

# TRANSFORMING THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM: DESIGNS FOR A WORKABLE WORLD

Joseph E. Schwartzberg, United Nations University Press, 2013

Summary compiled by Nancy Dunlavy, February 2015

Premises: (p.1): Global problems require global solutions. (p.2): The design of decision-making institutions has an important bearing on the quality and legitimacy of the decisions they make.

Obstacles (p.4): vested interests, inertia, ignorance

## Key Strengths of Proposals:

- Promotes a “workable world,” not a utopia
- Proposals are based on expert knowledge of geopolitics and current global governance systems, and with a reality-based yet humanistic belief in the power of humankind to save itself from itself
- Flexibility is built into proposed designs, so they can be modified as needed in the future
- Uses (transforms) existing agencies to maximum advantage; creates new agencies only when necessary
- Greater mission coherence, more reliable funding and wiser use of human capital
- Greater mission transparency, more accountability, enforceable sanctions when nations willfully fail to conform
- “We the People” gain a voice, not just “states”
- Qualified candidates, with fair regional and gender representation, vs. “politically connected”
- Acknowledges reality of regional differences, culture, religion, population, economics, historical experience, power dynamics, population, as well as the current “equality of nations principle” (one nation one vote)
- Built-in mechanisms that encourage meaningful dialogue (required for binding legislation), at global and regional levels. North/South, East/West and other “competing camps” are encouraged to enter into creative compromise

<p><b>Reform the General Assembly</b> (ch.2, p.13-35)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weighted Voting (population, GNI and “equality of nations principle”) p.21-25, 27-33</li> <li>• Ability to create binding legislation (p.26-27)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Create a World Parliamentary Assembly</b> (ch.3, p.36-63)</p>	<p>Possible stages to implement a WPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage 1: Advisory body with members (MWPs) chosen by national governments (p.38-49)</li> <li>• Stage 2: A popularly elected WPA with increasing legislative competence (p.49-58)</li> <li>• Stage 3: Worldwide electoral fields and the one-person-one-vote principle (p.58-61)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reform the Security Council</b> (ch.4, p.64-93)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace the current system with a council composed of representatives of 12 regions, including all UN member nations, weighted voting (p.73-89)</li> <li>• Eliminate the veto (in stages) (p.89-90)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reform ECOSOC, expand into ESEC</b> (ch.5, p.94-109)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add environmental oversight to ECOSOC core functions; change name to Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC) (p.96)</li> <li>• Clarify/strengthen its role (esp p.105-7); enlarge membership from 54 nations to 60 (p.101)</li> <li>• Institute a hybrid, regionally based system of partially weighted voting, guaranteeing the individual representation of all of the world’s leading nations while also enabling smaller nations to have a meaningful voice in shaping and guiding global policies (p.101-106)</li> </ul>
<p><b>A credible human rights system</b> (ch.6, p.110-128)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elevate the Human Rights Council from subordinate position with the GA to a principal organ on par with GA or SC; allocate greater fiscal &amp; personnel resources to human rights activities (p.117-124)</li> <li>• HRC members chosen primarily on merit (while not totally ignoring their countries/regions of origin); greater gender balance; inclusion of representatives of indigenous peoples and all major world religions; guaranteeing political immunity to delegates (p.118-20)</li> <li>• Intensify relevant monitoring &amp; information flows among various components of the UN system, and between the UN and its members states and civil society</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased resort to sanctions against egregious violators, and application of the use of force <i>as a last resort</i>, in keeping with “responsibility to protect” (R2P)</li> <li>• Regional human rights commissions strongly encouraged. (p.123)</li> </ul>
<p><b>A strengthened judicial system</b> (ch.7, p.129-148)</p>	<p>Much of the current judicial infrastructure already in place, particularly the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, is underutilized. When tribunals do arrive at resolutions deemed to be <i>legal</i>, they may not necessarily be regarded as <i>just</i>. Multiple recommendations for expanding and strengthening the global judicial infrastructure, both within and alongside the UN system, are presented (see pages 144-46).</p>
<p><b>Coordination of UN specialized agencies and special UN commissions &amp; funds</b> (ch.8, p.149-163)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas for possible consolidation of current agencies to reduce redundancy (p.,153-4)</li> <li>• Need for new and/or strengthened agencies to deal with emergent problems (p.154)</li> <li>• Geographic consolidation of headquarters of various agencies (New York or Geneva, with World Court and ICC remaining in the Hague) (p.155)</li> <li>• More effective central planning, utilizing a cabinet-like system (p.156)</li> <li>• Decision-making processes that are transparent, with decision-makers held accountable for their actions (p.156)</li> <li>• Better coordination of regional &amp; national centers, of UN agencies within countries, &amp; between UN agencies &amp; various govt ministries within countries where they work (p.156-8)</li> <li>• Weighted voting (p.158-161)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enhance human resources</b> (ch.9, p.164-178)</p>	<p>Junior-level administrative staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender equity an important consideration (p.174)</li> <li>• Chosen by merit over place of origin. Geographic diversity could be obtained through a system based on representation by major world <u>regions</u> rather than individual nations.</li> <li>• Recruited by a politically neutral UN Civil Service Commission (p.170-4)</li> <li>• Candidates would spend one year in training at UN Administrative Academy (p.171 &amp; ch. 12), &amp; would spend 4 months of their initial training year at a stressful field location (p.171)</li> </ul> <p>Positions at director level and higher: advertised worldwide well in advance of being filled, with specific and rigorous requirements; vetted resumes made available to all GA members; predetermined rotation among regions only at assistant secretary-general and higher levels; GA balloting to select holders of top-level posts be secret (p.176)</p>
<p><b>Engaging civil society: NGOs &amp; other non-state actors</b> (ch.10, p.179-200)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish (five) elective &amp; representative thematically-focused Civil Society Coordinating Councils (human rights, environment, development, peace/security, democratic governance) so that expert input from NGOs can contribute to decision-making (p.187-93)</li> <li>• Enhanced participation by multi-national corporations (Global Compact) through expanding the mandate &amp; resources of the UN Secretariat Ethics Office, and requiring ECOSOC/ESEC approval for large projects (p.193-97)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Funding</b> (ch.11, p.201-224)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substitute the multiple budgets that the GA must currently establish with a single consolidated budget</li> <li>• Dues for all states would be assessed at a very small affordable and equal percentage (say 0.1% initially) of their respective gross national incomes (GNI). (p.216-220)</li> <li>• The revenue thus raised easily covers all costs for functions presently carried out by the UN system; funds remaining would be put into an escrow account to enable the UN to respond expeditiously to peacekeeping emergencies and major natural disasters</li> <li>• Voluntary contributions should be accepted only if they are provided without donor influence on the agenda of agencies or programs being funded (p.220)</li> <li>• To increase the probability that nations pay their respective assessments, those payments shall be factored into weighted voting formulae in the GA, SC, other UN agencies (p.220-21)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Peacekeeping, peacebuilding, disarmament</b> (ch.12, p.225-271)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-step process to handle urgent conflicts that involves increased resort to proactive diplomacy; greater reliance on regional bodies as peace-promoting intermediaries; and judiciously targeted sanctions when UN &amp; regional efforts are rebuffed. (p.226-8)</li> <li>• Creation of UN Peace Corps: current peacekeeping function, plus peacebuilding (construction, training, logistical support, election monitoring, etc.) (p.243-52)</li> <li>• Creation of a UN Administrative Reserve Corps (UNARC) (p.252-4)</li> <li>• Creation of a UN Administrative Academy (to train UNARC personnel) (p.254-6)</li> <li>• Total abolition of WMD, largely based on McCloy-Zorin accords plus recent proposals; establishment of effective inspection regimes (p.256-60, 304-5)</li> <li>• Adoption of more deliberate approach to confronting terrorism, with greater international / interregional cooperation, greater use of a strengthened INTERPOL (p.262-3, 305)</li> <li>• Greatly increased efforts to address the root conditions of injustice that create and sustain terrorist networks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainability and Global Commons</b> (ch.13, p.272-295)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overhaul of ECOSOC/ESEC (see ch.5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Policy formulation: Common heritage principle should be honored; policy implications of scientific evidence should be accepted; ethos putting global welfare &amp; intergenerational equity ahead of the near-term interests of particular nations &amp; corporate giants should be embraced; adherence to set norms should be legally binding, with credible systems for penalizing egregious transgressors (p.288)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Creation of new (core) agency: UN Common Heritage Council (p.289-91) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use of eminent domain principle to reclaim the greater part of world's "exclusive economic zones" &amp; the atmosphere. A potential major source of revenue (p.291-2)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Ch.14: A new global governance architecture** (building on the recommendations and analyses of previous chapters – a potential workable system of global governance, with the acknowledgement that other configurations are possible). Recommends a **constitutional system of democratic, federal world government, characterized by a division of powers among executive, legislative and judicial branches and with clearly specified checks and balances.** See Fig. 14.1 on p.4.

**Field I: core agencies with omnibus mandates, extending to all domains of UN concern. Constitutionally determined.**

- Executive Council: made up of a selected number of individuals (recommends 12), elected by the Legislature from a slate of regionally-chosen candidates. Recommended functions p.301. Plural executive power, with "president" rotating among the Council members (similar to Switzerland system), would preclude the ascendancy of any single region, political bloc or nation. (p.310-313, plus ch.4, Reforming the Security Council)
- Legislature: (empowered to enact binding legislation, limited to a restricted range of truly global concerns)
  - General Assembly: representing states, including future regional federations (see ch. 2)
  - World Parliamentary Assembly: representing people (see ch.3)
- International Court of Justice: The supreme judicial body. Jurists nominated by the Executive Council and approved by the Legislature. Would try only cases deemed to be of major global importance.
- Secretariat: UN administrative functions. Headed by an elected Secretary-General. Administrative and ceremonial functions, facilitates execution of the decisions and programs of other UN agencies, translations, facilitating liaison among UN agencies and between UN and non-UN agencies.

All but Field I agencies are arranged in 4 functional domains: security, human welfare, economics, & the environment.

**Field II: specialized core agencies. Constitutionally determined. (p.302-4)**

Would include UN Peace Corps (ch.11), International Criminal Court (ch.7), Human Rights Council (ch.6), ESEC (ch.5) and Common Heritage Council (ch.13). An Electoral Commission would ensure fairness of elections globally, and a Board of Auditors would examine the financial accounts of all entities with the UN system, thereby creating greater transparency and accountability throughout the UN system. Also recommended are an Economic Court and Environmental Court.

**Field III: non-core UN agencies (p.304-10):** Numerous specialized agencies (e.g. WHO, UNESCO, ILO, etc.) to coordinate and perform needed tasks in a globalized world.

**Field III – Field IV Interface (p.313-16): Coordinating Councils representing civil society agencies legally outside the UN, but increasingly influential in UN decision-making.** Each of these Councils (ch.10) would examine, weigh, and consolidate the salient concerns of groups of NGOs working on related clusters of issues (peace and security, human rights, democratic governance, development and the environment); **Global Compacts** (ch.10), whereby non-governmental entities (mainly corporations) may cooperate with UN agencies to promote development goals, would be enhanced. The importance of regional and lower level organizations to resolve non-global issues is also discussed.

**Getting There** (p. xxxii, p.11; ch.15, p.319-337): will require a multipronged, long-term strategy

- improving the political and economic climate in key UN member nations to facilitate working for reform (p.320-23)
- global citizen education; fostering a cosmopolitan ethos, a sense of shared stewardship of our planet (p.323-27)
- creative political engagement from global civil society (p.327-29)
- the active involvement of highly respected and imaginative world leaders
- political leadership from trusted progressive states and regions within and outside the UN arena (p.330-2)
- global networking - forging new alliances between civil society, foundations, progressive govts, other change agents
- above all, the marshalling of human will on an unprecedented scale

Initially a few key & highly noticeable reforms – in regard to funding, decision-making &/or peacekeeping – might become *internal* catalysts for further change. (p.329-30). Unfortunately, major transformation may be prompted only by *external* catalysts such as horrific acts of terrorism or natural crises brought about by global warming, etc. (p.333-4)

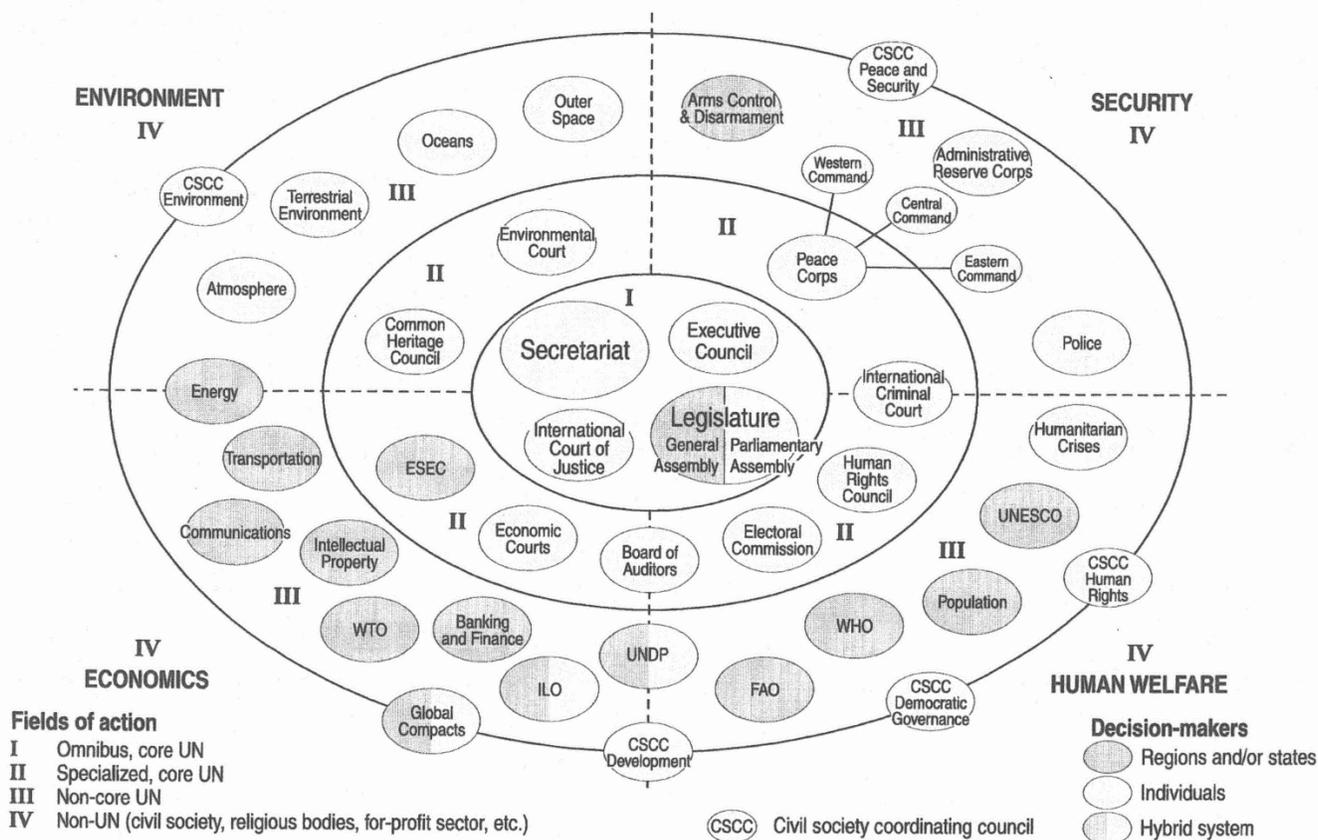


Figure 14.1 Hypothetical infrastructure at global level of a future system of global governance