

STUDY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE
for
**TRANSFORMING THE
UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM:
DESIGNS FOR A WORKABLE WORLD**

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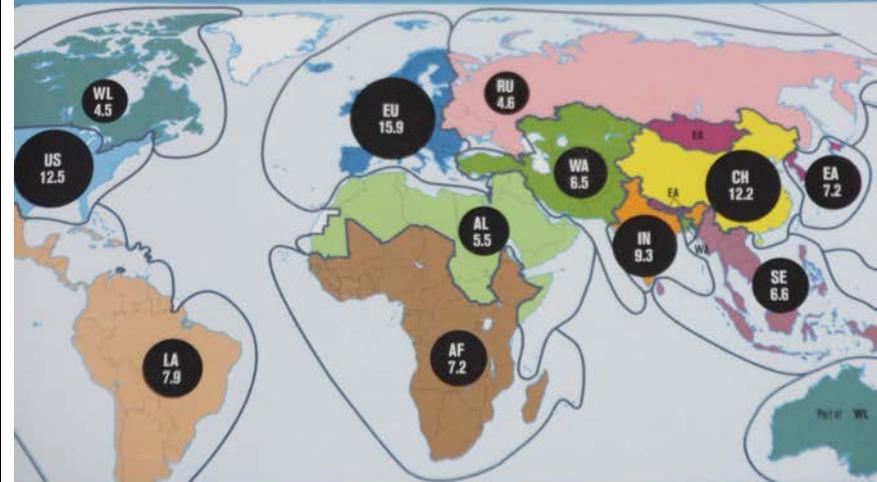


**The Workable World Trust
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United Nations System
Designs for a Workable World**

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With a Foreword by Ramesh Thakur

“I make no claim that any of the institutional designs put forward in this book are the only ones capable of promoting the objectives they address, and I recognize that many competing proposals have already been advanced ... Other worthy proposals will surely be forthcoming, each with its own pros and cons and likely costs and benefits, and nothing would please me more than to have my own formulations inspire others to advance alternative recommendations and have the merits of their respective ideas seriously debated.”

Six Fundamental Principles (TUNS pp. xxviii-xxix)

RULE OF LAW: The force of just law must supplant the law of force.

GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE: Our planet is an interdependent organism. What nations do on their own territory often affects other nations seriously, either for better or for worse. Nature respects no boundaries.

GLOBAL SOLUTIONS: Global problems require global solutions.

IMPLICATIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY: National sovereignty implies not only national rights, but also national responsibilities.

HUMAN RIGHTS: All humans are entitled to political, civil, economic and social rights, as expressed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT: When nations fail to protect the rights of their citizens, the international community has the responsibility to do so.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. For each of these six “Fundamental Principles,” do you agree or disagree? Why do you believe as you do?***
- 2. Are any of these principles potentially dangerous? Why?***

(TUNS p.xxx)

Choices for the Rich (the “Global North”)

Option A: Isolationism coupled with nationalism, looking only after one’s own national interests and relying on military might to keep potential enemies at bay.

Option B: Patronage of poor nations, allocating a small portion of one’s resources to meeting the world’s needs (enough to maintain others as dependent clients, but not enough to bring about major changes).

Option C: Globalism; working for needed changes in our system of global governance to promote democracy and justice.

Choices for the Poor (the “Global South”)

Option A: Fatalistically accepting the continuation of global injustice and adopting policies acceptable to the powerful.

Option B: Violently demanding justice (with the consequent likelihood of being crushed).

QUESTIONS:

Rather than waiting for World War III or some other global catastrophe to persuade us to institute major changes in our system of governance, how can we now marshal the necessary will to generate the momentum to do so?

(Father Ben Urmston of Cincinnati, Ohio asked by email:

What can the participants in our webinar do about the numerous and serious global problems that we are confronting? What first step / steps are there that we can take?

Utopia or “Workability?” (TUNS, p. 3)

A perfect world is not attainable, but a “workable world” is. The aim is not to create an unrealistic “utopia,” but rather - to the extent practicable - to establish a world in which the force of law supplants the law of force, a world committed to justice and continuous, yet sustainable, development.



QUESTION:

If you could bring about just one change in our present system of global governance, what would that change be? What if you could make two major changes? Or even three? (The book offers dozens of possibilities.)

The Problem of the “Sovereign Equality of Nations” Principle



Tom Weiss’ latest book “*Would the World Be Better Without the UN?*”

“State sovereignty is the fundamental organizing principle for international relations generally and for the United Nations particularly. Lasting and meaningful solutions [to global problems] are impossible when sovereigns reach decisions based on narrowly defined interests and can opt out of agreements that prove inconvenient or costly.

Westphalian sovereignty is a chronic ailment for the United Nations that could be lethal for the planet.” (p.26)

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Why do nations adhere so tenaciously to the outmoded Westphalian model of sovereignty?***
- 1. Should sovereign nations be subject to international jurisdiction and the imposition of punitive sanctions when activities within their borders have serious adverse effects on other countries? If “yes,” what might those sanctions be?***