

**SINGAPORE'S INPUTS
TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT
ON THE UN IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE**

The centrality of the UN system in global governance

- Lingering excesses and imbalances from the global economic and financial crisis have yet to be put right. The world has also recently faced a string of humanitarian crises even as it struggles to deal with the long-term challenge posed by climate change. These are problems that affect all countries, large and small alike, and which all countries have a stake in solving. They are thus urgent reminders of the need for global governance mechanisms that are both effective and legitimate. The UN is the only global entity with universal participation and unquestioned legitimacy that can provide the foundation for such governance.
- Multilateralism is vital for many countries, particularly small and medium sized states. There is currently no alternative to the UN system and the essential role it plays in the multilateral fora. The UN system must therefore remain central to our efforts to improve and reform the global governance framework.
- For the UN system to continue playing such a central role, Member States must promote and strengthen its effectiveness, efficiency and coherence so that it can tackle the evolving global challenges and provide value for its membership. As a first step, we must undertake a thorough analysis of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the system in all aspects of global governance. We must clearly identify areas in which greater internal coordination is needed, areas in which we need to engage other actors on coordinated responses, and areas in which we need to tap on the strengths of other actors to fill in the gaps.

Challenges of international cooperation

- The complexities of today's multipolar world mean that efforts to reform the global system will inevitably be varied and not always in sync. The rise of key emerging economies such as the BRICS and groupings such as the G-20 highlight the diversity of actors and differing world views. This expanded framework has the potential to deliver more effective and comprehensive solutions as it injects new competencies and perspectives, but it could also possibly degenerate into an arena of conflict between the different players. Hence, the need for the UN system to mediate dialogue and facilitate inclusive collective action among the various players is greater than ever. It is important that the players do not view the tackling

of global issues as a zero-sum game, but as a positive-sum game where complementary strengths can be harnessed.

- It has become increasingly difficult to separate international problems into distinct tracks, for example political, economic or social. More often than not, these issues are intertwined. To that end, we need to take a holistic approach to problem solving which involves a variety of disciplines and expertise.

The UN system and existing global governance mechanisms

- There is a pressing need for a stringent review and reform of existing global governance mechanisms, at the heart of which is the UN system. There has to be an honest, clear-eyed assessment of what role the UN system currently plays in global governance, how well we are doing and what more can be done. Member States conducted such a review in 2005 and closed the Commission on Human Rights and established the Human Rights Council. We also established the Peacebuilding Commission. The performances of both bodies continue to be reviewed and if necessary, reformed. We cannot exclude the same discipline for the Security Council, another key organ that is universally considered in need of reform.
- Self-reflection does not stop there. The UN Secretariat should critically and strategically overhaul its internal processes to trim waste and provide competent and effective aid and assistance to Member States in our search for solutions to manage the evolving challenges of global governance. The UN system should better engage and explore synergies between itself and other players, such as the emerging economies and groupings such as the G-20. There is a need to identify the comparative advantage of the UN system and the steps that can be taken to strengthen this advantage. For example, the UN - and its wider array of multilateral bodies - has traditionally played a key role in the area of development, which traditional and emerging powers also have deeply shared interests in, and is highly dependent on cooperation among stakeholders. The UN system can better enlist the strengths of other existing and emerging players, such as the G-20, to reinforce its role and effectiveness in such areas.
- There is also a need to identify and address the gaps in implementation by the UN system, establish a systematic means for the UN system to identify and address evolving challenges in global governance and identify the relevant expertise and actors. The UN system's surveillance of issues should also be improved.
- Member States should examine how to promote better interaction among

the UN, its specialised agencies, funds and programmes, and how the system as a whole can more effectively engage all the different institutions and interests that have an impact and a stake in global issues. There is a need to improve the UN's interaction with international organisations, especially in the context of engaging LDCs and strengthening its work in emerging market economies, together with the IMF and World Bank.

- The work of other players, such as the G-20, can complement that of the UN system. As such, it is important that such players are not seen to be damaging the international rules-based system by moving forward with their own agendas at the expense of the UN. The G-20 countries, which are members of the UN, should also play a key role in strengthening the UN system.

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