

**In larger freedom:
towards development, security and human rights for all**

Report of the Secretary-General

V. Strengthening the United Nations

153. In the present report, I have argued that the principles and purposes of the United Nations, as set out in the Charter, remain as valid and relevant today as they were in 1945, and that the present moment is a precious opportunity to put them into practice. But while purposes should be firm and principles constant, practice and organization need to move with the times. If the United Nations is to be a useful instrument for its Member States and for the world's peoples, in responding to the challenges described in sections II to IV above it must be fully adapted to the needs and circumstances of the twenty-first century. It must be open not only to States but also to civil society, which at both the national and international levels plays an increasingly important role in world affairs. Its strength must be drawn from the breadth of its partnerships and from its ability to bring those partners into effective coalitions for change across the whole spectrum of issues on which action is required to advance the cause of larger freedom.

154. Clearly our Organization, as an organization, was built for a different era. Equally clearly, not all our current practices are adapted to the needs of today. That is why Heads of State and Government, in the Millennium Declaration, recognized the need to strengthen the United Nations to make it a more effective instrument for pursuing their priorities.

155. Indeed, ever since I took office as Secretary-General in 1997, one of my main priorities has been to reform the internal structures and culture of the United Nations to make the Organization more useful to its Member States and to the world's peoples. And much has been achieved. Today, the Organization's structures are more streamlined, its working methods more effective and its various programmes better coordinated, and it has developed working partnerships in many areas with civil society and the private sector. In the economic and social spheres, the Millennium Development Goals now serve as a common policy framework for the entire United Nations system, and indeed for the broader international development community. United Nations peacekeeping missions today are much better designed than they used to be, and have a more integrated understanding of the many different tasks involved in preventing a recurrence of fighting and laying the foundations of lasting peace. And we have built strategic partnerships with a wide range of non-State actors who have an important contribution to make to global security, prosperity and freedom.

156. But many more changes are needed. As things stand now, different governance structures for the many parts of the system, overlapping mandates and mandates that reflect earlier rather than current priorities all combine to hobble our effectiveness. It is essential to give managers real authority so that they can fully align the system's activities with the goals endorsed by Member States — which I hope will be those outlined in the present report. We must also do more to professionalize the Secretariat and to hold its staff and management more rigorously accountable for their performance. And we need to ensure greater coherence, both among the various United Nations representatives and activities in each country and in the wider United Nations system, particularly in the economic and social fields.

157. But reform, if it is to be effective, cannot be confined to the executive branch. It is time to breathe new life also into the intergovernmental organs of the United Nations.

A. General Assembly

158. As the Millennium Declaration reaffirmed, the General Assembly has a central position as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations. In particular, it has the authority to consider and approve the budget and it elects the members of the other deliberative bodies, including the Security Council. Member States are therefore

rightly concerned about the decline in the Assembly's prestige and its diminishing contribution to the Organization's activities. This decline must be reversed, and that will only happen if the Assembly becomes more effective.

159. In recent years, the number of General Assembly resolutions approved by consensus has increased steadily. That would be good if it reflected a genuine unity of purpose among Member States in responding to global challenges. But unfortunately, consensus (often interpreted as requiring unanimity) has become an end in itself. It is sought first within each regional group and then at the level of the whole. This has not proved an effective way of reconciling the interests of Member States. Rather, it prompts the Assembly to retreat into generalities, abandoning any serious effort to take action. Such real debates as there are tend to focus on process rather than substance and many so-called decisions simply reflect the lowest common denominator of widely different opinions.

160. Member States agree, as they have for years, that the Assembly needs to streamline its procedures and structures so as to improve the deliberative process and make it more effective. Many modest steps have been taken. Now, new proposals to “revitalize” the Assembly have been put forward by a wide range of Member States. **The General Assembly should now take bold measures to rationalize its work and speed up the deliberative process, notably by streamlining its agenda, its committee structure and its procedures for holding plenary debates and requesting reports, and by strengthening the role and authority of its President.**

161. At present, the General Assembly addresses a broad agenda covering a wide range of often overlapping issues. **It should give focus to its substantive agenda by concentrating on addressing the major substantive issues of the day, such as international migration and the long-debated comprehensive convention on terrorism.**

162. It should also engage much more actively with civil society — reflecting the fact that, after a decade of rapidly increasing interaction, civil society is now involved in most United Nations activities. Indeed, the goals of the United Nations can only be achieved if civil society and Governments are fully engaged. The Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations, which I appointed in 2003, made many useful recommendations for improving our work with civil society, and I have commended its report (see A/58/817 and Corr.1) to the General Assembly together with my views. **The General Assembly should act on these recommendations and establish mechanisms enabling it to engage fully and systematically with civil society.**

163. The Assembly also needs to review its committee structure, the way committees function, the oversight it provides to them and their outputs. The General Assembly needs a mechanism to review the decisions of its committees so as to avoid overloading the organization with unfunded mandates and continuing the current problem of micromanagement of the budget and the allocation of posts within the Secretariat. If the General Assembly cannot solve these problems it will not have the focus and flexibility it needs to serve its members effectively.

164. It should be clear that none of this will happen unless Member States take a serious interest in the Assembly at the highest level and insist that their representatives engage in its debates with a view to achieving real and positive results. If they fail to do this the Assembly's performance will continue to disappoint them and they should not be surprised.

B. The Councils

165. Its founders endowed the United Nations with three Councils, each having major responsibilities in its own area: the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council. Over time, the division of responsibilities between them has become less and less balanced: the Security Council has increasingly asserted its authority and, especially since the end of the cold war, has enjoyed greater unity of purpose among its permanent members but has seen that authority questioned on the grounds that its composition is anachronistic or insufficiently representative; the Economic and Social Council has been too often relegated to the margins of global economic and social governance; and the Trusteeship

Council, having successfully carried out its functions, is now reduced to a purely formal existence.

166. I believe we need to restore the balance, with three Councils covering respectively, (a) international peace and security, (b) economic and social issues, and (c) human rights, the promotion of which has been one of the purposes of the Organization from its beginnings but now clearly requires more effective operational structures. These Councils together should have the task of driving forward the agenda that emerges from summit and other conferences of Member States, and should be the global forms in which the issues of security, development and justice can be properly addressed. The first two Councils, of course, already exist but need to be strengthened. The third requires a far-reaching overhaul and upgrading of our existing human rights machinery.

Security Council

167. By adhering to the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States recognize that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agree to be bound by its decisions. It is therefore of vital importance, not only to the Organization but to the world, that the Council should be equipped to carry out this responsibility and that its decisions should command worldwide respect.

168. In the Millennium Declaration, all States resolved to intensify their efforts “to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects” (see General Assembly resolution 55/2, para. 30). This reflected the view, long held by the majority, that a change in the Council’s composition is needed to make it more broadly representative of the international community as a whole, as well as of the geopolitical realities of today, and thereby more legitimate in the eyes of the world. Its working methods also need to be made more efficient and transparent. The Council must be not only more representative but also more able and willing to take action when action is needed. Reconciling these two imperatives is the hard test that any reform proposal must pass.

169. Two years ago, I declared that in my view no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council. That is still my belief. The Security Council must be broadly representative of the realities of power in today’s world. I therefore support the position set out in the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) concerning the reforms of the Security Council, namely:

- (a) They should, in honouring Article 23 of the Charter, increase the involvement in decision-making of those who contribute most to the United Nations financially, militarily and diplomatically, specifically in terms of contributions to United Nations assessed budgets, participation in mandated peace operations, contributions to voluntary activities of the United Nations in the areas of security and development, and diplomatic activities in support of United Nations objectives and mandates. Among developed countries, achieving or making substantial progress towards the internationally agreed level of 0.7 per cent of GNP for ODA should be considered an important criterion of contribution;
- (b) They should bring into the decision-making process countries more representative of the broader membership, especially of the developing world;
- (c) They should not impair the effectiveness of the Security Council;
- (d) They should increase the democratic and accountable nature of the body.

170. I urge Member States to consider the two options, models A and B, proposed in that report (see box 5), or any other viable proposals in terms of size and balance that have emerged on the basis of either model. Member States should agree to take a decision on this important issue before the summit in September 2005. It would be very preferable for Member States to take this vital decision by consensus, but if they are unable to reach consensus this must not become an excuse for postponing action.

Box 5**Security Council reform: models A and B**

Model A provides for six new permanent seats, with no veto being created, and three new two-year term non-permanent seats, divided among the major regional areas as follows:

Regional area	No. of States	Permanent seats (continuing)	Proposed new permanent seats	Proposed two-year seats (non-renewable)	Total
Africa	53	0	2	4	6
Asia and Pacific	56	1	2	3	6
Europe	47	3	1	2	6
Americas	35	1	1	4	6
Totals model A	191	5	6	13	24

Model B provides for no new permanent seats but creates a new category of eight four-year renewable-term seats and one new two-year non-permanent (and non-renewable) seat, divided among the major regional areas as follows:

Regional area	No. of States	Permanent seats (continuing)	Proposed four-year renewable seats	Proposed two-year seats (non-renewable)	Total
Africa	53	0	2	4	6
Asia and Pacific	56	1	2	3	6
Europe	47	3	2	1	6
Americas	35	1	2	3	6
Totals model A	191	5	8	11	24

Economic and Social Council

171. The Charter of the United Nations gives the Economic and Social Council a range of important functions that involve coordination, policy review and policy dialogue. Most of these seem more critical than ever in this age of globalization, in which a comprehensive United Nations development agenda has emerged from the summits and conferences of the 1990s. More than ever, the United Nations needs to be able to develop and implement policies in this area in a coherent manner. The functions of the Council are generally thought to be uniquely relevant to these challenges, but it has not as yet done justice to them.

172. In 1945, the framers of the Charter did not give the Economic and Social Council enforcement powers. Having agreed at Bretton Woods in the previous year to create powerful international financial institutions and expecting that these would be complemented by a world trade organization in addition to the various specialized agencies, they clearly intended that international economic decision-making would be decentralized. But this only makes the Council's potential role as coordinator, convener, forum for policy dialogue and forger of consensus the more important. It is the only organ of the United Nations explicitly mandated by the Charter to coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies and to consult with non-governmental organizations. And it has a network of functional and regional commissions operating under its aegis which are increasingly focused on the implementation of development goals.

173. The Economic and Social Council has put these assets to good use in the recent years, building bridges through an annual special high-level meeting with the trade and financial institutions, for instance, and establishing a unique Information and Communications Technology Task Force. It has also contributed to linking the issues of security and development by establishing country-specific groups.

174. These initiatives have helped to promote greater coherence and coordination among various actors, but there are still visible gaps to be addressed.

175. First, there is an increasing need to integrate, coordinate and review the implementation of the United Nations development agenda that has emerged from the world conferences and summits. **To this end, the Economic and Social Council should hold annual ministerial-level assessments of progress towards agreed development goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals. These assessments could be based on peer reviews of progress reports prepared by member States, with support from United Nations agencies and the regional commissions.**

176. Second, there is a need to review trends in international development cooperation, promote greater coherence among the development activities of different actors and strengthen the links between the normative and operational work of the United Nations system. **To address this gap, the Economic and Social Council should serve as a high-level development cooperation forum. Such a forum could be held biennially by transforming the high-level segment of the Council.**

177. Third, there is a need to address economic and social challenges, threats and crises as and when they occur. **To this end, the Council should convene timely meetings, as required, to assess threats to development, such as famines, epidemics and major natural disasters, and to promote coordinated responses to them.**

178. Fourth, there is a need to systematically monitor and deal with the economic and social dimensions of conflicts. The Economic and Social Council has tried to fulfil this need by establishing country-specific ad hoc advisory groups. But given the scale and the challenge of long-term recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation, ad hoc arrangements are not enough. **The Economic and Social Council should institutionalize its work in post-conflict management by working with the proposed Peacebuilding Commission. It should also reinforce its links with the Security Council in order to promote structural prevention.**

179. Finally, while the normative and strategy-setting role of the Economic and Social Council is clearly different from the managerial and policy-making role played by the governing bodies of the various international institutions, I would hope that, as the Council starts to assert leadership in driving a global development agenda it will be able to provide direction for the efforts of the various intergovernmental bodies in this area throughout the United Nations system.

180. Implementing all these recommendations would require the Economic and Social Council to function with a new and more flexible structure, not necessarily restricted by the current annual calendar of “segments” and “substantive session”. In addition, the Council needs an effective, efficient and representative intergovernmental mechanism for engaging its counterparts in the institutions dealing with finance and trade. This could either be achieved by expanding its Bureau or by establishing an Executive Committee with a regionally balanced composition.

Proposed Human Rights Council

181. The Commission on Human Rights has given the international community a universal human rights framework, comprising the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the two International Covenants^[21] and other core human rights treaties. During its annual session, the Commission draws public attention to human rights issues and debates, provides a forum for the development of United Nations human rights policy and establishes a unique system of independent and expert special procedures to observe and analyse human rights compliance by theme and by country. The Commission's close engagement with hundreds of civil society organizations provides an opportunity for working with civil society that does not exist elsewhere.

182. Yet the Commission's capacity to perform its tasks has been increasingly undermined by its declining credibility and professionalism. In particular, States have sought membership of the Commission not to strengthen human rights but to protect themselves against criticism or to criticize others. As a result, a credibility deficit has developed, which casts a shadow on the reputation of the United Nations system as a whole.

183. **If the United Nations is to meet the expectations of men and women everywhere — and indeed, if the Organization is to take the cause of human rights as seriously as those of security and development — then Member States should agree to replace the Commission on Human Rights with a smaller standing Human Rights Council.** Member States would need to decide if they want the Human Rights Council to be a principal organ of the United Nations or a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, but in either case its members would be elected directly by the General Assembly by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. The creation of the Council would accord human rights a more authoritative position, corresponding to the primacy of human rights in the Charter of the United Nations. Member States should determine the composition of the Council and the term of office of its members. Those elected to the Council should undertake to abide by the highest human rights standards.

C. The Secretariat

184. A capable and effective Secretariat is indispensable to the work of the United Nations. As the needs of the Organization have changed, so too must the Secretariat. That is why in 1997 I launched a package of structural reforms for the Secretariat and followed up with a further set of managerial and technical improvements in 2002, aimed at giving the Organization a more focused work programme and a simpler system of planning and budgeting and enabling the Secretariat to provide better service.

185. I am glad that the General Assembly has given broad support to these changes and I believe they have improved our ability to do the job the world expects of us. Thanks to changes in budgeting, procurement, human resources management and the way peacekeeping missions are supported, we now do business in a new and different way. But these reforms do not go far enough. If the United Nations is to be truly effective the Secretariat will have to be completely transformed.

186. Those with the power to make decisions — essentially the General Assembly and the Security Council — must take care, when they assign mandates to the Secretariat, that they also provide resources adequate for the task. In return, management must be made more accountable and the capacity of intergovernmental bodies to oversee it must be strengthened. The Secretary-General and his or her managers must be given the discretion, the means, the authority and the expert assistance that they need to manage an organization which is expected to meet fast-changing operational needs in many different parts of the world. Similarly, Member States must have the oversight tools that they need to hold the Secretary-General truly accountable for his/her strategy and leadership.

187. Member States also have a central role to play in ensuring that the Organization's mandates stay current. **I therefore ask the General Assembly to review all mandates older than five years to see whether the activities concerned are still genuinely needed or whether the resources assigned to them can be reallocated in response to new and emerging challenges.**

188. Today's United Nations staff must be: (a) aligned with the new substantive challenges of the twenty-first century; (b) empowered to manage complex global operations; and (c) held accountable.

189. First, I am taking steps to realign the Secretariat's structure to match the priorities outlined in the present report. This will entail creating a peacebuilding support office and strengthening support both for mediation (my "good offices" function) and for democracy and the rule of law. In addition, I intend to appoint a Scientific Adviser to the Secretary-General, who will provide strategic forward-looking scientific advice on policy matters, mobilizing scientific and technological expertise within the United Nations system and from the broader scientific and academic community.

190. Achieving real progress in new areas requires staff with the skills and experience to address new challenges. It also requires a renewed effort to secure "the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity", as required by Article 101.3 of the Charter of the United

Nations, while “recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible” and, we must add today, ensuring a just balance between men and women. While existing staff must have reasonable opportunities to develop within the Organization we cannot continue to rely on the same pool of people to address all our new needs. **I therefore request the General Assembly to provide me with the authority and resources to pursue a one-time staff buyout so as to refresh and realign the staff to meet current needs.**

191. Second, the Secretariat must be empowered to do its work. The High-level Panel suggested that I appoint a second Deputy Secretary-General to improve the decision-making process on peace and security. Instead, I have decided to create a cabinet-style decision-making mechanism (with stronger executive powers than the present Senior Management Group) to improve both policy and management. It will be supported by a small cabinet secretariat to ensure the preparation and follow-up of decision making. In this way, I expect to be able to ensure more focused, orderly and accountable decision-making. This should help but will not by itself be enough to ensure the effective management of the worldwide operations of such a complex Organization. The Secretary-General, as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization, must be given a higher level of managerial authority and flexibility. He or she needs to have the ability to adjust the staffing table as necessary and without undue constraint. And our administrative system needs to be thoroughly modernized. **Therefore, I ask Member States to work with me to undertake a comprehensive review of the budget and human resources rules under which we operate.**

192. Third, we must continue to improve the transparency and accountability of the Secretariat. The General Assembly has taken an important step towards greater transparency by making internal audits available to Member States upon request. I am in the process of identifying other categories of information that could be made available routinely. I am establishing a Management Performance Board to ensure that senior officials are held accountable for their actions and the results their units achieve. A number of other internal improvements are under way. These aim to align our management systems and human resource policies with the best practices of other global public and commercial organizations. **In order to further improve accountability and oversight I have proposed that the General Assembly commission a comprehensive review of the Office of Internal Oversight Services with a view to strengthening its independence and authority as well as its expertise and capacity.** I hope the Assembly will act promptly on this proposal.

D. System coherence

193. Beyond the Secretariat, the United Nations system of funds, programmes and specialized agencies brings together a unique wealth of expertise and resources, encompassing the full spectrum of global issues. And what is true for the United Nations proper is valid also for the other parts of the system. All must be clearly accountable to both their governing bodies and the people they serve.

194. Over the past few decades, responding to steadily growing demand, the system has seen a welcome expansion in its membership as well as in the scale and scope of its activities. One unfortunate side-effect of this has been that there is now often significant duplication of mandates and actions between different bodies within the system. Another has been significant shortfalls in necessary funding.

195. To try to address some of these problems I have launched two sets of major reforms during my time as Secretary-General. First, in my 1997 report, entitled “Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform” (A/51/950), I introduced several measures, including notably the creation of executive committees, to strengthen the leadership capacity of the Secretariat and provide better coordination in the humanitarian and development fields. Then in 2002, in a second report, entitled “Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change” (A/57/387 and Corr.1), I set out further steps aimed more directly at improving our work at country level, particularly by strengthening the resident coordinator system. I have also given more authority to my special representatives and instituted a system of integrated peace operations.

196. These efforts have paid significant dividends by enabling the various agencies to work more closely together at the country level, both with each other and with other partners, such as the World Bank. Nevertheless, the United Nations system as a whole is still not delivering services in the coherent, effective way that the world's citizens need and deserve.

197. Part of the problem is clearly related to the structural constraints we face. In the medium and longer term, we will need to consider much more radical reforms to address these. Such reforms could include grouping the various agencies, funds and programmes into tightly managed entities, dealing respectively with development, the environment and humanitarian action. And this regrouping might involve eliminating or merging those funds, programmes and agencies which have complementary or overlapping mandates and expertise.

198. Meanwhile, there are more immediate actions that we can and should take now. In particular, I am introducing further improvements in the coordination of the United Nations system presence and performance at the country level, based on a simple principle: at every stage of United Nations activities, the senior United Nations official present in any given country — special representative, resident coordinator or humanitarian coordinator — should have the authority and resources necessary to manage an integrated United Nations mission or “country presence” so that the United Nations can truly function as one integrated entity.

The United Nations at the country level

199. In every country where the United Nations has a development presence, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes should organize their technical efforts to help that country develop and implement the national Millennium Development Goals-based poverty reduction strategies set out in section II above. While the management of the resident coordinator system should remain with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is our principal development institution, the broader United Nations Development Group (UNDG) should guide resident United Nations country teams, led by properly resourced and empowered resident coordinators. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework should identify a clear set of strategic objectives and define the specific assistance that each United Nations entity must give to help our national partners achieve the Goals and meet their broader development needs. Governments and the United Nations itself can then use this “results matrix” to monitor and assess the performance of the United Nations system at the country level and hold its representatives accountable.

Strengthening the resident coordinator system

200. To drive this process, I shall further strengthen the role of my resident coordinators, giving them more authority so that they can coordinate better. But the governing boards of different agencies also need to provide guidance to support this process. **I call on Member States to coordinate their representatives on these governing boards so as to make sure that they pursue a coherent policy in assigning mandates and allocating resources throughout the system.** I also urge Member States to increase core funding and reduce the proportion of earmarked funds so as to help increase coherence in the system. As mentioned above, I hope a reinvigorated Economic and Social Council will give overall direction to this new coherence.

201. In recent years, I have been gratified by the benefits that the United Nations system has derived from working closely with independent scientists, policy makers and political leaders around the world. This is particularly true in the field of development, where we need constantly to integrate the latest advances in science and technology into the practice of our organizations and programmes. In 2005, to consolidate the links between United Nations development efforts and the world's leading minds in relevant fields I intend to launch a Council of Development Advisers. This Council, working in close cooperation with the Secretary-General's Scientific Adviser mentioned above, will comprise some two dozen people, who should represent a cross-section of leading world scientists, policy-making officials and political leaders. They will advise both me and UNDG on the best ways to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, will issue periodic reports and commentaries, and will liaise with scientific, civil society and other bodies with relevant expertise. Their advice will also be available to the Economic and Social Council.

Humanitarian response system

202. From the Indian Ocean tsunami to the crises in Darfur and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, recent months have provided eloquent testimony to the ever-growing range and scale of demands being placed on the international humanitarian response system. With leadership and coordination from the United Nations, the system that comprises the humanitarian community of agencies and non-governmental organizations has been performing reasonably well, under the circumstances. Expert humanitarian workers get deployed and large quantities of food and other relief items are now provided to victims of war and natural disasters anywhere in the world within a matter of days. There is less overlap between agencies and a more effective coordination between non-governmental and intergovernmental actors on the ground.

203. The system was able to provide massive relief to all tsunami-affected communities in the Indian Ocean, against all odds, in the course of a few weeks. Yet at the same time, assistance to displaced people in Darfur is falling well short of what had been pledged, while major crises, such as the one in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where more than 3.8 million people have been killed and 2.3 million displaced since 1997, remain woefully underfunded. Humanitarian response needs to become more predictable in all emergencies. To achieve that we need to make rapid progress on three fronts.

204. First, the humanitarian system needs to have a more predictable response capacity in areas where now there too often are gaps, ranging from the provision of water and sanitation to shelter and camp management. When crises are already under way there is a need to operate quickly and flexibly. This is particularly the case in complex emergencies, during which humanitarian requirements are linked to the dynamics of conflict and circumstances can change rapidly. In general, it is the relevant United Nations country team, under the leadership of the humanitarian coordinator, which is best placed to identify the opportunities and constraints. However, there is a clear need to strengthen field coordination structures, notably by better preparing and equipping United Nations country teams, strengthening the leadership of the humanitarian coordinator and ensuring that sufficient and flexible resources are immediately available to support these field structures.

205. Second, we need predictable funding to meet the needs of vulnerable communities. We need to ensure that the generous outpouring of global support to the tsunami crisis becomes the rule, not the exception. This means building on the humanitarian community's work with the donor community and more systematically engaging with new donor Governments and the private sector. Ensuring consistent and timely responses to crises requires both that pledges be rapidly converted into tangible resources and that more predictable and flexible funding be made available for humanitarian operations, particularly in the initial emergency phases.

206. Third, we need to have a predictable right of access and guaranteed security for our humanitarian workers and operations in the field. Humanitarian personnel are too often blocked from providing assistance because government forces or armed groups prevent them from doing their jobs. Elsewhere, terrorists attack our unarmed aid workers and paralyse operations, in violation of basic international law.

207. I am working with my Emergency Relief Coordinator to address these issues and to come up with concrete recommendations for strengthened action. A comprehensive humanitarian response review is currently under way and its findings will be made available in June 2005. **I expect them to include a series of proposals for new standby arrangements for personnel and equipment to ensure the capacity to respond immediately to major disasters and other emergencies, if need be in several areas at the same time.** I shall work with Member States and agencies to ensure that these proposals, once finalized, will be implemented without delay.

208. To enable immediate response to sudden disasters or large unmet needs in neglected emergencies, we need to consider the adequacy of the financial tools at our disposal. **We should examine whether the existing Central Emergency Revolving Fund should be**

upgraded or a new funding mechanism should be established. In the latter case, the proposal put forward by donors to set up a \$1 billion voluntary fund deserves serious consideration.

209. Special attention is due to the growing problem of internally displaced persons. Unlike refugees, who have crossed an international border, those displaced within their own countries by violence and war are not protected by established minimum standards.

210. Yet this acutely vulnerable group now totals roughly 25 million, more than double the estimated number of refugees. **I urge Member States to accept the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2) prepared by my Special Representative as the basic international norm for protection of such persons, and to commit themselves to promote the adoption of these principles through national legislation.** Unlike refugees, who are looked after by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, internally displaced persons and their needs often fall into the cracks between different humanitarian bodies. Recent steps have been taken to ensure that agencies provide assistance to such groups within their respective areas of competence, on a collaborative basis. But, as we have seen most recently in Darfur, more is needed. **I intend to strengthen further the inter-agency response to the needs of internally displaced persons, under the global leadership of my Emergency Relief Coordinator, and at the country level through the humanitarian coordinator system. I trust that Member States will support me in this effort.**

211. Finally, I intend to call more systematically on Member States in general and the Security Council in particular to address the unacceptable humanitarian access blockages that we are too often facing. **In order to save unnecessary pain and suffering it is essential to protect humanitarian space and ensure that humanitarian actors have safe and unimpeded access to vulnerable populations.** I shall also take measures, through the newly established Secretariat Department of Safety and Security, to make our risk management system more robust so that humanitarian workers can undertake their life-saving operations in high risk areas without unduly endangering their own lives.

Governance of the global environment

212. Given the number and complexity of international agreements and agencies that cover it, the environment poses particular challenges to coherence. There are now more than 400 regional and universal multilateral environmental treaties in force, covering a broad range of environmental issues, including biodiversity, climate change and desertification. The sectoral character of these legal instruments and the fragmented machinery for monitoring their implementation make it harder to mount effective responses across the board. There is a clear need to streamline and consolidate our efforts to follow up and implement these treaties. Already in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, emphasized the need for a more coherent institutional framework of international environmental governance, with better coordination and monitoring. **It is now high time to consider a more integrated structure for environmental standard-setting, scientific discussion and monitoring treaty compliance. This should be built on existing institutions, such as the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as the treaty bodies and specialized agencies. Meanwhile, environmental activities at the country level should benefit from improved synergies, on both normative and operational aspects, between United Nations agencies, making optimal use of their comparative advantages, so that we have an integrated approach to sustainable development, in which both halves of that term are given their due weight.**

E. Regional organizations

213. A considerable number of regional and subregional organizations are now active around the world, making important contributions to the stability and prosperity of their members, as well as of the broader international system. The United Nations and regional organizations should play complementary roles in facing the challenges to international peace and security. **In this connection, donor countries should pay particular attention to the need for a 10-year**

plan for capacity-building with the African Union. To improve coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, I intend to introduce memoranda of understanding between the United Nations and individual organizations, governing the sharing of information, expertise and resources, as appropriate in each case. For regional organizations that have a conflict prevention or peacekeeping capacity, these memoranda of understanding could place those capacities within the framework of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System.

214. I also intend to invite regional organizations to participate in meetings of United Nations system coordinating bodies, when issues in which they have a particular interest are discussed.

215. The rules of the United Nations peacekeeping budget should be amended to give the United Nations the option, in very exceptional circumstances, to use assessed contributions to finance regional operations authorized by the Security Council, or the participation of regional organizations in multi-pillar peace operations under the overall United Nations umbrella.

F. Updating the Charter of the United Nations

216. As I remarked at the beginning of section V, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations remain fully valid, and the Charter itself, in the main, continues to provide a solid foundation for all our work. It is still essentially the document that was drafted at the San Francisco Conference six decades ago. Much has been achieved by changes in practice without the need for amendment. In fact, the Charter has been amended only twice during the history of the Organization — for the purpose of enlarging the membership of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

217. Nonetheless, the United Nations now operates in a radically different world from that of 1945, and the Charter should reflect the realities of today. **In particular, it is high time to eliminate the anachronistic “enemy” clauses in Articles 53 and 107 of the Charter.**

218. The Trusteeship Council played a vital role in raising standards of administration in the trust territories and promoting the wider process of decolonization. But its work is long since complete. **Chapter XIII, “The Trusteeship Council”, should be deleted from the Charter.**

219. **For similar reasons, Article 47 on The Military Staff Committee should be deleted, as should all references to this Committee in Articles 26, 45 and 46.**

Note:

21. General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI). [[Back to text](#)]