

UN 2015

**How can Norway contribute
to reforms and to strengthening the UN?**

– A project report



**NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

This report is an edited and slightly updated summary of a projectreport on UN reform issues entitled “FN (UN)-2015”, commissioned by the Department for UN, peace and humanitarian Affairs in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and presented (in Norwegian) in September 2011. The text builds on existing Norwegian positions on UN reform, but on some issues contains proposals that go somewhat beyond those. The project report will be used as input to a government white paper to Parliament on Norway’s UN policies, which will be presented later in 2012. The director of the initial UN 2015 project and author of this paper is Ambassador and Special Adviser in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bjørn Skogmo (sko@mfa.no/skogmobjorn@gmail.com), who has worked on UN and multilateral issues in several capacities.

Foreword

Membership of the United Nations has been a cornerstone of Norwegian foreign policy ever since the world organisation was founded in 1945.

The United Nations represents a vision of a world order based on the rule of international law. It is a key arena for safeguarding important Norwegian national interests in areas such as the maintenance of international peace and security, the law of the sea, sustainable development and human rights.

For Norway, the UN system is an essential arena for working with other member states to discuss, consult on and agree on common responses to global challenges.

As a friend and supporter of the United Nations, Norway is continuously looking for ways to improve the relevance of our own policies towards the UN and global intergovernmental cooperation. As a responsible member state, we must periodically assess not only whether the UN functions as efficiently as possible, but also whether we – as member states – have set the right priorities for the world organisation.

Being a friend of the UN also requires critical analyses to identify fault lines, bottlenecks and inefficiencies, and a dedication to working actively with other countries across regions to promote adaptation and reforms.

The present report was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a background analysis for a white paper on Norwegian UN policy, which will be presented in the autumn of 2012.

I hope this report will also be useful for readers outside Norway as a contribution to our dialogue with UN partners and other countries on how we can make the UN system even more effective and relevant in addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

Any comments you may have can be addressed to the team working on the white paper: Proj-UN-review@mfa.no.



Jonas Gahr Støre
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Summary

- The world is changing and multilateral cooperation is changing with it. Traditionally, this was a way for nations to work together in international organisations within the wider UN system, including the specialised agencies, the financial institutions and cooperating institutions. Today, the number of global actors is increasing, both inside and even more outside existing multilateral organisations. New forums such as the G-20 have become key arenas. South/South cooperation is on the rise, regional organisations are developing global ambitions, civil society and private sector groups are assuming larger roles. Reforms in the UN and the global multilateral system must therefore be seen in the context of the wider debate on global governance and the impact of geopolitical change.
- The UN has been seen as a cornerstone of Norwegian foreign policy ever since 1945. The political platform of October 2009 of the present Norwegian coalition government states that a world order led by the UN and based on international law is in Norway's best interest. The normative functions of the UN system remain at the heart of Norway's approach to UN-reform. Norway too must periodically review how we can best safeguard our national interests as well as those we share with other countries through the UN system, and assess how and where we can make a difference.
- As Norway is not a member of the EU or the G-20, the UN provides a key arena for safeguarding Norwegian interests and for promoting Norwegian positions on global issues. In an age of increased competition for mandates and resources, we should seek to reform and strengthen a global intergovernmental system that is open to all countries, where we are guaranteed access as full members.
- Norway's ability to influence UN reforms is based on consistent political and financial support to the world organisation, on flexibility and a willingness to accept calculated risks to promote innovation, and on cooperation with like-minded countries on issues of common interest. Significant UN reform can be achieved only by breaking down unproductive North/South cleavages through strategic initiatives with countries in all regions.
- The intergovernmental character of the UN system has been strengthened. This means that member states have a particular responsibility to set necessary priorities, to ensure a proper balance between mandates and resources, and to address lack of coherence even at the governance level. Norway should work for governance approaches that encourage a stronger focus on strategic choices, avoid micromanagement, stress the responsibilities of UN leaders to defend UN norms and standards, and provide sufficient flexibility for UN leaders to move from a focus on due process to more results-based approaches.
- Norway should continue working with other countries to achieve a better focus on what member states really want the UN system to be and what it should deliver. Norway should press for a focus on functions where the UN has a unique legitimacy and comparative advantage, such as normative functions, global knowledge management, capacity building for public sector institutions and other upstream activities. Partnerships with civil society organisations and the private sector, based on UN norms, should be strengthened.
- The three pillars of the UN – international peace and security, economic and social development, and human rights, including women's rights – are becoming increasingly interlinked. Development resources continue to be necessary for building capacity for incorporating norms and standards, for institution-building and for support to key public sector functions in post-conflict situations and fragile states. Middle-income countries play increasingly important roles as partners and donors, and must be constructively engaged in these efforts.

- Norway should continue upgrading our involvement in administrative and budgetary issues to promote necessary reforms. Priority should be given to a better balance between mandates and resources, to more predictable UN budgets, to further accountability reforms and to addressing bottlenecks in human resources policies and recruitment.
- Norway should continue supporting a limited Security Council expansion to make the Council more representative of today's world, as well as transparency reforms in the working methods of the Council. Norway should continue to support ongoing reforms to strengthen UN multidimensional peace operations, the civilian capacities process and the peace-building architecture.
- Norway has put forward ideas for reforms in the UN disarmament machinery and should continue pushing for necessary reforms in this area.
- As the most important channel for Norwegian multilateral cooperation, the UN development system needs to strengthen coherence both at intergovernmental and interagency levels. Norway has given strong support to "Delivering as One (DaO)", aimed at strengthening UN coherence at country level, and should continue doing so.
- Norway should continue working for budgetary reforms in all agencies and programmes to strengthen results-based approaches and a stronger focus on transparency, reporting and communications about results achieved.
- Norway should continue to participate actively in negotiations on reforms within the field of environment and development before the Rio summit in 2012. We support negotiations on Sustainable Development Goals, the replacement of the Commission on Sustainable Development with a Sustainable Development Council with a stronger mandate and changed working methods, and stronger environmental governance based on the normative functions of UNEP.
- Norway should continue to give strong support to the implementation of recent reforms in the field of human rights (UN Human Rights Council) and in women's rights and gender (UN Women). Both reforms have led to positive results on issues of high priority for Norway, and contain reform elements that could also be used as examples in other areas in need of reform.

Issues for further discussion and exploration

- Norway should explore and support constructive proposals to streamline the number of bodies and financial mechanisms in the UN development system, in order to better achieve critical mass. The creation of UN Women, merging and building on the work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, shows that it can be done.
- The further development of thematic groups or clusters, building on existing structures, should be considered. Coordination and coherence at the interagency level would continue to be the responsibility of a strengthened cooperation within the Chief Executives Board (CEB). At governance level, better use of existing organs such as the General Assembly and ECOSOC, with revised working methods and less polarization, would still be possible. Some examples;
 - A UN peace and security group already exists, centred around the Department of political affairs (DPA), the Department for peacekeeping operations (DPKO - possibly with a merger between the two) and the Department for Field Support (DFS), - with the Security Council as the main governance body.

- A UN humanitarian group, building on the UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP) and humanitarian parts of other agencies and coordinated by OCHA. Governance is vested in existing executive committees and boards, by the humanitarian segment of ECOSOC and through the omnibus resolution of the General Assembly.
 - A consolidated structure is needed for a stronger and more effective global response to transnational crime, building on existing UN normative instruments and programmes such as the UNODC, linked to ongoing efforts within DPA and DPKO to support the rule of law in post-conflict situations, fragile states and in UN development programmes, in partnership with relevant bodies such as Interpol, the World Bank, and regional organizations.
 - A UN Sustainable Development Council (or group), building on reform processes of the Rio 2012 Conference and a strengthened environmental pillar. A global strategy containing a better division of operational responsibilities for UN agencies should also be considered.
 - A UN food security group building on the existing Committee on World Food Security, which is both an inter-governmental and an interagency body, with a strengthened partnership with the G-20, the World Bank and other relevant partners.
 - A strengthened global governance for health, with normative functions anchored in the World Health Organization. An exploration of options for a further strengthening of governance functions in global health is envisaged in the work of the independent academic Commission on Global Governance for Health organised by The Lancet and the University of Oslo in collaboration with Harvard Global Health Institute.
 - At the operational level, a strengthened UN Development Group (UNDG), with a strong focus on better coherence at country level (Delivering as One), and as a nucleus of a possible consolidation of funds and development programmes.
- We should continue to support functions that link the wider UN system better together, including integrated and multidimensional peace operations, coordination of humanitarian response and more coherent interagency efforts in peace-building and development efforts.



*Trygve Lie, the first Secretary-General of the United Nations laying down the cornerstone of the new permanent headquarters of the UN on 24 October 1948, together with Wallace K. Harrison, Chief Architect of the Building.
(Photo; UN.N.Y)*

The vision

The United Nations was built on a vision. This vision is defined in the preamble to the UN Charter of 1945, where “we, the peoples of the United Nations,” set forward their determination to promote the objectives that became the three pillars of the new world organisation, - international peace and security, economic and social progress, and human rights.

Norway’s policies in and towards the UN are based on this vision. This has been reconfirmed in a long list of government declarations, white papers and UN statements since 1945. The political platform of the current coalition government, adopted in 2009, builds further on that vision.

“Respect for international law and universal human rights and building up an international legal system are the basis for our international policy. A world order led by the UN is in Norway’s best interest. The Government shall therefore work to strengthen the United Nations and international law.”

Norway’s engagement with the UN covers a broad range of UN bodies, including funds, programmes and specialised agencies. Like other countries, Norway has certain priority areas where we are more deeply involved than in others. We have also engaged ourselves in processes aimed at enhancing UN governance, interagency cooperation, coordination and coherence within the UN system and with outside partners.

In addition to looking at the main priorities of our UN involvement, this report examines a few of the system-wide issues confronting the UN. It deals briefly with the present international background for multilateral reform. It describes Norwegian interests in the UN and discusses our possibilities of influencing UN reform issues. It addresses some of the challenges at the governance level, such as dilemmas of priority-setting, the group dynamics, partnerships, and the question of what member states really want the UN system to do. It deals briefly with reform issues facing the main organs of the secretariat and considers Norwegian engagement in reform within the three pillars of the UN – international peace and security, economic and social development and human rights, including women’s rights and gender equality.

In international discussions about global governance issues over the last 20 years or so, two sets of issues, both reflecting the consequences of geopolitical change, have been particularly prominent. The first is the reform of the international financial institutions, an area where progress has been made, but that is outside the scope of this report. The second is reform of the UN Security Council, which is discussed below. In addition, there are a host of other reform challenges within peace and security, economic and social development, and rights-based approaches where Norway is already engaged. The aim of this project has been to seek to look forward – to the 2015 milestone and beyond – rather than relying wholly on evaluations of past performance.

Background

In the second decade of the 21st century, global change is taking place at a faster rate than ever before. Drivers of change can be found in the private sector, in civil society groups, within governments and in all layers of our societies. Developing countries are fast becoming the main engines of the global economy.

The global intergovernmental system, which corresponds largely with the wider UN system with its more than 30 bodies and collaborating agencies, is continuously affected by such changes. It is required to adapt to new global demands, to changing geopolitical realities and to stiffer competition for mandates and resources.

At the same time, the multilateral organisations remain arenas where member states, particularly smaller and medium-sized countries that have fewer arenas and options to safeguard their interests, can meet to discuss how they can best cope with change. The UN system provides arenas for identifying and negotiating gaps in international norms, standards and response mechanisms, for monitoring the observance of existing norms, and for agreeing on common action to halt or curb negative trends. Through such processes, the multilateral organisations are themselves important agents and facilitators of global change.

When sudden change takes place, the UN system is in itself an instrument for crisis management – in the field of peace and security, humanitarian emergencies, environmental challenges, pandemics and in other global emergencies. UN organisations are arenas for member states to discuss the prevention of new emergencies and negotiate key development goals, priorities and approaches and for delivering support to member countries to enable them to build capacity to reach these goals. Multilateral institutions are sometimes also useful as scapegoats in cases where their stakeholders are unable to agree on how to confront change.

Many of the current global change processes are positive. The number of democratic regimes where citizens can hold their leaders accountable for the safeguarding of fundamental rights is increasing. Globally, the total number of wars and violent conflicts is falling. Many of the development goals adopted during the UN Millennium Summit in 2000 are achievable by the 2015 deadline, although the most vulnerable are being left behind. Universal norms and values are gaining ground in the human rights field. The world is becoming increasingly interconnected at an unprecedented pace.

At the same time, the economic and social challenges are becoming increasingly global. The 2008 global financial crisis has led to a global economic slow-down. According to ILO, 200 million people are out of work worldwide. Challenges linked to underlying imbalances have not been resolved. Poverty, inequality, injustice and climate threats persist in spite of efforts at national, regional and global levels to address them. As the President of the World Bank has observed: “something fundamental is going on, but the lesson is that we must modernize, not abandon multilateralism”.¹

¹ Speech by World Bank Group President Robert B. Zoellick, 15 September 2011.

The after-effects of the financial crisis are putting pressure on the financing of the UN and multilateral cooperation. The largest contributors are advocating cuts or zero growth in UN budgets. There are increasing pressures on the UN system to set tougher priorities, to deliver concrete, measurable results and to communicate development outcomes better. The UN is being asked to do more with less. Unresolved international conflicts, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian issue, continue to cast long shadows over the support to the UN and its financing in the United States.

At the same time, the UN member states continue to pull UN agencies in different directions. Regular budgets and core contributions – the main area for common multilateral action – are stagnating, while earmarking is increasing. Dependence on the 10–15 traditional donors in the North, many of whom are experiencing high levels of debt and deficits, remains high. Middle-income countries and emerging economies have increased their contributions through the UN, but often through earmarked allocations to purposes within their own borders. More countries are also contributing to the core budgets, but the volume so far is still relatively modest. The area for common responsibility, collective financing and joint action seems to be shrinking. Multilateral development agencies may be in the process of becoming demand-driven contractors for the earmarked priorities of member states.

In 2011, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon was re-elected as the leader of the world organisation for the period 2012–2016. In his letter of congratulation, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg encouraged the Secretary-General “to take leadership of UN reform, to make it a priority to consolidate ‘Delivering as One’ and encourage heads of UN funds, programmes and specialised agencies to undertake necessary reforms at Headquarters”.

The five imperatives set out in the Secretary-General’s address to the General Assembly in September 2011 – sustainable development, prevention, building a safer and more secure world, supporting nations in transition and working with, and for, women and young people – correspond closely with Norwegian priorities. The task of translating these priorities into a programme of reform, involving a strategic positioning of the UN system to better address the challenges of

the 21st century, will be a shared responsibility of the Secretary-General, other UN leaders and member governments.

The more multipolar world of the 21st century needs an effective, well-functioning, multilateral system of cooperation that is open to all countries and peoples. The vision of a rules-based, better organised global community is more valid than ever before. The world needs a stronger UN in the 21st century.

Norwegian interests in the UN

The UN has regularly been called a cornerstone of Norwegian foreign policy. This continued support is based not only on visions and on policy objectives and priorities of successive Norwegian governments. It is also based on calculations of how global change affects our national interests and on our best judgment on how to promote these interests and on where Norway could make a difference. There are long traditions in Norwegian foreign policy, which is very much aligned with the principles and objectives of the United Nations, of working for a peaceful settlement of disputes, for protection and relief to people in need, for compassion and solidarity with the poor and oppressed, for sustainable development to protect the global environment and for human rights and equal opportunities.

The interests, goals and priorities of Norway vis-à-vis the UN system include both areas of special significance and direct importance for Norway, and areas where we have shared interests with other countries in developing joint approaches to common challenges. Three of these areas stand out in particular.

- **Promoting respect for universal norms and standards and strengthening the normative role of the UN.** Norway’s security is based on international law, as enshrined in the UN Charter and in global treaties and conventions. Article 2.4 of the UN Charter, which concerns the duty of member states to refrain from the use or threat of force, is fundamental to Norway’s security. A UN Security Council mandate is an important precondition for Norwegian participation in international peace operations. Article 51 of the Charter secures our right to individual and collective self-defence.

UN norms and standards have been instrumental to make Norway larger and more and prosperous. Our sovereign rights to the natural resources under the Norwegian continental shelf derive from the provisions of the UN Law of the Sea Convention, which is also central to the protection of our fisheries, to agreements on delimitation of the continental shelves and to the regulation of the waters around the Arctic.

The norms and standards negotiated through UN agencies, including the specialised agencies, are part of the very fabric of international cooperation and an important support for the architecture of globalisation. They are particularly important for the national interest of small and medium-sized countries like Norway. They are also vital mandates for the protection of human security, through the conventions and instruments on human rights, international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, the rights of women, children, vulnerable groups and many more. A white paper to parliament on “Interests, responsibilities and opportunities” presented by the Norwegian government in 2009 describes Norway’s particular dependence on a world order based on the rule of law. We should continue to work for a strengthening of the web of mutual obligations among member states to international law, i.a. through a further development of international monitoring and instruments to promote compliance.

Global intergovernmental cooperation through the wider UN system is important not only for the negotiation of new legal instruments. UN agencies are regularly mandated to monitor the implementation of norms at national and international levels. They are tasked to assist member countries in incorporating international norms and standards into legislation, rules and institutions, to help them build capacity to fulfil their obligations and to hold states accountable when they do not.

A particular challenge to the universality of international law is posed by cases where there is lack of agreement among member states on urgent global issues. Protracted stalemates in global negotiations often lead to criticism of the UN and other multilateral bodies as negotiation forums. In 2011, the Doha Round on trade in the World

Trade Organisation (WTO) and the protracted negotiations on a new climate convention within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are perhaps the most prominent examples of such negotiating standstills. There are other examples, e.g. in the field of disarmament, where consensual solutions have proved to be elusive and where strict observance of the rule of consensus has blocked agreement even on procedural issues.

In some of these cases, like-minded countries have elected to go forward on their own. In cases where there are framework conventions, they can do so by agreeing on partial solutions in the form of protocols, such as the Kyoto Protocol under the UNFCCC, and protocols on human trafficking, illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms under the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

In other cases, like-minded groups may negotiate new instruments outside the UN framework. Norway has done so twice in the field of humanitarian disarmament, by joining the Ottawa process that led to the 1997 Convention on Anti-Personnel Landmines, and through the Oslo process that led to the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. We did so because of the urgent humanitarian need to save civilian lives from anti-personnel land mines and cluster munitions that remain in the ground long after the end of conflict. In both cases, we have tried to link the treaties negotiated to the UN, by making the UN a depositary and an instrument for follow-up action. Innovative approaches may also be considered in order to break, or circumvent, present deadlocks in global disarmament issues.

As a general policy, Norway should support efforts to link such “minilateralist” processes to global, inclusive multilateralism whenever this is appropriate, relevant and possible.

- **Protecting arenas.** Norway is not a member of the EU or the G-20. We are therefore more dependent than many other countries on forums where we are guaranteed access as members, to tables where our national interests can be safeguarded, and to arenas where our foreign policy and development policy interests, initiatives and positions can be promoted. Like other small and medium-sized countries, Norway has a corresponding interest in ensuring

that existing multilateral organisations are not marginalised in favour of groups of which we are not a member. The UN system is for Norway the primary arena for promoting and safeguarding interests that we share with other countries in addressing global challenges.

The emergence of the G-20 as the premier forum for economic cooperation among its member states raises serious questions for the 173 non-member countries of the UN. In 2009, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre called for a debate on the legitimacy and representativity of the G-20, stressing that “we have to be careful that we don’t lift all of the substance out” (of the UN).² The key contribution of the G-20 to tackling the first stages of the financial crisis in 2008–2009 has been widely recognised, also by Norway. If the G-20 manages to unblock negotiating issues that are difficult to resolve within the wider global setting, this should, of course, also be welcomed.

- **Multilateral organisation as contractors and channels.** Parts of the UN system are mandated to carry out operational activities on behalf of its member states. In that sense, it can be both an operator and a channel. It is asked to carry out operational responsibilities on behalf of the entire membership, for instance through peace operations mandated by the Security Council. It can be a contractor for national priorities of donors and partners countries alike in development programs. Norway has often partnered with UN agencies in setting up new initiatives, both on thematic issues and at the country level, through project support or through various trust funds. Without stifling the possibility of stimulating innovation, we should make an effort to ensure that such partnerships fall within the established priorities and focus areas of the organisations. Our support should contribute to coherence, not to further fragmentation.

The UN development system has been a key partner for Norwegian multilateral development assistance since the 1960s. The original reasons for multilateral development cooperation remain valid. They have

allowed countries like Norway to participate in the formulation of global targets and approaches to development with a scope far beyond the size of our own contribution. Working through the UN has enabled us to contribute to global action in sectors where we have had insufficient competence or capacity and in countries where we have had little or no presence. Multilateral cooperation can also enhance cost-effectiveness. By pooling resources and administrative overheads, transaction costs can be lowered for donors and recipients alike.

At the same time, the UN development system faces criticism, often based on perceptions of fragmentation and ineffectiveness. Parts of these perceptions are clearly correct, justified by evaluations and reports from the field. Fragmentation continues to increase; according to the OECD there are now more than 200 multilateral development agencies or mechanism as well as more than 120 bilateral agencies from OECD/DAC countries alone. The efforts to enhance effectiveness through a sharper focus on results and development outcome must remain very high on the reform agenda.

It is beyond the mandate and scope of this report to address the challenges of individual agencies. As a general policy, Norway has upgraded our preparations for meeting of governing bodies such as the UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, FAO, WFP and others, collecting information and assessment from the country level through our bilateral embassies and networks, consulting with like-minded countries, and elaborating strategic priorities for our engagement. We should continue working with other countries in UN governing bodies to address policies and practices that need to be improved. Fact-sheets for Norwegian engagement in almost 30 multilateral agencies (including financial institutions), setting out their respective strengths and challenges, are published every second year.

The development agenda itself is in transition. Traditional development aid (ODA) will continue to be necessary for the basic financing of the development system, but it has also become a key mechanism for achieving other global objectives. There is a new focus in the development community on a world beyond aid. The rise of the middle-income countries has shown the importance of national

² Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre in an interview with the Financial Times, 8 November 2009.

resource mobilisation, private sector investment, remittances, efforts to prevent illicit outflows and other sources for the financing of development.

Norway has a clear interest in maintaining and improving the effectiveness of multilateral co-operation. The UN development system has a justification of its own as an instrument for supporting efforts to reach agreed development goals. But it is also important as a tool to secure the continued legitimacy of the normative agenda, to underpin efforts for international peace and security in post-conflict situations and in fragile states, and for the implementation at country level of agreed development goals, human rights and rights-based approaches.

How can Norway make a difference?

Like other UN members and stakeholders, Norway has an influence within the UN. This influence should not be exaggerated, but neither should it be underestimated. On priority issues such as global health and the protection of forests, we can be part of groups setting the global agenda. On a great many issues, we are just one among 193 member states. In between, there are areas where we can make ourselves useful as defenders of established norms, as initiators, as co-drivers of new initiatives, as members of supporting groups, and as mediators and bridge builders and in various other ways.

- **Being a predictable, but also a critical friend.**

Over the course of the last 65 years, Norway has built up a level of credibility and trust in the UN through a consistent political support for the world organisation. Some of the priorities may have shifted through successive Norwegian governments, but the overall support has been strong and robust. We have also put our money where our mouth is by maintaining a consistently high level of contributions to UN funds, programmes and agencies. We have regularly ranked among the top donors to key funds and programmes such as UNDP, UNICEF and others. In 2008, Norway was the sixth largest donor to voluntary contributions in the UN system in overall terms, and the second largest per capita. By maintaining a high level of core voluntary

contributions and through a willingness to move towards multiyear commitments, we have also strived to contribute to more predictability in the funding and planning for UN agencies.

Being a predictable friend of the UN also allows Norway to be a critical friend when criticism is justified and needed. We should not shy away from pointing at weak leadership, unacceptable turf battles that damage effectiveness and carry serious reputational risk for the UN system, and other deficiencies. We should continue to strengthen our capacity to set sharper priorities, to formulate achievable objectives for UN operational activities and to hold agencies accountable for achieving results. But we should also continue to make clear that our main rationale for criticism is not to cut costs, but to improve effectiveness and to strengthen the world organisation. To encourage improvements in leadership and performance, we should also extend political and financial support when this is justified.

- **Preserving flexibility.** Norway's UN policies have also been based on a certain level of flexibility to support new initiatives. We have benefited from short decision-making procedures within our national systems, political leaders who have been willing to take calculated risks in supporting new initiatives, and a certain amount of budgetary flexibility. In a situation where flexibility and innovation within the UN system itself has been hamstrung by tight regular budgets, earmarking of contributions, and other forms of micro-management by member states, we have sometimes been able to give critical support to the implementation of mandates and to finance initiatives that otherwise could not have been implemented. In a period where all donors, including Norway, try to focus more of our contributions on fewer priorities, more of our funds will be tied up and flexibility may be reduced. We should nevertheless preserve sufficient flexibility to enable us to support innovation and important initiatives in the future as well.
- **Working with other countries.** Advancing reform processes in the UN system requires working with other like-minded countries. Effective multilateralism requires building broader alliances with a critical mass of like-minded countries on reform or new initiatives.

The other Nordic countries are traditionally close partners in UN reform efforts, including peacekeeping operations, humanitarian reforms and in the UN development system. Norway must also maintain credibility with other countries in the North, such as the EU, the United States and other countries in the JUSCANZ group (originally Japan, US, Switzerland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but expanded to include others). We regularly cooperate with all of them on reform issues and should continue to do so.

Increasingly, the future of the multilateralism as we know it will depend on emerging economies and countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In addition to countries in the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), Norway has established multilateral dialogues with other emerging economies as well as with a number of small and medium-sized countries that have a particular interest in strong multilateral cooperation through the UN. Norway should continue to engage in dialogues with key countries to identify interests, positions, and opportunities on multilateral reform and on how to modernise approaches and institutions within the UN system.

The challenges of priority setting

Norway has a broad range of priorities in all of the three main pillars of the UN. We are engaged in a large number of initiatives and follow-up processes in peace operations and conflict management, humanitarian coordination, new threats, development efforts and human rights and gender equality.

In Norway, as in some other donor countries, there is an ongoing discussion on whether we are spreading ourselves too thin. Strong arguments have been put forward that we should focus our attention and our resources on a smaller number of priorities where we could have a larger impact.

The answer to these dilemmas may hinge on what we mean by priorities.

- **A broad engagement policy on UN issues** should not be seen primarily as a problem. It can also be seen as a foreign policy asset. It reflects a broad international outlook in Norwegian society, including line ministries, the Parliament, non-governmental organisations and civil society groups, and a fairly enlightened public opinion that wants Norway to stay involved in the main global issues of our time. This broad engagement also means that we can usually find common interests with a lot of countries, as a base for further contacts, cooperation and possible reform initiatives.

- **Budget priorities.** In Norway's development budgets, efforts have been made over the last few years to set clearer priorities, which means reducing voluntary contributions to UN organisations and mechanisms where our interests are more marginal. A moderate carrot and stick approach has been applied to reflect our perceptions of their performance. Most of the growth in ODA contributions has been concentrated in areas such as global health – particularly vaccines and immunisation, contagious diseases, and the three health-related millennium development goals – the forest initiatives (e.g. UN REDD), and cleaner energy. At the same time, we have managed to maintain predictable funding at high levels to our main partners among UN agencies. We should maintain this balanced approach.

- **Reform priorities.** In its UN reform policy, Norway should take a broad approach in the sense that organisational reform and interagency coherence should be integrated into ongoing efforts wherever relevant. Even here we must set priorities, however. Major reform initiatives may become so resource-intensive that we must choose our battles and give emphasis to issues of particular importance to Norway.

Priority setting in multilateral cooperation is a notoriously difficult exercise. Member countries tend to have different and sometimes conflicting priorities, which often end up on top of each other in a long list of good purposes in UN declarations and resolutions. This is partly an inherent part of the multilateral process, which should be based on mutual respect for each other's priorities. But to translate all the good purposes into operational effectiveness, a sharper focusing and priority-setting must be encouraged in all UN organisations.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (third from left) visits the Polar ice rim North of Svalbard to witness firsthand the impact of climate change on icebergs and glaciers. Norwegian Minister for Environment and Development Erik Solheim on the right. (UN Photo/Mark Garten)

Intergovernmental cooperation and the group dynamic

The UN system has been described as the last bastion of the principle of sovereignty. The intergovernmental nature of the system has been strengthened while earlier visions of more supranational models have disappeared. The owners of the system, the member states, have tightened monitoring, control and funding of the different UN organisations through decisions of their governing bodies, detailed budget processes and earmarking of voluntary contributions.

As a system, it is relatively weak, with mandates defined largely along vertical, sectoral lines, and with few instruments at governance level to provide coherence. But it also has a potential for developing

interagency cooperation on global issues which require broad-based, comprehensive approaches. Interagency cooperation and coherence within the wider UN system has been significantly strengthened over the last decade. And it remains the only global, truly inclusive intergovernmental system for international cooperation on the global challenges of the 21st Century that we have.

- **Too little governance – or too much?** Intergovernmental process within the UN system produces a lot of mandates. By 2010, the member states had adopted some 5600 (live) mandates within the General Assembly alone. Mandates adopted in the

Security Council, ECOSOC and other bodies come on top of this number. The secretariats are very often asked to implement mandates within existing resources. This may be entirely reasonable and possible in many cases. In other cases, this leads to organisational resources being spread very thin.

The division of responsibilities between the governance level (assemblies, executive boards, etc) and the executive branch (the secretariats) is a live issue within many UN organisations. Sometimes there is disagreement on who is responsible for what and to whom.

In some cases, there may be structural factors or lack of agreement among member states that creates policy gaps, overlapping mandates and lack of clarity about the division of labour that give rise to inefficient practices or turf wars. In other cases, there may be too much governance or the wrong kind of governance. Micromanagement through overly elaborate rules and procedures, budget provisions or earmarking may be a hindrance to innovation, flexibility and, thus, to efficiency. The governance challenges in the boards of multilateral bodies are not always transparent or easy to understand for outside observers. Reform proposals are not considered only on their merits, but on linkages to unrelated issues and to group solidarities. In some boards, the cleavages among member states are so wide that they are unable to make necessary strategic choices.

As always, the quality of leadership matters. No other factor is more important to UN reform than strong leadership from the top. The Secretary-General and chief executives of the various funds, programmes and agencies have considerable authority – and responsibility – to promote and implement reforms in their respective secretariats within the mandates, procedures and budgets determined by member states. Several reform initiatives have been put forward through the years to make the selection of leaders more focused on qualifications for the job, and less vulnerable to political processes and pressures from member states.

The issue of the Secretary-General's flexibility in interpreting mandates given by the Security Council or the General Assembly was one of the most difficult issues facing the first secretaries-general

of the organisation. Although the character and intensity of this issue has been normalised after the end of the cold war, member states still express sharp displeasure and disagreement with the UN leader's words and actions if their own policies and practices are subject to criticism.

Norway has repeatedly expressed its expectation that UN agency leaders should be defenders and effective spokespersons for the basic norms established through UN conventions and instruments, even if it means criticising members states for not living up to their commitments. We have strongly defended the Secretary-General and the authority of UN leaders to independently gather and process information and to recommend courses of action based on UN norms, even if some states may not like the UN report or recommendation in question. Norway should continue to do so.

- **The challenge of verticalism.** A frequently heard and justified criticism against the UN system is its fragmented nature. The genesis of most UN specialised agencies has been determined by the need of public sector agencies in member countries to establish contact and cooperation with counterparts in other countries in sectors such as postal services, telecommunication, maritime issues, air traffic, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, health, education, monetary stability, trade, etc. Even though some of these sectors have been subject to deregulation and privatisation, there is still a need for international norms to safeguard minimum standards and to further facilitate processes of globalisation.

Many UN agencies have been given development mandates to support normative activities. This means that the development agenda is split between a large number of organisations, funds, programmes, financial mechanisms, convention-based secretariats, etc.

New structures and mechanisms have been added to this original structure, often in the wake of crises. Creating new bodies has been seen as a more attractive and newsworthy alternative to reforming existing structures. But what has been a part of the solution at one point in time may end up being part of the problem of fragmentation at another. The fragmented structure of the UN development

system has raised relevant questions about a lack of critical mass to respond strategically to changing needs.

Lack of coherence often starts at home. Member states themselves do not always have an integrated or fully coordinated position on international issues. Line ministries of individual countries prefer to seek contact and cooperation with their counterparts in other countries without interference from foreign ministries. Substantive responsibility and governance functions are generally organised vertically, not horizontally. The centrifugal forces in global cooperation are very strong.

At one level, this functional way of organising international cooperation works well. Often, normative functions and technical cooperation does not need any political interference or supervision. But without necessary linkages to broader international approaches, the “smokestack” structure of international cooperation will be strengthened, and strategic choices for the overall UN system will not be made.

At a global level, multidimensional issues such as peace-building, antiterrorism, and climate change require comprehensive, cross-sectoral approaches. Normative issues related to human rights, including gender, needs to be mainstreamed into all sectors of UN cooperation. At country level, there is a particular need for coordination and interagency coherence to promote country ownership and a more strategic use of development resources.

Together with various groups of like-minded countries, Norway has promoted comprehensive approaches to issues such as multidimensional peacekeeping, peace building and sustainable development. We should continue to do so. We have also taken steps to put our own house in order, e.g. by setting up reporting procedures to the Parliament on the coherence of our approaches to international issues, and through a number of plans of action to follow up our UN commitments in a more comprehensive manner.

- **The importance of group dynamics.** The dynamics of negotiating processes within the UN are very much influenced by the group system. For regional

groups like the EU and South-South groups like the G-77 and the non-aligned movement (NAM), the UN system is – among its other functions – a showcase for manifesting unity and political profile.

Although conflict lines in UN debates and negotiations have run along the East-West (until the end of the cold war) and North-South axes ever since the founding of the UN, the role of these groups has changed. Instead of functioning as informal consultation groups based on commonalities of interests in specific areas, they are now heavyweight negotiating participants in almost all fields. Through the implementation of a common foreign and security policy, the EU has become a role model for other groups, and has thus strengthened the role of groups in the UN.

In many negotiating processes, it is not only sensible but necessary to negotiate between group representatives instead of through plenary assemblies. But there are also challenges. Sometimes, negotiations between groups tend to be dominated by countries within the groups with the strongest opinions and most hardline positions. In such cases, the group dynamics of intergovernmental processes may hinder reform and rapid adaptations. The group dynamic is therefore an important factor in assessing opportunities for UN reform, and even more important for understanding where opposition and roadblocks may appear.

In the coming years, cross-regional contacts will be a key to effective reforms in the UN. The influence of the traditional donors in the North will inevitably be reduced by geopolitical shifts. Norway should continue to encourage the BRICS countries and other rising economies to clarify their interests and policies towards global multilateral cooperation. Over time, we should urge them also to take on larger global responsibilities through multilateral commitments.

In spite of numerous “friends” groups in New York, Geneva, in other UN headquarters and in capitals, a truly strategic dialogue between the key stakeholders in this process on the future and financing of multilateral cooperation does not yet seem to have found its direction or structure. The groups will almost certainly come into play in the

end game of such a strategic dialogue. Due to the many factors that often tie groups to the lowest common denominator position, it is not a given that they would be able to start such a dialogue and to provide innovation and new ideas.

Dialogue and negotiations within the UN are too often held hostage to the traditional North-South, G-77-OECD or donor-recipient cleavages, which are increasingly irrelevant in the new world economy. They are even more dysfunctional on global issues that should transcend this divide. They may thus be counter-productive for the institution, leading important countries to search for more constructive approaches outside the UN.

Norway is a member of electoral groups in the UN, but not of any policy-coordinating group. When negotiating issues are settled in back-room contacts between the main groups, for instance the EU and the G-77, we have little possibility of exerting an influence. Our best chance of meeting friends and influencing countries therefore lies in working with countries inside other groups to promote cross-regional alliances. Norway is often well positioned to take part in such alliances. In some cases, windows of opportunity may open where we can make ourselves useful. We should make strategic use of such opportunities.

Partnerships

In almost every field of activity, the UN system collaborates closely with partner organisations. Some of them are intergovernmental, regional organisations, others are non-governmental or civil society groups, while some come from the private sector through public-private partnerships.

- **Regional organisations.** Cooperation between the UN and regional organisations was envisaged already in 1945 through the provisions of Chapter 8 of the UN Charter. As regional cooperation has evolved – partly in response to pressures of globalisation – relations between regional organisations and UN agencies have also developed. In Africa, the UN is cooperating particularly closely with the African Union (AU) and sub-regional organisations like

ECOWAS. Contacts and cooperation with OSCE, NATO and the EU have been strengthened. Support for expanded South-South cooperation is becoming increasingly important to the UN although much of it is also bypassing the UN. Increasingly, the success of the UN could depend on its ability to open itself to such partnership, and to make itself attractive, with a clearly defined added value, to cooperating partners.

- **The “third” UN.** Civil society groups and non-governmental organisations play an increasingly important role in international cooperation, as advocates, as independent actors and networks, as implementing partners for UN organisations and in many other ways.

Relations between the UN and non-governmental organisations/civil society have also grown. Today, more than 3 000 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have some form of consultative status with ECOSOC, and thus with the UN. Those NGOs differ widely in their mandates, their field of activity and their representativeness. Their participation in expert committees, lobbying in the build-up to UN meetings and conferences, and use as service providers is so extensive that they have been termed “The Third UN”.

Norway has always supported the participation of NGOs and civil society groups in the work of the UN. While respecting the integrity of the intergovernmental process, we should remain open to all forms of cooperation that can strengthen such partnerships.

- **Public-private partnerships.** Interaction between the UN system and the private sector has expanded steadily over the last 10-15 years. While cooperation with private foundations have a long history in the UN, cooperation with the corporate sector is newer. Positive interest in private sector investments has replaced the earlier, almost ideological scepticism among developing countries towards transnational corporations. Private sector companies have adopted corporate social responsibility policies that address global as well as local challenges. There is an increasing number of meeting places – inside UN forums such as the UN Leadership Forum – and outside, e.g. through the UN Foundation, the World Economic Forum and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development,

to mention only a few. There is a clearer commonality of interests between the UN system and the private sector in supporting stable societies and institutions that enhance the predictability of investments and strengthen the rule of law and the fight against corruption. The wider UN system, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is central in this regard.

In a market-based world economy, the basic rules of engagement for the regulation of private sector activities remain under the responsibility of national governments and regional organisations such as the EU. The potential for further development of public-private partnership with UN organisations is nevertheless considerable. Such relations are primarily based on the voluntary adherence of private sector companies to global norms established and monitored through the UN system.

A large number of global public-private partnerships have been set up and hosted by UN agencies in areas such as global health, education and sustainable development issues. The UN Global Compact, which is based on 10 universally accepted norms relating to human rights, the labour market, environmental standards and anti-corruption efforts and allows companies and businesses to sign up voluntarily has been important in advancing cooperation between the UN and the private sector. In the UN Human Rights Council, Norway has been an initiator and chief negotiator for a process leading to the adoption of a set of guidelines for the operationalisation of the UN “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework for Business and Human Rights, and the establishment of an inter-regional working group tasked with promoting and implementing the guidelines. Norway should continue to support these efforts.

The growth of private military and security companies in conflict areas such as Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa indicates that private sector companies are also entering the area of peace and security. In this area it is necessary to proceed with great caution. The 2008 Montreux document on private military and security companies, which is based on a Swiss/ICRC initiative, describes existing international law as it applies to such companies. The UN Human Rights Council has initiated a process

to negotiate an international convention to establish minimum international standards for states parties to regulate their activities and personnel.

A question of principle in discussions about UN-private sector relations has been whether the governing bodies of the intergovernmental system could be more open to including representatives of civil society and private sector groups. Today, there are few exceptions to the purely intergovernmental character of the system. ILO, with its tripartite structure, is one. The Committee on Food Security (CFS), including member governments, agencies, civil society and private sector groups, is another. So far, there have been both constitutional and political constraints on a further opening up.

At programme level, it has been easier. In the field of global health, the programme boards of alliances and partnerships attached to the WHO have members from governments, civil society groups and the private sector. Civil society organisations and representatives of the private sector take active part in meetings of the UN Committee on Food Security (CFS). The UN-REDD programme board includes representatives of civil society and indigenous peoples. Norway should be open to exploring further how such partnerships could be organised in ways that would respect the integrity of both sides.

The key functions

Through the adoption of mandates and priorities, member states have assigned a series of functions to the various organisations within the UN system. The UN system has a unique legitimacy in dealing with some of these functions. Others could – partly or wholly – also be taken care of by other international bodies, including non-governmental organisations.

- **The normative functions** of the UN system constitute the backbone of the UN system, with important links to all the three main pillars of the world organisation. They are closely linked with the UN’s role to defend and speak out for the norms adopted by member states.

Many UN conventions and treaties have been signed and ratified by a large majority of member states,

and have become integral parts of international law. Other normative instruments have a narrower base in terms of signatures and ratifications. There are cases of agreement in principle, but with different interpretations of the lines of accountability between a member states and their own citizens, and towards the international community and the UN.

Support to capacity building in countries that ask for such assistance to incorporate norms and set up policies for implementation is a core function of the UN development system and should remain so. Normative functions and capacity building are often investments in long-term processes. It is often difficult to measure results and concrete development outcomes in the short term. In cooperation with developing countries, donors and the agencies themselves, Norway should continue its efforts to strengthen more strategic approaches to capacity building, particularly in terms of institution-building, with baselines, indicators and other relevant instruments that can better help indicate outcomes and impact.

Interaction with civil society organisations is important in this area for the normative activities of the UN as well. Ideas and initiatives for new normative instruments often come from civil society groups, which also play an important role as watchdogs that see to it that member states live up to the obligations they have undertaken.

- **Global knowledge management.** One of the main functions of the Secretary-General and the UN Secretariat is to prepare reports to member states, often on the follow-up to past resolutions or to provide background for new proposals. The Secretary-General may also be asked, through resolutions adopted in governing bodies, to produce reports on specific political or economic events as a factual base for further discussions at the intergovernmental level.

The UN system has important mandates on the preparation of global statistics and reports, using its comparative advantages to collect information from all parts of the world, to verify and aggregate data, and to publish it. The annual reports of UN agencies on issues within their mandates are international reference documents on the subjects discussed.

Initiatives may also be taken both by UN leaders and by member states to set up international commissions and panels to narrow global knowledge gaps, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, enabling the UN to lay the ground for international negotiations and eventual agreement on global challenges. Such commissions and panels have proved very useful in advancing the global agenda, both at the conceptual level and in setting forth policy and reform proposals. Such approaches remain useful to review possibilities and proposals for further multilateral reforms.

Through such efforts, the UN makes indispensable contributions to the expansion of global knowledge and to the wider global public goods agenda. The UN Intellectual History Project has documented convincingly that the UN has made important contributions not only through the collection and dissemination of information, but more generally to the world of ideas.³ It will also be important in the years to come to safeguard the independence of UN agencies to collect and process information on key global trends, even from pressures from member states.

Research institutions and think tanks in New York, Geneva and in capitals around the world will be important sources of insights and ideas on global issues and multilateral institutions in the years to come. Norway too has a number of research institutes that have established partnerships with UN bodies and with similar institutions in other countries, including the Global South. Such networks will be an important source of ideas and outreach for the Norwegian Government in its work on multilateral reform.

Knowledge management also involves good policies and capacities for disseminating information to the general public. The public information and communications capacities of the UN system should improve their ability to get the good stories out to the general public, and to taxpayers in donor countries. Some agencies, like UNICEF, have developed good communications departments, reaching out to audiences outside the UN. Other UN agencies have a clear potential for improvement.

³ See *UN Ideas that Changed the World*: Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij and Thomas G. Weiss, Indiana University Press 2009

- **Global crisis management.** In times of crises, member states need to meet to discuss how the crisis can best be met and to agree on joint action. The wider UN system provides key arenas for such crisis management. The Security Council and the UN humanitarian system have standing mandates for dealing with political and humanitarian crises. The food crisis, the HIV/Aids epidemic and other pandemics, global climate change and the effects of the financial crisis on the poorest countries are on the agenda of UN agencies dealing with food security, health and environmental issues. The IMF has a mandate to address financial crises and to act as a lender of last resort.
- **Moving upstream?** The UN system, while indispensable in some areas and useful in others, cannot work in isolation. It will very rarely have the mandates or the resources to be the sole executor of the will of nations, as expressed through its governing bodies. Most of the time, implementation will have to be effected through member states, through implementing partners and through broader partnerships.

There is a natural tendency for member states to shift their attention from one crisis to the next as soon as it appears. The responsibility for following up on countries emerging from conflict or crises as the TV cameras move on is often left to the multilateral system. There is a clear need to strengthen institutional capacities within the UN system for transitional action in order to prevent countries sliding back into new crises – and, in more general terms, for risk management in order to assess the risks of relapse or new crises. This requires a comprehensive effort by relevant parts of the UN, including its political, humanitarian, development, and human rights branches, and a strengthening of cooperation with the international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank.

International crises are also dealt with by regional organisations and by various smaller groups. Member countries often convene meetings outside the framework of the UN system. This is fully legitimate and sometimes necessary. Many crises will also have ramifications for smaller countries, however, those who are usually not invited to join the more exclusive groups. Crisis management on issues that have global ramifications should be dealt with in UN settings that allow all countries to take part.

Good arguments can be put forward that the UN should prioritise functions where it has unique mandates and legitimacy, while leaving “downstream” activities, e.g. in terms of service delivery, to partners. Norway has, in fairly general terms, supported such arguments and should continue to do so.

It would not be possible or advisable, however, to adopt this as a general principle. Current trends in the financing of the UN development system are not necessarily pointing in this direction. Increased earmarking both by traditional and by new donors is very often tied to specific programmes or projects. In some cases, UN agencies are implementing partners themselves for activities financed by financial mechanisms. UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR and others have a legitimate need to be visible to their main constituencies, not only in office buildings in capitals. There are also methodological constraints. The results of activities linked solely to “upstream” functions, such as normative development, knowledge transfer and capacity building, are generally more difficult to measure in terms of impact, and could put UN agencies at a further disadvantage compared with bodies that can deliver quick, measurable results on the ground in delivery of goods and services.



The Security Council Chamber in the UN headquarters - , a gift from Norway to the UN, designed by Arnstein Arneberg, mural painting by the Norwegian artist Per Krogh. (UN photo/Mark Garten)

The General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Secretariat

The UN General Assembly is a unique global forum. It is an arena for defending national interests, for presenting policies and opinions by member states, for venting national grievances, for launching new initiatives, for developing and expressing common views of members states in the form of resolutions, and for building consensual solutions to global issues.

The principle that all states are equal under international law has helped to make the General Assembly particularly important for small and medium-sized countries. The major powers have other and more exclusive areas to promote their interests, although the General Assembly can also be a valuable platform for the major powers to set forth their positions on global

issues. However, the repetitive character of many of the debates and resolutions has also led to legitimate criticism of the Assembly's present working methods.

The revitalisation of the General Assembly is a regular item on its own agenda. Norway has taken active part in this reform process as well as in reforms in the main committees of the Assembly when we have been in a position to do so. The opening up of the Assembly through debates on broader thematic issues, also involving experts from civil society and the private sector, is a step in the right direction. We should support efforts to reduce the number of agenda items, resolutions and live mandates, even though this may not be an area where Norway is best positioned to make a difference.

Administrative and budgetary reform is an integral and important part of overall UN reform. Norway should continue upgrading its involvement in the committee on administrative and budgetary issues under the General Assembly (the 5th Committee). We should consider presenting a candidature for the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), where Norway has never been a member. We should give particular attention to the following issues.

- **Finances and budgets.** The regular budget adopted for the 2012–2013 period represented a cut of some 4% compared with the previous biennium. In a time of global financial austerity, such cuts were unavoidable. As the social ramifications of the slowdown of the world economy become more evident in many countries, caution should be exercised in reducing institutional capacity in the multilateral system to help member countries deal with its effects. Convincing arguments can be put forward that the UN options are often less costly than other alternatives, and that contributions through the UN can also leverage support from a wider group of countries and partners. In times of economic distress it is, however, likely that national budget constraints will continue to be a strong influence on UN budgets in the period leading up to 2015.

Norway should continue to argue that budgetary resources should follow mandates. Zero nominal growth policies will inevitably lead to a gradual weakening of institutional capacity in the UN system, - and to a further loss of collective and equitable burden-sharing. Cuts in regular budgets could very well end up hurting our own priorities and would mean an even greater dependence on voluntary contributions for the implementation of important mandates.

Norway should continue to be a generous contributor to funds and programmes funded by voluntary contributions, both through the core budgets and through earmarked contributions to our preferred thematic issues within the overall priorities of each organisation. The balance between earmarking and core funding should take into account the organizational needs to uphold flexibility.

The global public goods agenda is severely underfunded. It is already diverting resources away from poverty alleviation and ODA funding. We should continue to support the exploration of innovative financing for urgent global challenges, both in priority areas such as global health and climate change, and in more general terms.

- **Human resources policies.** Human resources policies continue to be a bottleneck in field operations, where we particularly need the UN to perform. The effectiveness of UN organisations depends to a large degree on the quality of its staff. Today, there are too many examples of human resource policies and practices that do not sufficiently enable the UN to deploy key staff with the right qualifications to the right place at the right time.

In conflict and some post-conflict areas, UN staff are asked to take on sensitive assignments in some of the most high-risk areas of the world. Following a series of tragic incidents in Iraq, Afghanistan and African countries where UN staff have been targeted and killed, the security of UN personnel has become a deep concern both for the UN and for countries providing personnel, including Norway. Withdrawing UN personnel from areas where they are most needed would generally be an option of last resort. Ongoing efforts to strengthen security while allowing UN personnel to stay even in high risk areas should be pursued.

Norway has supported the idea of harmonisation of human resource policy across the system, as this will allow for more flexibility between agencies. We have been more sceptical to proposals to harmonise downwards, if this means reducing benefits for personnel in funds and programmes in order to reach a lower common level. A temporary compromise on reforms was reached in early 2011, but more needs to be done. While retaining a focus on system-wide harmonisation, rotation and mobility, attention must also be given to the need to shorten vacancy rates and to obtain an optimal skills mix. Norway should continue to be actively engaged in these reforms.

The Security Council

- **Accountability systems.** Over the last few years, there has been a sharply increased focus on oversight and accountability systems both within the UN Secretariat and in the different agencies. At central level, oversight functions have been reinforced through the establishment of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). Evaluation, inspection and auditing functions have been similarly strengthened. These efforts must continue.

In the Secretariat, the focus has traditionally been on process accountability, i.e. adherence to rules and regulations adopted by governing bodies, including principles of due process. Increasingly, there is also a focus on performance accountability, i.e. linking accountability and control to results. In order to move further in this direction, there is a need to ensure a clearer delegation of authority, hold programme managers accountable for results, and better calibrate the use of incentives, rewards and sanctions.

In the UN system, there has been a tendency of member states to add results-based accountability to established process mechanisms for accountability rather than replace them. These approaches are not fully compatible, micromanagement by member states does necessarily encourage programme managers to take on larger responsibility for outcome and results. But even for friends of the UN like Norway, the occasional lack of transparency by the Secretariat in identifying bottlenecks and the failure to give clear recommendations on policies to address them are sometimes hard to understand.

Accountability should be considered as a two-way street. There is a clear need for the UN Secretariat to exercise greater transparency with regard to the intergovernmental process, the management of financial resources and the reporting of results obtained. There is also a need for governments to be held accountable for delivering on the commitments they have undertaken, both in financial pledges and on their own implementation of UN mandates.

The key role of the UN Security Council in maintaining international peace and security has been reconfirmed many times since 1945. It has served to heighten the threshold for wars and aggression, and has retained its unique legitimacy as the only international body for legitimising the use of force in international relations.

- **The need for enlargement.** The present composition of the Security Council does not reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century, however. For many, Security Council reform is perhaps the most important reform challenge facing the UN.

Norway should continue to work for an effective, dynamic Security Council through a limited enlargement including new permanent members, without a right of veto. At the end of 2011, there is no agreement on the size of an enlargement, whether there should be more permanent members and whether they should have a right of veto, or which of the candidate countries should be given such a permanent seat. Norway has stressed our support for and interest in compromise solutions, whether or not they increase the number of permanent members.

Norway also has a clear interest in securing the rights of small and medium sized countries – particularly those that are also major contributors – to seek non-permanent seats on the Council according to Article 23 of the UN Charter. We should work to prevent a weakening of the established rotation scheme within the group of Western and other states which has made Nordic and Norwegian membership possible at regular intervals. Norway has presented its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Council for the 2021-2022 period.

- **Working methods.** Norway has supported ongoing processes to reform of the Council's working methods, both as an individual member state and as member of a group of like-minded countries. We continue to support measures aimed at enhancing transparency in the Council's working methods, e.g. through the publication "Security Council Report". For Norway, it will be particularly important to strengthen consultation mechanisms between the Council and troop contributors, countries that provide civilian police and other civilian capacities to UN operations, and countries that may have specific

competence or roles in the conflict in question, through mediation processes, humanitarian operations or in other ways.

UN peace operation and the tools of conflict management

The number of UN peacekeeping operations was at an all-time high in 2011, with around 120 000 personnel in UN service. In 2011, the UN Security Council established two new UN-led peace-keeping operations: one in South Sudan and one in Sudan (Abyei). A UN Support Mission was set up to assist the transitional authorities on the path to a new government and a new constitution in Libya. In 2012, disengagement or downscaling is expected in UN peace operations in Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, DR Congo, Liberia and Timor-Leste. Other current international operations with Security Council mandate but led by regional organisations include the NATO missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo as well as the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

The financial crisis has exacerbated pressures to reduce the costs of UN peace operations. At the same time, troop-contributing countries are demanding higher reimbursement rates from the UN to compensate for the costs of participation. Negotiations on the UN peace-keeping budget in 2011 were particularly difficult. The continued search for an adjustment of burden-sharing between the troop contributors (largely from the South) and those countries that bear most of the costs (largely from the North) is likely to pose a major challenge to UN peace operations in coming years.

Together with the other Nordic countries, Norway has taken part in UN peace-keeping operations from the very start. We have contributed to several reform processes through the years, supporting a continuous strengthening of capacities and capabilities at UN Headquarters and in the field. Because of our military engagement in the ISAF operation in Afghanistan, our national capacity to participate with military personnel in UN-led operations is limited at present. We continue to be an active provider of civilian police and other civilian capacities, which are playing an increasingly important role in multidimensional operations. We are also supporting ongoing efforts by the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO) and the

Department of Field Support (DFS) to strengthen doctrines and further enhance the UN's capacity to implement peacekeeping mandates.

Norway should continue to give strong support to ongoing reforms of UN peace operations. We should give particular emphasis to strengthening capacities in areas where the UN has a unique legitimacy and comparative advantages, such as in setting up integrated, multidimensional peace operations. In general terms, we should continue to support reforms that would enhance flexibility and organisational capability to deploy personnel with the right qualifications quickly.

Norway has made special efforts to contribute to UN peace operations, as well as other international peace and post-conflict efforts, through the development of stand-by capacities, including personnel rosters. For many years, the Nordic countries had stand-by forces ready for deployment in UN peace-keeping operations. We have set up emergency preparedness systems for material (NOREPS) and personnel (NORCAP) for rapid deployment by UN humanitarian operations and other humanitarian actors. We have developed capacities within civilian police and defence personnel as well as personnel from a rule of law pool (judges, public prosecutors, police lawyers, defence lawyers, and prison and probation advisers).

The Secretary General has asked member countries to join him in making 2012 the Year of prevention, and to develop more innovative ways to use available tools in Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Norway has given strong support to the mandate of the UN for the peaceful settlement of disputes and should continue to give high priority to the implementation of this mandate. We have supported the establishment of the Mediation Support Unit within the UN Department of Political Operations (DPA) in order to provide skilled negotiators who could be available to the UN at short notice.

UN peace operations should necessarily reflect the wider UN membership. Personnel on the NORCAP roster come not only from Norway, but also from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. We have established a special Training for Peace Programme for the training and capacity building of police and civilian personnel from African countries. We are planning

to further develop cooperation with key police and troop-contributing countries. Partnership agreements between the UN and regional organisations, individual countries and civil society organisations should be further developed. In South Sudan, we are one of the main funders of a three-way partnership that brings in experts from neighbouring countries to support the new administration.

Norway has given political and financial support to the so-called “New Horizon” reform process within the DPKO and DFS, which was initiated in 2009, and which builds on the Brahimi Report of 2000. The New Horizon process has been initiated to address major current and future policy and strategic challenges facing UN peacekeeping.

We have also supported the work on the 2011 report entitled “Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflicts”. The recommendations set out in these reports are being followed up in the UN Secretariat, the Security Council and the General Assembly. Norway should continue playing an active supporting role in these processes, focusing on areas where we are in a position to contribute.

In addition to these more general reform process related to UN peace operations, we should continue supporting more specific issues.

- The UN system has both standing and specific mandates to support countries in post-conflict transition. We should give particular support to ongoing efforts to improve capacity for dealing more effectively with post-conflict, recovery and fragile states.
- We should continue supporting reforms in planning and implementing UN peace operations. Special attention should be given to issues such as security and justice sector reform, including the role of civilian police, the rule of law and the protection of civilians,
- We should continue working to improve quality and capacity for UN mediation, which is a core activity of the UN, and to secure a better financing system for political operations. One solution would be a dedicated budget that is separate from the regular budget, but based on obligatory contributions.

- We should use our membership of the UN Peacebuilding Commission from 2011 to 2013 to strengthen peacebuilding structures and the inclusion of peacebuilding as an integral part of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, and long-term development. Norway was an early and major contributor to the start-up of the Peacebuilding Fund, and has continued our strong support to this mechanism.
- Norway should continue to be a driving force to promote the role of women in peace and security as a follow-up to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). We should continue to press for the integration of the gender perspective into all peace operation mandates and ensure greater participation by women in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements.

Humanitarian operations and humanitarian disarmament

The UN system has a long-standing history and key functions within international humanitarian operations. UNHCR has a unique mandate under the UN Refugee Convention for the international protection of refugees and for relief, resettlement or return of refugees that have crossed international borders. WFP has a standing mandate to provide food aid to people suffering from hunger or starvation, and has also become the foremost logistical agency within the UN system. UNICEF, WHO, FAO and other agencies have important humanitarian programmes as part of their wider mandates.

With the rapidly rising number of humanitarian actors in the NGO community and civil society groups, there has been a clear and urgent need to strengthen mechanisms for coordination, both within the UN system and with outside partners. Together with other like-minded countries, we have been a strong supporter, both in political and financial terms, of the coordination mechanisms set up by OCHA, including the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF). Norway should use its chairmanship of the OCHA Donor Support Group from 2011 to 2012 to continue strengthening the role of the UN as a leader and coordinator of humanitarian operations, in close cooperation with NGO partners and the International

Committee of the Red Cross. Key priorities for the Norwegian chairmanship will be to strengthen results-based management, to widen and strengthen partnerships, and to improve field performance with adequate headquarters backstopping.

In parallel to our engagement in the processes to ban anti-personnel land-mines (Mine-Ban Treaty) and the Oslo Treaty on Cluster munitions, Norway has been engaged in international efforts to stop the illicit trade in small arms and in the negotiations on Arms Trade Treaty. In more general terms, we are supporting efforts to curb armed violence in conflict areas and fragile states. With UNDP and a core group of like-minded countries as close partners, we are part of the Geneva declaration of 2010 on armed conflict and development, which was based on the “Oslo commitments”, adopted at a conference in Oslo in 2009.

Disarmament

The UN system has played an important role in debates on international disarmament issues, particularly during the cold war. The various functions in the disarmament field are split between several central UN organs, and governed by cooperation agreements with related bodies and convention-based instruments.

Since the last major convention in the disarmament field - the CTBT Treaty (1997) - was negotiated, it has not proved possible for the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to agree on mandates for the negotiation of new instruments, not even its own programme of work. Progress within convention-based instruments such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons has also proved to be elusive, among other things because of a strict interpretation of the rule of consensus.

Norway has put forward proposals for extensive reforms in the UN disarmament machinery apparatus. In a Norwegian statement in a thematic discussion on disarmament machinery at the 65th General Assembly in 2010, the present state of the disarmament machinery was characterised as dysfunctional. Among the suggestions put forward was to make the CD open-ended, to make its working methods much more transparent e.g. towards civil society, and to review the present use of the rule of consensus on procedural

issues. The working methods of the first committee (of the General Assembly) and the future usefulness of the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) were also addressed.

Norway should continue to work with other countries to look at alternative options for moving the disarmament agenda forward. This includes a reform of the multilateral machinery to better exploit the momentum for progress that was apparent e.g. in the wake of the 2010 Review Conference of the NPT, which sent a strong message about the overall objective of creating a world without nuclear weapons.

New threats and challenges

In his address to the General Assembly in September 2003 following the dramatic events in New York, Washington, Afghanistan and Iraq, Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the establishment of a High-level panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to generate new ideas about the kinds of policies and institutions needed for the UN to be effective in the 21st century. The panel identified six clusters of threats with which the world must be concerned, including war between and violence in states, poverty, infectious disease, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and transnational crimes.

These threats and challenges will be part of the list of global challenges facing the international community in the period up to 2015 – and far beyond. Many of them are already on the agendas of the Security Council, the General Assembly and relevant agencies. The UN system has been able to address many of them, drawing on its legitimacy to negotiate new normative instruments, its corresponding ability to set up mechanisms to monitor compliance with these instruments, and its institutional capability to support capacity building in member countries to implement their provisions.

The Security Council has adopted several resolutions on anti-terrorism and set up the Counter-Terrorism Committee to monitor follow-up to its mandatory decisions. The General Assembly has established an ad hoc committee to monitor compliance with three international conventions against terrorism. Most importantly, the General Assembly has unanimously adopted the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and the Secretary-General has established the Counter-terrorism Task Force (CTITF) to lead the implementation of the global strategy and coordinate the efforts of all relevant UN agencies. These efforts also show the added value of system-wide approaches in their ability to mobilise all relevant organs and specialised agencies of the UN system to a comprehensive, worldwide effort against terrorism. Through this broad interagency effort, direct links are also provided to specific ministries and governmental agencies in member countries. - Norway has strongly supported these efforts both politically and financially, and should continue doing so.

Similar comprehensive approaches have been taken to deal with transnational crime, the battle against illicit drugs and the fight against corruption, piracy, etc. The UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and its protocols against trafficking in human beings, the smuggling of migrants and illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms constitute essential frameworks for legal cooperation between member states to address such problems. The UN Convention against Corruption and programmes responsible for coordinated international action in the field of drug abuse control are vital tools in the international efforts to curb challenges posed by corruption and narcotic drugs.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has a mandate to support member states in the prevention of illicit drugs, crime and terrorism through three pillars: norms and standards, research and analysis and technical assistance. There is a clear need to secure more flexible and predictable funding for these efforts. Norway has given strong political and financial support to the efforts to strengthen monitoring and review functions related to these instruments. We have also sponsored fact-finding studies on issues of national interest to Norway, such as the need to stop illegal fishing and piracy.

The cluster of issues related to transnational crime and the rule of law is likely to become increasingly important on the global agenda in the coming years. Criminal networks are globalising significantly faster than the joint response capacity of member states. Cooperation between the UNODC, the DPA, UNDP and other UN partners is being strengthened within the UN System Task Force on Transnational Organised Crime and Drug Trafficking as threats to security and stability. The threat from transnational crime to regions such as Central-America and West Africa, but also to the rest of the international community, has been put on the agenda of the Security Council and the General Assembly. By early 2012, there seems to be an emerging consensus that a further consolidation of international efforts is needed.

Important research projects on strengthening global responses have been initiated in think tanks focused on global issues in New York and elsewhere. Such responses should be based on the normative and capacity-building functions of UN agencies, but must also include Interpol, regional organisations and national capacities. Norway should actively support such efforts.



Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Haakon and Crown Princess Mette-Marit with Minister for Environment and Development Erik Solheim in Ghana in August 2011. (Photo; Ragnhild H. Simenstad, UD)

Economic and social development

The global development agenda, formulated in the 1950s and 1960s after the decolonisation process and the entry of new members into the UN, was largely shaped by and within the UN. Although the financial institutions, South-South forums and donor cooperation within the OECD/DAC have become more important in the formulation of development policy approaches, the UN system remains the central arena for the framing of global development goals. UN summits, often convened at the level of Heads of State or Government, thereby also play a significant role in developing shared commitments among member states to global goals and approaches.

The operational aspects of the UN's development work grew steadily until the financial crisis of 2008. The total volume nearly doubled from 1993 to 2008, amounting to roughly USD 22 billion in 2008 and 2009. Several countries outside the OECD/DAC area have joined the donor group. Because of the slowdown of global economic growth, the development field may be the most vulnerable part of the UN system by 2011. The effects of the financial crisis, and the fact that many traditional donor countries in the northern hemisphere are suffering deficits and budget cuts, have affected the 2010-2011 budgets of some UN organisations, although aggregate numbers for 2010 and 2011 are not available at the time of writing.

Cuts to voluntary contributions are hitting core contributions harder than earmarked contributions. In some UN organisations, the earmarked share of voluntary contributions has reached around 80%–90%. This makes it more difficult for the UN development system to sustain the “critical” mass of core resources required for the system to operate efficiently. Core contributions are important for maintaining the infrastructure, for setting priorities, for making rapid adjustments and for enabling each entity to deliver on results defined in their respective strategic plans. Even though parts of these contributions (including Norwegian contributions) are “soft” earmarking, directed towards activities within the dedicated priorities of individual organisations, the overall trend makes joint priority-setting more demanding.

Core voluntary contributions cannot in the long run be financed by only a handful of donor countries, however. In 2008, five donor countries, among them Norway, accounted for about half the core funding for development activities. Better burden-sharing will be necessary to make the funding base less vulnerable to economic fluctuations in donor countries and to avoid creating vicious circles. It is necessary to counteract the tendency that only a handful of countries end up funding core infrastructure and administrative costs, while others can cherry-pick more attractive objectives through earmarked contributions. More countries that are in a position to contribute, including emerging economies, must do more in terms of core voluntary contributions. Otherwise, the area of common action based on joint financing and burden-sharing, which is at the heart of multilateralism, may continue to shrink. Here again, it will up to the members states to decide what they really want the UN development system to be: primarily a contractor for demand-driven services to member states, a contractor for the earmarked priorities of donors, or also a strategic partner to help member countries implement agreed development goals and to cope with global change.

- **UN and the G-20.** The activation of the G-20 cooperation during the 2008–2009 financial crisis as the premier forum for economic cooperation between its members caused anxiety within UN circles. It meant that a global economic security council was now established outside the UN. It was feared that the UN could be further marginalised as an arena for addressing global economic and financial issues.

Since then, this anxiety has subsided somewhat. The G-20 remains focused on financial issues, with the IMF as its most important counterpart within the multilateral system. Preparatory tasks and follow-up responsibilities have also been assigned to the ILO on social issues and to the Rome-based organisations on food security. Norway has taken part in consultations on how linkages to the G-20 could be established and improved. Successive G-20 presidencies have been helpful in setting up consultations and stressing the legitimate need of the 173 UN member states that are not member of the G-20 to be consulted. Efforts to explore complementarity should be encouraged. Such linkages will be particularly important if the work of the G-20 on the wider development agenda is further expanded.

Norway should continue to work for the development of links between the G-20 and the other UN member states (G-173). A precedent has already been set for consultations in the General Assembly and for the participation of the UN Secretary-General in G-20 Summits and UN sherpas in preparatory processes. Such linkages should be set up in such a way that the UN can provide input to G-20 processes, and so that the G-20 can report and be accountable to the 173 non-G20 member states on issues that concern all UN member states.

- **ECOSOC.** In spite of having a strong mandate under the UN Charter and a representative composition, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has never quite lived up to its mandated role as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues. Major issues in the world economy such as finance (the IFIs) and trade (WTO) are dealt with by other parts of the global intergovernmental system. It has proved to be very difficult to motivate key economic ministries in capitals to take an interest in ECOSOC. Even in development circles, there is a widespread scepticism towards ECOSOC. Its debates have too often been dominated by North-South polarisation and a reputation for politicisation. Such practices have led decision-makers in many countries to look for more constructive forums elsewhere.

This does not necessarily mean that we should give up entirely on ECOSOC. It plays its mandated role as a forum for discussions on economic and social

issues, with high-ranking representatives from member states, civil society and the private sector. It facilitates a coordinated follow-up to important UN Conferences. Norway and the Nordic countries have been involved in several ECOSOC reform processes through the years. These processes and ideas from other groups have led to some improvements, although there are still questions about its working methods of work, e.g. about the number of repetitive resolutions. More thematic debates and segments have provided useful bridges between the policy-making functions at governance levels on the one hand and humanitarian operations and operational activities on the other. It may be argued that reforming an existing body like ECOSOC, based on a consolidation of mandates and mechanisms, would be generally preferable to setting up new intermediate layers that could easily fall victim to the same cleavages.

There appears to be little appetite for new, comprehensive ECOSOC reform at present. Some interesting ideas have been put forward, however, in a recent paper entitled “ECOSOC is dead, long live ECOSOC”.⁴ In this paper, it is argued that ECOSOC should move beyond the North-South quagmire and towards issue-based and interest-based negotiations and that it should pursue the UN’s comparative advantages and realise that policy ideas and research matters.

We should continue to work for the continued improvement of working methods and support proposals that could lead to more focused debates and to greater added value overall. It is, however, hard to identify new ideas that could usefully be put forward by Norway to raise the profile and relevance of ECOSOC in the present circumstances.

- **The Development Cooperation Forum (DCF)** was established in 2006, and has held two sessions, in 2008 and 2012. Preparations for its next session in 2012 will be important for the positioning of the DCF itself as a relevant forum for the global debate on development approaches in the years to come, and thus also for the UN development system

⁴ “ECOSOC is Dead, long live ECOSOC”. Paper written by Thomas G. Weiss, December 2010, for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Perspective/FES New York).

itself. A review by the General Assembly in 2011 of resolution 61/16, which created the DCF, discussed among other things the possibility of annualising its sessions, but concluded that it was too early to introduce major changes.

The DCF will be what its member states want it to be. Norway should engage in the DCF’s consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. Interesting ideas have been put forward to link the future of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness more closely to the UN system. In the Declaration from the 4th High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea, of December 2011, the UN DCF is invited to play a role in consulting on the implementation of agreements reached in Busan. If this option is explored, it may give new substance to the role of the UN in discussions on development approaches and policies, and should be further explored.

Aid effectiveness

The need for stronger focus on results and better transparency, efficiency and reporting has been a recurring theme in Norwegian statements on development in UN bodies over the last few years. Together with like-minded countries, we have pushed in governing bodies for budget reforms, improved results frameworks and a stronger results culture in UN organisations. These efforts are progressing and have led to improvements. Most UN agencies have adopted results-based frameworks and strengthened their functions related to evaluation, oversight and control.

There is still a significant potential for improvement in many UN agencies, both at governance level and in the agencies themselves. Some of them need to sharpen their strategic focus and step up efforts to improve planning, resource allocation, risk management and reporting on outcomes. Member states should be clearer (and less divided) on strategic priorities, and on what they really want the system to do. There is a shared responsibility for improving methods of verification of outcomes and impacts. In consultation with the organisations, Norway should continue to work on specifying the performance requirements that can realistically be set. Together with other countries, Norway has initiated a strengthened dialogue with UN organisations to develop a joint understanding of

relevant baselines, as well as realistic performance requirements and indicators that better indicate results and impacts. Reporting should be improved to better indicate what donor funds are used for.

The UN system is also challenged by new approaches to development spending, developed largely outside the central UN system, e.g. by organisations such as GAVI and the Global Fund. More performance-based, cash-on-delivery approaches that are now being tested out in areas such as global health and forests are attractive to donors for several reasons: payments for outcomes rather than for inputs, greater responsibility delegated to country governments, and verifiable results that are more easily identifiable by taxpayers.

Such approaches are not always ideally suited to the normative mandates and the long-term capacity-building mandates of the UN system, which do not lend themselves readily to exact measurements of outcomes and impacts. In order to remain competitive, the UN development system needs to come to grips with such approaches as well. Not everything that counts can be counted, however, and there is a clear need to continue to support both normative capacity building and other long-term investments in development.

Improving coherence

Given the large number of organisations and financial mechanisms in multilateral development cooperation, there are strong arguments for consolidating mandates, institutions and financial mechanisms to give the UN development system a critical mass, particularly in operational activities at country level.

Various proposals have been put forward through the years on mergers or single agency models. With the exception of UN Women, most have failed. Norway should support efforts aiming at consolidation, but concrete proposals on more comprehensive reform need to be anchored in a broader coalition of countries, including countries in the Global South. The consolidation of efforts along the main thematic issues (sustainable development, food security, global health) should be explored as an interim measure.

Meanwhile, Norway should continue its ongoing efforts to strengthen system-wide coordination and coherence, particularly at country level. This was strongly recommended in a report of the second Nordic UN Reform Project in 1996, which led to several measures to improve coordination among UN development agencies. The need for further harmonisation was also the reason why the Secretary-General established a High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in 2006, with Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg as one of three chairpersons. The recommendations from this Panel have since been main priorities in Norway's approach to UN reform.

Improving coherence requires action both at the intergovernmental and the interagency levels. Norway should maintain its strong support for the coherence agenda in the executive boards of funds, programmes and specialised agencies and in ECOSOC and General Assembly. The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN operational activities in 2012 will be important. Important progress has been achieved at the interagency level through the UN Development Group (UNDG) and on programme and management cooperation through the Chief Executive Board (CEB). Continued strong leadership from the Secretary-General and from the UNDG will continue to be necessary.

Norway has attached particular importance to strengthening coherence at country level and should continue doing so. The recommendations of the High level Panel on "Delivering as One" (DaO) – one leader, one programme, one budgetary framework and, if possible, one UN office, have been described as one of the most important UN reform proposals in recent years. The country-led evaluations in the eight original pilot countries have demonstrated the achievements and the potential of this approach. They indicate stronger country ownership, better alignment with country priorities, and efficiency gains and cost savings through a better sharing of infrastructure costs. The positive experience gained in the eight pilot countries has inspired about 20 other countries to join the approach as so-called "self-starters". Positive lessons learned so far have also influenced work on the new generation of UN country programmes in other countries, through the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). There are still challenges to be overcome, however, related among other things to transaction costs through time-

consuming coordination procedures. There is a need to strengthen the authority of the UN country leader, to strengthen coherence and harmonisation of business practices at headquarters level, and to widen the circle of supporting countries.

Delivering as One has the advantage of being a country-owned, country-led process. In this sense, it is also a bottom-up approach that may be a catalyst for better coherence on programming and business practices even at Headquarters level. Better coherence must also be encouraged between UN agencies in countries that have not yet adopted the DaO approach, by strengthening the UNDAF Framework and through UN Country Teams. The independent review that will be presented in early 2012 as one of the inputs to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Programme Review in the General Assembly in the fall of 2012 will be important in this regard.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Over the last 20 years, the UN system has given particular attention to the human and social dimension of development. Through its focus on poverty alleviation, the fight against hunger, efforts to promote education, health, labour standards and other rights-based approaches, the UN system has made and is still making crucial contributions to the advancement of the global development agenda.

This focus on the human dimensions of development has found its clearest expression in the Millennium Development Goals. Norway has participated in efforts to fulfil all eight of the development goals.

- **Poverty eradication and the fight against hunger.**

Even if we are not a particularly significant food producing agricultural country, we have taken an active part in global efforts to ensure greater food security (MDG 1), which is likely to be one of the major challenges facing the international community in the 21st century. We have emphasised the need for reforms in the FAO under its new leader from 2012 onwards. We have supported the strengthening of global coordination through the Committee on Food Security (CFS), which is also offering an interesting model of governance. While decision-making is still intergovernmental, the CFS is based on partnerships

with relevant stakeholders at global, regional and national levels, including representatives of civil society, research institutions and the private sector.

- **Education.** Support to education, particularly primary education is one of the priorities of Norwegian development cooperation. Much of this assistance is channeled through multilateral organizations. Norway should continue working with UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative on basic education, giving particular weight to equal opportunities and quality improvement (MDG 2). We should continue to push for more accessible educational programmes in conflict and post-conflict areas, to give particular emphasis to education of young girls, and to highlight the importance of reaching the disabled and other vulnerable groups.

- **Global health.** The three health-related MDGs have been a particular priority for Norway. The need for a massive effort to reduce child mortality (MDG 4), maternal mortality (MDG5) and HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases (MDG 6) has led to a significant increase in funding for global health in the first decade of the century, and to institutional innovation and reforms, both inside and on the margins of the UN system. Norway has strongly supported the Secretary-General's "Every woman-every child" initiative, designed to intensify efforts to reach MDGs 4 and 5, - the MDGs that have been lagging most behind before the 2015 deadline. Through an Accountability Commission set up within the WHO, this initiative has also set a useful precedent for how accountability can be established both for participating states to monitor that they live up to their pledges – and for the relevant agencies for results obtained.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is the normative heart of the global health agenda. In a strategy paper for our membership of the Executive Board of the WHO (2010–2013), Norway committed itself to work for reform and greater efficiency in the organization. WHO's role vis-à-vis other health partners, such as GAVI, the Global Fund, the World Bank, UNAIDS and others, should be developed further, based on WHO's central role in normative areas. Global health should remain a pilot area for the further development of partnerships with research

institutions, civil society and the private sector, for new result- and performance-based approaches, and for exploring how diplomacy and foreign policy can make more active contributions to global health.

With the growth of institutions and global health partnerships, each with their own governing bodies, there is a growing need to improve global governance for health. Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre has, together with six other foreign ministers established an initiative on health and diplomacy that also aims to address health in global governance.

Following an initiative taken by the medical journal *The Lancet* in 2011, an independent academic Commission on Global Governance for Health was established in late 2011 in cooperation with the University of Oslo (UiO) and the Harvard Global Health Institute. The Commission has been mandated to undertake a scholarly analysis, based on empirical evidence, to “offer actionable ideas and a roadmap for the future protection and promotion of health in the many global governance processes that affect health”. - We should continue to explore these issues with other countries, health partners and resource persons within the global health community to determine the best way to address governance challenges in this important area.

Sustainable Development

Since the first UN Conference on Environment and Development was held in Stockholm in 1973, the UN system has had important mandates in both fields. However, it has not always proved easy to bridge the gap between the two because of different points of departure, objectives, priorities and constituencies.

The World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, made a serious effort to bridge this gap in 1987 through the concept of sustainable development, which was highlighted in its report “Our Common Future”. This led to the second major UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which adopted three major environmental agreements and laid the foundations for the present architecture of sustainable development. Since then, the climate change agenda

has expanded significantly, not only to negotiate new commitments to curb emissions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Changes (UNFCCC), but also in related fields such as the preservation of forests, the development of more sustainable energy and adaptation to climate change.

In June 2012, a new UN Conference on Environment and Development will be convened in Rio de Janeiro. This conference will, once again, address reforms in international environmental governance. It will also discuss reforms in the way the UN system is presently organised to deal with the sustainable development agenda. There is fairly widespread agreement that the present architecture is complex and fragmented, that it involves too many meetings and follow-up processes, and that it lacks a real centre of gravity.

- **Environmental governance.** The UN environmental protection programme, UNEP, plays a primary role in the environmental sector, particularly in normative issues. In addition, there are now a considerable number of environmental conventions, each with its own Conference of States Parties and secretariat services. There is broad agreement that the environmental pillar should be strengthened, simplified and made more coherent, but (as of early 2012) not yet on how. A proposal has been put forward to make UNEP a specialised agency. Norway should continue to support the strengthening of UNEP, e.g. through arrangements that could provide more predictable funding and that could increase the impact of the environmental pillar within system-wide approaches.
- **Sustainable development.** There is a growing convergence of views that the present architecture for the wider sustainability agenda within the UN system is badly in need of reform. The current UN Commission on Sustainable Development is regarded as ineffectual and should be replaced by a stronger instrument. Among the options being considered is the establishment of a new UN Sustainable Development Council, drawing inspiration i.a. from reforms in the human rights field in 2005–2006.

Interesting ideas have also been put forward to formulate a set of sustainable development goals for the post-2015 period. Norway has supported such ideas.

Norway has a long history of involvement in reform efforts in the environmental and development fields, and should continue to give this very high priority. We should continue actively to seek out solutions that can create greater coherence, both institutionally and through a shared cooperation strategy for the UN system's sustainable development work, not least through a clearer division of labour between affected organisations.

- **Climate change.** The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) remains the main negotiating track for reaching global agreement on reductions in emissions that lead to climate change. Negotiations have been difficult, among other things because of the unwillingness or inability of major emitters to accept multilaterally agreed curbs on CO₂ emissions and disagreement on burden-sharing. At the 17th Conference of States Parties (COP 17) to the Convention in Durban, South Africa, in late 2011, some progress was made in this process, which needs to be followed up in the period up to 2015.

New global agreements on climate financing will also be necessary to unblock negotiating deadlocks and generate the necessary trust to achieve progress. The UN Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing, co-chaired by President Meles of Ethiopia and Prime Minister Stoltenberg, was charged with developing proposals for scaling up long-term financing for mitigation and adaptation strategies from various public and private sources. Norway is also involved in the ensuing negotiations to set modalities for the Green Climate Fund for long-term climate financing to support developing countries, bolster technology cooperation and enhance the ability of vulnerable populations to adapt to climate change. Any structure that is agreed for the financing of climate measures should also be evaluated in the light of the need for coherence with the existing system.

- **Forests.** In 2008, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon launched, together with Norway, the UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, known as UN REDD. The programme is a partnership between FAO, UNDP and UNEP. It also collaborates with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility administered by the World Bank. As of 2011, 35 partners have joined the programme. The programme involves requirements for good governance, including agreed social and environmental standards, measures to prevent corruption, etc, and will be evaluated at regular intervals in the strategic programme for the 2011–2015 period.

The innovative character of these partnerships also makes it possible to test how performance-based approaches could be combined with the normative mandates of the UN system. In this programme, UN REDD provides norms and guidelines at the global level and capacity building and support for the expanded national REDD + strategies at national levels, whereas the World Bank-administered Facility supports the development of implementing systems and provides the agreed payments for reductions after proper verification.

- **Sustainable energy.** 2012 is the UN International Year for Sustainable Energy for All. Norway is an energy-exporting country that has significant oil and gas resources and extensive experience in developing renewable energy, particularly through hydropower. Support for energy-related initiatives and programmes is likely to be a high Norwegian priority in the years to come.

As the need for greener and more sustainable energy forms increases, the support given by UN agencies to the global effort should be strengthened. UN agencies would not necessarily be asked to play lead roles, but would be able to draw on system-wide participation that could provide added value both at the global and the country levels. Interagency cooperation through the UN Energy mechanism is a positive step forward, and should be developed further. Norway should continue its efforts to raise strategic issues related to sustainable energy higher on the global agenda, and help to clarify roles and functions within the UN system.

At a conference in Oslo in October 2011 entitled “Energy for all: Financing access for the poor”, in which the UN Secretary-General participated, Norway launched a new international energy and climate initiative called Energy +, which aims to support increased access to modern energy and curb emissions of greenhouse gases in developing countries. Energy + will support the Secretary-General’s own initiative on “Sustainable Energy for All” and will contribute to it by providing financial support to developing countries based on results achieved in their energy sectors.

The UN system has a mandate for the peaceful use of nuclear energy through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has its headquarters in Vienna. The importance of international cooperation in enhancing and verifying the safety of nuclear energy has been brought home among other things by the Fukushima disaster in Japan in 2011. The further strengthening of standards for nuclear safety and safeguards must remain a high priority for the international community.

Financing for development

The UN Financing for Development (FFD) conferences held in Monterrey in 2002 and Doha in 2008 were important landmarks for discussions on the mobilisation and use of financial resources for development, including but also beyond official development assistance (ODA). Some of the issues on the agenda for the FFD process have also been development policy priorities for Norway.

- **National resource mobilisation.** National resource mobilisation will be a key to economic and social development in the 21st century. ODA and foreign direct investment can play complementary and even catalytic roles, but they cannot be substitutes for the mobilisation of domestic resources. The UN system can use its normative base and capacity-building functions to advise developing countries on how to broaden their tax base, intensify efforts against corruption and illicit capital outflows, and strengthen transparency and democratic governance. These efforts require the support of several parts of the wider UN system. Cooperation with the international financial institutions will be particularly important

in this field. On taxation, Norway has declared our readiness to consider transforming the present UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters into an intergovernmental body, although there is also resistance to such an idea.

- **Illicit financial flows.** Illicit capital flows from developing countries, often to tax havens, is estimated to be many times higher than total development assistance. Stronger measures both at national and international levels to prevent such flight could make a major contribution to the financing of development. Assistance in recovering assets would be an important part of these efforts. UN bodies are participating actively in these efforts, for example, through general awareness raising, and through the use of instruments such as the UN Convention against Corruption and the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Norway is working closely with relevant UN bodies to support these efforts and should continue doing so.

- **Innovative mechanism for financing development.** Proposals for innovative mechanisms to secure development financing in addition to (ODA) have existed for a long time, but a breakthrough was made at the Monterrey FFD conference. Norway has participated actively in follow-up efforts, within a Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development, i.a. in the field of global health and on climate change. We have expressed support for proposals for a financial transaction levy to raise funds for global public goods, development and climate measures. The Special Representative on innovative financing appointed by the Secretary-General, Philippe Douste-Blazy of France, has been a driving force to increase international support for such approaches. Norway has promoted the inclusion of innovative financing on the General Assembly agenda, and should continue to support follow-up measures inside and outside the UN.

- **Trade and development.** Trade and development has been on the agenda of the UN since the 1960s, mainly through UNCTAD. Since the transformation of the GATT into the WTO and the accession of a large number of developing countries to the WTO, UNCTAD has focused on research, analysis and data collection as well as on technical assistance to developing countries. Its role as a forum for

intergovernmental deliberations has become less important for industrialized countries, including Norway. UNCTAD is partnering with other relevant agencies to support trade and development efforts, i. a, within the International Trade Centre and the Aid for Trade initiative. Norway has participated in several reform processes in this field and should continue doing so.

Other areas where we need a strong and effective UN system

In addition to the sectors and thematic issues discussed in this report, Norway is engaged in a number of other partnerships with UN bodies. In some of them, UN organisations play indispensable roles. In other areas, their roles may be limited to normative functions, to capacity-building as parts of broader coalitions and partnerships, or simply to providing arenas for international consultations on emerging issues. Among the most important thematic issues for Norway in this respect are the following ;

- **Post-conflict, recovery and fragile states.** The UN is often called on to assist member states in post-conflict situations, to support efforts after major disasters or to assist in other transitions. The UN has both relevant mandates and long experience of supporting member countries in the aftermath of civil wars, armed conflicts or major transitions to peace and security, the restoration of basic functions of the state, economic recovery and reconstruction, protection of civilians and basic human rights and in other ways. Norway is engaged in efforts to strengthen UN capacity in peace operations, political operations, peacebuilding and through the UN development system, including the UNDP through its Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR). We should continue to give high priority to these efforts, which should be seen as key functions of the UN system. Cooperation with the international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank, on these issues should be strengthened.
- **Democratic governance.** UN departments and agencies are involved on a regular basis in supporting national authorities in arranging democratic elections, strengthening democratic institutions at national and

local levels and involving civil society groups and vulnerable parts of the population. The UN can use its presence at country level and access to authorities to prevent conflicts or human rights abuses through quiet diplomacy and is often doing so. Norway should continue to support such efforts through the relevant parts of the UN Secretariat (political affairs, peace operations, peacebuilding), through the development system - where UNDP has a special mandate, through other UN offices, funds and programmes, and through interagency coherence and coordination.

- **Prevention of natural disasters.** Natural disasters are increasing in number, scope and destructiveness. Norway has been a strong supporter of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, which is an interagency mechanism designed to analyse and help reduce the causes of disasters, and which involves both the humanitarian and the development parts of the UN system. The impact of climate change is likely to increase the importance of these efforts in the 21st century.
- **Decent work.** By the drawing up and overseeing international labour standards, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has made indispensable contributions to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work related issues. Its decent work agenda, formulated by ILO's constituents – governments and employers and workers - reflects priorities on the social, economic and political agenda of countries that have become even more important in the wake of the 2008/2009 financial crisis.

Norway has strongly supported ILO's work to further develop the decent work agenda and should continue doing so. Because of the importance of its mandate, ILO also need reforms to enhance its effectiveness, i.a. in improving transparency in its working methods. Norway hosted an international conference in Oslo in 2010, which was organised jointly the ILO and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to discuss and address the employment crisis in the wake of the financial crisis. Parts of these efforts have now also been incorporated into the agenda of the G20.



*The Conference Chamber of the UN Human Rights Council in the Palais des Nations, Geneva.
(UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré)*

Human rights and gender equality

Human rights

Human rights values are at heart of the United Nations, and the UN is at the heart of the international effort to promote and defend fundamental human rights. The visions expressed in “we, the peoples” of the Charter were carried forward through the landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the two UN Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and in subsequent conventions and international declarations on human rights issues.

The institutional framework set up within the UN to monitor and carry forward the work on human rights underwent a comprehensive reform in 2005–2006. The former UN Human Rights Commission was replaced by a new UN Human Rights Council with new

membership criteria and reformed working methods. The introduction of Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) – a unique process that involves the review of the human rights records of all UN members every four years – has proved to be an important innovation in the UN. It may also provide lessons learned that can be used in reforms in other fields, for example in the field of sustainable development.

In 2011, the Human Rights Council was subject to a new review after the first five years of its existence. This review, conducted first by the Council itself and confirmed by the General Assembly in 2011, led to only minor adjustments. The main challenges in the years ahead will thus be characterised by a need for consolidation and strengthening, rather than by new major initiatives.

The experience gained of the Human Rights Council since 2005 shows that almost all UN member states now accept being held accountable for their human rights practices. Norway should continue to support the strengthening of the UN Human Rights Council, also after the end of its 2009–2012 membership period.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has key functions within the UN as the main spokesperson for human rights, as an adviser to member states on how to strengthen good governance practices and mainstream human rights perspectives into all UN activities. Norway has regularly supported efforts to ensure that the High Commissioner receives sufficient funds through the regular budget and should continue doing so. We participate in a review focused on improving the efficiency of treaty bodies, which was initiated by the High Commissioner and will result in the publication of a report in 2012.

Women's rights and gender equality

The UN system has had a decisive influence in the international struggle to promote women's rights. The main principles were embedded in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and found their most extensive expression in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in 1979, which has been called the international bill of rights for women. The World Conferences on Women, particularly the Declaration and Plan of Action from the fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995, have been important landmarks that have further confirmed all aspects of women's rights.

Like the human rights sector, women's rights and gender equality have recently undergone a comprehensive reform. Following a long process of negotiation *inter alia* on the recommendation from the High Level Group on System-wide Coherence, UN Women was formed in 2010, merging and building on four previously distinct parts of the UN system. This streamlining process and the innovative structure of the new entity, and the dynamic leadership of the first leader of UN Women, former president Michelle Bachelet of Chile, make this reform one of the most successful and interesting UN reforms in recent years.

It contains several lessons learned that could also be useful for reforms in other thematic clusters.

To follow up on the UN Women reform, a primary task will be to implement and consolidate adopted reforms and goals, rather than considering new institutional reforms. Norway will be a member of the Executive Board of the new body for the next five years and must use this opportunity to support follow-up processes. UN Women should be strengthened in relation to the monitoring of normative obligations linked to women's rights, efforts to promote the participation of women, and capacity development at country level. Performance measures and indicators must be developed for measuring the results of equal opportunities work throughout the UN system. UN Women must give priority to capacity building in the form of training programmes and advisory services, which must be adapted to the different needs and contexts of UN activities.

The promotion of women's rights and gender perspectives are important policy goals for Norway, both from a foreign policy and a development policy perspective. We should continue to give the strongest possible support to the work to strengthen system-wide efforts for women, peace and security as a follow-up to UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and in mainstreaming gender perspectives in all parts of the system. A national action plan for incorporating the gender perspective into all aspects of our development efforts has been extended for the period 2010–2013.

Together with other like-minded countries, we should continue to resist all attempts to reopen or renegotiate fundamental principles on women's sexual and reproductive rights embodied in the Declaration from the 1995 Beijing Conference.



*Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas G. Støre and collaborators being briefed by the UN in Gaza august 2010.
(Photo; UD/Bjørn Svenningsen)*

Suggested reform priorities

1 Setting strategic global priorities, enhancing operational effectiveness and improving coherence should continue to be main objectives for UN reform. Strong leadership from the Secretary-General and the leaders of UN funds, programmes and agencies continue to be essential for organizational reform.

Comprehensive UN reform must have a broad global ownership. This can be achieved only through efforts to transcend traditional North-South cleavages in global negotiating processes and in the exercise of governance functions within UN agencies. Norway can best contribute to such processes through strategic alliances between like-minded countries in the North and the South.

Comprehensive reforms are particularly needed in the economic and social field, which now appear to be the most vulnerable pillar of the UN system. The functional and normative character of the wider UN agencies and the aggregation of vested interests traditionally make consolidation through fusions or mergers difficult to negotiate. A streamlining of development programmes and financial mechanisms nevertheless is desirable. The example of UN Women shows that it is not impossible. Norway should support proposals for such streamlining in order to obtain critical mass for a more strategic and catalytic use of development resources.⁵

⁵ “Punching below its weight; The UN Development System at a Crossroad”, research project at the Center for International Cooperation, New York University, 2011, with Bruce Jenks and Dr Bruce D. Jones.

Pending a broader convergence on the directions for major reform, Norway should continue to push for organisational adaptation and reforms wherever we can make ourselves most useful.

- 2 A further exploration of thematic groups or clusters as an interim or alternative measure could also be an option. Such efforts are already on the agenda within the fields of sustainable development and global health. A thematic approach should be open to expanded partnerships with non-UN organisations.

The wider UN system is already organized around sectoral or thematic approaches. To enhance coherence within sectors and to encourage cross-sectoral approaches, further steps are needed. Closer interagency cooperation at programme level (e.g. UN Energy) is being developed also within the Chief Executives Board (CEB) structure and should be further encouraged.

There are several examples of such a thematic approach to reform already in progress. Some of them already exist in reality, if not as formal groups

- A UN peace and security group, centred around the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPA) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), which could possibly be merged, and the Department of Field Support. The Security Council has a clear mandate under the UN Charter for maintenance of international peace and security, supported by the mandates given to the Secretary-general and the General Assembly. Norway should continue to support the further development of integrated, multidimensional peace operations through the development of doctrines and organisational flexibility.
- A UN humanitarian group based on UNHCR, WFP and the humanitarian parts of other agencies and coordinated by OCHA. We should continue efforts to strengthen humanitarian coordination, both within the UN system and with outside partners. Governance functions are currently anchored in the executive committees and boards of the individual funds and programmes, by the humanitarian segment of ECOSOC and through the General Assembly.
- A consolidated structure addressing transnational crime based on a strengthened normative framework to transcend barriers between national jurisdictions. It should build on existing UN offices, departments and mechanisms to strengthen the rule of law in post-conflict situations, fragile states and in development cooperation. The World Bank, Interpol and other relevant non-UN agencies should take part in such a process. The UN system task force established by the Secretary-General and co-chaired by UNODC and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) is an important first step to strengthen interagency cooperation and to step up the international effort.
- A UN Sustainable Development Group or Council based on ongoing reform processes leading up to the Rio 2012 Conference, for example through a reformed Sustainable Development Council with a strengthened mandate and working methods. A system-wide strategy for sustainable development, which could also address the division of operational responsibilities between agencies, could be part of such a strategy.
- A UN/global food security group building on the existing Committee on World Food Security, involving UN agencies, the financial institutions, civil society organisations, research institutions and the private sector. Cooperation with the G20 and its Advanced Market Information System and Rapid Response system should be strengthened.
- A strengthened global governance for health should be part of the reform agenda. Better coherence could be obtained by building on the normative functions of the WHO, interagency cooperation through the H 4 Plus group (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank and UNAIDS), the participation of GAVI, the Global Fund, UNITAID and with key stakeholders in civil society and the private sector. In 2011, Norway supported the establishment of the independent academic Commission on Global Governance for Health organised by The Lancet, the University of Oslo and Harvard University which aims to offer ideas and a roadmap for the future protection and promotion of health in global governance processes.

- The UN Development Group (UNDG), building on the existing pillar within the Chief Executive Board (CEB), should continue strengthening interagency coherence at country level. In this way, it could also be the nucleus of the consolidation of UN funds and development programmes at operational level. The UNDG governance functions, which are currently performed by the boards of each agency and joint board meetings, should be streamlined.
- Such approaches could also generate useful roles for ECOSOC in promoting coordination and coherence and formulating policy advice, e.g. through the further exploration of thematic segments, and in preparing more constructive policy discussions in the General Assembly.

3 Expanding the partnership policies of the UN system

- The UN system should further develop its partnerships with regional and relevant sub-regional organisations.
- The G20 and “minilateralist” approaches should be linked as far as possible to global, inclusive multilateralism.
- Partnerships with non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations should be further strengthened, particularly in the planning and implementation of field operations.
- The possibility of further cooperation with the private sector should be explored, based on the universal norms and standards adopted through the UN system.

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