. U.N. officials lent logistical and strategic support to over twenty elections last year. In the aftermath of conflict, the U.N. can often help ensure that the new institutions of government will affirm this broader democratic dream. It was in this spirit that the U.N. helped guide the drafting of the Iraqi constitution.

The U.N. can also affirm the democratic promise by deepening South-South cooperation in areas beyond economic development. The UNDP’s global knowledge network of expertise contributed to the success of Lesotho’s elections in 2002. What the U.N. learns in one context may often be useful elsewhere. Indeed, the U.N. can and should function as a contagion for good ideas. What the U.N. learned in the effort to reduce voter registration fraud in Jamaica could be brought to bear in Lesotho to encourage all stakeholders to engage actively and peacefully in the election process. Initiatives of this kind help breathe life into the promise, encapsulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has the “right to take part in the government of his country.”²³

That promise would certainly remain hollow were the U.N. to ignore the dramatic obstacles faced by women across the globe seeking to participate in governance and economic life. Where women are not free, men are also unable to live in freedom. Only when the democratic promise of freedom can be realized for women can it be realized for mankind. The U.N. has long rec-

23. Universal Declaration of Human Rights art. 21, ¶ 1, G.A. Res. 217A, at 71, U.N. Doc A/810 (Dec. 12, 1948).

ognized these simple truths. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the commitment to gender equality. The U.N. has long promoted the rights of women through the Commission on the Status of Women and the many global conferences on the rights of women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is one fruit of that work.

But these ambitions remain unfulfilled. Much work remains to be done. It is easy to imagine that women's rights are but one component, women but one interest group claiming the benefits of recognition. We must be clear that *no one* is free where women are denied their rights. It is easy to treat men's interests as universal or global while leaving women's rights to the peculiarities of their local context. We must be clear that women's freedom is human freedom. The promise of human freedom is not the threat of cultural homogeneity. For each of us, freedom will be realized most fully in our own culture, our own society. Human freedom will generate and affirm human diversity and cultural variety. But variety cannot mean slavery, nor can a responsible freedom align itself with discrimination, routine violence, or the denial of education and self-determination for any group.

B. Democracy as Good Governance

There is much the international community can do to promote more accountable, responsive, and effective governance. First, it must lead by example. The U.N. administrative system must be a model of effective and accountable administration and proper management. U.N. programs throughout the world must be models of corruption-free governance, responsive to stakeholders and held firmly accountable for their performance. Whether the issue is results-based budgeting, ensuring a discrimination-free workplace, or implementing modern management techniques, the U.N. should be an illustration of best practices.

As we have learned over the past decades, there are many situations in which national governments need help from the international community to build their own governmental capacity. Whether in the aftermath of conflict or in the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule, efforts by Member States to improve their own public institutions or to prepare for and hold elections can often be assisted by technical assistance and expertise from the U.N. The U.N. is often particularly well suited to support efforts to build viable local public capacity in post-conflict societies. In East Timor and Kosovo, for example, the U.N. has done much to facilitate the transition to viable local government that is capable of managing post-conflict reconstruction, promoting economic development, and ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law.

At the same time, we must be careful that the international community does not find itself imposing when we seek to support and assist in the transition to viable local governance. Local and national governments must emerge

from their own societies and must reflect their own cultural, economic, and historic heritage. As it models what good governance might be, the U.N. must be careful not to imagine that one model is all good governance can be. Every society must find its own way to responsive and accountable national leadership. When the international community does become involved, we must focus on building local ownership and engagement. We should navigate by the principle that all local stakeholders must feel they own whatever solutions are devised to overcome national institutional or infrastructural weakness.

The international community has a stake in the emergence of democratic governance at the local and national level. It must affirm the need for all states to move forward towards full implementation of human rights. Respect for universal human rights is inseparable from the pursuit of good governance. The moral vision of the Charter that all peoples live in “larger freedom” demands that the U.N. be at the forefront of promoting good governance and the rule of law.

The U.N. can do so precisely because it is a voice of the entire international community. The U.N. is and must remain a universal organization, a forum in which all states are members and each has an equal right to have its viewpoint heard. Whether they are net donors or net recipients of U.N. funds, whether they are large or small, wealthy or impoverished, all nations are entitled to equal respect, and all are entitled to be heard at the U.N. All are members of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General works for all Member States. To be a model of democratic and accountable governance, the U.N. must represent all of its members, precisely as a democracy protects the rights of all its citizens.

Where there are grave violations of human rights that threaten international peace and security, the Charter provides a mechanism for response. Where members do not fulfill their Charter obligations, the Charter sets forth procedures for response. There is no place in the U.N. for cliques, clubs, or artificial distinctions among members, other than the special authority and responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council in the field of peace and security recognized by the Charter.

It is, nevertheless, appropriate that more legitimate governments have a stronger voice in world affairs. When states violate the human rights of their citizens or fail to live up to their international legal obligations, they lose legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. And when a government is no longer regarded as legitimate by its peers, it will be more difficult for the leadership of that government to achieve its own political objectives on the international stage. What is true for the international society of states is also true for the U.N. More legitimate governments can speak more softly and yet be heard.

The international community’s collective interest in promoting respect for human rights and the democratic values necessary for their protection does not need to be expressed formally in the architecture of our universal international institutions. It will be, and must be, expressed informally. In an open

political process, effective and accountable governance gains the authority that comes with legitimacy. U.N. institutions should encourage the emergence of the most respected and legitimate leadership at all levels. It is in this way that the moral suasion of the international community can be empowered to do its best work.

Good governance is not only a matter of internal process and stakeholder accountability. Well-functioning democratic governments operate in partnership with their citizenry and with the institutions of civil society; so must the U.N. Peace must be the joint responsibility of the world's citizens, religious institutions, multilateral economic enterprises, *and* governments. Prosperity depends upon networks of private arrangements built by commercial and financial participants in the global market. The U.N. must reach out to all these forces, enlisting them as active partners while encouraging the institutions of civil society themselves to be effective, open, and accountable to all stakeholders. By partnering with institutions of civil society, the U.N. can expand the store of knowledge and make it available to communities and Member States.

The bottom line is clear: to engage with civil society, to promote democracy and respect for human rights across the world, and to remain itself a legitimate partner for diplomacy, the U.N. must itself be a model for accountable management, effective administration, and democratic government. This is not only a problem of management or organizational design. It is also a matter of institutional culture and moral vision. To remain the symbol of the world's ethical commitment to peace, prosperity, and freedom, the U.N. must recommit itself to serving all of its many stakeholders, providing them with the effective and ethically legitimate voice they deserve. Only then can the Charter's mission to "practice tolerance"²⁴ and spread its faith in "the dignity and worth of the human person"²⁵ be realized.

V. REFORM, THE NECESSARY FIRST STEP

For the U.N. to remain the repository of our hopes for a world of peace, prosperity, and freedom, it must be reformed. But the call to reform the U.N. is not new. U.N. reform has been on the agenda of the international community almost since the day the Charter was signed. Numerous experts at all levels have made proposals to revitalize the organization. The agenda has remained remarkably stable: the Security Council should better represent the realities of global power and its decision-making should be made more effective; the General Assembly should be encouraged to operate more effectively as the organ with the broadest political mandate and responsibility; the Secretariat should be managed more efficiently and accountably; and the activities of all U.N. agencies should be better coordinated.

24. U.N. Charter pmbl.

25. *Id.*

Repeatedly, small and often important steps have been taken. But the call for renewal and reform returns because those steps have not been enough. Reform continues to be necessary. The reasons are starkly visible: mismanagement, micromanagement, and an institutional culture unable to rise to the challenges of a world in desperate need of effective mechanisms to address issues of peace and poverty and to make real the promises of human rights and “larger freedom.”

I do believe this may be a unique moment in the history of the U.N. The dramatic economic and political changes that have swept the globe in the years since the end of the Cold War have raised new demands for effective global governance. The U.N. seems indispensable as perhaps never before. But at the same time, the institutional and management weaknesses of the U.N. have never been so visible. In 1945, the Secretariat’s main function was to service the many meetings and conferences held by the deliberative bodies of the U.N. The main function of the U.N. itself was to facilitate multilateral diplomacy by bringing diplomats from all the world’s capitals together in one place. Indeed, the first Secretary-General was said to have sought the post of General Assembly President, thinking it would be the more significant position.

Diplomacy has changed dramatically in the years since, and the U.N. has taken on ever more operational responsibilities, running programs and fielding peacekeeping forces across the globe. But the administrative structure has not kept pace. The Oil-for-Food scandal emerged precisely from this mismatch: an organization overseeing an operational program without the necessary internal checks and oversight to ensure it was carried out appropriately. In the years to come, the U.N. will be called on to perform ever more complex operational functions, while the moments at which large diplomatic conferences and meetings will be useful are likely to become less frequent. The Secretariat must be rebuilt to support these new functions. That means more internal accountability, a deeper and broader policy capacity at the top, and more flexibility for the senior management in deploying resources for changing priorities. It must also mean new avenues for ensuring the political accountability of the U.N. to its stakeholders: the world’s citizens and Member State governments.

This is a moment to be seized by all of us who value the moral promises of the Charter. In 2005, the Secretary-General placed a comprehensive plan for reform before the world’s leaders. The result was mixed. On many items a consensus could not be reached. But never before had the need for reform been so widely acknowledged, nor the components of a reform agenda discussed in so much detail. When I look back at those discussions, I see a courageous beginning to what must be a process of reform that will take some years. There is much the U.N. institutions can do to clean their own house. There is much they can do to build the consensus needed for deeper institutional reform. But an important beginning has been made.

A. Management Reform

There is no longer any question that management reform at the U.N. Secretariat, flagship for our multilateral hopes, must come first if it is to provide the necessary leadership to realize our ambitious hopes of peace, prosperity, and freedom. The World Summit's goal was to make management at the U.N. more attuned to the needs of today and more responsive to all Member States' legitimate concerns. Many proposals were on the table, including innovative and diverse ideas about how the U.N. can be more effective in meeting its objectives.

But we fell short, our aspirations bruised by excessive politicking and by our failure to commit to broad and serious concrete steps. Most worrisome of all, this internal dissonance comes in the context of the Volcker reports, which dramatically highlighted a broad culture of mismanagement at the U.N. as the background to the serious ethical breaches of conduct under the Oil-for-Food Programme. I have heard it said that the Secretariat was not itself at the table where the worst abuses occurred, that Saddam Hussein and private companies were the main beneficiaries, and that the misuse of funds was widely known and tolerated by Member States, who perhaps saw it as a necessary price to get the program up and running. I find no comfort in these observations.

Where the U.N. provides the framework for a program, it must be at the table where administrative and implementing decisions are taken. It must be there precisely to insist that corruption will never be the price one must pay for multilateral engagement. The U.N. must have the capacity and the ethical and administrative reputation to ensure that funds entrusted to the international community are spent responsibly and effectively, and that those entrusted with their use can be held strictly accountable.

I have no doubt that the U.N. *can* once again assume such a responsibility, or an even greater one, if the international community is prepared to strengthen the U.N.'s internal structures of accountability. And I am encouraged by the decision at the World Summit to move forward on the creation of an independent oversight advisory committee with a view to enhance the independence and, I hope, the effectiveness of the U.N.'s oversight structures. Of course, accountability of the Secretariat starts with every staff member of the Organization. This requires both reliable independent oversight and a culture of first-rate professionalism. Anti-corruption experts agree that the single most significant factor in establishing a public administration with zero tolerance for corruption is leadership. Internal checks, whistleblower protection, independent auditing, clear performance standards, and result-oriented budgeting and evaluation are all important, but none will sustain a culture of professional accountability without committed and engaged administrative leadership on these issues.

Recent initiatives to require more extensive information disclosure by senior staff, more effective and credible whistleblower protection, and better enforcement of the Organization's zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation

are significant steps forward. The U.N. must have adequate internal structures to instill in its staff the courage to be creative, together with the ethical rectitude that is an obvious precondition for employment in an organization that should be a symbol for our limitless potential. In doing so, it lays the foundation for allowing senior staff the flexibility and authority to manage projects effectively with a view towards achieving the best possible results on the ground.

Top to bottom, the U.N. must spare no efforts to hire the absolute best professionals. The Charter *requires* that top consideration be given to ensuring a staff of “the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity,”²⁶ and that “[d]ue regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible.”²⁷ Kofi Annan has rightly stressed that gender equity must be an equally important element of this calculus.

Every nation has citizens with the requisite skills, desire, and ethics to serve in the U.N. Creating a culture of accountability within the organization will ensure that those citizens will gravitate to Secretariat positions. Human resources departments in the private sector often direct efforts in their recruiting to achieve a diverse pool of qualified applicants. The U.N. is no different. This is not a question of focusing on qualifications rather than geographic considerations, or the other way around. The U.N. will always be among the world’s most diverse workplaces. It must also field one of the most skilled, efficient, and accountable professional teams.

The Secretary-General has initiated a process to review all mandates older than five years at the Secretariat, seizing the opportunity to focus the U.N.’s work and use resources more efficiently. This may sound like a useful, if insignificant, housecleaning effort. But it is far more significant than that. It is no secret that the accumulation of items that recur on the agenda without comment, and of studies that continue to be carried out long after their usefulness has passed, has seriously impeded the ability of the deliberative bodies at the U.N. to set priorities and remain a site for the most nimble multilateral diplomacy. The accumulation of mandates has proven an even greater burden for U.N. operational efficiency, tying up staff and funds and encouraging the fragmentation of the Secretariat’s administrative staff into subunits and programs, each micromanaged by a particular constituency among the Member States, all tolerating one another’s intrusiveness on the Secretariat.

This must be reversed if the U.N. is to be an effective tool for the realization of our collective ethical hopes for peace, prosperity, and freedom. Political accountability must be about results, performance, and goals, guided by optimization and efficiency, not the details of management. Administrative accountability must mean the flexibility to mobilize the Secretariat’s resources to address new challenges. The Secretary-General, in consultation with staff,

26. *Id.* art. 101, ¶ 3.

27. *Id.*

is developing the framework for a one-time staff buy-out. Together with the review of mandates, this will be a crucial first step to free resources that can be directed to developing promotional opportunities for existing staff, improving on the conditions of service, and facilitating staff mobility to serve in areas where vacancies are more difficult to fill.

I am hopeful that these bold initiatives will help improve the U.N.'s ability to fulfill its mission in the many communities where it is already actively engaged. And I am confident that if we can articulate our hopes with clarity, we can continue to build the trust among all stakeholders necessary to ensure that the momentum of management reform is not stalled.

B. Reform and Political Responsibility

Polarized understandings of our priorities have impeded reform in the past. Conflicts arise when discussing in detail the paths that will lead to implementation of agreed-upon goals. Similar vocabularies turn out to signal disparate meanings to different Member States. For example, revitalizing the General Assembly means, to some, streamlining its procedures, trimming its agenda, and expediting decision-making; to others, it means increasing the role and standing of the General Assembly as the principal decision-making organ, enhancing multilateralism, and strengthening democracy within the organization's structures. The conflict, then, can be better understood as the culmination of a continuing tension on how to implement seemingly common goals, revealing the underlying struggle for control and representation that talk of reform brings to the surface.

I have written elsewhere that accountability must mean the right thing in the right context.²⁸ For the General Assembly, for example, accountability must mean encouraging the institution to take political responsibility, set appropriate strategy, and hold the Secretariat responsible for results. It should not mean micromanagement. For the Security Council, accountability can come only with an understanding that representation and effectiveness must go hand in hand.

The General Assembly should be a conduit of responsibility: responsibility of Member States to the Organization and to each other, responsibility of the General Assembly to the Organization and to the Member States, and responsibility of the U.N. to the peoples it is meant to represent, the ultimate constituents and beneficiaries of the Organization.

But micromanagement can also be a tool of resistance, a method which will only be eliminated when Member States' legitimate interests are addressed. If we are not prepared to understand one another's justified concerns, debates are bound to focus on our conflicting priorities, lost in the different meanings that we assign to our goals for the organization; and reform is bound to be repeatedly postponed. Any reform must combine internal efficiency with im-

28. See, Surakiart Sathirathai, *Managing the Rise of Asia*, 168 *FAR E. ECON. REV.* 14 (July/Aug. 2005).

proved mechanisms to ensure that the objectives pursued by a newly efficient management are in fact responsive to the political objectives of the broader international community.

Postponing reform of the Security Council leaves many nations convinced that the composition of the Security Council is unrepresentative of today's international community. It is right to ask whether an institution so locked in time can function effectively now that the map of economic, military, and political power has been so altered. The Security Council's accountability to our world's nations hinges on wider representation coupled with a formal or informal streamlining of decision-making. To that end, Member States must persevere in the collective project to reform the Security Council by focusing their efforts on establishing clear and reasoned criteria on how to make the body both more representative and effective. But improving the Security Council, like using it, will require political courage in the capitals of the Member States and at the organization itself.

The U.N. must be an organization that learns from its institutional heritage and continuously adapts its practices to better address current challenges facing the international community. There is no question that we can do more to foster a culture of political responsibility in all U.N. organs. In thinking about decision-making processes, we must keep our common values clearly in mind. We must remember that when the U.N. is ineffective, it is ineffective for everyone. When the U.N. fails, it fails us all. The status quo benefits no one, and that should be sufficient for the international community to pursue more vigorously efforts to strengthen the pillars of this great Organization.

C. Strategic Coordination

Of course, the U.N. cannot do it all alone. Reform means developing a multilateral regime that is open to diverse modes and voices for defending a common commitment to freedom. Nor should the U.N. be the center or framework for all multilateral action. Some years ago, one frequently heard the idea that all work in the field of human rights and humanitarianism needed to be "coordinated" by the U.N. in a single, coherent way. One sometimes hears the same thought expressed with respect to the fields of peace and security or development. But this is neither possible nor desirable. The U.N. must be a site for learning from diverse approaches and sharing best practices. Our diverse humanitarian organizations should be encouraged to innovate and develop new tools to respond to old problems. Where the U.N. can contribute, it should be prepared to pick up an oar alongside and in partnership with other organizations, be they public or private, regional or global. The U.N. will need to ensure that its own efforts are well coordinated, but that should also not mean that they are uniform. We can and should coordinate the heterogeneous, but we cannot and should not homogenize what we have coordinated.

The U.N.'s specialized agencies, funds, and programs must work closely together with private sector partners and Member States to cooperate on cross-sectoral issues such as health and intellectual property, or health and trade. These issues are currently addressed in a diffuse manner, yet it is clear that WTO rules can affect health and that WHO proposals can sometimes conflict with WIPO priorities. And it is equally clear that the U.N. can improve its capacity to coordinate initiatives both within the Organization and with the right partners and stakeholders in any number of issue areas.

The Economic and Social Council, for example, can serve as a regulatory clearinghouse, a library of successes and failures that Member States can draw on to devise their own regulatory policies. It can launch research towards the recognition, protection, and marketing of indigenous or local community knowledge in a manner deemed appropriate by the indigenous people or local community. Developing states are home to most of the world's biodiversity, and their people have developed vast and practical knowledge regarding its uses, as research institutions and multinational corporations increasingly recognize. The U.N. can help garner the expertise to adapt the existing legal regime and provide protection for this resource such that indigenous peoples and communities capture a fair share of the value of this knowledge.

Last September, Member States resolved to create a Human Rights Council, with the key goal of promoting "effective coordination and the mainstreaming of human rights within the U.N. system."²⁹ When Thailand was a member of the Commission on Human Rights, I experienced its work and witnessed first hand that its composition and working methods prevent it from seriously taking charge of human rights promotion and education. This should signal the urgent need to rethink how the human rights machinery at the U.N. can be reformed, and its credibility restored.

The Human Rights Council offers the promise of a more effective human rights organ within the U.N., and I am confident that having a standing human rights body within the U.N. will enhance the U.N.'s capacity to formulate more dynamic policies for the promotion of human rights. But the debate on the modalities of the new Human Rights Council must also focus on how this new body can expand on the Commission on Human Rights's engagement with civil society organizations. I agree with Kofi Annan that this provides a unique opportunity within the U.N. for partnering with a great number of civil society actors, an opportunity that we must vigorously explore.

The U.N. system's subsidiary and specialized agencies have expertise in many fields. Most recognize the value in partnering with appropriate civil society actors because they realize the resources of knowledge, management skill, funding, and implementation that private sector partners can sometimes represent. Learning how to better tap into these resources should be an inte-

29. 2005 World Summit Outcome, *supra* note 11, ¶ 159.

gral part of reform efforts. As the U.N.'s missions become more expansive, its capacity to coordinate both internally and with private actors must also be enhanced. Reform must be pursued with a view to ensure that the U.N. uses the most effective strategy. And it is particularly important that the U.N. strategize to develop better channels of coordination. I am hopeful it can do this by displaying an openness to diversity while keeping a firm hand on the rudder to ensure that coordination always advances the U.N.'s broad moral vision.

CONCLUSION: A COMMON FUTURE IN PEACE, PROSPERITY, AND FREEDOM

To live in peace, to prosper, and to live in freedom—these are the hopes that I draw from our common moral heritage. But we are right to wonder if our multilateral institutions can any longer be entrusted with these shared commitments and hopes.

Divisions and tensions abound within the U.N. and other multilateral institutions. This is to be expected in a world where divisions exist both within and between states. Multilateral institutions have always provided a forum for debate, but they cannot be expected to resolve fundamental tensions and imbalances. Cooperative successes, large and small, will increase trust between Member States, and raise the bar on those shared understandings and principles.

In cataloguing the failures of the U.N., it may be tempting to dismiss the relevance and necessity of the institution itself. To allow ourselves this verdict, however, would be to ignore the great successes and greater ambitions of this global organization. The legal structure and flexible nature of the U.N. make it an ideal location for the very debates it is, in fact, fostering today. We have not made enough progress since the end of the Cold War. Our hopes for a more peaceful world have foundered as the institution has remained mired in political division, ideological disagreement, and pervasive mismanagement.

At this significant moment in institutional history, however, we have the opportunity and, I believe, the responsibility to change this. We can and must continue to discuss and implement reform at the U.N., guided by our steady commitment to achieve a stable peace, ensure that prosperity is shared, and redeem the “larger freedom” that the Charter promises.

I am confident that the U.N. can sow the seeds for a stable peace: a peace that nourishes and is nourished by diversity, a peace that is rooted in our communities, a peace that can withstand change. The U.N. can be a focal point for an ethically robust global governance regime that will help build a lasting peace, a peace of laws, if we can find the courage to redeem the promise of our shared commitments together.

I am equally confident that the U.N. can be an advocate for an inclusive prosperity: a prosperity rooted in diverse local initiatives, a prosperity that nourishes the freedom to realize one's potential, to make a decent living, to have the ability to provide for one's family, and to live a life in dignity and security. The lifetime of the U.N. has coincided with several remarkable changes

in the global economy. As these changes continue to occur, so must the U.N. continue in its efforts to lay out comprehensive goals to achieve a prosperity that empowers individuals and communities, and that helps sustain a lasting peace.

If the U.N. can harness the creative energies of its agencies and of civil society actors, the Charter's mission for the international community to "practice tolerance" and spread its faith in "the dignity and worth of the human person" can be realized. If the international community can display the political courage to comprehensively reform the U.N.'s internal structures, then we can begin to make meaningful the Charter's promise of human freedom in its deepest sense, "larger freedom."

We have established a body that continues to democratize even as it discusses democracy. We have created and developed a location for the world's most profound debates. We know the way forward: the U.N. must operate with transparency and accountability. As I have articulated here and elsewhere, the U.N. should be held to the highest ethical standards and criticized robustly for its weaknesses.

The Charter reveals the breathtaking aspirations of the international community. It is a document that bespeaks extraordinary ambition and invites constant creativity. We must seize this moment—through reform, innovation, good management, political courage, and strategy—to make tangible the Charter's moral vision and imagine together the paths to lasting peace, shared prosperity, and freedom.