
A
WORLD IN NEED
OF LEADERSHIP:
TOMORROW'S
UNITED NATIONS

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PREFACE

The dramatic changes taking place throughout the world present new challenges and new tasks to the international organizations in the United Nations system. Their successful response will depend in considerable measure on the capacity and quality of their leadership.

This study of leadership in the UN system has been produced under the joint auspices of the Ford Foundation and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. It consists of a main paper (also published separately for an initial distribution) and two discussion papers amplifying the argument and reasoning underlying the main paper, with some further ideas and suggestions. A compilation of statistical data on UN leadership posts is also provided.

Enid Schoettle and Karel Vosskühler of the Ford Foundation have participated in all phases of the project, as have Sven Hamrell and Olle Nordberg of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation who, with their staff colleagues, have also been responsible for the publication of both editions. For all this support from the two Foundations we wish to express our gratitude.

Catherine Tinker has been of invaluable assistance throughout the process in doing professional historical research and in checking the various papers. We also express our appreciation to Wytold Zyss for his research on the specialized agencies. Marcia Bikales has shepherded the entire study through numerous drafts and has been solely responsible for the typing and collation of the papers as well as for the voluminous correspondence connected with the study.

Work on the study has been assisted throughout by a steering group of which the members are Stephane Hessel (France), Donald Mills (Jamaica), Dragoljub Najman (Yugoslavia), and Göran Ohlin (Sweden). A large number of international experts and persons with experience of international affairs and organizations has also been consulted in the course of the study. We take this opportunity of expressing our warm appreciation to the steering group, and to all who contributed comments on the main paper. However, we wish to make it clear that responsibility for the opinions and suggestions contained in this study is solely that of the authors.

The study is published on the twenty-ninth anniversary of the death of Dag Hammarskjöld. We hope that it may be helpful to governments and others in the essential task of strengthening the United Nations system for the future.

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* * *

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INTRODUCTION

After forty-five uncertain, and sometimes bleak, years, the prospects for international cooperation are brighter than at any time since the Second World War. There is therefore both a new challenge and a new opportunity for international leadership.

In the UN's first forty years the highest tensions in the political sphere arose from the East-West relationship, and the most difficult and urgent task was the maintenance of international peace and security. International peace and security in the traditional sense remains the primary concern of the UN itself, and there now seems to be at least some prospect of gradually converting the present *ad hoc* and largely reactive approach into a more consistent and reliable system for maintaining the peace.

The most formidable problems for the world community lie in the vast complex of socio-economic and environmental issues on which the future conditions of life on the planet may well depend. Indeed the future concept of security will have to embrace many of these issues. In trying to deal with such problems the old pattern of East-West tension is likely to be less important than the basic North-South differences, sometimes stemming from a lack of effective dialogue, such as those that arose a decade ago over the South's call for a New International Economic Order. The gulf between rich and poor continues to be a basic and vital problem of the world community. A deeply felt consciousness of this basic issue and a commitment to continued action to resolve it are essential features of future international leadership.

Leadership at all levels, and especially at the international level, will be an indispensable factor in successfully meeting these challenges. Such leadership will be needed to bring divergent interests together, and to generate ideas large and practical enough to match and to manage new global developments. It will also be needed for the necessary adjustment, and even restructuring, of the existing international system.

Some of the political obstacles which have hitherto inhibited the development and effectiveness of the United Nations system are now vanishing. It may therefore be easier to agree on more relevant criteria and procedures for the selection of leaders, as well as to allow those leaders to carry out their tasks with less political obstruction and attrition.

Leadership is an essential ingredient in the successful conduct of most great

enterprises. It is a quality easy to identify but difficult to define, easy to talk about but extraordinarily difficult to find, and even more difficult to provide for.

In the United Nations system the normal difficulties of leadership are compounded by the nature of the intergovernmental structure itself. Political differences and conflicts of interest among member states, sensitivity over the relationship between international responsibility and national sovereignty, and the autonomous nature of the system of specialized agencies which was deliberately chosen in 1945, all constitute considerable obstacles to the normal exercise of leadership.

In the United Nations leadership comes, or can come, from a number of possible sources. Member states, either singly or in groups, are one such source. Imaginative political leaders are another. Non-governmental organizations and other expressions of the opinions and aspirations of the people are yet another. The UN system also has its appointed leaders—the Secretary-General and the heads of the various specialized agencies and programmes. The calibre and team-work of these leaders, led by the Secretary-General, are essential to the future effectiveness of the system.

Until the early 1970s the UN system reflected a pre-eminently *sectoral* approach to the problems of the world. In future the international system will have to respond increasingly to *global* problems and challenges which will require new kinds of leadership. The UN system could not be blamed for being sectoral when the world was perceived as sectoral. It will, however, be blamed if it *remains* sectoral when the global nature of the world's greatest problems, and the need for leadership in managing them, is beginning to be perceived.

If the UN system is to remain relevant to the great problems of the future, both its approach and its internal relationships need re-examination. The question of centralization and decentralization will have to be squarely addressed. Although the need for much specialized activity remains, the nature of the global problems of our time have to some extent put in doubt the validity of a system of self-contained and completely autonomous specialized agencies. A far greater degree of cohesion and team work, both intellectual and practical, within the UN system is clearly required. This is another important factor in the consideration of future leadership.

multilateral cooperation. The world of 1990, however, bears little resemblance to the world of 1945 when the UN system was set up. Moreover we live in a period when governments, the basic units of the UN system, have less and less control over the forces that are shaping the future. Nationalism and sovereignty are increasingly problematic concepts. Their relationship to international responsibility and to the realities and hard facts of contemporary life are inevitably changing. The private and non-governmental sectors have never been so important nor so influential as they are today.

The UN system, for all its shortcomings, is unique and cannot be duplicated or reinvented. It is the only available universal system. It now has to live up not only to the demands of governments but also to the increasing expectations of the peoples of the world. It therefore has to adapt itself to this changing world or run the risk of becoming irrelevant in important fields of human activity. Effective leadership will be crucial to this transition.

► ***This Study***

The following study is an attempt to identify the demands on UN leadership which are now arising and to suggest possible ways of looking at the leadership question accordingly. We fully understand that the Secretary-General, the other executive heads of the UN system, and the international civil service cannot possibly fill all the demands for leadership at the global level. We are very much aware of the very real constraints on international leadership, and of the fact that much of the essential work of international cooperation goes on outside the UN system. Our intention is not to criticize past or present leadership. It is rather to look at past experience and present problems as a guide to the demands of a very different future.

We hope that this study may help governments, as well as the informed public, to give their best attention to the essential subject of leadership.

THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA FOR THE 1990s

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar, in 'Perspectives for the 1990s', has sketched out a general agenda for the UN in this decade.

It must be the common purpose to forge from ... varied, sometimes contradictory, economic, social and political conditions, a global environment of sustained development, social justice and peace.

The nations of the world will be forced to take account of this 'global environment' in the 1990s as never before. In this process governments are being more frequently confronted with the necessity to find acceptable ways in which to yield elements of their sovereignty through common actions and codes of conduct, in order to deal with issues which cannot be tackled by one nation, or even one group of nations, alone. There is an increasing awareness that the traditional structures of government are inadequate for a world that is suddenly far more complex and fragile than it had seemed only a few years ago.

The proliferation of phenomena which transcend national boundaries—technology, communications, the global financial market, disease, drug trafficking, mass movement of peoples, or pollution, to name only a few—is combining with the excessive use of resources by one fraction of the population on the one hand, and the continuing population increase among the poorest three-quarters of humanity on the other, to produce the most precarious conditions our planet has ever known.

The optimism of earlier decades over the marvels of science and technology has suffered a series of rude ecological awakenings. It is now also clear that technologies which could have provided solutions have not been closing, and in many cases, especially during the last decade, have even been widening, the gap between an affluent North and much of a poverty-stricken and increasingly restless South. In large parts of the South, poverty and inappropriate external development models which have failed to provide for expanding populations, are wreaking another kind of ecological degradation. And the same trans-border communication of ideas and news that now
10 encourages entire peoples to revolt is generating among the millions of the poor an

ever-greater impatience, not only with their own elites but with those they regard as inequitably monopolizing wealth.

Phenomena which were once thought to be comfortably controlled by science, or neatly self-contained within specialized sectors, or manageable within nation-states, have emerged as systemically dangerous, multi-sectoral, and transnational hazards. The agenda of the international community has enormously expanded—in the number of its items, in their scope and in their interrelationship.

International law, only yesterday a seemingly quiet backwater in human affairs, is reaching into hitherto unimagined fields. The nations of the world have acceded to an unprecedented number of agreements in virtually all branches of human activity—from the ocean floor to outer space—in only the last forty years. There has been a truly astonishing growth of public international law which will accelerate into the coming century. The pressing need for an international system based on law has never been so evident.

Different groups of states obviously have very different ideas of how the international agenda should be shaped and realized. Effective action will also require considerable rethinking of the United Nations system, which has been structured largely as an outgrowth of the different sectors of national administrations. Innovation and skilful leadership will be required to deal with both these problems.

Main areas of responsibility for the UN system and its future leadership:

- ▶ the maintenance of early warning systems on potential conflicts, and the conduct of preventive diplomacy;
- ▶ peace-making, peace-keeping and the settlement of disputes;
- ▶ disarmament, arms regulation and reduction of the flow of arms;
- ▶ the promotion of an effective system of common and collective security;
- ▶ the promotion of a more equitable and purposeful management of the world economy;
- ▶ proposals for dealing with the world's financial and monetary problems including the debt problem;
- ▶ the mobilization of resources and the formulation of strategies to overcome mass poverty and marginalization;
- ▶ leadership in safeguarding the environment and in the management of the global commons;
- ▶ the management and mitigation of urgent and major problems, including those posed by refugees and large scale migrations, natural disasters and other human emergencies, AIDS, and the international drug problem;
- ▶ coordination and improvement of the capacity of the UN system for development cooperation;

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- ▶ development of and respect for international law in its many new economic, environmental and social, as well as its traditional, spheres;
 - ▶ promotion of respect for all human rights and their further codification, with particular attention to eliminating discrimination based on gender;
 - ▶ strengthening understanding of the value of cultural diversity and efforts to conserve it;
 - ▶ the furtherance of basic and innovative research to support the above work, including comprehensive global data banks and multidisciplinary analyses of global trends;
 - ▶ stimulating participation in the UN system of all components of civil society: citizens and their organizations, the business sector, research and academic institutions, and the media.
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Within this broad agenda, many specific problems will make heavy demands on the leadership capacity of the UN system. These problems have in common both urgency and interconnections which require skilful coordination of policies and programmes. To take one example, massive poverty and ecological degradation in the South can only be halted by better and more sustainable development; but this will require, among other things, effective population planning, improved primary health care, better education and technical training, changed agrarian policies, renewable energy sources to replace fuel-wood, and more stable, predictable and favourable external aid, trade and financial arrangements for developing countries. Those arrangements will require, among other things, progress in the resolution of the debt problem, a return to a more stable system of currencies and capital movements—at a time when the market-oriented industrialism of the North encourages the reverse—and a new diversification of trading opportunities for the South—at a time when new North-North trading systems are mushrooming. Ecological degradation in the North is approaching a stage which will demand, at the least, stringent and very costly anti-pollution measures. These measures will probably coincide with retrenchments in the defence industry and in employment. Such costs, together with new demands from Eastern Europe, may threaten increases in North-South development cooperation, which is vital for sustainable development in the South.

Within this complex web of challenges and conflicting demands there are other intransigent problems. For example, escalating drug abuse and trafficking requires the provision of alternative sources of income for poor growers in the South, yet this in turn is related to the external economic environment. Tighter customs and currency measures

urban economies do not yet offer psychological alternatives for drug users in Northern countries.

Nor is the agenda of the 1990s free of new political and cultural factors. The centres of economic power are shifting, and with them the global trading system. In many parts of the world the decline of central state power and the new power of trans-border communication, are stimulating ancient ethnic drives and nationalistic urges, and reviving demands for the resolution of the residual problems of the age of empires, including many border issues. Most of these issues are also infused with intricate economic and social problems.

A productive approach to such problems and to their inherent interconnections and contradictions will require rigorous intellectual analysis. Intellectual leadership and the generation and following-up of new ideas are an urgent necessity. The field of future potential action is so vast that only a continuous and tough-minded effort to define the issues that really require global and regional management will prevent a hopeless diffusion of resources and effort. Developing an active consensus about the world agenda and the UN system's part in it should become a central task for the Secretary-General and his or her colleagues in the UN system. Without the Secretary-General's leadership such a consensus is unlikely to emerge. The 1992 Conference in Brazil on Environment and Development will provide a unique opportunity for the United Nations to demonstrate that the UN system can be pulled together to deal effectively with a series of complex and interrelated transnational issues.

The agenda needs to be continuously focused with a view to deciding where the UN system can uniquely lead, promote and monitor; what its organizations can do and should be properly financed to do; and what they need *not* themselves do but can stimulate, guide, and report to the world. In many instances North-South and other differences on priorities within the agenda will continue to be at the heart of this process and will require skilful, imaginative and coherent handling. There is at present no other group of more or less universal institutions in which these differences can be addressed comprehensively. It will, however, be impossible to carry out this task effectively until the work of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the GATT is conducted in harmony and coordination with the rest of the UN system.

To make a coherent and feasible strategy for the future, to build intergovernmental consensus and to engage international public thinking in that consensus, and to initiate a serious programme of implementation at all levels, are formidable tasks. Any hope of practical success will demand leadership and imagination at the local, national, regional and international levels. At the international level it will demand a new approach by governments to the relationship between national sovereignty and international responsibility. It will also require an order of leadership and management quite different, both in attitude and expertise, from what was foreseen in 1945.

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

► **Historical Background**

It is easy enough to say that the UN system needs strong, imaginative and independent leadership. The reality is more complex than that. Both governments and commentators have evinced considerable ambivalence on this subject down through the years, although in times of stress or expectation there has been a traditional tendency to dump sudden and unexpected tasks on the Secretary-General and his senior colleagues.

Ambiguities about the nature of the Secretary-Generalship have existed from the very outset. Even great power delegates at the founding UN Conference on International Organization in San Francisco acknowledged that the post could have an important political aspect; but in the end the UN Charter described the holder primarily as 'the chief administrative officer of the Organization', and sketched out far less clearly the political or coordinating functions.

The Charter is even less forthcoming on qualifications, stating merely that the Secretary-General and the staff 'shall not seek or receive instructions from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might

In 1944 a group of former League of Nations officials made perhaps the most explicit, if sexist, attempt to describe the future Secretary-General's qualifications:

The qualities which the head of the service should possess are not easy to define. He should be young. Political or diplomatic experience, but not necessarily great fame or eminence, is an advantage. Above all, ability for administration in the broadest sense is important, implying a knowledge of when to be dynamic, to take the initiative and to force an issue; when, at the other extreme, to be content as a purely administrative official; and when, on a middle course, to be a moderator impartially smoothing over difficulties, a catalytic agent in negotiation.... In a new organization, it may well be that the only qualities which must under all conditions be demanded of the director are those of common sense, courage, integrity and tact.

*The International Secretariat of the Future
(Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, March 1944)*

reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization' (Article 100). Later on the Charter refers to the necessity of securing, in the Secretariat, the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity (Article 101).

Around the time of the appointment of the first Secretary-General, some delegations pondered on these matters without reaching very clear conclusions. For example, a U.S. State Department meeting in August 1945 concluded that the future Secretary-General 'should be a man of recognized prestige and competence in the field of diplomacy and foreign office experience. He should be forty-five to fifty-five years of age and be fluent in both French and English.... It was generally agreed that it would be undesirable that the candidate should come from the USSR or from France.' A later memorandum states, 'The SG should, if possible, not be a national of one of the Big Five; he should be chosen because of his qualifications.' (The requisite qualifications are not stated.) In late September 1945, Adlai Stevenson told Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., 'we favour choice of an outstandingly qualified individual, preferably a figure who has attained some international position and preferably a national of a small or middle power.'

A few specific names began to be mentioned. In late December, when the appointment of the first Secretary-General was imminent, the State Department, in a memo entitled 'Hot Topics expected to arise in the Assembly...', stated that the Secretary-Generalship was the most important and urgent administrative matter and that 'a more common acceptance of the qualifications required for the SG would be helpful in arriving at a decision'. Even two weeks before the appointment the State Department apparently had no candidate and no clear policy in mind, Alger Hiss noting to the Secretary of State on 19 January 1946 that 'the qualifications of the man should be the primary consideration...' and that he should preferably not be a national of one of the five major powers. Trygve Lie, who began to be considered for the Secretary-Generalship at a relatively late stage, was appointed on 1 February 1946.

In the prolonged search for a successor to Trygve Lie in late 1952 and early 1953, the name of Dag Hammarskjöld emerged at a late stage in the proceedings as a suggestion by the French Ambassador, who had been impressed by his work in Paris on the early
16 stages of the Marshall Plan. Hammarskjöld was virtually unknown to the other members

of the Security Council, and was generally believed to be a non-political technocrat. Within less than two weeks he was Secretary-General.

Thereafter, whenever the post was about to become vacant, little consideration seems to have been given to the qualities or qualifications required of a future Secretary-General, nor indeed to the *need* for leadership qualities or the demands which the forthcoming period in world affairs would be likely to make on the new leader.

► ***What Do Governments Want?***

What do governments, which make the key decisions in this matter, really want from the Secretary-General? The answer to this question is a complicated one, varying as it does between different situations, different periods and the different perceptions of different groups of governments. Hitherto, most industrialized countries have tended to see the UN as the guardian of the *status quo*, while the developing world has been inclined to look to it as the agent of change. The five permanent members of the Security Council, whose votes are crucial in the selection of the Secretary-General, have usually been reluctant to accept too much political independence in the Secretary-General, especially if his views or actions seemed likely to be at variance with their policies on a particular issue. There are some indications that this attitude may be changing. The interests of the UN as a whole, as well as its member governments, are, in the long run, undoubtedly best served by an impartial, independent and imaginative Secretary-General with both the courage of his convictions and the common sense to avoid unnecessary difficulties.

There may also be differences between governments as to the relative importance of the different parts of the Secretary-General's work—political, administrative, mediating, coordinating, producing new ideas or communicating with public opinion. As a general rule governments do not wish either to be upstaged or to be publicly opposed by the Secretary-General, yet they also wish him to take the initiative in an emergency or when governments themselves are unable to act. Virtually all governments believe the Secretary-General should be the guardian of the Charter, although there are frequent disagreements on the interpretation of that document. Virtually all believe he 17

should step in as an intermediary in disputes between states, but precisely when and how is often a matter of controversy.

In practice governments seem to require in the Secretary-General, as Ambassador Max Finger, a former member of the US Mission to the UN, has put it, 'excellence within the parameters of political reality', a carefully qualified mandate.

The general public would probably welcome something more dynamic than this—a fearless, wise, outspoken, articulate champion of peace, justice, law, human rights and reason.

► ***Problems of Coherence and Coordination in the UN System***

The Secretary-General has always been expected to provide a focal point and a sense of direction in certain complex international dealings. There has so far been less emphasis on his role in shaping the global agenda, in encouraging cooperative action and in providing intellectual leadership. As indicated earlier, this may well become a central part of the Secretary-General's role in the future. As the areas of global interdependence increase and become more important for the future, an architect of global management systems and an advocate of global approaches will also be urgently needed.

The Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, states (p. 318):

As in each agency, there is also a need for a high-level centre of leadership for the UN system as a whole with the capacity to assess, advise, assist and report on the progress made and needed for sustainable development. That leadership should be provided by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization.

Such a development may pose a significant dilemma. The by-now accepted role of the Secretary-General in diplomacy, conflict-resolution, and peace-keeping has always suggested a certain detachment, reticence, even mystery, for the office. Can the same

human rights, and public educator on international economic and social issues? A way has to be found to reconcile these different roles and to fit them into the total leadership of the UN system, in the UN Secretariat, and among the various agencies and programmes.

In this connection it is also necessary to look briefly at the practical difficulties presented by the present state of affairs in the UN system, the central organization of the United Nations and its galaxy of specialized agencies, programmes, special funds and offices. Although its political and security functions usually attract the most public attention, the United Nations system is already concerned with virtually all fields of human activity. It has, however, been developed and used by governments over the years in a surprisingly unsystematic way. The balance of centralization and decentralization has not been clearly thought out or defined. The system is unwieldy, lacks coherence, and often has difficulty in developing and implementing integrated strategies. This is particularly serious at a time when, as we have seen, the priority items of the international agenda are, increasingly, immensely complex global problems.

The failure of coordination in the UN system begins at the political level. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has never successfully performed the coordinating functions which the Charter assigned to it in relation to the programmes of the whole system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF and the World Bank group. Moreover, the discussion of economic and social issues is spread in an unsatisfactory and wasteful way between ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

No one has yet prevailed upon governments to coordinate their own policies in the different parts of the UN system. Thus governments often call for strong, multidisciplinary coordination in the United Nations and allow for the reverse in the governing bodies of the specialized agencies. Governments also frequently fail to apply in their internal policies what they advocate in international fora.

At the administrative level, the Secretary-General, as *primus inter pares* among the heads of autonomous specialized agencies, has neither the position nor the power to coordinate the system effectively. He does not, for example, have the outright authority to convene meetings of the heads of key agencies to deal with matters on the global agenda and to arrange for a proper division of effort within the UN system. This also

means that there is a lack of integrated intellectual analysis to animate the activities of the whole system. Although the full ramifications of this are outside the scope of this study, the obstacles to coordination are a major part of the problems of leadership in the UN system. While coordination must not degenerate either into obfuscating bureaucracy or paralysing centralization, strengthening the leadership will require, among other things, a radical improvement in the arrangements for coordinating the different parts of the system.

► ***The Actual Scope of the Job***

Different Secretaries-General have tackled their tasks in different ways. Among the qualities that are unquestionably required are moral stature and integrity, diplomatic skill, fair-mindedness, analytical capability, administrative, management and executive ability, the ability to develop original ideas, the capacity to communicate, physical stamina, and a sense of proportion and humour.

The Secretary-General, if the work is to be effective, must also have the capacity to look beyond the purely intergovernmental sphere to the private and non-governmental sectors and to bring them into the work of the UN system to a far greater extent than hitherto. For many of the key items of the international agenda—human rights, the status of women, or the environment, for example—much of the necessary dynamism and capacity to gain support and follow-up for international decisions will come increasingly from non-governmental sources. 'We, the peoples...' must be acknowledged, and sensitivity to the will of the peoples will be an important factor in gaining popular support for essential changes. President Mikhail Gorbachev's proposals for a 'World Consultative Council' and an 'Assembly of Public Organizations' are of great interest in this connection.

The responsibilities of the Secretary-General are thus constantly expanding, and the job comprises, at present, at least three or four more or less full-time jobs. These include:

- ▶ administration and management of the Secretariat;
- ▶ official representation of the United Nations worldwide;
- ▶ constant contact with member states;
- ▶ representation and interpretation of the United Nations to the public, and to the non-governmental sector and the private sector;
- ▶ coordination of the UN system;
- ▶ maintenance of a global watch on major developments;
- ▶ generating ideas and strategies;
- ▶ use of good offices and crisis management (peace-making and peace-keeping);
- ▶ good offices on human rights and humanitarian matters.

Obviously no single individual can be expected adequately to perform all these tasks.

The opportunity afforded by the recent improvement in the political climate should enable future Secretaries-General to work through managed delegation of authority in the United Nations itself to a far greater extent and in a far more effective way than in the past. This of course makes the proper selection of top officials even more essential. The ability to delegate, while leading and concentrating the efforts of the whole system and mobilizing it to tackle well-defined common objectives, will be essential to success.

The increasing importance of socio-economic problems in the broadest sense by no means downgrades the necessity of the functions of peace-making and peace-keeping which have hitherto been regarded as primary tasks of the Secretary-General. On the contrary, peace and security are increasingly an indispensable complement of the resolution of the world's economic, ecological and social problems, which have themselves become security problems. The other aspects of the Secretary-General's duties, and those of his senior colleagues in the Secretariat and the specialized agencies—management, coordination, intellectual leadership and the formulation of international strategy to deal with global problems—have simply assumed a greater importance than in the past. In other words, the always onerous task of the Secretary-General has become more demanding than ever before.

If the present political climate holds, it may well be possible to envisage for the first time a far more efficacious structuring of the Secretary-General's own chain of command. One possible scheme would be for three deputies—for peace and security, 21

including peace-keeping; for economic and social matters, including environment and the coordination of the system; and for administration and management. There is also a growing case to be made for a deputy in charge of relations with the public and with the non-governmental and private sector, with a special interest in cultural diversity. The willingness of governments to deal with a deputy will be more important than ever.

A system of deputies would allow for a reduction and restructuring of the present large top echelon of officials. As a practical matter, the need for a far greater degree of delegation of authority will require both the authority and the ability to select the best subordinates, to bestow confidence on them and to manage them imaginatively.

For the future, the problem of the coordination and management of the system will be paramount. Thus, to the traditional duties of the Secretary-General as a diplomat, mediator, and administrator must now be added those of a team leader and *animateur*, with the capacity to organize, to conceptualize, to delegate and to coordinate international work over a vast range of human activity. He or she will need to be able to mobilize the intellectual, human and organizational resources for this task, and have the vision as well as the management skills to use them.

► ***The Conduct of the Office***

It is easy to formulate generalizations on the ideal conduct of the Secretary-Generalship. The Secretary-General should both have the confidence of governments, and be an inspiration to the peoples of the world. The Secretary-General should be assisted by a brilliant, cohesive, forward-looking team drawn from different disciplines. He or she should be at the same time a bold leader, a master in managed delegation, and a prudent diplomat. He or she should be independent and not afraid, when necessary, of upsetting a super power or a large group of member states. He or she should have a deep commitment to the eradication of poverty. He or she should know when to take initiatives and when to hold back. He or she should generate, and be receptive to, new ideas and be capable of following them up. The Secretary-General should be the world's leading mediator and honest broker in disputes between governments. Although the

22 office has little real power, it provides very wide possibilities for exercising influence.

THE SELECTION PROCESS 1945-1986

The process of appointing the Secretary-General has, hitherto, been a curiously haphazard and disorganized affair. The actual selection would appear, in all cases, to have been the product more of chance than of foresight, consultation, or planning at the highest levels of government. It might be said to be remarkable, with such a method of selection, that the results have been, on the whole, as good as they have. However, the importance and changing nature of the task raise the question whether such an important appointment should, in future, be left so much to chance.

A study of how the five Secretaries-General since 1946 were appointed creates two main impressions—its last-minute and unpredictable nature, and the increasingly parochial level at which the matter is considered by member states.

► *Who Appoints?*

At Dumbarton Oaks the idea that the Secretary-General be elected directly by the General Assembly was strongly opposed by the great powers who were to be the permanent members of the Security Council. A subsequent proposal that the Security Council should make the recommendation by a majority of seven votes (the Council originally had eleven members) but that the veto power of the permanent members should not be applicable was also strongly resisted by the permanent members on the grounds that the election of the Secretary-General was not a procedural matter.

The issue was debated again at San Francisco, and amendments were offered by Honduras, Egypt, Mexico, Australia, Uruguay and Venezuela, with a view to lessening the control of the Security Council over the selection of the Secretary-General. Mexico, for example, proposed nomination by a majority of the Council, and Belgium and Canada urged that the Security Council vote need not include the affirmative vote of the permanent members. This was rejected by the United States. The permanent members again argued that this was a substantive matter and that in any case the Secretary-General would need the support of the major powers in order to do his job.

The Netherlands made forceful arguments against the applicability of the veto and suggested that if the veto applied to the selection, then re-election should not be allowed.

These and other arguments did not move the permanent members, and, after lengthy debate, it was determined that the veto *would* apply to the appointment of the Secretary-General. Article 97 of the Charter states that 'The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council'. As one ambassador pointed out, the word 'electing' would have given the General Assembly the authority to choose a candidate, but in 'appointing', it could only confirm or reject.

Belgium, the Netherlands, Canada and Australia took the view that the application of the veto might impair the independence of action of the Secretary-General. The Netherlands also maintained that the application of the veto by one of the permanent members,

would compel the permanent members to reach a compromise, and this might result in the appointment of a 'lowest common denominator'. Furthermore the Secretary-General would work in the knowledge that his chances of re-election would be small if he were to incur the displeasure of one of the permanent members.

► ***Who Starts the Process?***

It is impossible to say precisely who or what agency initiates the nomination of candidates for the Secretary-Generalship. In practice it is now usually self-named candidates themselves, or their governments. Certainly the permanent missions at United Nations Headquarters exchange views and gossip on the matter, and keep their capitals informed. Foreign Offices with active United Nations desks take an interest and eventually decide at least which candidates are unacceptable, and even which candidates they most favour. In recent years there is remarkably little evidence of serious discussion of the Secretary-Generalship at higher levels of government, and even less of a dispassionate high-level consideration of the nature of the task or of the qualities,

24 background and expertise required to provide the best future leadership.

► ***The Role of the Veto***

The veto power in the Security Council has remained a decisive factor in the selection of the Secretary-General, an eliminating process before the Security Council makes its recommendation to the General Assembly. The essential choice of the Secretary-General has in practice been made by the five permanent members, and the decision of the General Assembly has been more or less of a rubber-stamp. The fact that the General Assembly theoretically has the power to *refuse* a Security Council recommendation has not, so far, played any significant part in the process.

► ***Campaigning***

The practice of candidates campaigning for the office of Secretary-General, which emerged around 1970, has further confused and downgraded an already disoriented and unsystematic process. The possibility of the incumbent Secretary-General staying on has also tended to discourage a systematic search for a successor. Right from the beginning unless they were running a candidate themselves, governments seem to have considered the selection of a new Secretary-General only when names had begun to emerge and lobbying by self-proclaimed candidates had already begun. The process then became a matter of examining the field, picking possible winners, deciding who had to be blocked, discarding unsuitable candidates and bargaining for either the best available among them, or the least bad. Latterly, discussions in regional groups, especially in the initial phase, sometimes played a part in putting together bloc support for a particular candidate. The knowledge that the veto would, in the end, determine the outcome seems for the most part to have discouraged an imaginative approach to the matter, based on a wide-ranging search procedure.

► ***Term of Office***

The Charter is mute about other important questions relating to the Secretary-General, such as term of office or re-election. The term of office of the Secretary-General was a matter of some debate at San Francisco. The Preparatory Commission of the United Nations changed the suggested term from the three years recommended both in the Dumbarton Oaks proposal and at San Francisco to five years. General Assembly resolution 11(I) of 24 January 1946 stated, 'the *first* Secretary-General shall be appointed for five years, the appointment being open at the end of that period for a further five-year term'. The resolution clearly applied only to the first Secretary-General and was designed to allow him to follow through with start-up plans for the organization. The resolution added, 'there being no stipulation on the subject in the Charter, the General Assembly and the Security Council are free to modify the term of office of future Secretaries-General in the light of experience'. (At San Francisco, Mexico had proposed a single 7-10-year term.)

There has been little subsequent debate on the merits of the five-year, renewable term, which has become the accepted practice.

Certain purely unwritten and informal assumptions have grown up about the Secretary-Generalship. The Secretary-General should serve a five-year renewable term of office. The Secretary-General should not be a national of one of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council. The veto applies to Security Council recommendations on the choice of the Secretary-General. Governments alone are responsible for the selection and recommendation process.

Other assumptions have been vaguer. The Secretary-Generalship should in theory rotate among geographical regions. The background of candidates should be diplomatic or political. The Secretary-General shall not have deputies as such. The Secretary-General shall be a man. The candidates seriously considered have all, hitherto, been men.

► ***The Nature of the Process***

From the foregoing it emerges that the process for the appointment of the Secretary-General has so far been largely confined to a *procedure to secure a nomination*. There has been little or no methodical search in order to find candidates outstandingly equipped for an important and extraordinarily difficult job. Rather, the basic criterion appears to have been to find a reasonably acceptable candidate who could escape the veto. A secondary criterion has been a notion of rotating the post among the main geographical regions.

The appointment of the Secretary-General has tended to become more and more an 'in-house' affair. It is only natural that permanent representatives to the UN, with their admirable collegial tradition, should tend to be predisposed in favour of candidates known to them and already part of the UN diplomatic community. But this has also had the effect of limiting both the field of candidates considered and the breadth of their experience and expertise.

The search for the best person for what is one of the world's most important offices has thus become a chancy and, to some extent, self-serving process. The events leading up to the 1971 appointment of the Secretary-General, for example, provide a sad impression of lack of top-level governmental interest, inadequate high-level consultation, opportunism, gossip, rumour, intrigue and a complete absence of record-checking. In that particular case the result later became highly questionable and damaging to the stature of the United Nations.

► ***Changing Assumptions and Criteria***

Governments, while often outspoken in their criticism of international organizations, seem to have become less conscious of their responsibility to appoint the best possible leaders for them. An examination of some assumptions might serve to refresh a process that has become somewhat stale.

There is nothing sacrosanct about the convention that the Secretary-General's term should be five years and renewable. The disadvantages of this tradition have been pointed out many times. The job is so demanding, and so physically and mentally strenuous, that ten years may be too long. Five years is a relatively short time to initiate and carry through important policies or reforms. An incumbent Secretary-General who wishes to be reappointed may be subjected to undesirable pressures. The tradition of reappointment, abetted by the natural predisposition of governments against change and their reluctance to face making a new choice, can lead to staleness. It certainly inhibits a properly organized and timely search for a successor.

In the light of these and other considerations a single term of seven years would have many advantages. It would give a Secretary-General the opportunity to undertake far-reaching plans and to ignore undesirable pressures. It would make possible a more orderly and considered process for selecting the best possible successor. In our view the seven-year, single term of office is the key to improving the whole process and should be established as soon as possible.

Effective as of the next election, Secretaries-General should be elected for a single term not to exceed seven years.

*A Successor Vision: The United Nations of Tomorrow,
the report of an international panel assembled by the
United Nations Association of the United States of America, 1988, p. 204.*

As the world and its problems steadily transcend nationality, it seems possible that the idea of continental rotation, or indeed nationality, will have decreasing importance in the selection of the Secretary-General. Only one major geographical region has still not provided a Secretary-General. However, this is by no means inconsistent with the paramount consideration of finding the best possible candidate.

The tradition that the Secretary-General should not be a national of one of the five permanent members of the Security Council rules out some forty per cent of the world's people as potential candidates. It also rules out countries which are both major powers
28 and major financial contributors to the United Nations. Until now, there has been a

general feeling that political conditions made it unwise to reconsider this tradition. With the current rapidly changing political climate, and changes in the power balance and in the old concept of 'great powers', this serious restriction on the pool of candidates may begin to lose its validity. This question is indirectly related to the assumption that the veto should apply to the Security Council's recommendation of the candidate for Secretary-General. A trade-off between these two traditions might be considered.

The fact that no woman has hitherto been a candidate for the Secretary-Generalship is grotesque, especially for an organization whose Charter commits it to the equality of men and women. This basic shortcoming reaches to virtually all parts of the UN system: so far, no woman has served as the executive head of a specialized agency, and only one as the head of a main fund or programme.

► ***Can the Appointment Process be Improved?***

Would an alternative to the present haphazard, increasingly parochial, predominantly political process in fact produce better results? And would governments, not to mention candidates, be prepared to accept the kind of scrutiny, expert advice and wider canvassing which are considered both normal and essential in great enterprises in the non-governmental and private sector? In this study, we assume that the present process *can* be improved, and that the conditions of our changing world demand it. We do this in full knowledge that the political aspect of the matter cannot be ignored, and also that the character of the United Nations inclines to trading and lobbying.

► ***An Improved Process***

If the term of a Secretary-General were to be limited to a seven-year single term, an improved process of appointment could be discussed by the General Assembly and the Security Council without any risk of possible embarrassment to the current Secretary-General.

The essential elements of an improved process are:

- ▶ serious consideration by governments of the necessary qualifications for the post, as indicated, among other things, by probable future demands on the UN;
- a single seven-year term;
- ▶ the cessation of the practice of individual campaigning for the Secretary-Generalship;
- ▶ agreed rules as to nominations and a timetable for the process;
- ▶ a well organized search, in good time, for the best qualified candidates worldwide, thus taking the initiative away from self-perceived or nationally sponsored candidates;
- ▶ the inclusion of women candidates in the search in comparable numbers to men;
- a mechanism for the proper assembly of biographical material and for the assessment and checking of the qualifications, personal suitability, record, etc., of the candidates;
- ▶ high-level consideration of candidates by governments, in consultation with parliamentary leaders and important non-governmental bodies, before final decision.

A search group, to be established by the Security Council each time, should be representative of both its permanent and non-permanent members. It should be authorized to seek information and advice from any source, including the non-governmental sector and the international civil service. Its work should be carried out in the strictest confidentiality and well in advance of the date for a new appointment.

The search group would examine the qualifications and background of all nominees, with the option to interview them and, if necessary, to conduct a wider search for candidates. It should consult with the regional groups, and its recommendations should reflect, among other things, their views. It would report to the Security Council.

The right to nominate candidates should be clearly defined, as well as the information required to accompany a nomination. A timetable for the whole process, including deadlines for the nomination of candidates, should also be agreed on.

The aim of such arrangements would be to produce a better considered choice of candidates, to avoid a desperate last-minute search for a compromise candidate, and to give more weight to the views of the membership as a whole, as well as of concerned constituencies outside the UN.

It will be argued by some that the above suggestions constitute a complicated alternative to a relatively casual process which on balance has not worked badly in the past, and that they will only cause unnecessary work, trouble, and even embarrassment

THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

The function of leadership of the specialized agencies and programmes is easier to define than that of the UN itself. Nonetheless, changing circumstances here also demand a new look at the question of leadership.

► Current Practice

The appointment process for the heads of the specialized agencies differs in many ways from those in the United Nations itself. Exact arrangements also differ from organization to organization, although all the executive heads are appointed either by the legislative body composed of all the member states of the organization or by its smaller governing body.

Generally speaking the procedures of the specialized agencies for the appointment of their chief officers are far more systematic and explicit than those of the United Nations. They include time frames, rules for the submission of candidatures, and procedures in case no candidate receives the requisite majority. The submission of biographical details is mandatory in some cases. The entitlement to make proposals or nominations is also specifically spelled out in many cases. In no instance, however, are the criteria for the election of the executive head or the qualifications required spelled out.

The terms of office of the executive heads vary from three to six years, and in all cases executive heads may be reappointed. Some have remained in office for very considerable periods of time. The record is twenty-five years, but four others served for more than twenty years. In five organizations reappointment is restricted for one further term only, and there is a current tendency in other agencies to introduce such a restriction. Governments at FAO voted in 1971 for a single term of office, but rescinded the measure in 1977. UNESCO has recently restricted the Director-General's term of office to two six-year terms. A number of organizations also have specific provisions for the removal of the executive head from office in exceptional cases, although these have never been invoked.

A wide variety of patterns and traditional assumptions has governed the selection of executive heads of the specialized agencies. In some the head is invariably of Western nationality; in some the head is almost always from within the organization; in most from outside it. There have been some brilliant appointments; other promising candidates have belied their promise once in office.

It is difficult to draw categorical conclusions from the record of fourteen agencies of widely varying character and specialized constituencies. Three observations, however, seem to be valid.

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- ▶ The existence of detailed procedures is no guarantee of quality if member governments are not determined to secure the best.
 - ▶ The level of concern for leadership quality in some important agencies has, over the years, declined.
 - ▶ In some larger agencies in recent years, North-South tensions and frustrations have sometimes resulted in more importance being given to political considerations or to geographical bargaining than to the need to find the best possible candidates, whether from North or South.

▶ ***Reappointment***

The present practice whereby most executive heads are eligible for reappointment has the obvious merit of enabling an outstanding leader to continue to serve, but it also has a number of disadvantages, similar to those mentioned for the United Nations in preceding pages.

On balance, experience seems to indicate the desirability of single terms of office, long enough for an outstanding person to make the optimum contribution under the best possible conditions.

▶ ***Possible Improvements***

Since the specialized agencies have detailed procedures, and their intergovernmental bodies have constitutionally established roles in appointments, improvement in the selection of their executive heads would largely involve improved search procedures and, above all, an increased interest among member governments in appointing the best possible candidate.

In 1988, the World Health Organization instituted improved procedures for election of the WHO European Regional Director. The WHO intergovernmental Regional Committee established a one-year timetable for the process; specific criteria against which to measure all candidates; and a small Search Group to examine
32 nominations and, if necessary, seek other candidates. The search group gave its final

recommendation to the Committee, which then chose a candidate to forward to the WHO Executive Board. Such a procedure might prove a useful model for the selection of executive heads of agencies.

... it is obvious that the choice of a person to be Regional Director for Europe is an important and a difficult one; yet, paradoxically, the present method of selection for this post is less stringent than that applied to all lower levels of WHO staff.... It seems essential that the choice (be) guided first and foremost by the professional and individual characteristics of the person concerned. Under the present procedures, however, the qualities expected of candidates are not specified (and) there is no mechanism whereby different candidates can be assessed on an objective basis and measured by a common yardstick....

WHO Programme Committee, 4 October 1988

There is ample evidence that serious political tensions, and even developments that are highly damaging to the performance of the agency concerned, may result from mediocre or ill-advised choices. This danger is unlikely to be eliminated so long as, on the one hand, the North-South dialogue makes no progress, while on the other, only candidates of Western nationality can be considered in certain agencies. The time may well have come when governments of industrialized countries might consider relinquishing such traditions, perhaps in return for an understanding that the search for the best possible executive heads in all agencies will be conducted on the basis of consensus between all regions.

The implicit responsibility of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the health and high standards of the whole United Nations system indicates that the Secretary-General should be connected in some way with the appointments of the heads of specialized agencies. In view of the responsibility of the Secretary-General as guardian of the credibility of the whole system, governments, through the respective search committees, should consult him or her about such appointments. Giving the Secretary-General at least an informal say in the election process would be an important expression of the team idea which is becoming more essential in an increasingly interdependent world.

UN FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

► *Previous Practice*

The work of the UN funds and programmes is complex and wide-ranging. For example, the heads of the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund and World Food Programme are responsible for thousands of development projects in developing countries; and the UN Environment Programme addresses highly technical worldwide problems. The responsibilities are large and resources are pledged to these funds in the order of \$3 billion annually. The appointment procedures for the executive heads of these funds and programmes differ radically from those for the specialized agencies.

The development funds and programmes have their own governing bodies elected by the Economic and Social Council and composed of representatives of member states. There, however, similarities between selection and appointment of executive heads of the big funds and of the specialized agencies end.

There are no rules for the submission of nominations for these posts, except the unwritten tradition that the heads of UNDP and UNICEF should be nationals of the United States. Beyond formal descriptions of responsibilities, there are no guidelines for the requisite qualifications or experience of candidates. No governing body, nor any group designated by it, meets to consider an executive head appointment. The Secretary-General selects a candidate, consults members of the governing body individually and privately, and then seeks General Assembly confirmation of the appointment. The terms of office vary from three to five years. All these positions are renewable without any prescribed limit as to the number of terms.

The UN and the world have, by and large, been well served by those appointed to head the development funds, but the appointment process was established many years ago when the funds were much smaller, the pattern of contributions was different, and it was appropriate for their heads to be appointed by the Secretary-General with particular regard to their fund-raising ability. Today these funds are large operations. UNDP's \$1.2 billion in annual contributions alone exceeds the core budget of the UN itself. The funds' operations are now multi-faceted interventions to support global, regional, and national development efforts in some 150 countries and territories. Of the nine executive heads to date in UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA—organizations which exist exclusively to assist developing countries—only four had prior working experience in Third World development. Only two of these (both heading UNFPA) have been nationals of developing countries. Only one woman has ever headed *any* of these funds.

The selection and appointment process for these posts of major international importance
34 depends on an already heavily burdened Secretary-General trying to find the best

possible person for the job, in the face of donor and other lobbying and much campaigning for not necessarily suitable candidates. The process does not include gathering together the members of a fund's own governing body to consider new candidates. In one recent instance, even the informal consultation step with governing body members was neglected. The tendency to reappoint incumbents seems to have become nearly automatic. The 'confirmation' by the General Assembly, of which these funds and programmes are legal organs, is largely nominal and ritual.

► ***Improvements***

The procedures for the appointment of the heads of UN funds and programmes should measure up to the scale of their responsibilities and the complexity of their work. Obviously the Secretary-General should remain predominant in the process of selection, but he or she should be properly supported and assisted in this task and protected from undue pressures. The role of intergovernmental bodies in the process should also be made more constructive and consistent.

The issue of terms of office for these posts, which vitally affects the selection process, should be squarely addressed. A single term of up to seven years should be long enough for an outstanding leader to make an optimal contribution without the liabilities of reappointment.

It is highly desirable to eliminate national monopolies on such important posts. It ought to become possible, as it has with UNFPA, for the best possible candidates to be considered whether they come from industrialized or developing countries. Or, as an interim step, if it is still considered desirable to have UNDP, UNICEF and WFP headed by nationals of industrialized countries, at least the field should be opened up to *all* such countries.

► ***Changes in Procedure***

A year before the expiry of the incumbent's term, the fund's governing body should publicly review the main tasks required of the executive leadership in the forthcoming period, taking into account new developments and the need, if any, for reorganization. The governing body should agree on a deadline by which the Secretary-General should receive nominations.

The Secretary-General, in consultation with the bureau of the governing body, should appoint a small group of highly experienced governmental and non-governmental advisors, representative of industrialized *and* developing countries and expert in the fund or programme's field of work. This panel would review the candidates, seek more information on them, search out others if necessary, and present to the Secretary-General a short list of the best available candidates, with equal consideration for male and female candidates.

The Secretary-General could then choose and present a candidate to the governing body on the basis of independent expert advice and enquiry. The appointment would still be confirmed by the General Assembly.

THE SENIOR ECHELON AT THE UNITED NATIONS

► *Current Practice*

In the senior echelon at the UN, the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation holds rank equivalent to that of the executive heads of the specialized agencies and the major UN funds; the remainder hold the ranks of Under Secretary-General (USG) and Assistant Secretary-General (ASG).

Except for the few who carry out diplomatic or 'special representative' functions for the Secretary-General, the USG-ASG senior echelon consists mainly of the operational heads of departments. They are responsible for implementing all the work programmes of the UN, for effectively using its budget, and for ensuring the quality, direction and morale of its international civil service staff. These are critically important functions.

In the UN Secretariat appointments to the senior echelon have traditionally been the personal responsibility of the Secretary-General. By an early 'gentleman's agreement' five of the original eight Assistant Secretaries-General were to be nationals of the five permanent members of the Security Council, introducing from the outset the element of national representation. The number of USGs and ASGs has grown over the years to more than thirty. Some of these have been proposed by governments; some have been personally selected by the Secretary-General for given jobs; only a few have risen through the ranks of the Secretariat. Vacancies are the focus of much jockeying and diplomatic lobbying, and it has not always been easy for the Secretary-General to resist such pressures.

This senior UN echelon has responsibilities at a very high level, yet very few reach these top positions through the UN's equivalent of monitored and prescribed civil service performance and promotion procedures. No vacancy is published, nor job description gazetted. The normal procedures for recruitment and appointment do not apply. The member-governments, whose delegations spend so much time and energy elaborating the UN's actual work programmes, devote little or no time or energy to ensuring that these programmes will be executed by the best possible managers. The incumbents are not accountable to a monitoring body of any kind.

In what should be a crucial leadership group, the performance of the top echelon over the years has been uneven. Although there have been some outstanding choices down through the years, the Secretary-General, the main body of the Secretariat, and the international community are not well served by such a disorganized approach to senior appointments.

► ***Improvements***

USGs and ASGs should continue to be appointed by the Secretary-General. The selection process, however, should be demystified and given a level of attention commensurate with the responsibilities of the senior officials involved. The Secretary-General should be freed from corridor manoeuvring, pressure and lobbying, and be given instead the necessary help in making the best possible choices.

Vacancies for these posts should be publicly announced, with properly prepared job descriptions, with the necessary indications to maintain the general geographical and gender balance of the top echelon. The Secretary-General should also make it clear that the General Assembly provision against national monopolies on senior posts will be rigorously applied.

The Director of Human Resources and Management should maintain a well researched list of top-calibre potential candidates. The Director, or a senior official designated by the Secretary-General, should interview candidates and seek independent outside views on their qualifications and suitability.

The Secretary-General's announcement of an appointment should describe the appointee's qualifications in relation to the responsibilities of the post. This might discourage the practice of urging substandard appointments upon the Secretary-General.

CONCLUSIONS

The pressing need and the present opportunity for well-directed international cooperation demand the best possible leadership for the United Nations system, the only existing universal framework for intergovernmental cooperation and international management. This is a testing time for the organizations of the UN system. It is a time when the urgent need for international action is confronted by coalitions of powerful special interests and with a renewal of nationalistic and ethnic feeling in many parts of this fragile world. It is a time when the balance between national sovereignty and international responsibility has constantly to be adjusted. It is a time when wise trans-national leadership is vital for human well-being—perhaps even for human survival.

The UN system faces two broad tasks, to combine peace-keeping and peace-making in a more consistent and reliable system of international peace and security, and to find the best way to deal with the major issues of global interdependence. The first of these tasks seems at present to be more straightforward than the second. Inspired leadership *and* managerial skill are needed to mobilize the UN system to its full potential. The agenda has to be shaped by rigorous analysis and nourished with the best ideas. Essential international objectives and programmes have to be persuasively presented to the public and to the private sector, as well as to governments.

These are formidable tasks for the Secretary-General and his or her colleagues who run the different parts of the system. Only if they become a team, working towards the same goals on an agreed plan, can they hope to succeed. It is also clear that there must be a symmetry and mutual reinforcement between leadership from member states and executive leadership within the United Nations system.

The question of leadership is obviously not the whole answer. It cannot be separated from the necessity for governments to adapt the UN system to the pressing realities of our times. Leadership will also be a part of that process and will be vital to its success.

The appointed leadership of the UN system functions within the realities of the existing power structures of world politics. While those structures remain dominant there is inevitably a serious limitation to what even the most inspired or devoted international leaders can achieve. By the same token, such leadership may be instrumental in constructively modifying the existing power structures.

The Secretary-General undoubtedly now has the opportunity to rationalize the command set-up in the UN itself by a more effective delegation of authority and by streamlining the senior echelon. Measures are also needed to ensure that the heads of the key agencies will in future join the Secretary-General to form what would, in effect, be an international cabinet for an energetic, coordinated approach to global problems.

The need for leadership demands reconsideration by governments of the process by which the UN's executive leaders are appointed. Parochial, national, geographical or political considerations should cease to dominate the process. Far more imaginative and wider search procedures are clearly required, with the primary purpose of finding the best possible candidates. The decision to have single-term appointments for a maximum of seven years would do much to energize and facilitate the search and appointment process. Major improvements in the selection process should be adopted throughout the system in order to ensure the highest standards and the most effective choices.

The best procedures will, however, be useless without the will and the sustained interest of governments in making them work. Obviously there is no perfect or infallible system for selecting leaders, but the risks can be greatly reduced by a stronger emphasis on the main objective, finding the best candidate for the job. None of the suggestions made in this study would require any change in the United Nations Charter, or in any other basic documents of the system.

Although governments select and appoint the leadership of the UN system, it is well to recall that the UN Charter opens with the words, 'We, the peoples...'. Elected representatives of the peoples in national parliaments should play a part in these important choices. The views of non-governmental organizations and committed citizens working on the planet's major problems should also be heard on the central question of the multilateral leadership required to address those problems.

The revitalization of the UN system and the quality of its leadership are closely related. If governments in the UN and the organization's executive leadership can generate valid and exciting ideas and approaches to urgent global problems with the same success that they are now beginning to have with conflict resolution, there will be no shortage of the best candidates for top leadership positions. The need now is to select the best, and to give them the most advantageous conditions in which to work. The

Discussion Papers

FINDING THE MOST EFFECTIVE UN LEADERS

Improving the Process

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INTRODUCTION

Finding leadership of high competence and integrity in public service is not an exact science, and it is not claimed that the recommendations made in this study could guarantee the kind and quality of UN leadership that the world will need in the exceptionally demanding times ahead. The realistic question is: what improvements in the selection and appointment process for UN system leadership would afford better possibilities for finding the most effective people?

Only governments, and those who may influence governments, can take action to improve the process. Improvement in rules and procedures alone will not secure the desired results if those who make the decisions and who influence decision-makers are not genuinely interested in the question. Rules and procedures can, however, make possible a better process of search and selection, and can perhaps reduce the chances of, or the damage from, serious mistakes.

TERMS OF OFFICE

The issue of renewability of the terms of office for UN leadership posts runs like a thread through all other aspects of the process of search and selection.

► *The Case for Renewability*

The arguments in favour of the renewability of an incumbent's term in a UN leadership post can be stated quite briefly. If an outstanding person is in the post, has realized the potential perceived in him or her,¹ and has perhaps even grown in the position, why deprive the organization and the international community of such leadership?

The second argument in favour of renewability is that of continuity and steadiness. Why rock the boat if it is on a reasonably sound course? This argument may attain greater weight if the incumbent is still engaged in some major improvement or innovation as the first term draws to a close, or if some major international crisis is still in process.

The issue of *length* of term is also important. Understandably, if a leadership term is of only four or five years and the incumbent is doing well enough, or is in fact carrying out important initiatives, the argument for renewal may seem overwhelming. The real issue here, however, is not renewability but the length of the term: if it were somewhat longer, a single term of office would be sufficient for any executive-led innovation.

There has been a third, much more circumspect, argument for renewability, namely that renewability sometimes affords a chance to protect an organization against the election of some 'undesirable' candidate who may have overwhelming political influence behind him. This argument has arisen not so much in general debate about terms of office but concerning a few posts over which a member state has held a 'traditional' monopoly. A sharp change in the political colour of a government might open a post about to be vacated to a candidate who might not be capable of running the organization or respecting UN precepts. In such a case, renewability allows the retention of a known quantity.

¹ Since the selection and appointment practices discussed in the past have been overwhelmingly for, and in the hands of, men, the authors use only the pronouns 'he' or 'him' for references in the past and present.

► ***The Case against Renewability***

Whether or not one accepts the first part of Lord Acton's often-quoted dictum, that 'all power corrupts', the knowledge that one could be re-elected or reappointed can be, and on occasion has been, a dangerous psychological force in the mind (and in the inner office) of an executive head. Even some who have previously shown no trace whatever of excessive self-esteem or vaulting ambition have proved vulnerable to these subtle influences:

- the first time an important Ambassador or other national official arrives, and includes in the discussion a mild suggestion about recruiting a favoured citizen into the Secretariat, the danger may manifest itself. The national's biography may reveal no reason why he/she should *not* be recruited into UN service; the question whether it contains decisive evidence that he *should* is the one that may not be asked.²
- policy issues may arise where the executive head's views will be important. Will he court the certain displeasure of some delegations, if a small voice is reminding him that they are future election voters?
- situations may call for an important public initiative by the executive head which one or more governments may not welcome.
- almost invariably, an executive head soon has around him some staff who perceive their own careers as invested in his. Beginning to rationalize that he really ought to be re-elected, they soon begin to say so to him, often with advice as to what should be done, and not done, to ensure his re-election.

To this list may be added the dangers of deliberate actions by the incumbent to ensure re-election. These have occurred from time to time throughout the history of UN system leadership, although comparatively seldom. Such behaviour has included manipulation of recruitment and other personnel procedures; the steering of project funds towards important sources of votes; the intimidation of permanent representatives near election time by high-level manœuvres with their home governments; the intimidation of international civil service staff into active campaigning for the executive head's re-election; actions taken to obtain awards or secure personal publicity; and the use of the executive head's valuable time and travel funds for journeys seeking re-election votes.

Taken overall, the record of the UN system in these respects is good in comparison with behaviour patterns among national public leaders seeking re-election. But that offending practices

² Soon after he first assumed the office, Secretary-General Pérez de Cuellar made a point of publicly declaring that he would only serve one term, adding that it was important that all concerned know this so that he might be free of pressures.

have been limited to only a few UN executive heads, or that a few have indulged in only some of the offending practices, is still no argument for renewability of terms of office. Even one case of this kind is unacceptable, as well as damaging for the reputation of the entire system.

► ***The Danger of Error***

It is axiomatic that there is no perfect, error-proof process for selecting public leaders. Someone who has shown great promise may fail to rise to the actual challenge of a post. Someone who has served well as the head of one kind of organization can turn out to be a relative mediocrity in a major UN agency. Someone whose autocratic ways were tolerable in some smaller agency outside the UN can be revealed, once in position in a large UN body, as an arrogant unguided missile. Or the unassuming, quiet personage of yesterday can become an incipient megalomaniac in high office in a UN organization. Some of the more disastrous appointments made by governments to these posts in the past can clearly be attributed to indifference, to the politics of the lowest common denominator, or to East-West or North-South tensions; but some have been straightforward errors in judgment. The improvements in rules and procedures suggested in this study will not fully guarantee against such errors.

If only for this reason, however, it is vital that the UN system's leadership be *capable of change when change is clearly needed*. In addition, changes in world needs—and perhaps major restructuring—indicate that a good leader for one period may not necessarily be the most appropriate for the one ahead. The tradition of renewability of an incumbent is a serious obstacle to the system's capacity for well-considered change.

► ***The Incumbent's Advantages***

In national public leadership, an incumbent has very powerful built-in advantages over any contestant; but in the UN system an incumbent is in some respects even more favoured. The following description of this phenomenon could apply to all intergovernmental organizations (IGOs):

A main, perhaps the main, basis for leadership by an executive head of an IGO is the respect accorded the position as the primary institutional representation of the organization. In even the least complex IGO, there is multiplicity—of members, of organs, of tasks, of programmes. The more complex is the organization, the more multiplex are its components and its emanations and the more difficult it is for the organization to identify itself, to be identified,

amid the multiple claims to define its ethos. Only one actor is available to fill this identity vacuum and that is the executive head. Constitutionally neutral, the executive head is in a position to attract the confidences of all and, thus, is enabled to claim their confidence as well.³

The aura that can build up around this personage can soften—and has softened—criticism of an incumbent at crucial junctures.

Other powerful factors can work to the advantage of the incumbent who is eligible for another term. There is nothing like as much patronage to dispense to loyal supporters as in national politics; but an incumbent in the UN system usually has behind him his government and his region *vis-à-vis* other regions, either or both of which other governments may not wish to offend by supporting a new candidate.

► ***The North-South Factor***

The strong economic, political and cultural tensions across the North-South divide can make re-electing an incumbent from a developing country an issue not only of his competence and behaviour in office, but also of resisting Western pressures or donor-country conditions. An incumbent may be able to mobilize Third World majority support for himself.⁴ He may also greatly strengthen his position if he is able to point to Northern opposition to a Third World incumbent concurrently heading another UN agency. Developing country delegations may well have misgivings about renewing an incompetent or mediocre executive head in terms of the effect on the organization itself. As long, however, as the deep and sometimes bitter tensions of the North-South imbalance persist or increase, factors of 'solidarity' and emotional reaction to a potential insult to the Third World as a whole may be an important factor in the selection process while the renewability of terms continues.

The obvious solution to such problems is the single term of office. The developing countries' majority provides the possibility of electing a new and better person from their regions, while removing from the selection process any suggestion of bowing to Northern 'pressure' or acquiescing in derogation of a Third World head in another agency.

³ Lawrence S. Finkelstein, in Finkelstein (ed.), *Politics in the United Nations System* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1988) p. 409.

⁴ Needless to say, when Western majorities prevailed, the same syndrome noted here could be observed.

► ***Other Political Factors***

North-South tension is not the only cause of the renewal of an executive head whose performance has been less than brilliant. There can be situations near the end of a term of office where the incumbent is from a country whose government various other members do not wish to displease at that particular time. Key ministers of such governments, all of whom may well be Northern, may judge that they should 'reserve their credit' in that particular capital for more important controversies which may have absolutely nothing to do with the UN organization concerned, but which override the policy considerations on the UN issue.

Renewability of terms can have especially severe consequences where there is no formal involvement of a governing body, as is the case in the selection procedures for virtually all executive heads of UN funds and programmes. The Secretary-General is supposed only to 'consult' the members of the governing body separately and privately. There being no *voting* procedure either in the immediate governing body or in the General Assembly (which merely and nominally 'confirms' his appointment), the Secretary-General is at the mercy of a form of unspoken consensus. He thus may not wish to take the risk of proposing a replacement of the incumbent, even if he knows this *should* be done and knows that many governments wish it *could* be done, lest delegations not wishing to offend the incumbent's government fail to support his action. As long as member governments permit their non-UN diplomatic relationships to affect their positions over these vital posts, the Secretary-General may not be free to act in the best interests of the organization. Single terms of executive office would remove this obstacle to eliminating mediocre or poor leadership.

► ***Diplomatic Delicacy***

The basic delicacies of the diplomatic circuit also have a subtle influence on the process. An incumbent is often seen as 'one of us' who cannot be 'insulted'; and thus even a demonstrably better new candidate may be viewed as an upstart outsider. The diplomatic community includes many people who find it difficult to perceive the deficiencies of an executive head as clearly as do those judging from the outside. The camaraderie of diplomatic life can soften the edges of critical judgment. This can be an important factor when the time comes to advise home governments as an executive head's term draws towards its close.

► ***Involvement of Secretariat Members***

The use of members of the Secretariat in promoting renewable terms is another factor in the present process. In a few worst cases, Secretariat members have been instructed to campaign for the re-election of their executive head. A conscientious ambassador, trying to assess the performance of the incumbent, may well try to obtain further insight by informal talks with well-placed staff members. If the staff member knows that the chief is bent on re-election—and has a good chance of getting it—he or she may well think twice about the danger of being quoted back to the front office.

► ***The Vicious Circle of Re-eligibility***

An important characteristic of renewable terms in any public service post, national or international, is the inhibition of serious consideration of an alternative. The built-in advantage held by the incumbent is often at work before any alternative candidate is even in sight. Busy government officials shrug off as unrealistic suggestions that there could be a change for the better; diplomats at the organization are reluctant even to speculate about what they regard as a futile exercise, lest any involvement may diminish their access to the incumbent in his presumed next term.

The consequences of such forces and factors can often be the reappointment of incumbents about whom, if asked in total confidence, most delegates would voice criticisms that were quite enough to warrant a change. Long-lasting damage has sometimes been done to a UN organization—to its reputation in the world at large, to its work, and to the morale of its staff—simply because, at the crucial moment, the incumbent seeking re-election has such formidable built-in advantages over any possible rival.

► ***The Balance Sheet***

The case against renewability has been elaborated at some length because it is seldom thoroughly explored, whereas the arguments in favour of it are well known and ostensibly attractive. In strongly recommending the adoption of single terms this study's authors have no intention of belittling the record and memory of all the fine leaders in the UN system who have served more than one term. The dangers of renewable terms have not been at work in the majority of

re-elections. The issue is whether the inherent dangers of renewability outweigh the benefits. In our view a longer term would ensure that the organization would receive an outstanding leader's best contributions, while protecting the system from the dangers of renewing terms of incumbents who were *not* outstanding.

The idea that an outstanding leader can make no further contribution except in continued service as an executive head in the UN system must also be questioned. In the early days when there were fewer UN organizations and a global agenda that posed far fewer simultaneous major challenges, this notion of total loss was strong. In a world that requires more and more complex multilateral machinery of varying kinds, the truly outstanding leader will always have opportunities to continue his or her service.

The tradition of giving one member state a monopoly on a post is a powerful argument both against renewability and for an *end* to such monopolies.

The authors of this study believe that a general rule of non-renewable terms of office for a seven-year term would be highly desirable for the health of the UN system.

► **FAO and UNESCO**

The history of debate and decision on renewability in FAO and UNESCO is of direct relevance to this question.

In FAO until 1971 the Director-General was appointed for four years with the possibility of renewal for two successive terms of two years only (for a total of eight). In 1971 a single six-year term was adopted. In 1977, however, during Mr. Edouard Saouma's first term, it was proposed that the six-year term should be renewable, without limitation on further terms. The argument was made that renewability was the practice in most other UN organizations, and that there was thus no reason for FAO to depart from the general practice, and that to retain the single term was a discrimination against the incumbent. Renewability without limit was decided upon and Mr. Saouma is now in his third six-year term.

In UNESCO, at the 1989 General Conference, the Constitution was amended, limiting an incumbent to two six-year terms. Here again, the practice in the rest of the UN system was raised in the debate, the Chairman of the Legal Committee recalling that various delegations had spoken of the desirability of a similar step in other organizations.

In both these cases the main point was the difficulty of establishing single terms in a single organization, while an incumbent was in service. A common, system-wide policy approach, at least in the major organizations, is not only desirable but has in effect already been actively

► **One Term Too Rigid?**

Some may still advance the view that adopting single terms could at any time needlessly deprive the UN of a truly outstanding, even genuinely great leader. Perhaps. The answer to this question should not be to maintain the present tradition of re-eligibility. Preserving leadership of this order could be provided for by stipulating that an incumbent could be extended for one further term *on the unanimous vote of the full legislative body* of the organization to *suspend*, as an exception, the standard provision of a single term.

► **Length of a Single Term**

The relatively short length of terms in small and wholly technical agencies may make it desirable to maintain existing arrangements. The major issue to be addressed is the term of office of the Secretary-General and the executive-head posts of major elements of the UN system. The number of years should be long enough for an outstanding leader to make a decisive contribution and short enough for a less satisfactory incumbent not to do too much damage. Thus, the inevitable possibility of error in selecting public leaders, even with the best possible process, will be limited.

Article 97 of the UN Charter says nothing at all about term of office of the Secretary-General, either as to renewability or length.

At Dumbarton Oaks the 'Sponsoring Governments' proposed a three-year term with re-election allowed (a British delegation cable back to London observed that a three-year term would make it possible 'to retain a suitable man indefinitely and dismiss a bad one within reasonable time'). This proposal was reluctantly accepted by the membership of the succeeding 1945 UN Conference on International Organization (UNCIO)—but at a time when it was assumed that the Security Council's recommendation of a candidate to the General Assembly would be by a simple seven-member majority.

When, however, the USSR persuaded the other major powers that the veto provision in the Security Council should apply to recommendation of a candidate for Secretary-General, Committee I/2 went into reverse and insisted that length of term of office not be provided for in *any way* in the Charter. The delegations argued that the need for unanimous agreement among the permanent members of the Security Council to extend an incumbent every three years would either render the Secretary-General hopelessly subservient to them during such a short term, or result in his removal before being able to do a useful job. The Preparatory Commission for the first General Assembly session recommended that the *first* Secretary-General be appointed for a term of five

years, 'the appointment being open at the end of that period for a further five-year term'.⁵ At the first General Assembly session in London, this provision was adopted (Resolution II(1) of 24 January 1946).

There had not been much debate on all this at San Francisco, but Mexico offered alternative proposals for a single term of seven or ten years, and this affords a good starting point for a brief examination of the question.

The challenges that have always poured in upon the Secretary-General have no convenient timetables. The only sensible way to approach the question of length of a single term is therefore to judge the best period for a solid, valuable contribution.

The Secretary-General and other major executive heads have usually needed about two years to assemble and organize a team of senior aides, make the first vital rounds of capitals and regional or other group organizations, steer a new medium-term programme of work through the governing organs, and begin to make a substantial impression in the international community. With ongoing management duties and inevitable emergencies, it is usually about the third year before a Secretary-General emerges at full capacity.

In the world of the 1990s and beyond, the immensely complex challenges of a more cohesive, multidisciplinary approach will have to be added to the leadership challenge. Future Secretaries-General will need to spend more time developing and consolidating their leadership of the UN system as a whole. Their colleagues in the agencies and programmes will need to spend comparable time adjusting to far more substantial coordination and mobilizing their respective constituencies.

Bearing all these challenges and responsibilities in mind, seven years seems a reasonable period for an effective single term for the Secretary-General.

► **Removal from Office**

Of the 31 organizations covered in this study, a provision for removal from office formally exists at present in only six, all specialized agencies or voluntary funds.⁶ Provisions for impeachment for grave dereliction of duty are standard in most national public structures, and poor performance of a Cabinet Minister in a parliamentary democracy almost invariably results in removal before long. Yet the UN system has no uniform provision for gross inadequacy or malfeasance in office.

⁵ UNCIO Report, Doc. 1155, p. 2-4, and Report by the Executive Committee of the Preparatory Commission, Doc. PC/EX/113 Rev. 1, 12 November 1945.

⁶ UNESCO, WHO, UPU, ITU, WMO and IFAD.

To urge that provision for dereliction be made uniform throughout the system is in no way to imply that it has often been needed in the past; it has not. It is simply to suggest, again, that the United Nations system deserves the same protection against errors of judgment by electors that is regarded as vital in any sound national administration. To avoid embarrassment governments should address this deficiency uniformly throughout the UN system simultaneously with the question of terms of office.

THE CONDITIONS OF SEARCH

The scope and quality of the search for best possible candidates is important to all public service leadership posts. A marked characteristic of the UN system for selecting leadership to date has been the narrowness of the crucial preliminary process. There has been a tendency for candidates to appear from within a relatively circumscribed network of those already close to the organization, especially self-perceived candidates, or sometimes those being advanced by their governments.

It is clear that the process of search must be improved and should be widened. This depends in the first place on enlarging the reservoir of candidates. This in turn depends on a number of factors, including the publishing of an impending vacancy and the perceived stature of both the organization and the job.

► *Information about Vacancies*

Vacancies in top public service posts in any democratic country become widely known through national media and political and professional organizations. Those of the UN system do not; indeed, impending vacancies in key national posts are far more often and widely reported in other countries than the executive posts of programmes and agencies of the UN system. The resources for a new UN system leadership, which by definition need to be worldwide, are thus constricted from the outset.

The causes of this virtual silence about vacancies in top international positions include lack of interest in the international media. UN organizations are also to blame, because the vacancies are not posted and in most cases are not announced to the media in any positive way.

Announcements of eligibility for reappointment of incumbents are not mandatory. The head of any organization who wishes to be re-elected is unlikely to publish the vacancy concerned.

In their own countries governments are, by their own insistence, the prime agents of the UN system. This responsibility should include making UN vacancies known to the public, but this, too, has virtually never happened. Inevitably, therefore, information about vacancies becomes available only haphazardly, and only to 'inner circles' of diplomats and to specialized professional bodies in the case of the agencies.

It is sometimes argued that making these vacancies internationally 'transparent' might be worse than the prevailing silence and might result in a flood of candidacies from all over the world, some manifestly unsuitable and implausible. But we have not reached the stage where these are in any sense popular elections. Basic information about the vacancies, including the simple fact that

54 the posts are filled through government decisions, will deter the vast majority of 'nuisance'

proposals; and the governments can be counted upon to 'filter out' aspirant citizens who would obviously prove nationally embarrassing. Above all, in a new age where the world is in need of courageous, imaginative leadership, limiting even the knowledge that UN leadership posts are becoming vacant makes no sense.

► ***Image Factors***

The 'image' of the UN organization and of the job itself is another constraint upon the size of the reservoir of candidates. If member governments in any part of the world display little interest in the UN, or participate in, or remain silent over, unwarranted attacks on it, it is not surprising if the calibre of leadership candidates attracted is not high. The UN system unquestionably needs constructive criticism and monitoring. But a negative and patronizing public attitude to the UN system is unlikely to attract the candidates for leadership which the situation demands and the international community deserves.

There is thus a direct correlation between the public perception of the worth of the UN system and the quality of the leadership it can aspire to. Such perceptions are formed by the UN system's secretariats, member governments, the media, and international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs). More and more NGOs take very seriously the filling of key posts in countries, both in central political leadership and in specialized fields like environment and health. Their vigilance is also important to the future of the UN system.

A manifestly poor performance by an incumbent taints not only the organization concerned, but the post itself. A bad incumbency may well necessitate restoring the image of a post as part of the process of securing a first-rate replacement. Governments' expressed concern about a poor performance does not always seem to carry forward into a successful effort to install an outstanding replacement. Vigilance by all other actors in the international community therefore seems to be quite as necessary in such cases as in normal situations.

THE SEARCH

As already noted, a predominant tendency of the election or appointment process has been to consider only those who promote themselves, those who are promoted by one or more governments, or those who are already in the wings when 'compromise nominations' are needed. This is not a *search* for candidates; it is merely sorting out pre-existing nominations from various sources.

The failure to provide for a serious search procedure has several causes. At the beginning it was necessary, as a matter of urgency, to start up a new organization, and political conditions seemed to override the desirability of a search. The rise of permanent-mission, diplomatic communities at each UN headquarters generated the prevailing practice of leaving these matters increasingly to the members of these communities. The idea of renewability was reinforced by cases where it was known that an incumbent wanted another term.

As has been pointed out above, decisions to limit incumbents to one adequate term would obviously make a decisive change in this casual approach. But such a change should be complemented by adopting properly prescribed and organized search processes as part of the official process.

► ***Proper Timetables***

Few organizations in the UN system formally provide for the initiation of an election or appointment process on a specific timetable. There is no such formal timetable even for the Secretary-Generalship, nor for any of the leadership posts which the Secretary-General fills by confirmation of the General Assembly. A crucial minimum improvement throughout the UN system would be to establish a date by which a proper search process must be launched.

Such an opening date should, of course, be the first point in a prescribed timetable, which should include a date by which properly constituted nominations must be filed (closing of nominations), and a further date by which names of candidates must be circulated.

► ***Qualifications***

No organization in the UN system presently provides for any kind of discussion or assembly of a profile of the next leader or study of what particular demands the times may make on the future

Ideally a discussion of the leadership requirements by delegations could be rendered into a consensus document but, given the ongoing disagreements on major aspects of global policy and agenda, it is unlikely to be possible. A broad-ranging discussion would, however, bring to the search and selection process a better sense of the nature of the leadership responsibility and initiative desired. It would also heighten the general awareness of what is at stake in the search for leadership.

For this reason discussions about the profile should be conducted in open session, especially if single terms of office become the rule.

► ***The Search Process***

The search process could well comprise two elements, one continuous, the other specific to the pre-election period. Outstanding potential leaders do not automatically become known in the right place at the right time. If Dag Hammarskjöld's name had not occurred to one Ambassador at the right time, or if that Ambassador had for some reason been absent, it is entirely possible that he would never have become Secretary-General.

The ultimate search might benefit if the senior official responsible for personnel matters in each UN organization were specifically charged with assembling and continuously building a well-researched list of outstanding leadership talent for *all* senior posts up to and including the executive head (i.e., a pool of 'talent to watch', not necessarily just for the very next vacancy).

This list would only be a starting point for the actual pre-election search process and would have no larger objective. The list would simply be made available as source material for the pre-election search.

► ***Search Committees: Elected Heads***

For each vacancy that is filled by an actual election, a special search committee of the governing body should be established, composed of government representatives on a balanced geographical basis.

In the case of the UN Secretary-Generalship, this committee would be established by the Security Council which, under Article 97 of the Charter, has the prerogative of recommending a candidate to the General Assembly. The Committee would comprise both permanent and non-permanent members, the latter establishing a bridge to the universal membership of the General Assembly. In the specialized agencies, member governments might decide in some

instances that the search committee would be constituted by the inner Executive Board or Council. Reasonably compact size, combined with balanced representation, would be essential for all search committees.

Assuming single terms of seven years, the search period could begin eighteen months before the election or appointment of the Secretary-General, or of the executive heads in other organizations.

These search committees should be given a wide mandate. They should be able to consult with regional groups, individual governments, the outgoing executive head, senior members of the Secretariat, non-governmental organizations, and whomever else might be able to assist them in the search. They might consult eminent figures in fields related to the organizations' tasks as advisors. They should be equipped to carry out confidential research on the qualifications, working record and personal suitability of potential candidates; to interview candidates; and to conduct their search throughout the prescribed period until satisfied that they have made a sound international canvassing of available talent. Budgetary provision should be made for adequate supporting staff.

Although the search process has been casual or non-existent in the past, a carefully organized effort is highly desirable for the UN system. Equivalent leadership posts in nation states may be filled through the rough and tumble of politics; but the UN system's leadership is not subject to the rise and fall of democratically-governed cabinets or other national political changes; and the pool of potential leaders for the UN system is worldwide. The proposed organization of search committees is a modest improvement, given the worldwide responsibilities of the leader of the UN system.

The search committee would submit its recommendations to the electoral machinery of the organization concerned. For the Secretary-Generalship this would of course be the Security Council.

► ***A Judicial Example***

An exception to the generally casual approach to appointments is the procedure for search and selection of the UN system's judicial arm. Candidates for the fifteen judgeships of the International Court of Justice are nominated by government-appointed national groups of reputed experts in international law. Only nominations that satisfy the highest standards set by their peers can qualify for consideration by both the General Assembly and the Security Council in separately held, absolute-majority elections. The Judges then elect the President and

► **Search Systems for Appointed Heads**

The responsibility of the Secretary-General for appointing the heads of the main UN Funds and Programmes should be retained. However, the process by which the appointments are made should be vastly improved.

This would require a different search system to enable the Secretary-General to assemble the best possible short list and to select one candidate to be examined by the governing body. The ongoing roster maintained by the personnel chief, as suggested above, could be of use here.

In consultation with the bureau of the relevant governing body, but making his or her own decisions, the Secretary-General should also have the help of a panel of eminent specialists in the organization's field, from both North and South, governmental and non-governmental, but of course not personally interested in the post. Such a panel could review the roster, and any current candidates, and make a wider search as necessary. The panel would be an *ad hoc* body and need not have formalized constitutional status. Its function would be, in providing the Secretary-General with objective and highly qualified advice, to protect him or her against pressures to appoint merely political or unqualified candidates. The integrity and quality of such advice would command the confidence and respect of the governing bodies.

► **National Monopoly**

The tradition of a major contributor, the United States, having a permanent monopoly of the leadership of certain UN funds and programmes has ceased to have any justification. Other donor governments now make contributions nearly as large as any single donor, even in straight dollar volume; in *per capita* terms more than ten governments contribute so much more as to place the 'single largest donor' far down such a *per capita* list. Any monopoly inherently and severely limits the Secretary-General's responsibility, derogates from that Office, and reduces the General Assembly's 'confirmation' to a ritual, because all governments assume that the Secretary-General is simply handed a nomination by the government concerned. Furthermore, the practice of national monopolies on any senior-official posts has now been expressly disapproved in a General Assembly resolution.

The international community may not yet be ready to consider the best possible candidates for these posts from wherever in the world these may be found. An essential first step, however, is surely that the search must be wide open among all major industrialized countries for the leadership of any UN fund or programme.

EXAMINING THE CANDIDATES

The Secretary-Generalship and, in appropriate degree, the leadership of other major organizations of the system require both dynamic and public leadership abilities and the capacity for imaginative teamwork on complex and multi-sectoral problems. Neither of these critically important qualities is easily identified from a *curriculum vitae*. It is also axiomatic that personal qualities, dedication and commitment, or reasonable self-confidence, for example, are only revealed in direct encounters.

A short list of candidates produced by the search process described above and submitted by the Secretary-General should therefore be further examined by the governing bodies.

The search for and selection of candidates for at least the major posts should thus be completed by inviting them to spend some hours discussing their analysis of challenges to be addressed, and their approach to such tasks, with an appropriately limited intergovernmental panel (not the same as the search group), in closed session. For the Secretary-Generalship, this would be the Security Council itself. For organizations like the UN funds and programmes, whose governing bodies are often up to 48 strong, it might be some smaller group especially designated for the purpose. In many agencies, it could be the Council or Board.

Would top-calibre leaders, especially for the post of Secretary-General, be willing to submit themselves to such scrutiny? For example, would the Prime Minister of a country consent to be interviewed by the Security Council, either in terms of his or her dignity or the political consequences at home should she or he not secure nomination?

The office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations has, since World War II, been the highest international office in the world. That the current renaissance at the UN goes far beyond peace-making and peace-keeping means that this office will become more and more visible and important to the international community. The stature of future leadership of the United Nations system is an extremely important matter. It is now more widely understood that the United Nations will be a vital element in a vastly more complicated future than had been foreseen. It seems only reasonable to assume that those who aspire to lead it should be ready to present themselves and their ideas to its representatives.

Indeed, given the full future dimensions of the post, any worthwhile candidate should consider it an honour to have been invited to discuss his or her candidacy with governments even if he or she is not selected in the end.

The fear of being rejected should not discourage candidates who may be politically active in their own country. It would be virtually impossible to keep the candidacy of, say, a Prime Minister
60 for the Secretary-Generalship, or of an Agriculture Minister for head of FAO, secret from the

media. The proposed search process, which would be more likely to remain discreet at the early investigative stages, should afford a would-be candidate of high national stature the opportunity to make a realistic assessment of his or her chances before assenting to the possible risks of meeting with the interviewing group.

► ***Age Criteria***

The new and constantly expanding challenges to the UN system will call for extraordinary stamina in its leaders. It is indeed remarkable that leaders of already advancing years have maintained such active performances to date. There is now the additional consideration that the human race is maturing earlier, and that the population will be proportionally more youthful for many decades ahead.

Ideally the future leaders of the international system should be at the height of their powers in order to shoulder the demanding daily workload that a different and highly complex world is going to expect of them.

► ***Gender Criteria***

The gender record of UN system leadership so far elected and appointed by governments is appalling, especially in view of the affirmative and egalitarian provisions of the UN Charter, human rights declarations, conventions and resolutions. It is essential that a much greater effort be made to realize the proposition that women should have fully equal opportunity for all UN leadership posts.

If the UN's own decisions are any guide, necessary affirmative provisions to ensure equal opportunity, in line with existing UN system legislation regarding the UN civil service, should provide that 50 per cent of the candidates finally assembled in each organization's short list should be women.

CAMPAIGNING FOR OFFICES

Active individual campaigning for nomination, a practice unheard of in the UN until 1970, should be unacceptable. In some of the Specialized Agencies, comparable behaviour has been allowed to develop. There are two prevalent forms of campaigning: by people outside the UN system, and by serving Secretariat members.

► *Campaigning from the Outside*

The time may come when the Secretary-General is elected by some more directly popular machinery than by member-governments alone. At that time it might be appropriate for would-be candidates actively to put themselves forward to public scrutiny. That day has not yet arrived.

Until such fundamental changes are made, the arguments against active campaigning are conclusive. The first is one of equity: the more affluent government and/or would-be candidate in campaigning for the Secretary-Generalship has an automatic advantage. The costs of campaigning are obvious—for example, staying in New York for recurring periods before the year of election to be seen and heard and to entertain, and travel to important capitals.

Campaigning through the support of one's government, which has been common practice in recent times, is related to the first issue. A candidate who secures support from an affluent government has an advantage that may have little to do with his or her qualifications for the job. Potentially excellent candidates may well be people who would not dream of campaigning at all. The decisive argument against campaigning, however, is that it will be virtually impossible for the ultimate electors to know what may already have been promised during such campaigning—for example, senior posts in a secretariat to governments in return for their support. Other bargains, future compromises, intimations or assurances of important policy positions, will also not be known. These considerations are not theoretical.

There is no possible way of ensuring against such infringements of candidates' impartiality, objectivity or independence except to exclude from consideration candidates who campaign for the office. This rule should apply throughout the UN system for all executive head posts without exception. Campaigning cannot be concealed for long, and search committees and panels will know of such activity. If it is clearly stated that search groups will not include in their lists anyone they judge to be campaigning, the practice will quite quickly cease.

► ***Civil Servant Candidates***

The practice of campaigning has also extended into the ranks of the UN civil service. Here, of course, it can be less obvious: the person is already in the circuit, in contact with Mission diplomats in connection with his work, even with officials in capitals while on official travels for the organization. Such campaigners have usually been senior civil servants and thus well placed to campaign in what appear to be their normal duties. They also have the opportunities to get other staff to campaign *for* them, under a threat that need scarcely be voiced—that if they are elected, it will go hard for any career civil servant known either to have refused such assistance or to have opposed them. Even if not elected, recalcitrant staff members may suffer the consequences of lack of cooperation.

Such abuses of UN civil service conduct are the consequence of permitting the practice of campaigning by anyone. It may well be that on occasion the best possible next executive head might be someone from within the ranks of the organization. If campaigning by staff members is tolerated, the staff member who refuses to campaign but who deserves to be considered will be at a major disadvantage, however honourable his or her conduct may be. Such an undesirable situation can only be avoided by a clear proscription of all campaigning. Again, an efficient search body will have little difficulty in learning of violations of such a rule. In addition, the relevant Staff Regulations should make an explicit provision that international civil servants in the UN system, while fully eligible for consideration as candidates for the leadership posts, must refrain from any campaigning activity to advance themselves.

APPOINTMENTS CONFIRMED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Study has already discussed the improvements that should be made to enable the Secretary-General to search for and then select the best possible candidate to head each UN fund and programme. These, however, are now of such size, both financially and in the scope of their work, that it is no longer sound practice for their established governing bodies only to be informally consulted by the Secretary-General, with the General Assembly merely confirming his or her selection.

It has been suggested above that the Secretary-General's chosen candidate (or one or two alternatives) should be invited to meet with the fund's or programme's governing body, or a representative smaller group thereof. The introduction of dialogue and interview processes by the governing body would assure both its members and the Secretary-General that the latter's final selection, when presented to the General Assembly for confirmation, meets the very high standards required by the breadth and complexity of the work of these organizations. The General Assembly, of which each such fund or programme is a constituted organ, could in turn be satisfied that its role in confirming the appointment is the culmination of a sound and serious process of selection.

THE SECRETARY-GENERALSHIP

The Charter (Article 97) states that the Secretary-General shall be 'appointed' by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. A contemporary commentary on the evolution of the Charter noted that the use of the word 'appoint' instead of the word 'elect' is intended to emphasize the administrative character of his duties.⁷ This somewhat ambivalent remark apparently was meant to emphasize the international civil service character of the post, with the idea that 'elect' might imply that the Secretary-General's position was subject to political influences.

The preoccupations on the issue of length of term of office and renewability have already been noted. The principal controversy before and at the San Francisco conference was over the veto power of the permanent members in relation to the recommendation of the Security Council.

► *The Veto Syndrome*

The decision that the veto applied to the recommendation of the Secretary-General has had a decisive impact. One consequence, as foreseen at San Francisco, has been a tendency to a lowest common denominator nomination—which has on occasion translated into a preference for candidates judged likely to be passive (as one veto-possessing national leader is reported to have remarked, 'unlikely to give us any trouble').

The insistence at San Francisco by the future permanent members on the veto applying to recommendations to the General Assembly arose in a diplomatic and political context which no longer exists. It was even before the 'cold war'; the principal victorious powers took the position that under the Charter they would share the responsibility of keeping the peace and policing the world, and that it would therefore be essential that a Secretary-General have both their individual and their collective confidence.⁸

There have been many changes since 1944-45. East-West détente is now unfolding at an increasingly rapid pace. In this new climate, it is reasonable to ask whether it is not more politically realistic now to envisage the permanent members agreeing to abandon their veto over the choice of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

⁷ Leland M. Goodrich and Edvard Hambro, *Charter of the United Nations—Commentary and Documents* (Boston, World Peace Foundation, 1946), p. 269.

⁸ In fact, the Sponsoring Powers went further, proposing that Article 27 provide for Deputy-Secretaries-General for each main UN organ, also to be appointed through the veto mechanism. This was dropped at the insistence of the smaller members, but in no small part at the price of their accepting the veto over the Secretary-Generalship itself.

► ***A Hidden Veto***

There is no mention in Article 97 of a veto on the manner of appointing the Secretary-General. It is covered in the mention under Article 27 of 'decisions of the Security Council on all other matters' (i.e., non-procedural) which 'shall be made by an affirmative vote of seven members including the concurring votes of the permanent members' (Article 27, paragraph 3). During the San Francisco Conference negotiations over what would be 'procedure', and what would be 'all other matters', the Greek delegation insisted on the issue regarding the Secretary-Generalship being put straightforwardly to the powers in a questionnaire on all such definitions.⁹ In the confusion that ensued over the applicability of the veto, above all in disputes and crises, no straightforward answer was ever given to this question. Now, in a world radically changed from that of 1945, the time may well have come for a new discussion of the matter.

► ***The Assembly's Unused Power***

A second important point surrounding the question concerns the role of the General Assembly under Article 97. It shall appoint the Secretary-General upon the recommendation of the Security Council. It can, however, obviously *decline* to appoint a candidate recommended by the Council, i.e., a candidate who has survived all possible vetoes in place of one who has not. Thus, in the past when a good candidate was discarded because of the veto of only one permanent member, the General Assembly, in principle at any rate, could have rejected the candidate finally recommended.

This might well have created consternation. It is, however, interesting to consider the price that may have been paid for always concluding the selection process without controversy and with an apparent consensus. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that not enough governments have cared enough about the outcome; that too many had already been reduced to silence by the inhibiting effect of the anticipated veto of good and otherwise acceptable candidates; and that the somewhat parochial nature of the entire process did the rest.

► **Possible Improvements**

For any permanent member of the Security Council who may still rigidly insist upon retaining the veto in this matter, the sequence of improved procedures discussed in this study may not be entirely welcome. The search procedure means that governments will search for *the best* candidates, not merely for those least likely to offend the sensibilities of one or more of the permanent members. The search procedure will also take the process outside of the UN diplomatic network. The time has surely come for governments and those who advise and influence them, to examine what trade-offs might be considered in return for the introduction of such improved procedures.

Given the great changes in the international climate it might, for example, be possible to get an agreement covering *all* UN system elections, that candidates must have the approval of all regional groups. This would mean in practice that the developing countries would forego their automatic majorities in elections in the larger specialized agencies in return for systematic search and selection procedures throughout the system *and* a tacit dropping of the Security Council veto.

The foregoing idea is advanced as one possibility only. It does, however, illustrate the possible improvement that imaginative discussions in the new international climate might produce. The primary objective remains to ensure that the leaders of the UN system should be outstanding choices for undertaking the great responsibilities of the future, and that they will assume them with the confidence and support of all governments and of international public opinion.

ORGANIZING THE UN SYSTEM FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE 1990s

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INTRODUCTION

We must seek the optimum balance between a system with a large number of autonomous bodies and a system with strong concentration of tasks within a lesser number of organizations.... Probably new forms will have to be devised, not only (for) an integration of activities among autonomous organizations, but also for the delegation of powers within this or that organization without a breaking up of its inner unity.

*Dag Hammarskjöld, 1960*¹

Already thirty years ago Dag Hammarskjöld was drawing attention to the contrast between the complex demands the world was making of the UN, and the increasingly unwieldy international structure that governments were building. The 'UN family', as it was more often called in Dag Hammarskjöld's time, has since become even more unwieldy as it faces the tumultuous developments of our own time. If the United Nations in the 1990s is to react effectively to these developments, it will undoubtedly need to achieve greatly improved coordination and management within the present system, as well as better ability to analyse, propose, and act in an integrated manner.

Governments in 1943-1946 created the UN structure which their perceptions of the need seemed to indicate. The Charter of the UN invoked the interdependence of peace and security with economic and social progress; but in practice the post-war international structure was not designed to recognize that interdependence or to achieve integration of the work of its different parts.²

The predominantly sectoral thinking of that time sought to strengthen the separate agencies or bureaux that had worked alongside the League of Nations, and to add new ones. The ILO already existed. As early as 1942 Allied Ministers of Education met in London to discuss the expansion of existing international institutes and bureaux into what became UNESCO. The designing of the future FAO began some months before the major powers gathered at Dumbarton Oaks to discuss the future United Nations.³ The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were constituted at Bretton Woods ten months before the UN Conference at San Francisco.

¹ Speech at University of Chicago Law School, May 1, 1960 (doc. SG/910).

² The Preparatory Commission did faithfully report one option as 'Liquidation of an agency and arrangements made for the exercise of its functions under appropriate commissions or committees within the United Nations'; but the new concept of 'specialized agencies' prevailed. Report of the Executive Committee, London, 1945, PC/EX/113 Rev. 1, p. 102.

³ The food and agriculture meetings were at Hot Springs, Virginia in May and in Washington in July of 1943; the new FAO Constitution was published in August 1944, nine months before the San Francisco UN Conference.

Thus, by the time the mandate of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was considered, the structural die was already cast.⁴ Article 57 of the Charter stated that 'the various specialized agencies' were to be 'brought into relationship with the United Nations'; but ECOSOC only 'may' coordinate their activities 'through consultation with and recommendations to' them (Art. 63.2). Each agency was given its own charter, membership, budget, and an intergovernmental legislature largely representative of the respective national sectoral authorities. The UN's standing in relation to these separate, sovereign international bodies is expressed in strikingly timid language.

The effect of these basic structural decisions on the Secretary-General's capacity to lead and coordinate has generally been underestimated. There is indeed an Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) which brings together the executive heads of the system two or three times yearly. The Secretary-General chairs this body, but it is nothing like a substantive cabinet for the UN system. A specialized agency director-general can at any time and on any issue invoke his autonomy and decline to cooperate in a measure of coordination—and legally be perfectly in order in doing so. Other executive heads, even if appointed by the Secretary-General, have their own governing bodies behind them.

It can be imagined how effectively national governments might function if Ministers turned up to Cabinet meetings only twice a year, were responsible to their own separate parliaments (of bankers, agronomists, public health chiefs, educators, etc.), had their own separately authorized budgets, policies and programmes, and yet were supposed to be led and coordinated by a Prime Minister responsible to another parliament altogether.

Even at the outset some doubts were expressed about the loose structure of the new multilateral machinery. As participants in the final drafting of the new UN Charter at San Francisco, Dr. Edvard Hambro, member of the Norwegian Delegation, and Dr. Leland Goodrich, Secretary of the Pacific Settlement Committee, raised the question about how well the polycentric UN system might work:

It is to be noted that the authority of the (UN) Organization to coordinate the policies and activities of the specialized agencies is limited to the making of recommendations. These will undoubtedly have great weight, since the governments represented in the specialized agencies will for the most part be the same governments that are represented in the General Assembly. However, differences in the voting rules of the various organs of the Organization and of the specialized agencies may create difficulties⁵

⁴ ECOSOC itself was quite a late addition to a UN initially conceived as primarily for peace and security purposes.

⁵ Leland M. Goodrich and Edvard Hambro, *Charter of the United Nations—Commentary and Documents* (Boston, World Peace Foundation, 1946), p. 206.

In the event, the voting rules have not been the prime difficulty (except between the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions). By far the largest problem is that 'the same governments' have not behaved consistently. While governments have adopted resolutions in the UN urging the Secretary-General to achieve better coordination in the UN system, their delegations in agency bodies have often voted duplicative programmes and encouraged directors-general to assert their autonomy *vis-à-vis* 'New York'.⁶

In addition, coordinating provisions in the agreements made between the UN and the specialized agencies under Articles 17 and 63 soon encountered dispute and have never been implemented. Article 17 envisaged General Assembly oversight of a system of consolidated budgets;⁷ in the agreements with the major specialized agencies they undertook to consult on arrangements for the inclusion of their budgets within a general UN budget. These undertakings were 'quietly dropped'.⁸

As Hammarskjöld also foresaw in the 1960 speech quoted above, governments have compounded these problems by creating more, largely autonomous, special-purpose UN bodies. The tendency to throw a new organization at each newly perceived world problem may be coming to an end. At the very time, however, when it is increasingly clear that the problems of the planet are both increasingly dangerous and increasingly interconnected, its universal institutions are a sprawling extended family, the head of which has only nominal authority.

The UN itself at present is not well organized to lead the work in the enormously complex challenges of the 1990s. The heavy pressures on the Secretary-General in the fields of diplomacy and peace-keeping have tended to isolate the Office from the rest of the UN structure it is supposed to manage, and to limit the UN's ability to be the substantive economic and social leader, *primus inter pares* in the system as a whole. Nor is the UN's own machinery dealing with economic, social and environmental problems particularly coherent. At important moments it has been possible for recalcitrant agency heads to point, sometimes with reason, to 'lack of clear thinking in New York' as a justification for proceeding on their own.

⁶ Long ago, Hammarskjöld discovered these realities, becoming 'increasingly exasperated or amused by turns at the tendency of his Specialized Agency colleagues to go their own way and politely to ignore his leadership'. Cf. Urquhart, *Hammarskjöld* (New York, Knopf, 1972), p. 372.

⁷ Report of the Executive Committee to the Preparatory Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 102, 105.

⁸ Martin Hill, 'Towards Greater Order, Coherence and Co-ordination in the United Nations System', p. 13, UNITAR Research Report No. 20, UN, New York, 1974.

► *Partial Reforms*

There are no startling new revelations in the above picture. Indeed, at roughly ten-year intervals, governments, aware of these problems, have set in motion major expert studies for restructuring and reform.⁹ Each time, however, a mixture of deft specialized agency footwork, discordance within governments about their own policies in the system, and North-South differences have produced hesitant and half-hearted results.

Governments have usually lifted out from their own experts' proposed comprehensive reforms a few minimal reforms, none of which has been sufficiently strong by itself to withstand the inherent polycentrism and accumulated vested interests of the post-1945 system. These isolated reform elements are backed up over the years by further studies and resolutions, the main effect of which is to further overload the channels—and to create further tensions between the UN and the agencies.

If the executive leadership of the UN system is to do better in the greatly changed conditions of the 1990s and beyond, it is necessary to consider the question of restructuring, although this study is concerned with questions of structure only as they directly affect leadership.

⁹ A 1965 General Assembly demand for a review of the economic and social sectors did lead to the reorganization of UNDP in 1970, though not in accordance with all the system-wide reforms recommended by the Capacity Study led by Sir Robert Jackson. A 1974 expert study led to the creation of the office of Director-General for Development and International

72 Economic Co-operation and some other changes. From 1985 on, the Committee of 18 has been working on similar lines.

RESTRUCTURING?

Governments have in many respects structured the UN system *against* a cross-sectoral, integrated approach to world problems. The system is also structured severely to limit the degree to which the Secretary-General can take such an approach.

In a unitary structure, one governing body can instruct one executive head to carry out coordinated research or action; the head can respond by delegation to associated executives; and the governing body can monitor and evaluate the results and hold the leadership to account. In a polycentric structure of many organizations, the instructions have to be given simultaneously by each governing body to each head if a chief executive is to be able to lead with real authority and effect. Even if this happens, the process is inherently clumsy, and monitoring of performance and accountability extremely difficult. But even this degree of coordination has not to date been achieved for the UN system.

If governments are in agreement that the moment for basic restructuring has not yet arrived, it will be necessary at least to try to make the existing polycentric system work as well as it can. Failure to do this will cripple the international system just as it faces its most serious challenges.

► ***Coordination Begins at Home***

The task of coordination *without* restructuring the system has to begin with governments coordinating their own policies in their home capitals, where their delegations to each body of the UN system are instructed. This need appears to be recognized in some recent General Assembly resolutions, at least at the hortatory level.¹⁰

Some governments have begun to establish committees or other procedures, through which all policies prepared for each of their delegations—whether to the UN General Assembly or an FAO conference or to the UNDP Governing Council or to UNIDO's legislature—must be approved and coordinated. Examples include the Netherlands and the Soviet Union. Considerable attention is also being given to this kind of coordination by governments members of the European Community.

Such improvements by *governments* would have a dramatic effect on what has so long been misperceived as lack of coordination 'by the UN'. These steps will, of course, raise the similar

¹⁰ For example, on system-wide reforms in Operational Activities for Development, the General Assembly in 1989 called upon 'States members of the governing bodies of all organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system consistently to ensure full implementation' of that resolution (44/211, para. 30).

Brian
Urquhart

Erskine
Childers

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TOMORROW'S UNITED NATIONS

sectoral reactions in national ministries as the Secretary-General's efforts to coordinate do in agency secretariats. However, without such policy coordination within governments themselves, at least on major issues, the Secretary-General will be unable effectively to overhaul the system, even if he or she has the backing of the General Assembly.

THE SYSTEM NEEDS A CABINET

Improved internal and intra-system policy coordination by governments has, as an essential corollary, the building of dynamic leadership. The executive heads should collectively analyse inter-sectoral needs, enabling the Secretary-General to offer governments valid policy options from the system as a whole. The Secretary-General and his or her senior associates must then be able effectively to implement the decisions governments take. These vital responsibilities require that the Secretary-General be leader of an intellectually cohesive and operationally effective inter-agency team. In other words, the system needs a cabinet.

What would it require to transform the ACC? Short of drastic restructuring that would make agencies subordinate to the General Assembly and the Secretary-General in all broad policy issues and trans-sectoral concerns, a graduated scale of system-wide measures could at least move the ACC towards a cabinet role. The first is related to the question of search for and selection of the executive heads of the system.

► A Criterion for Selection

Not all specialized agency heads resist coordination; but much depends upon the capacity and personality of each incumbent. The importance of *professional teamwork qualities* in the executive heads chosen by governments cannot be over-emphasized. If governments select a self-important primadonna, a mediocre politician, or a defensively narrow technical specialist to head an organization, the capacity of the UN system for coordination and teamwork is significantly diminished.

Equally, the Secretary-General must be able to show his or her senior associates 'mastery of detailed and specialized subject matter (and) powers of analysis and leadership'.¹¹ He or she (or a deputy) must be a real *animateur*, not necessarily knowing all that each specialized colleague knows, but knowing what questions will identify the right comprehensive policy options. Serious, top-calibre executive heads will usually respond to this kind of leadership without needing constant legislative instruction.

¹¹ Urquhart, *Hammaraskjold*, op. cit., p. 371.

► ***Improvement Without Radical Restructuring***

Better leadership selection throughout the system is thus again vital, but it will not alone transform the ACC into an effective cabinet. Nor can it overcome specific disagreement on policies and programmes arising from government decisions in the specialized bodies. It will not altogether overcome the tendency of civil servants to strive to preserve the identity of their own agency. In the absence of full restructuring, can governments take measures to convert the ACC into a cabinet?

Coordinating their own policies in the system would be a good start. Without any amendment to any constitution, governments could decide in the General Assembly that the ACC be reconstituted as the United Nations Inter-Agency Executive Commission chaired by the Secretary-General, and, in each agency's governing body, that its executive head shall be a responsible member of the Commission. Governments might mandate the Commission to provide a global 'watch' report every two years, identifying trends and problems needing substantial and coordinated first, or further, attention by the international community, with an annual interim progress report. Governments could also mandate the Commission to prepare a *common* medium-term (six-year) programme for the UN system including all priority elements of each organization's own programme that require coordinated action; and report the total budgets for such a common programme, indicating the proposed contributions towards it of each organization from its own budget.

The new Inter-Agency Executive Commission would need its own high-calibre professional staff. The staff should work in the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation.¹²

The ACC could thus be transformed without any constitutional amendments, if governments decided to act consistently throughout the UN system.

¹² The transformation of ACC into a Commission is one of the recommendations of the international panel which produced *A Successor Vision: the United Nations of Tomorrow*, United Nations Association of the United States of America, 1988.

DECENTRALIZATION

It has long been a damaging canard within the UN system that coordination means centralization. To the contrary, the best coordination is that which organizes and stimulates the most creative use of capacities where they are best sited—and relocates them if necessary.

► **Task Forces**

If the UN system is to be enabled properly to address inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary problems, governments will have to find ways to make parts of the system collaborate effectively by putting together task forces for specific purposes.

Inter-agency task forces are not new in the system, but their general record is poor for a number of reasons. Agencies participating have often persisted in the turf battles that inevitably rise from organization by sectors.¹³ The general disdain of separatist officials for such forms of collaboration has often resulted in inferior or inappropriate staff assignments to these task forces. Finally, governments themselves, which originated the sectoral splits that produce these problems, have often failed to assign the right professionals to evaluate the work of such task forces.

There are no quick solutions to these problems, but governments should take far more care to ensure that, when they call for a task-force initiative, they carefully specify its organization, insist upon the best staff assignments, and draw on their own best specialists to monitor progress and evaluate results.

► **Composition of Delegations**

Another example of the positive or negative roles of governments is in the composition of their delegations to UN committees. If the best policy and programme basis is to be provided for UN leadership and coordination in multidisciplinary problems, the delegates assigned must be chosen with more care. There is no reason why a foreign service diplomat should be expected to be able to cope with many of these increasingly high-priority problems. Foreign services must themselves

¹³ For example, is Nutrition 'food' or is it 'health'—or maybe 'education'? Who is responsible for rural development; or is it in itself a misperception of spatial planning and programming in *national* development?

decentralize, delegate and co-opt professionals from among their national institutions if they are to demand a high standard in UN coordinated leadership.¹⁴

► ***Non-governmental Involvement***

Non-governmental knowledge and experience is often neglected by the secretariats of the system as well as by government delegations. The UN should draw, for its leadership and initiatives, from the constantly expanding and improving non-governmental capacity in virtually all the fields of the global agenda for the 1990s. The problem of even getting agreement for an NGO representative to speak in a UN committee is a poor reflection on governmental positions, especially in an organization of which the Charter opens with the words, 'We, the peoples...'. The discomfort still evinced by some senior secretariat officials towards NGOs is archaic. It should become the rule of executive leadership in the system to respect and seek the best assistance from the best non-governmental sources, which are very often the best contact with the people whom the organization ultimately serves.

► ***The Regional Dimension***

The intellectual and informational quality of the UN system's leadership will also depend in no small measure on better attention to the regional level. Global strategies will obtain much of their relevance and accuracy of thrust from regional and sub-regional analysis and insights. The implementation of such strategies will have a greater 'country relevance' if they are interpreted through regional and sub-regional perspectives.

It follows that senior officials at UN Headquarters should take the regional economic and social commissions much more seriously, in formulating policy, in personnel appointments, and in decentralization of responsibilities. Where the commissions need improvement, they should be improved, not simply neglected.

Governments should at last examine the resolution they adopted in 1977 calling for the rationalization of the system's regional office structure.¹⁵ The price of polycentrism has, here

¹⁴ There is evidence, as well, that the present travel allowances for delegates from low-income countries is inadequate to enable their delegations to cover so many, often simultaneous committee processes. This problem is part of the prevailing North-South economic imbalance, and must be addressed as such.

78 ¹⁵ General Assembly resolution 32/197.

again, been heavy—in different definitions for regions themselves among organizations and agencies; in different geographical coverage by their regional offices; and in a veritable checkerboard of differing locations for those regional offices, some of them not even in the same city as the UN commissions. Coordinated leadership of the UN system will be seriously inhibited while such practices persist.

LEADERSHIP IN THE UN ITSELF

► ***The 'Impossible Job'***

As discussed earlier in this study, it is not possible for any single human being personally to handle, on a continuing basis, all the priority responsibilities which devolve on the Secretary-Generalship. Even in Hammarskjöld's day a Secretary-General who was originally an economist found himself overwhelmingly preoccupied with diplomatic, political, and peace-keeping burdens. He even described himself in 1958 as 'an ex-economist', unable to keep up with the literature.¹⁶

The number and variety of major issues being brought to the Secretary-General's office has greatly increased since that time, in particular with more socio-economic and environmental problems requiring multilateral initiative and cooperation. At the same time, it is unlikely that East-West détente will reduce the workload in crisis control, peace-making and peace-keeping, not to speak of the possible reactivation of the UN's role in arms regulation and disarmament.

The UN Secretariat needs to be organized in such a way as to enable the Secretary-General to exercise leadership on a well-coordinated basis, drawing the best out of the system as a whole. In all the studies and debates on reform and restructuring, this problem is seldom broached.

► ***Delegation of Responsibility***

Obviously the Secretary-General must be both willing to delegate responsibility, and able to *manage* delegation. These two qualities will be vital to the future effectiveness of the office of Secretary-General.

► ***Public Exposure Factor***

Delegation of responsibilities involving coordination and initiative is much more complicated than assigning routine tasks to subordinates. It requires both self-confidence and mutual confidence among colleagues. In the future the complex problems and the options for addressing them will require public exposition on a scale quite beyond the energy and time of any

80 ¹⁶ In a private note in 1958; Urquhart, *ibid.*, p. 374.

Secretary-General alone. Deputies will have to do much of this public work, take important and complex initiatives on behalf of the Secretary-General, and have more public exposure than before.

Personality and personal relations play an important role in an organization that is constantly working on the outer limits of the human condition and human endeavour. Both the Secretary-General and his deputies will have to be prepared to accept the adjustment of working relationships which this public exposure will require. When the Secretary-General is not able himself or herself to provide the leadership which an issue requires, delegation of responsibility for public exposition is essential. It is important that the preservation of the unique position of the Secretary-General should not inhibit such delegation or create inertia among senior staff on key issues where active analysis and initiative are required.

► ***The 38th Floor***

As already noted, the confidentiality, urgency, and sometimes the deliberate mystery of good offices and peace-keeping work, combined with the stature of the Secretary-Generalship, have tended to isolate the Secretary-General's office from the rest of the Secretariat. This has sometimes led to weaknesses in capacity for high quality analysis, forecasting, and the presentation of policy and action options. It is important in future to avoid the situation where the Secretary-General's office is suddenly presented with the need to take decisions, but does not have the necessary working rapport with those parts of the Secretariat which should have been assigned a clear responsibility to prepare for such decisions.

Such matters include the strategy for a major UN Conference or General Assembly debate; the appointment of a senior official; or a meeting where a complex international problem is to be discussed, with outside expectations that new substantive ideas will emerge. In each the quality of overall leadership is dependent on the best possible preparation and advice. To be better served by the rest of the Secretariat, the Office of the Secretary-General must be better connected with it.

► ***The Question of Deputies***

Organizational logic would suggest the need for Deputy Secretaries-General, with clearly delegated responsibility for major areas of work, and for the necessary coordination on behalf of the Secretary-General within the system. Until the present time political conditions have worked against the appointment of Deputies.

The sponsoring major powers originally wanted to provide for Deputies, but to have them, **81**

like the Secretary-General, recommended by the Security Council and appointed by the General Assembly. Smaller countries vigorously and successfully opposed this bid to extend major-power political influence in the senior echelon of the international civil service.¹⁷ However, in London at the Preparatory Commission a 'gentleman's agreement' was concluded whereby five of the eight Assistant Secretaries-General were to be nationals of the permanent members of the Security Council.

These major-power monopolies have restricted efforts to achieve better organization at the top of the Secretariat. Hammarskjöld secured General Assembly agreement to a reorganization that would make heads of main departments Under Secretaries-General, to undertake political responsibilities solely at the direction of the Secretary-General. At the end of Hammarskjöld's term the USSR invoked the old idea of a representative Cabinet in the form of Khrushchev's 'troika' proposal.

In these circumstances, there have never been Deputy Secretaries-General in the UN, although there are Deputy Directors-General in specialized agencies, and equivalents in most international organizations outside the UN system.

A new problem emerged after Hammarskjöld's time. Pressure from governments for senior jobs gave rise to a relentless upward increase in senior posts. This has so expanded the echelon of Under (and Assistant) Secretaries-General that it is virtually impossible to establish a practicable system for delegating authority.

The new political climate and the improvement in East-West relationships should now make it possible to consider the establishment of a very small group of Deputies to the Secretary-General to be responsible on his or her behalf for the main spheres of UN activity, for coordination on them within and outside the system, and for the relevant UN departments in each sphere.

While peace-making should probably remain in the Secretary-General's personal domain, the first deputy might be responsible for international peace and security, arms control and international law. The second could be for development, environment and economic and social cooperation. A third should be responsible for management and administration.

These officials should be appointed by the Secretary-General (who can be counted upon to ensure sensible geographic balance) for his or her term only, but could be confirmed by the General Assembly.

Such an innovation would depend on the political will and consensus capabilities of member governments in a new political climate. If the appointment of Deputy Secretaries-General proves

¹⁷ Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway were especially active in defeating this proposal at San Francisco.

still to be impossible, then at the least an inner group of the Director-General and a few key Under Secretaries-General should be designated to improve the line of authority from the Secretary-General. Their main function would be to provide a workable and continuous, substantive connection between the Office of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat on one hand, and between the UN and the rest of the system on the other.

► ***The Director-General***

One highest-level post under the Secretary-General was established by the General Assembly in 1977, as a selective outcome of the 1974 expert recommendations on the economic and social sector. The new office of Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation was to give a strong and explicit lead in *positive*, affirmative multidisciplinary coordination. This official was to be, in effect, the second official in the Secretariat. The General Assembly, however, took from the experts' comprehensive report so few of their recommendations as to leave the new Director-General and his office without the authority and functions to fulfil the Assembly's own mandate.¹⁸

In the 1990s the Director-Generalship must be taken far more seriously, and its incumbent given the responsibilities, and capacity, to carry out the explicit and onerous mandates of the General Assembly to this office.

► ***Major-Power Post Monopolies***

The permanent member of the Security Council which first volunteers to respond to the changed situation by giving up the traditional major-power monopoly on certain senior posts will do the United Nations an inestimable service.

Secretaries-General have had only minimum say in the choice of individuals to fill these crucially important top-echelon political and management positions. The indifferent quality of some of these senior incumbents, and the national monopolies, create a rigidity in the structure of the senior leadership which forces the Secretary-General to achieve balanced representation for all the rest of the world community in the untied posts. This system gravely limits the Secretary-

¹⁸ The Director-General was supposed to be clearly in charge, on one hand of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA), with a Deputy Director-General, and on the other, of a new UN Development Authority of the major operational funds, with a second Deputy. Neither recommendation was adopted.

General's capacity to put the best possible people into crucially responsible senior posts regardless of the prerogatives of any one member state. The UN leadership should be relieved of this limitation in the future.

► ***The Office of the Secretary-General Itself***

How a Secretary-General organizes his or her own office must obviously be a factor of the incumbent's personal management style. Nevertheless, the tradition whereby most of the professional staff in the Office of the Secretary-General are on the diplomatic and peace-making/keeping side needs serious review.

The future agenda of the UN is likely to be far more equally balanced between the traditional forms of peace and security and the newly perceived forms—of environmental, economic, and social security. The make-up of the Secretary-General's office should reflect this change. The expansion of the UN peace-making and peace-keeping roles will in any case require some reorganization of the Office of the Secretary-General.

A Secretary-General needs immediate access to aides who are competent in *all* the major areas of activity. Meetings with senior officials should be limited to directly relevant staff and based on carefully prepared subject matter if the Secretary-General is to be properly briefed to take priority high-level decisions.

► ***Policy Research and the Formulation of Options***

Crucial to the adequate exercise of leadership is the need for greatly improved coordination of problem analysis and research, in order to formulate options. Here again, polycentrism has taken its toll in an ever-expanding number of research units in different agencies or on their own. Many of these do excellent work, but their staff frequently learn that much of what they are labouring over has been or is being simultaneously addressed in other parts of the system. The overall results are extremely difficult to evaluate.

In a polycentric system it is difficult to decide *what* to research, *what* strategic policy analysis and option formulation the UN system should carry out for the world, and how to make best use of the system's total human resources in such work. Here again, the same governments have often instructed different agencies to perform overlapping research, or to do the same research under a different name. Prestige-minded agency executive heads have ordered isolated research that

84 should have been interdisciplinary, and have then been applauded for it by the same governments

whose delegates in New York have been complaining about duplication of research and lack of focus in policy analysis.

Specific proposals, well short of restructuring, exist to remedy these weaknesses and make proper use of the system's capacity. The essence of all such proposals involves governments supporting, throughout the system, the establishment of properly coordinated UN inter-agency early warning, trend analysis and option study groups or task forces to focus on selected world problems. There should be far more contact with advanced-study centres throughout the world. Delegation and decentralization, and the capacity to identify what the UN system should tackle, and what it should leave to non-UN international institutions, are vital in these improvements.

HUMAN CAPACITIES AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

There is a general decline in attention to the staffing of the UN system. This paper concludes with this issue because it is of the very greatest importance in the entire question of organization for UN leadership.

► *The Cascade Effect*

The correlation between governments' appointments of executive heads, and the appointments those heads make for the senior echelon, and in turn the senior echelon's choice of staff, is a vital issue for the entire UN enterprise. Contrary to a widespread view, the UN civil service is not particularly large in relation to its tasks—some 55,000 for the entire system worldwide is equivalent to one medium-size European municipal service or one-third of the staff of British Railways. But the *quality* of the staff is of the highest importance. The cascade effect that starts at the top can be highly positive or profoundly damaging. If it is the latter, it is very difficult to repair.

An executive head who is indifferent to personnel questions or who allows such questions to be influenced by diplomatic pressures or considerations of re-election or re-appointment, can very quickly damage the quality and morale of staff throughout a secretariat.

In this cascade effect member governments' responsibility does not stop at their choices of executive heads. There can be a chain reaction between a politically minded executive head, the senior officials he appoints, and governments seeking favours for their nationals for reasons that often have little to do with the quality of their contribution as members of the UN civil service. Very few member governments refrain from bringing pressure to bear once the word goes out that an executive head is open to pressure regarding personnel appointments.

Such practices and proclivities were less serious in the earlier period of UN history. They must cease if the international community is to get the quality of UN leadership and staff which is provided for in the Charter, and which the situation demands.

► *Desiderata*

As already spelled out, adopting single terms for executive heads will be an important step towards mitigating some of these problems.

search for the best possible candidates for executive head posts is another necessity.

Measures to assure a more consistently high quality in executive heads will lead in turn to the appointment of consistently high calibre people in senior echelons.

If the United Nations Secretariat is to meet its future responsibilities in multidisciplinary leadership, the traditional weight given to diplomatic experience in recruitment should be adjusted. The world now needs a broader range of background experience and professional skill in the UN civil service.

Geographical quotas for the international civil service are likely to continue until the major imbalances have been overcome. The effort currently underway in the UN to install competitive examinations must be pursued. This will ensure that each person finally selected is not only an asset to the UN but a credit to his or her own country.

Outside pressure combined with excessive internal application of the quota system has often resulted in assignment of staff already in service to jobs for which they do not have the necessary professional background. Governments should mutually agree to forgo monopolies on posts as well as excessive invocations of the quota system.

For the demands of the 1990s and beyond, far more care must be taken over assignments to special task forces and to emergency or short-term intensive units. These are vital instruments of leadership and initiative, requiring special talents. Their purposes cannot be realized if the far too common practice of shifting currently unassigned staff into them regardless of suitability is continued.

The damaging practice of member governments supplementing the UN remuneration of some of their nationals in the civil service is an outright violation of the spirit of the Charter. It is the more astonishing that some of the same governments have been asserting that UN civil servants' pay is too high. The practice should cease forthwith.

The Secretary-General should, on his or her own authority and responsibility, establish an independent board of eminently qualified national civil service chiefs and others to review regularly the condition of the civil service and to recommend the necessary reforms.

► **Conclusion**

In the end, the quality and capacity of humanity's only universal public service—at all levels—will be a determining factor in the ability of the United Nations system to provide the world with the kind of leadership and service it will need to manage its problematic odyssey into the next century.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF UN SYSTEM LEADERSHIP POSTS

INTRODUCTION

The basic facts about all the executive leadership posts in the UN system are not readily available in one place. A coherent approach to the subject of UN leadership must be based on facts and analysis. This compilation attempts to remedy the deficiency.

► *The 1990s Calendar*

The data begins with a table of the calendar of years of election or appointment of all executive heads in the UN system for the coming decade up to the year 2000. This calendar shows clearly the timetable, and the dimensions of governments' responsibilities for selection of the leadership of the entire United Nations system for the challenging years ahead. It also indicates that there is plenty of advance time to ensure the calibre of multilateral leadership which is now required.

Further tables provide basic data on existing selection processes and on the history of leadership in the UN system. Notes follow each table of data.

► *Definitions*

There is no legislative or other authority as to the definition of 'executive leadership posts' in the UN system. The authors' selection will not satisfy everyone, but an attempt has been made to encompass those posts that have major global responsibilities. The tables do not include the posts heading the UN regional commissions. They do not tabulate the International Court of Justice because its president is uniquely elected by his or her peers.¹

¹ The Court's 15 Judges are elaborately selected and approved by both the Security Council and General Assembly, but elect their own President.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF UN SYSTEM LEADERSHIP POSTS

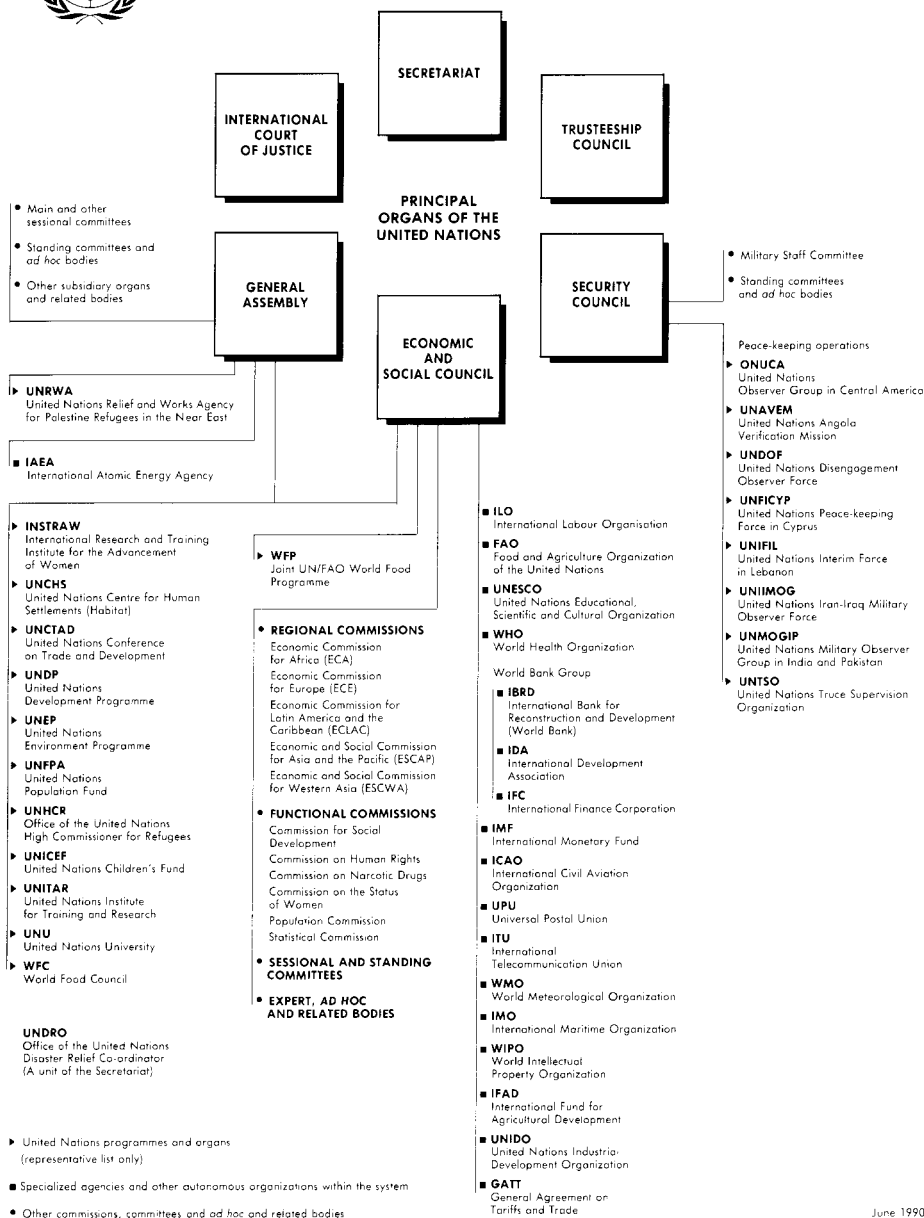
Consideration was given to whether the statistical tabulations should be subdivided, for example by main-UN, Specialized Agency, and Bretton Woods institutions, since the manner of appointment or election differs between these groups. On balance it was judged more important to adduce the overall patterns of nationality, source-region, etc., in the United Nations system taken as a whole.

► *Glossary of Abbreviations*

UN	United Nations: the central organization
UN S-G	Secretary-General of the United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNDRO	United Nations Disaster Relief Office
UNHCR	United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Refugees
WFC	World Food Council
WFP	World Food Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural Organization
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
UPU	Universal Postal Union
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNU	United Nations University



THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM



June 1990

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS
OF UN SYSTEM LEADERSHIP POSTS

► **Table 1. Leadership Elections/Appointments in the 1990s¹**

Head	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
UN S-G	•					•				
UNICEF				•					•	
UNCTAD		•			•			•		
UNDP			•				•			
UNEP		•				•				•
UNFPA	•				•				•	
UNRWA					•					•
UNCHS ²		•				•				•
UNDRO		•		•		•		•		•
UNHCR				•				•		
WFC				•				•		
WFP		•					•			
ILO				•					•	
FAO			•						•	
UNESCO			•						•	
ICAO	•			•			•			•
WHO			•					•		
UPU				•					•	
ITU				•					•	
WMO	•				•				•	
IMO			•				•			
WIPO	•						•			
IFAD			•			•			•	
UNIDO			•				•			
IAEA			•				•			
GATT	•				•				•	
IBRD	•					•				
IMF		•					•			
UNITAR	• ³						•			
UNU		•					•			
Totals	8	7	8	9	5	6	9	6	10	5

¹ Assume current provisions for length of terms; see Table 2.

² Assumed.

³ Not yet projected.

► **Table 2. Executive Head Posts: Selection Procedure**

Organ	Title	Present term ¹ (years)	Procedures for election or appointment					
			Renewable? ²	Nomination	Time-table? ³	C.V.? ⁴	Screening? ⁵	Approval by
UN S-G	Secretary-General	5	Unlimited	Member State	None	No	None	S.C./G.A.
UNICEF	Executive Director	5	Unlimited	Sec.-General	None	No	None	Exec. Board
UNCTAD	Secretary-General	3	Unlimited	Sec.-General	None	No	None	Gen. Assembly
UNDP	Administrator	4	Unlimited	Sec.-General	None	No	None	Council/G.A.
NEP	Executive Director	4	Unlimited	Sec.-General	None	No	None	Gen. Assembly
UNFPA	Executive Director	4	Unlimited	UNDP Admin.	None	No	None	Gen. Assembly
UNRWA	Commissioner-Gen.	5	Unlimited	Sec.-General	None	No	Yes	Advisory Comm./G.A.
UNCHS	Executive Director	2 ⁶	Unlimited	Sec.-General	None	No	None	Gen. Assembly
UNDRO	Co-ordinator	2 ⁷	Unlimited	Sec.-General	None	No	None	Gen. Assembly
UNHCR	High Commissioner	4	Unlimited	Sec.-General	None	No	None	Gen. Assembly
WFC	Executive Director	4	Unlimited	Sec.-General	None	No	Yes	Council/DG, FAO
WFP	Executive Director	5	Unlimited	S-G/D-G, FAO	None	No	Yes	Comm. on Food Aid/G.A.
ILO	Director-General	5	Unlimited	Member State	Yes	No	Yes	Governing Body
FAO	Director-General	6	Unlimited	Member State	Yes	No	None	FAO Conference
UNESCO	Director-General	6	Once only	Exec. Board	Yes	Yes	Yes	Gen. Conference
ICAD	Secretary-General	3	Unlimited	Member State	Yes	No	Yes	ICAO Council
WHO	Director-General	5	Unlimited	Exec. Board	Yes	Yes	Yes	WHO Assembly
UPU	Director-General	5	Once only	Member State	None	No	None	UPU Congress
ITU	Director-General	6	Once only	Member State	None	No	None	Plenip. Conf.
WMO	Secretary-General	4	Unlimited	Member State	None	No	None	WMO Congress
IMO	Secretary-General	4	Unlimited	Council	Yes	No	Yes	Council/Assembly
WIPO	Director-General	6	Unlimited	Coord. Comm.	None	No	Yes	Gen. Assembly
IFAD	President	3	Once only	Member State	None	No	None	Gov. Council
UNIDO	Director-General	4	Once only	Indust. Dev. Bd.	Yes	No	Yes	Gen. Conference
IAEA	Director-General	4	Unlimited	Bd. Governors	None	No	Yes	Gen. Conference
GATT	Director-General	4	Unlimited	Exec. Comm.	Yes	No	Yes	Interim Comm. of ITO
IBRD	President	5	Unlimited	Exec. Board	Yes	Yes	Yes	Executive Board
IMF	Managing Director	5	Unlimited	Exec. Board	Yes	Yes	Yes	Executive Board
UNITAR	Executive Director	1 ⁸	Unlimited	Exec.Bd/SG	None	No	Yes	Exec.Bd/SG
UNU	Rector	5	Once Only	SG/DG-UNESCO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Council

¹ Length of term of incumbent as presently prescribed.

² 'Unlimited' = no formal provision by the organization limiting the number of terms which an incumbent can serve.

³ Whether there is a *prescribed* timetable for procedures.

⁴ Whether circulation of curriculum vitae is *prescribed*.

⁵ Whether candidacies are formally examined by governing body.

⁶ Term not prescribed; current contract is as shown.

⁷ Term is normally 5 years for the initial appointment; current renewal contract is as shown.

⁸ Term not prescribed; current contract is as shown.

Notes on Table 2

Table 2 indicates that at least some of the procedures for the election or appointment of executive heads are more specific among the specialized agencies than for the heads of the principal UN funds and programmes. None of the organizations prescribes criteria for a qualified candidature.

No formalized timetable by which nominations must be made is prescribed for the principal UN organizations, the only timing being that the Secretary-General's 'consultation' process must obviously be completed in time to announce an appointment to the General Assembly. In only a few of the organizations is there a specific advance date for receipt of nominations. In other instances where 'Yes' has been entered in the column it is because there is a step involving an inner governing body whose schedule of meeting ahead of the final approving body does at least establish some sort of inherent timetable.

Only a handful of organizations require the depositing of a proper *curriculum vitae*, to be circulated to all members of the electing body.

Where an inner governing body like an executive board or council receives and considers nominations, it may be said that there is a form of screening of candidates; its members meet and discuss candidates in closed session. For most of the executive-head posts in the UN organizations no meeting of a governing body takes place.

In none of the organizations of the system is there at present a procedure whereby candidates must appear before any official body.

► **Table 3. Past and Present Executive Heads of the UN System**

Organ	Name	Nationality	Term of office	Birthdate
UN	Trygve Lie	Norway	1946-1953	1896
	Dag Hammarskjöld	Sweden	1953-1961	1905
	U Thant	Burma	1961-1971	1909
	Kurt Waldheim	Austria	1972-1981	1918
	Javier Pérez de Cuellar	Peru	1982-	1920
UNICEF	Maurice Pate	USA	1947-1965	1894
	Henry Labouisse	USA	1965-1979	1904
	James Grant	USA	1980-	1922
UNCTAD	Raul Prebisch	Argentina	1965-1969	1901
	Manuel Perez- Guerrero	Venezuela	1969-1974	1911
	Gamani Corea	Sri Lanka	1974-1986	1925
	Kenneth Dadzie	Ghana	1986-	1930
UNDP	Paul Hoffman	USA	1966-1972 ¹	1891
	David Owen	UK	1966-1969	1904
	Rudolph Petersen	USA	1972-1976	1904
	Bradford Morse	USA	1976-1986	1921
	W. H. Draper	USA	1986-	1928
UNEP	Maurice Strong	Canada	1972-1976	1929
	Mustafa Tolba	Egypt	1976-	1922
UNFPA	Rafael Salas	Philippines	1969-1987	1928
	Nafis Sadik	Pakistan	1987-	1929
UNRRA	Herbert Lehman	USA	1943-1946	1878
	Fiorello LaGuardia	USA	Apr.-Dec. 1946	1882
UNRWA	H. Kennedy	Canada	1950-1951	1892
	J. Blanford	USA	1951-1953	1897
	Henry Labouisse	USA	1954-1958	1904
	John H. Davis	USA	1959-1963	1904
	Laurence Michelmore	USA	1964-1971	1909
	Sir John Rennie	UK	1971-1977	1917
	T. McElhiney	USA	1977-1979	1919
	Olof Rydbeck	Sweden	1979-1985	1913
	G. Giacomelli	Italy	1985-	1930
UNCHS	A. Ramachandran	India	1978-	1923

¹ Paul Hoffman was head of the UN Special Fund from 1959 to 1966; David Owen was Chairman of the UN Technical Assistance Board from 1950 to 1966 when these two bodies were merged into the new UNDP; the two men served as co-Administrators of UNDP from 1966-1969 until David Owen retired from the UN, and Paul Hoffman continued as sole Administrator until 1972.

S T A T I S T I C A L A N A L Y S I S
O F U N S Y S T E M L E A D E R S H I P P O S T S

Organ	Name	Nationality	Term of office	Birthdate
UNDRO	F. Berkol	Turkey	1972-1982	1917
	M. Essafi	Tunisia	1982-	1930
UNHCR	G.J. van H. Goedhart	Netherlands	1950-1956	1901
	A.R. Lindt	Switzerland	1956-1960	1905
	F. Schnyder	Switzerland	1960-1965	1910
	Sadrudin Aga Khan	Iran	1965-1977	1933
	P. Hartling	Denmark	1978-1985	1914
	J. Hocke	Switzerland	1985-1989	1938
	T. Stoltenberg	Norway	1990-	1931
WFC	John Hannah	USA	1975-1978	1902
	Maurice Williams	USA	1978-1986	1920
	G.I. Trant	Canada	1986-	1928
WFP	A.H. Boerma	Netherlands	1962-1967	1912
	F. Aquino	El Salvador	1968-1976	1919
	T.C.M. Robinson	USA	1976-1977	1912
	G.N. Vogel	Canada	1977-1981	1918
	B. de A. Brito Azevedo	Brazil	1981-1982	1935
	J.C. Ingram	Australia	1982-	1928
ILO	E.J. Phelan	Ireland	1941-1948	1888
	David A. Morse	USA	1948-1970	1907
	Wilfred Jenks	UK	1970-1973	1909
	Francis Blanchard	France	1973-1989	1916
	Michel Hansenne	Belgium	1989-	1940
FAO	Sir John Boyd Orr	UK	1945-1948	1880
	Norris E. Dodd	USA	1948-1954	1879
	Philip V. Cardon	USA	1954-1956	1889
	B.R. Sen	India	1956-1967	1898
	A.H. Boerma	Netherlands	1968-1975	1912
	Edouard Saouma	Lebanon	1976-	1926
UNESCO	Julian Huxley	UK	1946-1947	1887
	Jaime T. Bodet	Mexico	1948-1952	1902
	John W. Taylor	USA	1952-1953	1906
	Luther H. Evans	USA	1953-1958	1902
	V. Veronese	Italy	1958-1961	1910
	René Maheu	France	1961-1974	1905
	Amadou M. M'Bow	Senegal	1974-1987	1921
	Federico Mayor	Spain	1987-	1934
ICAO	Albert Roper	France	1946-1951	1891
	E.C.R. Ljungberg	Sweden	1952-1959	1897
	R. McDonnell	Canada	1959-1964	1909
	Bernard T. Twight	Netherlands	1964-1970	1912
	Assad Kotaite	Lebanon	1970-1976	1924
	Yves M. Lambert	France	1976-1988	1936
	S.S. Sidhu	India	1988-	1929

Organ	Name	Nationality	Term of office	Birthdate
WHO	Brock Chisholm	Canada	1946-1953	1896
	Marcolino G. Candau	Brazil	1953-1973	1911
	Halldan T. Mahler	Denmark	1973-1988	1923
	Hiroshi Nakajima	Japan	1988-	1928
UPU	Alois Muri	Switzerland	1945-1949	1879
	Fritz Hess	Switzerland	1950-1960	1895
	Edouard Weber	Switzerland	1961-1966	1901
	Michel Rahi	Egypt	1967-1973	1912
	A.H. Ridge	UK	1973-1974	1913
	M.I. Sobhi	Egypt	1975-1984	1925
	A.C. Botto de Barros	Brazil	1985-	1925
ITU	Franz von Ernst	Switzerland	1947-1950	1879
	Leon Mulatier	France	1950-1953	1887
	M.A. Andrada	Argentina	1954-1958	1904
	Gerald C. Cross	USA	1959-1965	1903
	M.B. Sarwate	India	1965-1967	1910
	Mohamed Mili	Tunisia	1968-1982	1917
	R.E. Butler	Australia	1983-1989	1926
	P.J. Tarjanne	Finland	1989-	1937
WMO	G. Swoboda	Switzerland	1948-1955	1893
	David A. Davies	UK	1955-1980	1913
	A. Wiin-Nielsen	Denmark	1980-1983	1929
	G.O.P. Obasi	Nigeria	1984-	1933
IMO	O.H. Nielsen	Denmark	1959-1961	1893
	J. Roullier	France	1962-1967	1898
	Colin Goad	UK	1968-1973	1914
	C.P. Srivastava	India	1974-1989	1920
	W.A. O'Neil	Canada	1990-	1927
WIPO	Arpad Bogsch	USA	1973-	1919
IFAD	A.M. Al-Sudeary	Saudi Arabia	1980-1984	1936
	Idriss Jazairy	Algeria	1984-	1936
UNIDO	Domingo Siazon	Philippines	1985-	1939
IAEA	Sterling Cole	USA	1957-1961	1904
	Sigvard Eklund	Sweden	1961-1981	1911
	Hans Blix	Sweden	1981-	1928
GATT	Eric W. White	UK	1948-1968	1913
	Olivier Long	Switzerland	1968-1980	1915
	Arthur Dunkel	Switzerland	1980-	1932
IBRD	Eugene Mayer	USA	June-Dec. 1946	1876
	John McCloy	USA	1947-1949	1895
	Eugene R. Black	USA	1949-1962	1898
	George D. Woods	USA	1963-1968	1901
	Robert McNamara	USA	1968-1981	1916
	A.W. Clausen	USA	1981-1986	1923
	Barber Conable	USA	1986-	1922

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Organ	Name	Nationality	Term of office	Birthdate
IMF	Camille Gutt	Belgium	1946-1951	1884
	Ivar Rooth	Sweden	1951-1956	1888
	Per Jacobsson	Sweden	1956-1963	1894
	Pierre-Paul Schweitzer	France	1963-1973	1912
	H. Johannes Witteveen	Netherlands	1973-1978	1921
	J. deLarosière	France	1978-1986	1929
	Jean-Michel Camdessus	France	1987-	1933
UNITAR	G. d'Arboussier	Senegal	1965-1968	1908
	Simeon Adebo	Nigeria	1968-1972	1913
	Davidson Nicol	Sierra Leone	1972-1982	1924
	M. Doo-Kingue	Cameroon	1982-	1934
UNU	J.M. Hester	USA	1975-1980	1924
	Soedjatmoko	Indonesia	1980-1987	1922
	H.G. de Souza	Brazil	1987-	1928

Notes on Table 3

The most striking fact revealed in Table 3 is that among 136 executive heads appointed since 1946, only *one* woman has headed an organization—Dr. Nafis Sadik, the Executive Director of UNFPA since 1987.

Subsequent tables are based on the data in Table 3. First, Table 4 assembles the number of executive head posts held by different nationalities over the whole period 1946-1990.

► **Table 4. Nationalities of UN System Executive Heads, 1946-1990**

Nationality	Number of executive heads ¹	Per cent	Nationality	Number of executive heads ¹	Per cent
USA	33	24.0	Algeria	1	.73
Switzerland	10	8.0	Austria	1	.73
UK	9	7.0	Burma	1	.73
France	9	7.0	Cameroon	1	.73
Canada	7	5.0	El Salvador	1	.73
Sweden	7	5.0	Finland	1	.73
India	5	4.0	Ghana	1	.73
Netherlands	5	4.0	Indonesia	1	.73
Brazil	4	3.0	Iran	1	.73
Denmark	4	3.0	Ireland	1	.73
Egypt	3	2.0	Japan	1	.73
Argentina	2	1.5	Mexico	1	.73
Australia	2	1.5	Pakistan	1	.73
Belgium	2	1.5	Peru	1	.73
Italy	2	1.5	Saudi Arabia	1	.73
Lebanon	2	1.5	Sierra Leone	1	.73
Nigeria	2	1.5	Spain	1	.73
Norway	2	1.5	Sri Lanka	1	.73
Philippines	2	1.5	Turkey	1	.73
Senegal	2	1.5	Venezuela	1	.73
Tunisia	2	1.5			
Totals				136	100.0

¹ A person serving multiple terms in an executive position was counted once for purposes of this and subsequent tables. The same person serving as executive head of two separate UN organizations at different times was counted twice for purposes of this and subsequent tables.

Notes on Table 4

Table 4 shows that citizens from one-quarter (41) of the 160 UN member countries have so far held the 136 leadership posts. There is no particular pattern for regional 'representation' as such. To the extent that governments have selected executive heads of UN bodies or organizations with regional rotation in mind, they have not spread appointments according to any discernible logic. Of Europe's 55 appointments since 1946, 44 have been nationals of only 6 European countries. Of Asia's 13 appointments, 5 have been nationals of only 1 Asian country, India. Of Latin America's 10 appointments, 6 have been nationals of only 2 Latin countries, Brazil and Argentina.

It may be of some significance for the future that the wider 'spread' of leadership posts, resulting in the long list of nationalities with 1 or 2 appointments, has occurred in the last twenty years. Of the 20 nationalities with single appointments, no less than 18 were appointed to UN leadership within the last twenty years. This may suggest that monopolies or concentrations of appointments within regions are beginning to become a thing of the past.

Switzerland's 10 appointments may be a surprise, since it is not a member of the United Nations proper, but UN membership is not a prerequisite to membership in specialized agencies. The historical role of Switzerland in refugee matters and as host to the UNHCR is reflected in 3 appointments, and its key role in the UPU in another 3.

The large numbers of executive-head posts held by a few Western nationalities can best be examined after analysing the regions of origin of the UN system's leaders and the years in which they served.

► **Table 5. Regional Sources of Leaders, pre- and post-Decolonization¹**

Region of Origin	Number of appointments & per cent of total				Totals	
	1946-70	per cent	1970-90	per cent	1946-90	per cent
Western Europe ²	33	46	24	37	57	42
Eastern Europe	0		0		0	
North America	24	33	16	25	40	29
Latin America	6	8	4	6	10	7
Caribbean	0		0		0	
Arab States	2	3	7	11	9	7
Africa (sub-Sahara)	2	3	5	8	7	5
Asia-Pacific	5	7	8	13	13	10
Totals	72³		64⁴		136	100

¹ Most former colonies achieved independence by 1962. However, to allow for such factors as completion of existing incumbencies, the advent of some important new organizations and the reorganization of others, 1970 was chosen as the base year from which to analyse possible regional shifts in executive leadership in the system resulting from decolonization.

² Includes Australia.

³ Includes appointments that in some cases extended beyond 1970.

⁴ The practice of multiple terms of office affects the total number of new appointments.

Notes on Table 5

Table 5 analyses the 136 appointments by region. Western European and North American nationals have held the majority of the executive-head posts in the UN system at all times since 1946—79 per cent in the first period before decolonization; still 62 per cent after 1970; and 71 per cent overall for the entire period 1946-1990. No Eastern European or Caribbean has ever been an executive head.

Reflecting the fact that their countries were decolonized at an early stage, Asians have held more executive-head posts than nationals of other developing countries. However, the developing countries combined have never had nationals in more than 38 per cent of the leadership posts at any point despite their decisive majorities in the General Assembly and many other governing bodies (an interesting fact in light of the frequent description of the UN as 'dominated by the Third World').

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between the two periods analysed. The percentage of posts held by nationals of developing countries increased from 21 per cent between 1946 and 1970 to 38 per cent after 1970. Citizens of Arab, Asian and African countries have largely accounted for this shift; Latin Americans' 'share' of top appointments has slightly declined.

The UN system includes some agencies which are quite small and purely technical. It is important, therefore, to examine the patterns in the larger organizations separately.

► **Table 6. Regional Sources of Leadership of Major Organizations, 1946-1990**

UN Body	Western Europe	North America	Latin America	Arab States	Asia	Africa sub-Sahara
UN	3		1		1	
UNICEF		3				
UNCTAD			2		1	1
UNDP	1	4				
UNEP		1		1		
UNFPA					2	
UNRWA	3	6				
UNHCR	6				1	
WFP	2 ¹	2	2			
ILO	4	1				
FAO	2	2		1	1	
UNESCO	4	2	1			1
WHO	1	1	1		1	
IFAD				2		
UNIDO					1	
IBRD		7				
IMF	7					
Totals	33	29	7	4	8	2

¹ Includes the present Australian incumbent, James C. Ingram.

Notes on Table 6

A number of patterns can be noted. ILO has had a prevailing tradition of Western leadership, and more recently IFAD an Arab equivalent. Otherwise, in the larger specialized agencies there has been a spread by region.

The two financial institutions (IMF and the World Bank) and the large operational programmes that are voluntarily financed (i.e., not by assessment) have traditionally been seen as a monopoly by industrialized countries for leadership choices. On the other hand, UNFPA, also voluntarily funded, has only been headed by citizens of developing countries.

Because of the inevitable role that global political factors play in these large UN organizations, it may be useful to analyse the pattern of their leadership before and after

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► **Table 7. Major Organizations' Executive Heads, pre- and post-Decolonization**

Region of origin	Number of appointments & per cent of total				Totals	
	1946-70	per cent	1970-90	per cent	1946-90	per cent
Western Europe	17	39	16	41	33	39
North America	18	41	11	28	29	35
Latin America	5	11	2	5	7	8
Arab States	0		4	10	4	5
Asia	4	9	4	10	8	10
Africa (sub-Sahara)	0		2	5	2	2
Totals	44		39		83	
Subtotals:						
North	35	80	27	69	62	75
South	9	20	12	31	21	25

Notes on Table 7

Decolonization has only had a modest effect on the nationality of leadership of the *major* organizations of the system. Nationals of Arab, Asian, and African developing countries have held only 11 per cent more posts since 1970, with both North and South American shares reduced accordingly. Multiple terms of office account for a decline in the total number of appointments made between 1970-1990 compared to 1946-1970, even though four new agencies were created during the period.

► **Table 8. Number of Terms Served as Executive Head**

Organ	Number of terms begun or completed							
	Current (first)	One	Short (one) ¹	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six
UN				5				
UNICEF					3			
UNCTAD	1	2				1		
UNDP		1		2	1	1	1	
UNEP		1		1				
UNFPA	1						1	
UNRRA		1	1					
UNRWA		3	2	3				
UNCHS					1			
UNDRO				1				
UNHCR		5		1	1			
WFC	1		1	1				
WFP		2	3	2				
ILO	1	1		1		1	1	
FAO		4		1	1			
UNESCO	1	2	3	2				
ICAO	1	2		4				
WHO	1	1		1	1	1		
UPU	1	3	1	2				
ITU		7			1			
WMO	1			2				1
IMO	1	2	1			1		
WIPO					1			
IFAD	1			1				
UNIDO				2				
IAEA	1				1		1	
GATT					2		1	
IBRD	1	2	2		2			
IMF	1	3		3				
UNITAR		1	1	1	1			
UNU	1	1		1				
Total	15	44	15	37	16	5	5	1

¹ 'Short' = less than one full term for one reason or another.

Notes on Table 8

Table 8 shows that all of the organizations in existence for more than the single term of its current executive head have had multiple-term appointments. Aside from the 15 current first terms and 15 short single terms (one year or less), 61 per cent of all terms of office have been multiple-term, the largest share of which were two terms.¹ Most of the 15 incumbents now serving first terms are eligible for reappointment.

There is no particular pattern as to number of multiple terms among the organizations. Looking at the same seventeen major organizations analysed in Tables 6 and 7, 49 per cent of their incumbencies have been for two or more terms. Of the older organizations, ITU and WMO have usually had single terms, although in both one person held office for many years. Where longer terms of 5 or 6 years are selected by an organization, there is no presumption against reappointment of an incumbent for another term or two. Organizations that prescribe shorter terms of 3 or 4 years do not have a higher proportion of multiple terms. (See Table 2.)

The four previous United Nations Secretaries-General all could have served at least ten years (two terms) and been eligible for more. Trygve Lie resigned during his second term; Dag Hammarskjöld died during his; U Thant was ill as he neared the end of his second term and, although delegations approached him about a third, he declined;² Kurt Waldheim actively campaigned for reappointment to a third term but was unsuccessful; Javier Pérez de Cuellar publicly stated that he would only serve one term, but accepted reappointment in 1987.

¹ 36 per cent for two terms; 16 per cent for three terms; 4 per cent for four terms, and one (David Davies, WMO) five terms.

² He said that he did not believe a Secretary-General should serve more than one term. Ramses Nassif, *U Thant in New York* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1988), p. 123.

► **Table 9. Age of UN System Executive Heads**

Age at appointment ¹	S-G's term in which appointment made					Total		Age at end of term ²	
	1946-53	1953-61	1961-71	1972-81	1982-			Total	per cent
30's	1		1			2	2		
40's	5	3	3	7	5	23	17	4	4
50's	14	10	19	21	14	78	57	35	33
60's	8	5	5	5	6	29	21	52	50
70's	2	1		1		4	3	13	12
80's								1	1
Totals	30	19	28	34	25	136	100	105	100

¹ Multiple terms are not counted separately; see Table 3 for birthdates and dates of terms served.

² Excludes those currently holding UN leadership posts.

Notes on Table 9

The data show that an overwhelming majority of newly-appointed executive heads of UN organizations are in their fifties (57 per cent) and half serve until they are in their sixties (50 per cent). The few exceptions were either those who were very young (two were appointed in their thirties: Eric White, who then spent 20 years as the head of GATT, and Sadruddin Aga Khan), or those who were already distinguished elder statesmen when they began to serve the UN in executive positions.

At the Secretary-General level, Dag Hammarskjöld was 48 when he became Secretary-General; Pérez de Cuellar was 62. No similar trend towards older appointees has been apparent among the executive heads of the specialized agencies or UN organizations. Fifty-seven per cent of appointees were in their fifties, 17 per cent in their forties, and 21 per cent in their sixties at the time of appointment to their initial terms. The number of appointees in their seventies at the time of appointment has declined since the beginning of the United Nations; the number of appointees in their forties and sixties has stayed about the same; and the number appointed in their fifties peaked under U Thant and Kurt Waldheim. The spread of ages at the end of the term is no more evenly balanced than the spread of ages at the time of initial appointment: 50 per cent complete

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Over 2.5 billion people in the world today are below the age of 25, roughly half of the world's population of 5.3 billion; the total population of the world is projected to be 6.25 billion in the year 2000, when close to 3 billion are projected to be under age 25. The young population is increasing in the developing world and decreasing in the industrialized world.

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