



United Nations @ 70

Proceedings Report

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

| | |
|-------|--|
| ASEAN | Association of South East Asian Nations |
| AU | African Union |
| BRICS | Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa |
| CELAC | Community of Latin American and Caribbean States |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| IBSA | India, Brazil and South Africa |
| ICC | International Criminal Court |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| NGO | Non - Governmental Organisation |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| RECs | Regional Economic Communities |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| TDC | Trilateral Development Cooperation |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |

INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) in partnership with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) South Africa Office held a one day seminar in Pretoria on 27 November 2015 on the theme of the United Nations @ 70: Towards a Future.

The United Nations (UN) lies at the centre of the global multilateral system of governance. It is viewed as a principle guarantor of the idea of an international system of governance, and the dream of an international society. It is the principal platform through which international values, norms and decisions are made and remade. In 2015, the UN reaches 70 years of existence and this marks a critical point of reflection on the significance of the organisation, its key challenges and prospects for its future. Such a reflection is a deliberation on the state of the world today.

Ten years ago, the IGD in partnership with the FES convened a dialogue on the United Nations @ 60 that covered the background on the UN. This seminar was therefore purposed to reflect further, building upon the earlier discussions of the UN and its importance in international diplomacy. This reflection was based on presentations made on the UN and global governance, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Reform, Global Economic Governance, Global Development and Africa and the UN.

SETTING THE SCENE

Renate Tenbusch, the Resident Director at the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (South Africa Office) opened the seminar and kicked off the day's proceedings by situating the importance of the UN in the context of an evolving conversation on multilateral governance. Reference was made to the dialogue on the UN@60 hosted by the IGD-FES and University of Pretoria in 2005 which provided important background detail of the UN and was a useful backdrop against which to reflect on the significance of the UN as it marks its 70th anniversary in 2015.

Mr Gana Fofang, the UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa offered insight as a UN practitioner and traced the roots of the UN objectives to the development of the Atlantic Charter of 1941, which made strong calls for a better world after the war. This world order was based on democratic forms of governments, free trade between countries, world prosperity and the reduction in production of weapons of war. This incorporated a wider version of security. The genesis of the UN is rooted in these ideals and remains relevant today. However, the expectation of the founding fathers is hampered by the challenges of the global agenda, resource and capacity constraints.

The 70th anniversary of the UN provides is an important opportunity to honour the ideals in the Atlantic Charter and meet the objectives in today's context beset by violent extremism and humanitarian crises. These challenges feed into the global call for action and is seen with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which requires commitment and participation from all stakeholders concerned.

Mr Fofang explained that in taking stock of where the UN is, one must acknowledge its achievements of the past 70 years. A notable success of the UN has been in the area of peacekeeping and conflict resolution. UN forces are able to operate in conflict zones that other actors cannot easily access and speaks to the dozens of peacekeeping operations that the UN has conducted in the past 70 years. The UN has also been involved in the initial stages of peacemaking seen through its use of quiet diplomacy to divert imminent wars and has negotiated over a hundred peaceful settlements. He also highlighted the role of the UN in creating an enabling environment for free and fair elections. The UN system has also invested resources into human skills development and capacity building. He listed other areas of success as: environmental management, decreasing nuclear proliferation, conflict resolution and administering humanitarian aid to victims of conflict and natural disasters while also strengthening international law. In building on this success, Mr Fofang emphasised the need to ensure that preventative measures were taken to end conflict around the world and maintain the gains and successes of the UN, in which peace and security plays a vital role.

In addressing the issue of reform, Mr Fofang acknowledged the need to reform the UN structure as the governance of these structures is a key factor that will assist the UN in addressing the challenges mentioned as well assist in achieving the goals in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Specifically discussing the matter of UNSC reform, he explained that the UNSC is not delivering the security that is needed. Notwithstanding the challenges and shortcomings of the UN, a world without the UN would be difficult to imagine. The UN provides an important platform to address the realities of today. The UN has more to learn and the potential to deliver more in order to fulfil the mandate outlined in the charter and realise the dream of the founding fathers. Mr Fofang ended by encouraging South Africans to stand by and support the government in moving the process forward with the UN.

Next, Professor Maxi Schoeman, the Head of the Department of Political Sciences at the University of Pretoria (UP) reflected on the previous conference hosted by the IGD, FES and UP, noting that while not much progress had been made with regard to the structural limitations of the UN, there has been notable progress on the African continent. The changes needed for the UN to achieve its objectives are situated in the 'Fit for Purpose' debate which needs to take cognisance of the political decay which sets in when institutions become too rigid to adapt to changing contexts. Bearing this mind along with the power dynamics within the UN which mostly reflect the privileged positions of more powerful states, the UN has still been able to affect change and turn big ideas into practice. Two examples stand out; the first is the Uniting for Peace Resolution (1950) which allows the General Assembly to recommend collective action in cases where the UNSC fails to act, and needs to be revisited. The second example of a UN achievement was the enlargement of the UNSC in the 1960s, which promoted increased representation. These achievements should not be forgotten during debates on reform and legitimacy of the UN.

Core and interrelated challenges of the UN are linked to practice and policy, which are dependent on epistemic origins and the use of words. While these may seem abstract in the policy arena, it is important to interrogate the abstract ideas before moving on to practical solutions. Prof Schoeman argued that the deeper systemic problems faced by the UN can be linked to the propensity to think in dichotomies. The most problematic assumption has been basing political decisions on the perception that over the past 70 years, conflicts are more intrastate in nature – a misconception that has often been used as the argument for UNSC reform. The role of extra state actors as instigators and promoters of war has been grossly understated. External intervention in conflict was equated with a form of anarchy where external state actors intervene on the basis of promoting the civilising effects of democracy. If this intervention is not accepted, then violent regime change is employed. This not only presents challenges to the UN but also to academics and researchers, who need to capture truth about contemporary conflict through more nuanced analyses.

Another medium to long term challenge presented to the UN is the problematic and politicised use of language. Prof Schoeman explained that more powerful states use language to promote radical policies and delegitimise international law and institutions. An important example of this was seen in Libya with Resolution 1973 and the case made for the “responsibility to protect”. The idea of war talk therefore also becomes a medium to long term challenge for the UN and is contained in the frameworks of international law and the international criminal court (ICC). States now speak of intervention and conflict and the explicit language of war is not used.

Another challenge posed to the UN relates to American research into ‘moral machines’ as part of ongoing research into arms and weapons. These are lethal and autonomous robots programmed with the knowledge of war with an ethical capability. This is compounded by another challenge for the UN which relates to different value systems in a large global community of both states and international institutions. Preference to prioritising Western or American values also presents a challenge for the UN and there is a need to build agreement and support the values of the UN system and prevent falling into relativism. This is not an easy task when considering member states (not just the P5) and their abuse of values to serve their own interests.

The challenge of values extends to the non -governmental sector and global civil society where, representation and representivity become problematic. In other words, how is the agenda set and how is accountability ensured? This takes place against the backdrop of resource imbalances and funding between the global north and global south. There is an entire structure of global governance which is not at the UN or at a multilateral level which highlights the role of politics in global governance and democratic accountability.

The rise of the ‘philanthocapitalist’ is also important in the global civil society structure as they have taken on an active role outside of the state to solve societal problems in predetermined ways that aligns with their capitalist interests. They are in essence, applying business methods to social problems and exaggerating the role of technology. This results in a parallel governance structure instituted by the non – governmental organisation (NGO) sector. In concluding, Prof Schoeman noted that the alternative global governance model seen through social engineering fashioned by philanthocapitalists presents a scarier reality than a slow moving UN. The UN is still rooted in a cooperative approach, however flawed, of addressing issues of peace, security and wellbeing for all.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC) REFORM

Dr Jakkie Cilliers, the Executive Director of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) began the discussion on the reform of the UNSC by locating it as part of a broader historical debate. In 1965, the number of non-permanent seats on the UNSC increased from six to ten. Since then and although it has been on the UN General Assembly (UNGA) agenda since 1979, no proposal for UNSC reform has received the required support in the UNGA. In 2006 and 2007, the President of UNGA facilitated meetings regarding UNSC reform in terms of equitable representation and increased membership. Intergovernmental negotiations followed which were finalised through UNGA Resolution 62/557 and eventually resulted in a 30 page negotiation text which eventually resulted in an impasse. Efforts were then made by the G4 (Brazil, India, Japan and Germany) which ended in a stalemate with the Uniting for Consensus Group and the African Group. While meetings have taken place, no real progress has been made.

Dr Cilliers then outlined the position on UN and UNSC reform held by the African Union as outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus in 2005. The position of the AU is based on selecting an African representative considering the capacity and representative nature of the candidate, which some have argued could translate into rotating permanent seats accountable to the AU. Thus far, South Africa and Nigeria have been fingered as the main contenders for the two permanent seats while Egypt is the third favourite and has the advantage of providing Arab representation. Interestingly, even though South Africa sits within Brazil Russia India China and South Africa (BRICS) grouping and India Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) group as well as the G20, none of the other members have advocated or expressed support for a permanent African seat. Furthermore, the unpopularity of the South African permanent seat is becoming clearer from other African countries.

More recently, the UNSC reform process has been resuscitated by a 25-page framework document dated 31 July 2015 developed by the member states of the intergovernmental group on UNSC reform led by its chairperson, Jamaican Ambassador E Courtenay Rattray. An important difference in this process is that the member state submissions are in the public domain and are accessible. This framework document was adopted in the General Assembly on 14 September 2015 amid objections by China and other countries. However, this process could be stalled by pressure from a P5 country which would ensure that Rattray was not re-elected to continue his work. As such, on 23 October 2014, Amb Sylvie Lucas, the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg was elected as the Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations.

In summary, Dr Cilliers noted that the historically entrenched positions on reform do not show any signs of abating. Progress achieved in the previous UNGA session will be overshadowed by inevitable challenges in the 70th session of the UNGA. It is therefore unlikely that the current state-led approach to UNSC reform will effect much change. The weakness of the UNSC in its ability to fulfil its global mandate lies with the veto. The abuse of the veto by any of the P5 members has the potential to undermine the Council even though every resolution should satisfy all P5 members. This was seen with the inability of the UNSC to act on Syria and Ukraine in 2014 and 2015. These dynamics within the P5 and the UNSC are a source of frustration to African countries even though Africa presents a region where the UNSC can effectively act in the absence of great power interests.

In addressing the prospect of change realistically, three requirements need to be considered:

- More restraint on power politics.
- Minimum criteria approach for membership to improve capacity.
- Increased representation linked to increased legitimacy.

These requirements will take time to incorporate while also considering the global realignments in power. The prospect of UNSC reform would also have to accommodate veto powers, the United States of America and China. Increasing the veto would not necessarily improve efficiency, as argued in the African position. Smaller states also demand equal treatment and representation on the Council, as seen with the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the Arab group.

The answer to reform in today's interconnected context lies in a paradigm shift and a collaborative security framework. The African and South African approach to UNSC reform should therefore move away from a national statist approach to a regionally based process of electing representatives to the UNSC. Dr Cilliers explained that this could allow for two categories of seats which see the re-election of key countries and shorter non-renewable terms for others. Against this background, the Institute for Security Studies has launched [Elect the Council](#), an initiative which invites academics and civil society members to work with their respective governments. This proposal rejects the intergovernmental process on UNSC reform and instead advocates for an agreement by two-thirds of the member states on detailed recommendations on reform. This will form the basis of demands submitted to the P5 in the General Assembly.

Francis A Kornegay Jr, senior research associate at the IGD continued the discussion on UN reform by looking at whether the UN is still fit for purpose at 70. Since the establishment of the UN, the realms of peace and security have changed and so the relevance of the UN has become a mainstay in global policy discourse and has been blamed for not evolving with the ideologies and changing power structures. Thus is the UN at 70 still relevant or is a change of course necessary to remain relevant? Against this background, Mr Kornegay argued that the UN reform debate needs to address the reform of the entire UN and not just the UNSC, as the latter presents the 'tip of the iceberg' that may need to be reconfigured in an integrated framework. He suggested that this might be situated in the regionalisation of the larger UN system and in essence, global governance. UN reform is in fact located in the larger context of global governance with an architecture and discourse that is possibly outdated given the regionalisation of multilateral governance frameworks. These frameworks are often uneven in terms of institutional development, capacity and function and plague many regional organisations including the European Union.

Consideration needs to be given to the interests of the global system as made up of regional systems, seen with structures like the European Union (EU), African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Eurasian Economic Union and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. Mr Kornegay then stressed the importance for greater integration of these organisations into a larger regionalised UN system. The need to view the global system in this way is rooted in the fact that each region has very specific problems. Many of the global governance issues discussed at the multilateral level actually need to first be discussed within the region. Exploring regional governance as part of the global framework is imperative. The five regional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) could form the centrepiece of UN regionalisation while, in New York, the United Nations Administration could be consolidated to recognise and accommodate the evolution of the UN and address some of the challenges located here.

He further proposed that certain UN agencies needed to be consolidated and organised into a *UN Stabilization & Integration Administration (UNZIA)*, in partnership with continental and regional communities in order to strengthen their capacities. The UNSC dimension is also located here. Essentially when one contemplates emerging peace and security challenges in weak and failing states, it is clear that peacekeeping has evolved into more of a stabilisation mission, addressing issues of governance and socio economic issues. This involves medium to long term management which should be devolved to continental bodies and regional economic communities (RECs) and essentially involves revisiting the trusteeship structure within the UN. Therefore certain UN agencies, like the UNDP and the UN Peacebuilding Commission could be organised into the abovementioned UNZIA which will oversee stabilisation mandates in partnership with RECs. The agenda here should ideally be to strengthen the RECs. If this regionalised approach is adopted, then UNSC reform would also follow a similar regional empowering approach. For example, the AU Peace and Security Council could include the UN as a component.

Mr Kornegay explained that certain gaps exist in the UNSC reform debate, seen with the various assumptions on who should become permanent members and how a reformed council should function given the lobbying alignments of the G4 on the one hand and the 'Coffee Club' on the other hand. The African position outlined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the role of China as a representative of the global south present further alignments. Against this background, politics of competitive entitlement seem to characterise the reform debate, without the due consideration of geopolitics.

The UNSC reform should be leveraged as a conflict resolution instrument. This applies especially to such longstanding conflicts such as that between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, or on the African continent, the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Furthermore, any reform of the UNSC needs to include a new relationship amongst the P5 themselves, especially between the USA, China and Russia. In concluding, Mr Kornegay reiterated that the reform debate should be located in a ECOSOC- UNSC- REC stabilisation nexus in order to move the debate forward. This needs to be coupled with a global civil society mobilisation around UN and UNSC reform.

Ms T Nxumalo, the Acting Chief Director: Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) was the last panellist on UNSC reform and began the discussion by outlining the legitimacy of the UN in global governance through its mandate which is contained in its charter. However, the transformation of global governance should involve an approach that is attuned to the needs of the developing world.

The mandate of the UNSC focuses on the promotion of international peace and security. It is essential that the Council is representative, democratic and transparent in composition. From the South African perspective and experience of serving two terms on the UNSC, it was clear that the current composition and functioning has had a tendency to frustrate the operation of the Council and therefore the inability to deal with crises, which has in effect undermined its legitimacy. The current composition of the UNSC represents European and like-minded interests and illustrates an underrepresentation of Africa, Asia and South America. Important to note is that Africa and South America are not represented in the permanent category.

In outlining the South African position, Ms Nxumalo explained that the South African government remains committed to the Ezulweni Consensus representing a unified African position. Africa calls for the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent categories with an increase from 15 to 26 seats with not less than 2 permanent and 5 non-permanent seats allocated to African countries. It also calls for the abolition of the veto however, if this is not possible then the veto should at least be available to all UNSC members as a matter of common justice. In terms of the African representation on the UNSC, Africa would prefer to select its own candidates for election by the UNGA onto the UNSC.

South Africa has continuously called for the improved workings of the UNSC especially with regard to being more inclusive and more transparent in its decision making. In the previously mentioned intergovernmental negotiations within which various state groupings exist, South Africa is located within the group of 10. The group consists of Sierra Leone (Chair), Algeria, Libya, Senegal, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Namibia and Zambia. The group was formed at an extraordinary meeting of the AU of which the purpose of the group is to promote and defend the common African position. Another grouping is the G4 (Brazil, India, Germany and Japan) which proposes the expansion of the UNSC from 15 to 25 members with an additional 10 seats 6 permanent and 4 non-permanent members. The seats will be distributed as follows:

Asia – 2 permanent seats and 1 non-permanent seat

Africa – 2 permanent seats and 1 non – permanent seat

Latin America and the Caribbean – 1 permanent set and 1 non-permanent seat

Eastern Europe – 1 permanent seat and 1 non -permanent seat

Western Europe – 1 permanent seat and 1 non – permanent seat

The next grouping is the Uniting for Consensus Group comprising Argentina, Italy, Mexico and Pakistan which proposes an expansion of 15 to 25 members with additional non-permanent seats. This would be structured as follows:

- Africa – 3 non-permanent seats
- Asia – 3 non-permanent seats
- Latin America and the Caribbean – 2 non-permanent seats
- Western Europe – 1 non-permanent seat
- Eastern Europe – 1 non-permanent seat

The final grouping is the P5 comprising the United Kingdom, China, Russia and France. There are major divisions within the P5 but they are unanimously opposed to any UNSC reform that would affect their right to veto. The United Kingdom and France have been more forthcoming than the other three members regarding the reform debate however, all have been amenable to realistic and modest expansion in both categories. Both China and Russia agree that Africa needs to be represented on the council. Ms Nxumalo then referred to a proposal by France regarding the suspension of the veto in the case of mass atrocities which was supported by 85 countries arguing that this is reflective of the potential progress outside of the intergovernmental negotiations. The same approach can be applied in other aspects of council reform looking at accountability and transparency, but should not distract from the goal of expansion.

In terms of the goals for South Africa for the 70th session of the UN, it reiterates the call by President Zuma made in 2013, to reform the UNSC. While other member states have acknowledged the urgency of this matter, not much progress has been made. It contends that an obstacle to progress is the flawed process of the intergovernmental negotiations which sometimes present a series of endless debates around positions on reform. Against this background, SA calls for text based negotiations as the way forward, as well as a roadmap with clear guidelines for implementation and timelines.

THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

Michelle Pressend, an Independent Consultant began this session by reviewing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In tracking the developmental discourse of the United Nations, Ms Pressend explained that it was in the 1960s that the idea of development and subsequent environmental impact gained traction. Here, the Brundtland Commission coined the term 'sustainable development'. In 1992, another watershed moment took place in Rio where the impact of development was looked at and this culminated in Agenda 21 which acted as the blueprint for sustainable development. A deeper look into development is needed especially since the focus on development has been a dualistic representation of humans and nature, with humans at the top of the hierarchy. This universalised way of seeing the world has its roots in the history of Western civilisation which represented the beginning of capitalist world ecology. A different form of thinking is needed where man is considered part of nature, as this would lead to a different thinking around development.

Ms Pressend pointed out the current discourse on development separates the social, economic and environmental issues. In many cases, the economic is prioritised before the social and environmental issues, as the impact is easily measured through the return on the investment. Development has therefore become more Anthropocene in nature which puts human beings at the centre, and suggests that sacrifices can be made to protect human centrality. The climate crisis is situated in the Anthropocentric approach to development in that human beings have become the geological force behind climate change. For example, one of the key historical causes of climate change has been linked to industrialisation in the 18th century. While the Anthropocentric approach explains what caused climate change, it does not necessarily explain how it came about. Furthermore, Anthropocene is not a universal term and refers more to a type of active civilisation that is associated with the industrialisation in England or Western civilisation.

Ms Pressend argued that climate change should be seen as a response from Gaia to our form of development and modernisation. The response to the crisis of climate change has been met with largely technical initiatives seen through quick fixes and market based incentives. There has been activity from social movements through protest, some of whom have argued that programmes used to address climate change are displacing communities and not dealing with the system causing climate change. A more useful response would consider how the development has occurred and how knowledge has been produced.

Thus far, we are living in an environment defined by a capitalist world ecology which promotes capitalist development. The shift in changing human activity through the promotion of private property and production of knowledge is indicative of an extractive relationship with nature. When looking at the MDGs and SDGs, it is clear that they follow a particular 'business-as-usual' model. The success of the MDGs has been based on a qualitative process of measuring progress and therefore, the SDGs merely represent a shift of the MDGs and still contain a certain neoliberal approach. There has also been a shift in the UN which reflects an increase in corporate partnerships. In today's context, some corporations have larger economies than some governments and therefore play a more active role in the development space. This begs the question of representation of voices and how silenced voices are represented. This is normally where the protestors are active.

Essentially, the current development trajectory is based on extraction. This calls for an urgent rethinking beyond development into development alternatives which address the human-nature divide, as seen with some exiting indigenous systems. Development needs to be based on local democracy and place social means above economic means.

Bandile Ngidi - Director: Knowledge and Information Management: Rethink Africa continued this session by contextualising the UN within a fragmented world with different power dynamics which has resulted in a divergence from the original mandate which focused on unity. From the perspective of a NGO, it is important to consider how the UN impacts on grassroots organisations in different pockets of the world as well as the impact of the SDGs on development in general. A reflection of the UN and its global agenda must consider both the gains and perspectives of the different actors. The role of the UN is to ensure that all these perspectives are considered and that actors act from their own locality. This is key in understanding the development discourse and the UN must evolve their development paradigm to incorporate a more pluralist form of thinking. The MDGs were developed from a singular perspective which does not accommodate the pluralistic world that the UN exists in. The global agenda needs to consider this.

Key aspects of the UN and Global Development to consider were highlighted by Mr Ngidi as: historical powerplay in the UN, architecture of institutions and origins of the paradigm of the UN development agenda. It is important to consider how this global paradigm has been based on a largely Western perspective. However, there is a growing popular dissatisfaction with this development paradigm as seen in South Africa with the student protests and the 'Fees must fall' movement throughout the country.

In discussing the MDGs, Mr Ngidi explained that the MDGs were broad and not focused in comparison to the SDGs, which were formed through a more inclusive process of state led negotiations. Many countries had little success in achieving the MDGS, with South Africa also enjoying mixed success. However, when SA measures its progress, it is important to consider whether the goals were too broad in the first place. The SDGs are therefore an improvement as it includes more detail and focuses on different aspects of a particular issue. Mr Ngidi pointed out two main challenges which influenced the progress of countries in achieving the MDGs. The first challenge centred on resources and whether countries had the ability to channel domestic and sometimes limited resources into financing the MDGs. Future plans to fulfil development agendas need to consider the resource constraints of countries. The second challenge dealt with policy coordination and specifically how the globally aligned policies prescribed by the UN could compliment domestic and continental policy priorities. Going forward, there needs to be more active coordination of the implementation of SDGs with different country and continental policy priorities.

In concluding, Mr Ngidi acknowledged the successes of the UN agencies in building capacity as seen with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), both of which provide useful data and information. Such organisations have also been at the forefront of meeting other challenges based on the UN ability to bring together expertise and resources. However a major challenge is to incorporate the different localities which have divergent goals within the UN system.

Dr Philani Mthembu – Senior Researcher at IGD ended the session by situating the continuously evolving idea of development in a larger historical context, arguing that development is an old idea which can even be traced back to the colonial era with agencies who dealt with development under civilisation missions. For example, universities such as Fort Hare were built using such funding. It is therefore not entirely fair to view it as an imposition of the UN or by the West as developing countries were also in favour of a development agenda. The development agenda also appears in other organisations like the WTO, where currently a major deadlock is ensuing with development countries advocating for development for trade. This means that the WTO does not just act as a forum which debates economics, but also where the impact of trade on development is being understood.

In terms of the MDGs, Dr Mthembu explained that the main critique of the MDGs centred on a certain development paradigm based on the responsibility of Northern countries to develop Southern countries.

The UN millennium summit therefore advanced the idea that the industrialised world might assume more responsibility by increasing aid in order to assist developing countries. Therefore one could argue that the MDGs were developed based on a donor-recipient arrangement.

2015 was dubbed a watershed moment for development, seen with the Financing for Development negotiations in Addis Ababa, the adoption of the SDGs and the type of process, which resulted in the adoption of the SDGs. This process has been more inclusive than the previous process and includes the priorities of developing countries and civil society. The transparency of the process has implications for implementing the SDGs, and the next challenge will be based on the operationalising the SDGs. National statisticians and researchers will have an important role to play in the operationalisation of the SDGs however, a problem arises in the social sciences with operationalising certain terms that are used. For example, how can a global partnership for development be operationalised? Trilateral Development Cooperation (TDC) might be useful here in financing the goals where members states from the Global North and Global South are coming together to assist a third country. The TDC arrangement might also take on a South-South-South model where Southern countries are coming together to work in a third country to bring about better development. We are therefore in a better position to impact development.

The UN and Global Governance

Prof Rasigan Maharajh, Chief Director, Institute for Economic Research on Innovation, Tshwane University of Technology, began this session with a presentation entitled Reflections on the Reform of the Institutions of Economic Governance: Time for Transformation. In reflecting on the progress made on economic governance, Prof Maharajh began by making reference to a publication by the IGD on Dilemmas on Poverty and Development (2007), arguing that not much progress had been made. This is largely linked to the use of the same institutions and expecting different results. These institutions preceded the concept of globalisation and the question still remains as to whether we have developed a national response to globalisation.

Prof Maharajh went on to explain that the challenge of sustainability in development is not new and the lack of an institutional framework is of concern in this regard. Globalisation aims to create a convergence of ideas but actually exacerbates the inequality from which it started. Between 2008 – 2015, the benefits of globalisation should have been visible however, there is no evidence that it has reduced inequality and has in fact exacerbated inequality in some countries. Opponents of globalisation often argue that we have evolved with the system rather than providing alternatives. Alternatives to development encourage a form of 'creative destruction', an idea that is not discussed at the domestic, continental and regional level. Some of the effects of globalisation centre on uneven economic growth, under employment, persistent poverty and the increase in inequality which takes place in the context of ecological degradation.

In comparing proposals made in 2007 about alternative development, Prof Maharajh highlighted key points of discussion to avoid the debt trap and to encourage endogenous development in South Africa and the rest of Africa. The debt trap is linked to the cost of money, a key instrument of neoliberal policy. In SA, this is regulated by the South African Reserve Bank, against the background of social unrest in South Africa regarding the cost of higher education and increased indebtedness. There was also a call for more equity and justice within global trade policy negotiations but there were no progressive results. Discussions on aid directed at development as oppose to 'phantom aid' were also highlighted. In addition, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was supposed to be restructured to liberalise the market however, the pattern of FDI has not changed and FDI continues to operate in a context that is not shaped by national contexts. Developing economies are therefore losing the capital that they have attracted and in some cases, this is largely due to the changes in the economy of the United States of America (USA).

Prof Maharajh went on to explain that the UN institutions also operate within this global capitalist system. None of these institutions suggest moving beyond capitalism and therefore will be plagued with problems. In terms of going forward, we need to ask whether the UN is capable of providing us with an equitable and sustainable development paradigm based within planetary boundaries. Infinite growth is not a possibility, a concept that also needs to be reinforced in how economics is taught, and the appreciation of contextual dynamics. Furthermore emerging trajectories need to be recognised and this means understanding how the hegemony of advanced capitalist economies are threatened even within these countries. Prof Maharajh also called for a critique of the institutional mix that is presented as the *fait accompli* of the UN which should rather be seen as the start of alternatives that can help the UN develop further. This needs to be premised on a higher level of encouraging participatory reconstruction and development as transformation with all actors, not privileging corporate actors who seem to have a direct link to the UN secretariat.

Prof Fioramonti, Jean Monnet Chair in Regional Integration and Governance Studies at the University of Pretoria, continued his presentation by drawing a parallel to the commemoration of the Bretton Woods Institution, which was created before the UN, 71 years ago. In 1944, this model of economic governance was created in 21 days and the UN should be viewed as part of this package. In explaining the history of the institution, Prof Fioramonti explained that three African countries – Egypt, Liberia and South Africa had been part of the process of redesigning global governance. However, 71 years later, there is only one African member in the G20, the most important Global Economic Governance space that exists today. While there is much discussion on how to reform these institutions to make them more inclusive of the Global South, there is not enough discussion on the content of the policies and the nature of decision making. Representation from the Global South does not mean that the status quo will change. The Bretton Woods Institution based global economic governance on Keynesian economics : macroeconomic expansion, strong leadership of government and the use of public expenditure for development. However, this mandate changed in the 1970's and the same institutions became associated with structural adjustment and indebtedness due to political change and the grouping of economists to lobby for neoliberal changes. This illustrates that change can happen in existing institutions but requires a certain kind of pressure, changing paradigms, vision and planning.

All financial institutions have been based on encouraging indefinite growth in countries. Growth was therefore the ordering institutional principle for global economic governance. The growth model still permeates the structure of states and societies as well as multilateral bodies like BRICS. The reality presented by BRICS suggests that the grouping is merely looking to be a part of the existing global governance model, rather than changing it.

On the positive side, Prof Fioramonti explained that a new kind of Bretton Woods is emerging in spaces all over the world. These new processes and discussions are becoming useful in determining global economic governance. This takes place against the backdrop of systematic economic contraction and is dictated by the operation of our social and ecological systems. This was also recognised by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, who called for a new economic model based on the social, economic and environmental limits within which we operate. While the SDGs can be contradictory targets with redundancies, it also provides an entry point to reform global economic governance by combining all the different elements of governance. This interconnected approach provides a better opportunity to achieve change. However, in today's context, much emphasis is still placed on growth as the main functioning principal even though its extractive nature is straining resources. This is reflected in the 'Africa Rising' narrative, which popularises the belief that growth brings power, especially when conducting international relations. However, the reality is that African countries are not growing and are dissipating the wealth they have. This system is coming to an end and instead, there are systemic dynamics which exist and are represented in the convergence of the following trends: climate change, energy and economic plans.

As mentioned in the previous session, energy is making globalisation increasingly difficult to sustain as fossil fuel is running out and affects climate change. Moreover, renewable energy does not allow for transportation and movement due to the difficulty of storage. This calls for a new global order not based on economic globalisation.

Prof Fioramonti went on to explain that global governance is being affected by a post growth discourse seen through the new global formation of the B20, otherwise known as the vulnerable 20 countries. This is a body of smaller countries which create better representation against bigger countries and multilateral bodies and therefore oppose the current growth. The G7 is often seen as the main body in global economic governance, as the largest economies are heralded as the most powerful, even though they have poor environmental practices and inequality within their respective countries. In discussing the way forward, Prof Fioramonti described that due to the contraction of economies, climate change and energy crisis, a different economic model of governance is needed to replace the current one which is seen as ineffective, inefficient and unjust. The different nodes of innovation taking place across the world is allowing for a decentralisation of the model of economic governance. Furthermore, regional integration and cooperation will also be important in creating integrated governance to address common concerns of climate change and financial regulation. Therefore the future of the UN might be a redundant topic, or it might provide a useful and cheaper system of supervision of activity at the regional level, which allows different communities and countries to be in control of their own economic governance.

Africa and the UN

Amb James Jonah, former UN Under- Secretary- General for political affairs began by providing a history of Africa's engagement with the UN, noting that African countries were not part of the negotiations at San Francisco during the formation of the League of Nations. Some African countries, like Ethiopia, became victims of the failure of the League of Nations structure. An important failure was that every member had the veto and in response, former Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie, made a landmark speech which still resonates today explaining that peace is indivisible however, the concerns of the major powers were the maintenance of international peace and security. The UN learnt from these and other weaknesses of the League of Nations.

In reflecting on earlier discussions of the UN and specifically, Uniting for Peace, Amb Jonah emphasised the importance of understanding the politics of the UN. The Uniting for Peace resolution was in contravention of Articles 10, 11 and 12 of the Charter and magnified the role of the UNGA, giving it powers that were not contained in the Charter. The magnification of the role of the UNGA began the foundation of the decolonisation process, with the UNGA more important than the UNSC. In the 1960s, the decolonisation process was supported by the USA who were against colonialism and here, the UN also played an influential role in the decolonisation movement. This was combined with strong African leaders behind the various independence movements who were highly competent within the UN system, which prioritised decolonisation and the fight against Apartheid. Without amendments to the Charter, this started to shape the UN. However, the role of the UN in the fight against colonialism and Apartheid is not often recognised.

Amb Jonah explained the strength of the African position was also based on the support received from the Non-Aligned Movement. However, at the end of the Cold War, Africa became a victim, giving assistance to the former East European states that were part of the Soviet bloc, which had a strong presence in many African countries. Unfortunately, this was also the era of poor governance, regime changes through military coups and dismantling of economic progress previously made in African countries.

At this time, Africa became over dependent on donor support and aid which in turn affected their ability to exercise independence. The danger of this overdependence was seen with the unfavourable situation created in Libya where the UNSC chose to ignore the African roadmap which outlined a solution to dealing with the problem, and instead chose the Arab League proposal. This was exacerbated by African countries on the UNSC choosing to abstain from voting. Consequently, the resolution passed resulted in exacerbating the instability that exists in Libya today. The latter of which is closely linked to the crisis in Mali and here, ECOWAS had a good peacekeeping deal to address the situation but the matter was instead referred to the UNSC to seek financing, even though there are potential financiers within the African continent. Eventually France intervened in Mali. The last example which illustrates overdependence is seen with the robust international response to ISIS as a terrorist threat, even though reports have shown that Boko Haram has killed more people than ISIS.

In moving forward, African leaders need to recognise the need for change and to appreciate the need for African representation within the UN. Overdependence on external intervention also needs to be addressed as this has severe consequences.

A short synthesis of the discussion

The seminar panels addressed a diversity of issues relating to the past and future of the UN which made for interesting and heated debate. Sticking to the theme of the seminar which focused on the 'UN@70: Towards a future', some questions focused on the relevance of the UN and global governance. Responses to this question highlighted the importance of the UN as a useful platform for global governance. However, the perception is that OECD countries exist in a post-industrial phase which rejects collective and global governance, with a preferred focus on the 'individual'. This creates the impression that developing countries appreciate global governance more. However, even the idea of global governance can be contested as pure rhetoric when it comes to decision making, as it does not always happen in multilateral forums, as seen with the UNSC. Nevertheless, in discussing global governance it is important to avoid discussions of 'democracy', 'civilisation' and 'governance' in the singular, but to rather reflect on different experiences, which avoid misguided and unnecessary distinctions. Furthermore, the hierarchy within global governance needs to be addressed by ensuring participation through a bottom up approach.

A discussion of the future of the UN would of course not be complete without questions on UN and UNSC reform. Here it was argued that the UN system needs to be strengthened through increased integration with different regional communities around the world. This also has implications for peacekeeping and stabilisation missions which should be conducted after there is regional buy in. UNSC reform specifically should see a power shift away from the P5, who need to recognise their increasing irrelevance and should therefore be willing to engage.

Conclusion

In closing the seminar, Dr Zondi left participants with different ideas to think about regarding the importance of UN and the transformation of the organisation. In highlighting its importance, Dr Zondi explained that the mandate of the UN should not lie with ending conflicts but should also consider the underlying concerns that govern our relations with government, and discussed the process of transformation as a substitute for reform of the UN.

The Institute for Global Dialogue in partnership with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung will consolidate the different papers presented into a monograph for publication in 2016.

APPENDICES : PROGRAMME



08h30 – 09h00 Registration, Tea and Coffee

09h00 – 10h15 Setting the Scene

This session will reflect on the UN in the global context and history. It will revisit what we know about the place of the UN in the modern world.

Welcome : Renate Tenbusch, Resident Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung SA Office

Speakers: Gana Fofang, UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa, United Nations
Prof Maxi Schoeman, Head of Dept. of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria

Moderator: Dr Siphamandla Zondi, Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue/UNISA

10h15 – 10h30

Tea Break

10h30 – 12h00

UN Security Council (UNSC) Reform

The UNSC Reform process has been under discussion for a while. What is the state of the reform debate? What are the prospects going forward? What are the implications of the United Nations General Assembly's (UNGA) newly adopted text which sets the stage for negotiation of the UNSC?

Speakers: Dr Jakkie Cilliers, Executive Director, Institute for Security Studies (ISS)
Ms T Nxumalo, the Acting Chief Director: Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) representative
Francis Kornegay, Senior Researcher, Institute for Global Dialogue

Moderator: Dr Philani Mthembu, Senior Researcher, Institute for Global Dialogue

12h00 – 13h30

The United Nations (UN) and Global Development

Given the fact that the UN plays a pivotal role in the global consensus on development, this session will reflect critically on the UN and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the UN and Finance for Development, and other terrains negotiating a global development agenda.

Speakers: Michelle Pressend, Independent Consultant

Bongani Ngidi, Director, Rethink Africa and
Dr Philani Mthembu, Institute for Global Dialogue /UNISA

Moderator: Dr. Fritz Nganje, Post Doctoral Research Fellow, University of JHB

13h30 – 14h30 Lunch

14h30 – 15h40 Global Economic governance

This session will reflect on the state of IFI reform debate currently. What are current positions of various formations and alliances? What are the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the WTO (World Trade Organisation) currently doing about it?

Speakers: Prof Rasigan Maharajh, Chief Director, Institute for Economic Research on Innovation, Tshwane University of Technology. Nodal Head: Dept. of Science and Technology and National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence in Scientometrics and Science, Technology and Innovation Policy RSA. Professor Extraordinary: Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology, Stellenbosch University. Associate Research Fellow: Tellus Institute, Boston, USA.
Prof Lorenzo Fioramonti, Jean Monnet Chair in Regional Integration and Governance Studies , University of Pretoria

Moderator: Romi Reinecke , Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

15h40 – 17h00 Africa and the United Nations (UN)

This session will debate the place and position of Africa in the UN, given the fact that it is one of the biggest regions in the world and its issues dominate the UN Security agenda. It will reflect on how Africa has exercised its agency in the UN and how UN AU interface has evolved.

Speakers: Ambassador James Jonah, Former United Nations Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs

Moderator: Dr Martin Rupiya ,Institute for African Renaissance Studies UNISA

17h00 Closure

Speaker: Dr Siphamandla Zondi, Institute for Global Dialogue / UNISA

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The IGD is an independent foreign policy and diplomacy think tank dedicated to the analysis of and dialogue on global dynamics that have a bearing on South Africa in Africa. It advances a balanced, relevant and policy-oriented analysis, debate and documentation of South Africa's role in international relations and diplomacy.

The IGD's research agenda has three broad programmatic focus areas: foreign policy analysis with special reference to the making and management of foreign policy and diplomatic tools like economic, developmental, and public diplomacy; African studies focusing on the role of regional and continental integration in African politics and development as well as the study of peace diplomacy; and international diplomacy, analysing dynamics in international diplomacy that have a bearing on African peace and prosperity.

In 2010, following a strategic review the institute entered into its strategic partnership with the University of South Africa, the biggest university in the southern hemisphere to pursue through research, publications and community engagement the shared vision of a prosperous and peaceful Africa in a progressive global order.

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