



**DEMOCRACY  
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DISCUSSION PAPER

# **A RENEWED WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

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## ABSTRACT

The present paper was a contribution to the New Shape Prize awarded by the Global Challenges Foundation in May 2018. It was selected as a semifinalist and is part of the Global Challenges Foundation's New Shape Library.

The submission elaborates on key aspects of how a renewed world organization could be designed and operate. It proposes the creation of a World Parliamentary Assembly elected by the world's citizens to work alongside the UN General Assembly as representation of UN member states. Together the two assemblies form a world legislature that is empowered to adopt framework legislation that needs to be transposed into national law and global regulations with direct and immediate applicability. Different qualified majorities are required for regulation to pass.

The delegates of the World Parliamentary Assembly form transnational political groups rather than national ones.

A Joint Security Committee succeeds the UN Security Council, and its seats are elected by the World Parliamentary Assembly and the UN General Assembly.

The UN's secretariat and the administrative structure of the UN system are transformed into a World Commission, acting as an executive branch, with cabinet functions. The International Court of Justice is made responsible to oversee the World Commission, and to ensure that global legislation is in accordance with fundamental human rights and equally applied across member states.

Member states are to contribute a uniform assessment of 0.75 per cent of GNI to a single, unified UN budget.

For implementation, a UN Charter review conference and a comprehensive reform treaty are proposed.



## SUMMARY

The proposed model outlines the main features of a renewed world organization resulting from a comprehensive consolidation and reform of today's United Nations and the institutions of global governance.

The renewed organization consists of a legislative, executive and judicial branch.

The General Assembly (GA) as body of member states is complemented by a World Parliamentary Assembly (WPA) that is called upon to represent the world citizens. Together the two assemblies form a world legislature that is empowered to adopt binding global legislation: framework directives which have to be transposed into national law and global regulation with direct and immediate applicability.

States are equally represented with one seat and one vote in the GA. Delegates are appointed by the executive branches of member state governments.

The WPA consists of individual delegates either elected from within national or regional parliaments or by popular vote. Each country is allocated a minimum of two seats. The remaining number of seats available up to a ceiling of 800 is allocated according to popu-

lation size. The WPA elects three non-voting special delegates per group of stakeholders that should have enhanced representation: indigenous peoples, children and youth, and local authorities. Additional stakeholders may be determined.

Legislation is prepared by GA and WPA committees or joint committees and usually adopted if concurrently passed by the plenaries of both chambers with a supermajority of 3/4 or 4/5.

If a decision has budgetary or economic significance, the votes in the General Assembly are weighted and additionally need to represent 2/3 of combined budget contributions of member states.

Depending on the subject-matter of global legislation other additional voting weights may be determined.

Global legislation enters into force provided that 1/4 of national parliaments do not file an objection within 9 months.

A procedure of enhanced cooperation allows a minimum number of member states to cooperate within the structures of the world organization without all member states par-



ticipating. In this framework a regulation may only apply to a group of member states.

The delegates of WPA establish political groups according to their political affiliation. A group is recognized if it has 25 or more members from at least three world regions. Political groups scrutinize draft legislation and reports drawn up by the committees and may table amendments to them.

In addition to regular committees, WPA may set up temporary committees on specific issues, in particular committees of inquiry that investigate breaches of global legislation, alleged maladministration, and other issues of special concern.

The main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security is conferred to a Joint Security Committee (JSC) which succeeds today's UN Security Council. The JSC consists of 30 seats of which 20 are elected by the GA, held by government representatives, and 10 by the WPA, held by individual WPA delegates and their substitutes.

Decisions of the JSC may be binding and require a 2/3 majority to be passed. They may be repealed by a majority vote of the GA or the WPA.

The UN's core secretariat with its offices and departments as well as the administrative structures of the UN system's funds and programs, specialized agencies, related organi-

zations, conventions and other entities are merged and reorganized as departments under the roof of a World Commission (WC) that acts as the executive branch.

The functions of the main governing bodies that exist today across the UN system's entities are transferred, as appropriate, to specialized GA committees. It will be necessary to make individual assessments for each entity on how it can best be integrated.

The WC functions as a cabinet government. The president of the WC is proposed by the GA and elected by the WPA. Each portfolio or department of the WC is headed by an individual commissioner who is nominated by the president and confirmed on an individual basis by majority votes of the GA and the WPA.

The WC as a whole or individual commissioners can be dismissed by a no-confidence vote of the GA or the WPA.

The world organization's new charter includes provisions that make fundamental human rights legally binding to the world organization, its bodies and officers. The jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is expanded to cover disputes regarding the constitutionality, legal validity, interpretation and application of global legislation and the conformity of actions with the charter and its human rights obligations.



In addition, the ICJ is made responsible to ensure that global legislation is equally applied across member states and may determine whether a member state has failed to fulfill obligations.

Cases may be brought forward, as appropriate, by the world organization's main bodies or parts thereof, as well as by member states, their supreme courts or other international courts.

Half of the judges of the ICJ should be elected by the GA and the other half by the WPA by 2/3 majority votes.

A single consolidated budget is established for the world organization and its departments. In addition to voluntary funding, member states contribute a uniform and single

assessment of 0.75 percent of gross national income. The world organization may accept voluntary contributions from non-state actors.

The proposed changes can be achieved by a Comprehensive Reform Treaty (CRT) through with the UN Charter and all relevant intergovernmental treaties are amended as necessary. The CRT is negotiated in the framework of a UN Charter Review Conference (CRC) as provided for in Article 109 UN Charter.

To create political momentum and solid ground for a CRC and a CRT, a consultative UN Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) is created by a simple majority vote of the UN General Assembly according to Article 22 UN Charter.



# A RENEWED WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

## INTRODUCTION

Major challenges confronting the world community today are challenges that nation-states acting alone or even in concert cannot solve in a timely, effective, democratic, and legitimate way. This includes issues such as climate change but also others that have been virulent ever since but remain unsolved so far, in particular global disarmament and security.

Global action and global regulation is necessary in many fields but hard to come by in the framework of existing international law and intergovernmental arrangements. Improving the quality of international institutional capacity is vital to enhance the provision of global public goods. A new level of trust and collaboration is needed.

With this contribution we present key points and outlines for a renewed world organization for the 21st century. The United Nations and the broader UN system are useful structures to build upon. Little tweaks here and there will not be sufficient, however. We believe

that a fundamental consolidation of the UN system and the architecture of global governance must be considered.

The most important change will be to create a well-balanced and legitimate system for the adoption of binding global regulation and decisions.

If it is possible to rally substantial parts of the international community and global public opinion behind the project of creating a renewed supranational world organization, even the privileged permanent members of today's UN Security Council – whose cooperation is necessary and should be sought – will at some point realize that the system of 1945 is no longer sustainable and that they need to embrace change.

Despite recent waves of populist nationalism in certain countries, surveys seem to confirm that large parts of the world's citizens are strongly internationalist in orientation and ready to support a leap forward.<sup>1</sup>

## I. REDESIGNING GLOBAL DECISION-MAKING

### A CASE FOR WEIGHTED VOTING

In many cases, a major barrier for effective international norm-setting and collaboration is the consensus principle according to which unanimous agreement of the parties concerned is required.<sup>2</sup> Consensus-based decision-making allows each party to block a decision and to wield undue influence on an agreement's content. Decisions are thus limited to the preferences of the least ambitious

country and in the case of treaty negotiations, countries may entirely opt out of the framework in question.

By contrast to treaty negotiations, various types of majority voting are used in numerous intergovernmental bodies. In this case, another issue comes up: under established principles, with only few exceptions, all states are considered equal and thus have an equal vote. In reality, however, they differ in extreme



ways in terms of population size, economic performance, and other factors.

The 128 least populous states in the UN General Assembly, for instance, make up a 2/3 majority of votes but only represent around 8.4% of the world's population or 11.2% of world GDP. The ten most populous UN members, by contrast, represent nearly 60% of the world's population or 48% of world GDP but control only 5.2% of votes.

The gap between the largest UN members and the rest concerning governance and voting was described as the core dysfunction of the United Nations.<sup>3</sup> Under this condition it is no wonder that there is an agreement that the UN's budget should be adopted by consensus, if possible, and that UN bodies cannot be entrusted with adopting global regulation.

More effective and binding global rule-making can be achieved by shifting towards systems of qualified majority voting that reflects the disparities within the international community of states.

It was pointed out that weighted voting mechanisms can ensure that all major interests among governments are taken into account without granting a veto to any single party.<sup>4</sup> At the same time it limits the ability of small states to outvote large ones.

Majority voting comes along with another benefit. Research suggests that it works in favor of long-term solutions. A team simulated the use of common resources over several generations using a game theory model. The resource was almost always over-exploited and exhausted when the decisions on its use were made on an individual basis. When decisions were made by majority vote, the usage was always sustainable and the resource was maintained.<sup>5</sup>

## A FLEXIBLE SYSTEM BASED ON STATE EQUALITY AND POPULATION SIZE

How should weighted voting work? According to the Binding Triad proposal, the UN General Assembly may be given the authority to adopt universally binding international legislation provided that a decision is adopted by (1) a two-thirds majority of member states (2) who represent a majority of the world population and (3) whose combined contributions make up a majority of the UN's regular budget.<sup>6</sup> Other proposals for weighted voting at the UN are also using population size, economic capacity and sovereign equality of states as determining factors.<sup>7</sup>

Instead of applying one uniform mechanism or formula to all decisions, the majorities required for binding global regulation may and should differ depending on the issue area of concern.<sup>8</sup> If a decision has no immediate budgetary or economic significance, for instance, it may not be necessary that contributions to the UN budget are part of the equation. Other factors may be more important. If climate change mitigation is concerned, it may be useful to include CO2 emissions as a factor (per capita or in total).

Different rules with different thresholds and factors may have to apply to different areas. This will require a careful case-by-case assessment.

State equality and population size should always play a role, however. States will continue to be the most important entities of governance and are needed for the implementation of global policy and legislation. Most will not agree to a system that overly diminishes their role and weight. That's why the executive branch of member state governments should continue to be equally represented in the UN General Assembly (and similar bodies) under the principle of "one state, one seat, one vote."





Population size is the key factor to achieve a more balanced, legitimate and democratic system of decision-making. It should not simply be part of a formula that determines a weighted vote for member states. A government delegate is unable to reflect the diversity of political opinions present in democratic states in an adequate way and government votes are cast uniformly. Factoring in population size opens up new possibilities and should be done through an additional way of representation: a citizen-elected body.

In such a World Parliamentary Assembly (WPA), citizen representatives of a given state cast their votes individually irrespective of their national origin which allows for cross-border alliances and majorities that are not based on national or geopolitical considerations. This will help shaping solutions in the common global interest.

## **TWO CHAMBERS REPRESENTING GOVERNMENTS AND CITIZENS**

We suggest the creation of a decision-making mechanism that rests on two pillars: an assembly of equal executive representatives of individual countries like today's UN General Assembly and another assembly that consists of individual delegates elected by the world's population in which the number of delegates roughly corresponds to population size.<sup>9</sup> The resulting world legislature composed of a General Assembly (GA) and a WPA would combine principles of international law and world law.<sup>10</sup>

It should be a fundamental principle that the approval of both chambers is required for binding global regulation to be passed. As argued before, depending on the matter under consideration, different levels of qualified majority could be required and votes in the chamber of states could be linked to additional majority requirements.

For binding global legislation, it will remain unlikely for a considerable time to come that a simple majority in both chambers would

represent adequate legitimation. Should there be no agreement on an additional factor such as contributions to the world organization's budget, an initial standard threshold of 3/4 or even 4/5 in both chambers may be a realistic starting point. Global regulation thus could only be passed if there is strong agreement.

## **INVOLVEMENT OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS**

In order to provide for an additional connection between global law-making and the electorate, the national parliaments should be involved in the process as well. In order to ensure the efficacy of a global system of legislation, there must not be a requirement for global regulation always to be ratified by a specific majority of national parliaments like it is the case today relative to intergovernmental treaties. However, binding decisions adopted by the world legislature should only come into force if objections are not raised by a specified number of national parliaments within a specified time period. An adequate threshold may be 1/4 within 9 months.

## **TWO KINDS OF GLOBAL LEGISLATION**

As in the law-making process in the EU, at least two types of global legislation should be envisaged: firstly, framework directives, which have to be fleshed out in detail and transposed into national law by the national parliaments within a specified time limit; and secondly, global regulation with direct and immediate applicability on states, individuals and other entities.

## **THE SCOPE OF GLOBAL LEGISLATION**

The scope of global regulations and directives must be limited to areas of global concern and should not interfere with domestic issues in the realm of member states.

Global regulation must not place individual member states at an excessive and unjusti-



fied disadvantage or burden compared with the others.

The principle of subsidiarity must be observed. The world organization should perform only such tasks that cannot be performed in an effective way at a lower level.

Whether or not a particular regulation or action meets the above principles must be open to judicial review.

Global regulation and action will often be the most effective way to improve the provision of global public goods that benefit all governments and all persons and to minimize global risks that may threaten the well-being of large parts of the world population.

As priority global public goods the following were identified: Preventing the emergence and spread of infectious disease, tackling climate change, enhancing international financial stability, strengthening the international trading system and achieving peace and security.<sup>11</sup>

A recent assessment of global catastrophic risks concentrated on the use of weapons of mass destruction, catastrophic climate change, ecological collapse, pandemics, asteroid impacts, supervolcanic eruptions, geo-engineering and artificial intelligence.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, global regulation could significantly contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and enhance mechanisms for food, water and energy security.

## ENHANCED COOPERATION

Following the example of EU law, a procedure for enhanced cooperation should be designed that allows a minimum number of member states to co-operate within the structures of the world organization without all member

states participating. This would allow member states to move at different speeds and accommodate heterogeneous participation in existing entities and regimes.

In this framework a regulation may only apply to a group of member states and in other cases opt-outs could be allowed if universal application is not an absolute requirement for a regulation to be effective.

## A JOINT SECURITY COMMITTEE

The main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security is conferred to a Joint Security Committee (JSC) which succeeds today's UN Security Council. The JSC is a joint body of the GA and the WPA that is in permanent session and empowered to adopt binding decisions following, in principle, on the lines of Chapter VII of the current UN Charter. This concerns in particular decisions on the use of force and other coercive measures.

Decisions of the JSC require a 2/3 majority to be passed. They may be repealed by a majority vote of the GA or the WPA and are subject to judicial review.

The JSC consists of 30 seats of which 20 are elected by the GA, held by government representatives, and 10 by the WPA, held by individual WPA delegates and their substitutes. All seats are elected for a duration of two years. Consecutive terms are allowed.

The seats elected by the GA should be representative of all world regions and those elected by the WPA of the major political groups formed in the assembly.

The GA and WPA may choose to establish further joint committees but only the JSC is empowered to adopt binding decisions..



## II. A WORLD PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

It is now widely accepted that parliaments are an indispensable element of good, accountable and democratic governance. This will also need to apply to a renewed world organization.

The level of democratic legitimacy and representation that is required for a supranational system of global regulation to be generally acceptable can only be achieved with a parliamentary body. A WPA as suggested above as part of a two-chamber world legislature thus represents a centerpiece of the present proposal.

There is a long history to learn from. The idea of a citizen-elected world parliament was put forward for the first time during the French Revolution and has been discussed continuously ever since.<sup>13</sup> Even if there is no parliamentary body in the UN system yet, it is still possible to draw on extensive experience with a number of other long-standing international parliamentary institutions.<sup>14</sup>

As a directly elected legislative organ of the European Union, the European Parliament has evolved the furthest. The WPA suggested here builds on these examples and particularly on the discussion of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA), a proposal that enjoys significant support.<sup>15</sup>

### SELECTION OF DELEGATES

The number of seats would be determined by country but they would be held by independent individual delegates. Member states should be able to choose whether the delegates from their country should be elected from within the national parliament or by popular direct elections.

In the first case, the selection would have to reflect the proportional weight of parties within the legislatures themselves as best as possible. Groups of member states should

also be allowed to agree that delegates allocated to them are elected fully or in part from within a parliamentary organ of a regional organization (such as the European Parliament or the Pan-African Parliament). As a rule, delegates will be largely exempted from duties in their parliament of origin in order for them to be able to concentrate on global issues.

In the case of popular elections, the system to be used would have to be proportional representation as to guarantee diversity.

To guarantee the independence of delegates from governments, political groups and special interests it may be considered that votes are cast in secret.

### APPORTIONMENT OF SEATS

We suggest that the total number of delegates allocated to member states is capped at 800.<sup>16</sup> Under the model favored here, the starting point is to allocate a minimum of two seats to every country. Usually this will be one for the ruling party and the other for the leading opposition party. If we assume that all of today's UN member states participate, 386 seats would be distributed in this way. In a next step, the remainder of 414 seats is allocated to countries in proportion to their population size. Due to rounding, the resulting total number would be 796.

Under this model, the 10 most populous countries would send 33.7% of delegates which is 6.4 times more votes than they currently have in the UN General Assembly, and the 128 least populous ones would send 35.9% which is 1.8 times less. Only 12 countries would have more than 1% of delegates each. The largest shares would be held by delegates from China (10.63%), India (9.25%) and the United States (2.63%).



As many votes will require additional majorities in the state chamber, for example based on budget contributions, the suggested distribution in the WPA should be a compromise that large and small states should be able to agree upon.

## GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

The delegates of WPA establish joint political groups according to their political affiliation. A group is formally recognized if it has 25 or more members from at least three world regions as defined by the UN geoscheme.

Political groups scrutinize draft legislation and reports drawn up by the committees and may table amendments to them.

The groups are a key mechanism that will facilitate debates and solutions that are informed primarily by common transnational perspectives instead of geopolitical considerations and national self-interest.

WPA delegates are divided up among specialized standing committees whose membership reflect the weight of political groups in the plenary assembly.

The committees develop legislation for the plenary, propose amendments to the plenary, draft reports, appoint negotiators to conduct consultations with the GA and other bodies on legislation, create sub-committees if need be, organize public hearings and conferences with experts and civil society and scrutinize the other bodies and institutions of the world organization.

WPA may set up temporary committees on specific issues, in particular committees of inquiry that investigate breaches of global regulation, alleged maladministration, and other issues of special concern.

Committee meetings are held in public and at different locations depending on the agenda.

## SPECIAL DELEGATES

In order to improve the representation of important stakeholders and interests, the WPA elects on the basis of broad international consultations three additional delegates per stakeholder who have full procedural rights but may not participate in votes. Special delegates may sit on committees of their choosing and do not belong to a political group. We suggest that initially special delegates are elected to represent indigenous peoples, children and youth, and local authorities (cities and municipalities). Additional stakeholders could be added as need be.

## CIVIC PARTICIPATION

In order to improve the connection between the WPA, its delegates and world citizens, an internet platform is established where constituents can register. The online platform provides for a secure and authenticated channel of communication between citizens and WPA delegates. Delegates are able to establish online surveys and other instruments to consult with their constituents.

Through the online platform citizens are able to launch and sign official petitions to WPA that are reviewed by a petitions committee. If a petition exceeds a certain number of signatories as determined by WPA, an official hearing needs to be held with the original submitter.



## III. CONSOLIDATING THE UN AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

### THE ISSUE OF FRAGMENTATION

The fragmentation of norms, authority and institutions into largely unconnected, incoherent and autonomous specialized “silos” is probably the main characteristic of today’s international law and intergovernmental global governance. This sort of patchwork governance is hard to navigate, nearly impossible to coordinate and problematic in many respects, in particular from a perspective of democratic theory as there is no mechanism through which competing rules could be weighed up against each other.<sup>17</sup>

The creation of a world legislature as outlined before is part of the solution since it can bring together hitherto disconnected and divergent political regulation processes and apply to them a system of political balancing, preference-setting and prioritization. Institutionally integrated decision-making will help to reconcile fragmented norms.

### AN INTEGRATED WORLD ORGANIZATION

Global regulation and policy needs to be implemented. To a large degree the responsibility to do so lies with member states and their administrations. In addition, existing intergovernmental institutions and programs within and outside the UN system already constitute a de facto executive structure. A renewed world organization should build on these structures and, where appropriate, carry them forward. This needs to go along with a radical consolidation to achieve coherence, harmonization, greater efficiency and more transparency.

The UN’s core secretariat with its offices and departments as well as the administrative structures of the UN system’s funds and programs, specialized agencies, related organi-

zations, conventions and other entities should be merged and reorganized as departments under the roof of a World Commission (WC) that acts as the world organization’s executive branch.

It will be necessary to make individual assessments for each entity on how it could best be integrated. This concerns not only the administrative structures but also the governance arrangements.

In principle, the functions of the main governing bodies that exist today across the UN system’s entities in which all member states that participate are represented should be transferred, as appropriate, to specialized GA committees. There is no reason why there should be different assemblies for each UN specialized agency.<sup>18</sup>

Special features will have to be accommodated. A GA committee that carries on the work of the ILO, for instance, should continue to have a tripartite structure that represents governments, employers, and workers.

GA committees would interact with each other and consult with WPA committees, and vice versa, so that concurrent legislation could finally be passed by the world legislature at the plenary level. In addition, joint GA/WPA committees might be set up.

Based on an enhanced cooperation procedure membership in GA committees and participation in votes may depend on whether a member state participates in a given entity or regime or not.

### A WORLD COMMISSION

The executive structure of the world organization is led by a World Commission that functions as a cabinet government. The pres-



ident of the WC is proposed by the GA and elected by the WPA. Each portfolio or department of the WC is headed by an individual commissioner who is nominated by the president and confirmed on an individual basis by majority votes of the GA and the WPA.

The WC takes over the functions of today's UN Secretariat. In particular it implements decisions and regulation, assists the GA,

WPA, JSC and other bodies in setting the agenda and drafting regulations and decisions, coordinates and manages the activities of the departments, proposes a unified budget to the world legislature and operates missions.

The WC as a whole or individual commissioners can be dismissed by a no-confidence vote of the GA or the WPA..

## IV. JUDICIAL REVIEW AND LEGAL PROTECTION

### FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

A renewed world organization will be based on primary law – the founding charter – and secondary legislation emanating from the world legislature. The charter needs to include provisions that make fundamental human rights legally binding to the world organization, its bodies and officers. This may be achieved with references to existing resolutions and instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, or by including an amalgamated human rights catalogue in the charter itself.

Whether global legislation passed by the world legislature or other decisions or actions by any body or officer of the world organization are in accordance with the charter and its human rights provisions in particular must be subject to judicial review.

### THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

To this end, the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is expanded to cover disputes regarding the constitutionality, legal validity, interpretation and application of global legislation and the conformity of actions

with the charter and its human rights obligations.

In addition, the ICJ is made responsible to ensure that global regulation, directives and decisions are equally applied across member states and may determine whether a member state has failed to fulfill obligations under the charter or secondary legislation.

The ICJ is also responsible to solve disputes within the WPA, for instance concerning the rights, responsibilities or credentials of WPA delegates or WPA bodies.

The ICJ has the power to annul legislation or actions in full or in part. Verdicts of the court in such cases are legally binding.

Cases may be brought forward, as appropriate, by the world organization's main bodies or parts thereof, as well as by member states, their supreme courts or other international courts.

Under this model, half of the judges of the ICJ should be elected by the GA and the other half by the WPA. A 2/3 majority would have to be required.



## V. FUNDING

### A SINGLE UNIFIED BUDGET

In 2015, the total revenue for the UN system as a whole was US\$ 48 billion. Currently, there are four main types of funding sources: 1. Assessed contributions (30%), 2. Core contributions (10%), 3. Earmarked funding (53%) and 6. Fees and others (7%).<sup>19</sup> Only assessed contributions are obligatory.

The revenue is dispersed across multiple budgets, entities and programs. A coherent and consolidated world organization as proposed in this model would establish a single consolidated budget. Funding for this budget needs to be based on a larger share of obligatory member state contributions, a smaller share of voluntary and earmarked funding, and new funding sources that allow it to accept contributions from non-state actors.

### A UNIFORM RATE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The present opaque system for member state assessments needs to be replaced by a uniform and single contribution that is based on a set percentage of the gross national income of member states.<sup>20</sup> The rate may be subject could range at around 0.75 percent which would result in annual revenues for core funding in an area of US\$ 60 billion based on GNI numbers for 2016. Individual contributions should be capped at 20% of the total budget, however, as to prevent a too large dependence on single member states.

### VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS AND GLOBAL TAXATION

Under stringent criteria, the renewed UN should be allowed to accept voluntary contributions from non-state actors including individuals.

There is a long history behind the idea of global taxation.<sup>21</sup> UN planners speculate that

different sorts of global taxes and other innovative financing instruments such as IMF Special Drawing Rights could raise up to US\$ 400 billion US dollars annually in additional funds.<sup>22</sup> Proposals for international taxes have always been contentious in the international community, however. While initially it politically may not be possible to establish a sufficiently broad agreement among member states on the introduction of taxation for the purpose of funding a renewed world organization, we suggest that like-minded member states should be allowed to proceed with such plans in the framework of the enhanced cooperation mechanism suggested above. Only participating member states would decide on the budgetary allocation of funds raised by them in this framework.

### OTHER BUDGETARY ISSUES

Some departments and offices will carry out work in continuation of UN entities that some member states originally did not join or will support activities in the framework of enhanced cooperation of groups of member states. The share of budget allocated to finance these activities would be detracted proportionally from the contribution of member states that do not participate in them.<sup>23</sup>

In budget decisions, votes in the GA additionally would need to represent a supermajority of combined individual member state contributions. Member states which are in arrears in the payment of their obligations should automatically have a proportionally reduced weight and eventually their vote should be suspended in all member state-based bodies (this excludes the WPA).

Expanding the budget and revenue sources of a renewed world organization will require enhanced accountability and transparency. This need strengthens the case for a citizen-elected WPA that would exercise democratic oversight.<sup>24</sup>



## VI. A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

### A COMPREHENSIVE REFORM TREATY

Some final remarks are in order on how the proposed changes can be achieved. Legally it will be necessary to amend the UN Charter and numerous intergovernmental treaties. The goal should be to draft one Comprehensive Reform Treaty (CRT) that would include all necessary provisions to change all treaties concerned. This CRT should be negotiated in the framework of a UN Charter Review Conference (CRC) as provided for in Article 109 UN Charter. According to para. 3 such a CRC can be convened by a majority vote of the GA and the Security Council. A CRT would have to be approved by a 2/3 majority of the CRC and then ratified by 2/3 of UN member states and all of the Security Council's five permanent members. It is generally believed that the latter is an impossible threshold for any alteration of the Charter for a long time to come. We don't agree. The P5 are not able to block the convening of a CRC and they are also not able to block the CRC from passing a CRT. Once this process is under way, it may become difficult for the P5 to resist the momentum and not come on board. As noted in the introduction, large parts of global public opinion are in favor of UN reform and supranational decision-making. There is a general consensus among member states that the UN is in urgent need of reform. In addition, many national constitutions permit the transfer of sovereign rights to international organizations which effectively is already the case concerning Chapter VII of the UN Charter.<sup>25</sup>

A lesson learned from the virtual impossibility so far to amend the UN Charter is that no veto right can be allowed to any state over future changes of a CRT and the charter of a renewed world organization. A concurrent 4/5 majority vote of the GA and WPA may constitute a useful threshold.

### A UN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AS A CATALYST

Since the end of the Cold War it has been argued that the establishment of a UNPA may pave the way towards a comprehensive reform of the UN as it would allow progressive parliamentarians to pursue this goal inside the system.<sup>26</sup> In this spirit, the appeal of the international campaign for a UNPA – which is endorsed, among others, by over 1,500 current and former members of parliament – states that “the assembly could become a political catalyst for further development of the international system and of international law.”<sup>27</sup>

Following this approach, a UN parliamentary body may be created to prepare solid ground for the convening of a CRC and a CRT. Article 22 UN Charter allows the GA to set up subsidiary bodies as it deems necessary to fulfill its work. Based on this, a UNPA could be established as an advisory body with a simple majority vote of the GA. The P5 would not be able to block such a decision.

The creation of a UN parliamentary body based on Article 22 is one of the options supported by the UNPA Campaign.<sup>28</sup> It was also recommended by the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance.<sup>29</sup> A UNPA would not only create public and political momentum for reform, it would be a precursor of a WPA as described in this model.

### THE UN'S 2020 ANNIVERSARY

The Commission suggests that preparations should be made for a World Conference on Global Institutions to take place on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations in 2020 that should consider reform proposals that may or may not involve Charter amendments.<sup>30</sup>





Among other things, a UN2020 process and conference should result in the creation of a formal UN parliamentary body and constitute a step towards a CRC and a CRT that may

create a renewed world organization for the 21st century.

## ENDNOTES

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## **ABOUT DEMOCRACY WITHOUT BORDERS**

Democracy Without Borders is a non-governmental organization that supports a holistic approach to democracy promotion that spans from the local to the global level and at the same time embraces the dimensions of representation, participation, deliberation and co-decision. Democracy Without Borders advocates a democratic world order in which citizens participate beyond national boundaries. While advocating ongoing democratization at all levels, we focus on promoting democracy in transnational regional and global institutions. The establishment of a democratic world parliament is one of our key goals.