Reforming the UN for the 21st century

The submission proposes the creation of a council of twelve elected UNGA members to review matters, inclusive of those raised at the UNGA and the UNSC. The UNSC should support resolutions, and UNGA is to have a part in selecting the UNSG. An additional consultative body should be formed in the UN consisting of transnational corporations, international NGOs, civil society, and the general public is to be formed like a parliament. The UNSG is be able to return resolutions vetoed by the UNSC back to debate and vote. The institution of a second deputy UNSG would create a position more dedicated to policy than administration.

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1. Abstract

The aim of this proposal is to outline ways forward for a better decision-making system; to complement rather than rival or replace existing mechanisms in the United Nations. The model opts for an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary approach to address the interlinked and complex issues faced by the international system today.

Global governance mechanisms, such as UN bodies, suffer from serious disabilities.

They are either:
1. Too large and unwieldy (the General Assembly), resulting in little operational value, or
2. Too exclusive and unrepresentative (the Security Council), where a few major powers marginalize much of the world including emerging powers.

However,
1. Blocs, such as the G8 or G20, have no legal foundations. They lack the universality of membership.
2. The UN remains the only international organization that approximates a form of global governance based on a “multi-stakeholder” system (states, bureaucracies, and NGOs).
3. The UN also enjoys the value of trust in the hearts and minds of most of the world’s population.
4. The UN changed and is changing the world, especially in the sphere of human rights, peacekeeping, human development, and environmental sustainability.
5. The UN is expected, rightly or wrongly, by its member states to play a larger role and assume new responsibilities in all its activities.

For a healthier and more efficacious balance, authority should be dispersed more democratically and justifiably to enfranchise more global citizens as empowered stakeholders.

Thus, the paper proposes:

**FIRST**, for the exclusive and unrepresentative power distribution among nation states to be addressed through the formation of a separate body that constitutes the members in the UN General Assembly (UNGA). This body, named the Global Council for Development and Justice (GCDJ), will have 12 seats of equal rights and privileges shared by 12 members from their geographical groupings. The membership is rotational and will discuss issues of global significance. The Council may consider and review issues raised at the UNGA and the UN Security Council (UNSC) as well as propose resolutions for debate.

**SECOND**, for the relationship between the UNSC and the UNGA to be developed further and strengthened. Relations can be improved if the UNSC support the implementation of Resolutions.

**THIRD**, for the UNGA to be involved in the selection of the Secretary-General. The largest, most representative body in the UN will then have a bigger role in charting the world’s future.
FOURTH, for representation in the UN decision-making system to include social movements and the people through the formation of a consultative body to the UNGA. This body, named the UN House of Social Movements and the People (UN HSMP), will inject the participation of transnational corporations, international NGOs, civil society, and the general public in international governance. The UN HSMP will interact with the UNGA similar to the way the European Parliament of the European Community functions.

FIFTH, for reforms to take place to the office of the Secretary-General. One is to create the role of a second Deputy Secretary-General. The current Deputy Secretary-General is largely tasked with administrative matters. Hence, the creation of a second Deputy Secretary-General will help sharpen the Secretary-General’s advocacy stance by wielding powers that search for solutions to global issues. He will be given the authority to call for interim multi-stakeholder councils and present recommendations to the Secretary-General.

The other is to equip the Secretary-General with the power to call for resolutions that have been vetoed to be debated and voted on again. Enhancing the Secretary-General’s role is indeed in line with the broader goal of making him more of a General than a Secretary and to further the democratisation agenda of the UNSC.

Despite the UN’s shortcomings, there is no other global institution which holds as much membership and footprint as the UN. This paper believes that reforming the UN to meet the new century’s challenges is the most efficient way forward to solving the plights and problems of the world today.

2. Description of the model

Part I: Towards Reforming the Global Governance Mechanism

WHY THE UN?

Institutions of global governance are only as strong as the will of its member states. The limitations of the UN are more by design, rather than by default, according to former President of the UN Security Council (UNSC) (2001-2002) Kishore Mahbubani [1].

The priorities of the UN system are set by its member states and the UN relies on the collective will of its members. Without their consent, the UN is unable to act. Member states will only allow the UN to become strong and effective, if they see the UN as essential for advancing their national interests.

This can be seen from the obstacles faced by any large-scale UN reform initiatives. These obstacles, according to former UN Secretary General (1992-1996) Boutros Boutros-Ghali are mainly caused by the split between the developed North and the developing south, the haves and the have-nots [2].

In the post-Cold War period and the age of neoliberal globalization, the “North-South quandary” plays out at every level of the UN, from debate over UNSC membership, to the evolving role of peacekeeping operations, to discussions on the organization’s sustainable development agenda. While attempts to reform the
UN are well-intentioned, progress is slow and many member states are reluctant to concede on their national interests.

Therefore, why begin at the UN for international institutional reform?

Why not start the G8 or the G20 – both much more coherent blocs?

Firstly, the main factor is that these groups have no legal foundations. The G8 and the G20 can complement and supplement the UN, but not supplant it. By definition, the G8 and G20 lack the legitimacy of the UN in terms of universality of membership.

Secondly, the UN remains the only international organization that approximates a form of global governance based on a “multi-stakeholder” system. This multi-stakeholder system consists of the “First UN” (the intergovernmental arena with its state representatives), the “Second UN” (the Secretariat and international bureaucrats) [3], and the “Third UN” (NGOs and individuals, for example, experts and eminent persons) [4].

Thirdly, the UN also benefits from the trust it enjoys from most of the world’s population. Favourable views of the UN prevail in Europe, Asia and the US as indicated by the recent Pew Research Global Attitudes Survey Spring 2016, with outright majorities in 17 of 19 countries surveyed holding a favourable view of it [5].

Fourthly, the favourable views regarding the UN are largely due to the way it has changed the world for the better. The UN Intellectual History Project (UNIHP) has documented the 70 years since the UN’s creation, and how the UN has been the institutional champion of various influential ideas and policies such as human rights, peacekeeping, human development and environmental sustainability [6].

Finally, the member states expect the UN to play a larger role and assume new responsibilities in all its activities. This is despite their increasing reluctance to provide the necessary support for the UN whether politically, militarily, and financially. Unless the UN is reformed, the gap between expectation and performance is likely to grow.

For the UN to be more reflective of the contemporary world, the key to progress is to understand the paradox faced by the organization. This will enable reformers to work more effectively via existing mechanisms, or to improve those mechanisms if further change is necessary (see Figure 1).

THE GLOBAL COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE
Power that is more representative should be shared by 12 Regional Neighbourhoods (RNs) on the various continents. The number 12 is uniquely practical in that it is a multiple of 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 12. In making decisions among the 12, various types of quora/quorums and majorities can be had, as they apply to different categories of issues with varying degrees of urgency or seriousness (simple, two-thirds or three-fourths majority).

RNs are identified geographically for several vital reasons:
• Politically, they tend to share more of a region’s attributes such as stability/instability, and peace/conflict;
Economically, they also tend to share similar levels of attainment such as development/underdevelopment;

Socially, they tend to share more experiences such as culturally and historically

Each RN would over time develop its own regional character representing the interests of its member countries and reflecting the outlook of its region.

One country from each of the 12 RNs would form the 12-member Global Council for Development and Justice (GCDJ) to decide on a particular set of issues of global significance. Since the GCDJ reviews several sets of issues at the same time, all countries would be actively engaged at any one time.

The countries within each RN would rotate among themselves on an annual basis to preside over a particular set of issues considered by the GCDJ. A one-year term is deemed better in encouraging a good balance of consistency and variety in the views and positions of each RN on any particular set of issues, as well as to ensure a more equitable representation of an RN on the issues by all its member countries.

At any given time and on any set of issues, the entire globe will be represented in respect of the 12 regions and the countries in them. This may be regarded as a more workable and meaningful balance between representative and participatory democracy by the sovereign nations of the world.

It may be that some RNs will have fewer constituent countries than others, such that each country may have to multitask to manage more than one set of issues. Nonetheless, the RNs with fewer countries also tend to comprise larger countries with more resources and greater capacities to multitask.

Overall, every country in every region will be active stakeholders of global developments in an equitable international system. This inclusive arrangement provides for a more even distribution of rights and responsibilities globally, as well as of interests and accountability in global commons and other issues.

Some Regional Neighbourhoods may correspond with existing regional groupings to utilize mechanisms already in place, since creating new RNs takes time, effort and political will to overcome inertia. Thus groups of 12 sovereign nations would work together to identify specific challenges and develop solutions in a credible arrangement where all global citizens are equal before international law, norms and conventions, regardless of the wealth or power of their countries.

All 12 RNs would have equal rights and privileges, with each entitled to one vote in the GCDJ. There will be no veto power to obstruct proposals. All members within each RN as sovereign nations will also have equal rights and privileges, with one vote each within their RN.

The 12 Regional Neighbourhoods (in no particular order) are:

- Northeast Asia (China, Japan, Koreas, Taiwan)
- Southeast Asia (10 ASEAN countries and Timor Leste)
- South Asia (SAARC countries)
- Eurasia, Central Asia and other EAEU (Eurasian Economic Union) countries
- West Asia (“Middle East”)
Some adjustments may be needed in some RN memberships, but the general spread of RNs as above would contribute to more balanced multipolarity. Additionally, in some regions such as Northeast Asia and West Asia, it may encourage peace and stability through a sense of common regional identity.

HOW DO THE GLOBAL COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE AND REGIONAL NEIGHBOURHOODS RELATE TO THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM?

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) will actively constitute, assist and participate in RNs and the GCDJ;

- The GCDJ will consider and review issues raised at the UNGA and the UNSC;
- The GCDJ may propose UN Resolutions and table issues for debate at the UNSC;
- Where a proposal has been vetoed at the UNSC, the UN Secretary-General may pass it to the GCDJ for consideration, debate and resolution by way of a UNGA Consensus (UNGAC)
- The GCDJ and RNs may support and assist the mandated work of UN agencies, bringing a sharper focus and more urgency to their tasks for greater efficacy

In general, the GCDJ would enhance the work of the UN by bringing greater global legitimacy and heft to it, through building global support and effectiveness for international management. Stronger international consensus would be developed for a range of issues through incentives and enforcement (carrots and sticks) of international norms, agreements and standards.

After an offending country has been cited by a UN Resolution, punitive action against it would first be approved and then formulated by a majority decision at the GCDJ. More serious measures for more serious offences would require larger majorities at the GCDJ. Some reforms at the UNSC for certain measures would also be required.

[Majorities at the GCDJ – Simple majority: 7; two-thirds majority: 8; three-quarters majority: 9]

- Selective sanctions: Simple majority at the GCDJ
- Full sanctions: Two-thirds majority of GCDJ plus simple majority of UNSC Permanent Members
- Military intervention I (Mild): Two-thirds GCDJ majority plus four-fifths majority of UNSC PMs
- Military intervention II (Blockade, No-fly Zones): Three-quarters GCDJ majority
- Military intervention III (Invasion): Three-quarters GCDJ majority plus four-fifths of UNSC PMs
- Military intervention IV (War): Unanimous decisions at both GCDJ and UNSC
In all the above categories, at least a simple majority of UNSC Non-permanent Members is also required.

On the positive side to encourage good conduct, the GCDJ would also incentivize full and consistent conformance to international law as well as respect for international norms and agreements as follows:

- Award of Most Congenial Nation (MCN) I status with facilitation of mutual international investments
- Award of MCN II status with development loans at favourable interest rates
- Award of MCN III status with MCN I and MCN II combined
- Award of MCN IV status with MCN III and trade facilitation (favourable to zero tax for imports)
- A simple majority at the GCDJ would be required to award a country with Most Congenial Nation status. However, a two-thirds majority would be required to decide on the level of MCN status award and its duration.

**REVITALIZING THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

This section elaborates on our proposal to revitalise the UNGA. First, is to improve the relationship between the UNSC and the UNGA. Second, is to place the selection process of the UN Secretary-General in the UNGA. Third, is to include the participation of a House based on social movements and the people.

1. **Improving the relationship between the UNSC and the UNGA**

Unlike the UNSC, the UNGA is more representative. While its recommendations are not binding, it has played a key role in setting standards, norms, and contributed to the codification of international law. For example, it was in the UNGA that the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was adopted.[7]

Relations between the UNSC and the UNGA can be improved should the UNSC support the implementation of Resolutions by enhancing coordination between the Presidents of the UNSC and the UNGA.

2. **The General Assembly to select the Secretary-General**

According to Article 97 of the UN Charter, “The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council”. However, in practice, the Secretary-General is usually selected by the UNSC roughly based on regional rotation. The five permanent members can veto any candidate they do not agree with and can even suggest their own preferred candidates.[8]

By placing the selection of the Secretary-General in the UNGA, the largest, most representative body in the UN will have a bigger say in charting the world’s future. As the Secretary-General is the central figure in areas of administrative matters to conflict resolution, a Secretary-General that champions inclusivity will be beneficial for the world.
3. A House based on social movements and the people
It is argued that nation state representatives often only represent a certain elite, usually male, upper-class, elite university educated, and disciplined in political science or international relations.[9] Groups such as NGOs and transnational corporations have no official authority; they argue that nations do not adequately represent local and regional interest groups. But the success of these interest groups lie in the moral authority they wield, the development programs they have accomplished, as well as the alternative development model they work from.

The world still needs the UN as an instrument with the mandate to act on global issues. The establishment of a House that empowers social movements and the people will strengthen this mandate. With the formation of this House, the problem of not having sufficient political will to act on important issues facing the planet can be solved.

Structurally, this House can be considered as a subsidiary organ or as a principal organ to the UNGA. Initially it could serve as a consultative body to the UNGA by raising issues close to the hearts of the ordinary people. The body, through a gradual, phased process, it could ultimately be a world citizen-elected body with a stronger mandate in the UN framework.

The House that empowers social movements and the people can be established under Article 22 of the UN Charter which states that the UNGA can create subsidiary organs to help in its work. The first stage in establishing this House should be a consultative body comprising of representatives elected by the national parliaments of each state. This serves to create a valid democratic link between the UN and the world’s citizens through their representatives in the national legislatures.

At the same time, the UN should experiment with cyber democracy. Fired by the engines of information and communication technologies, the digital revolution has fundamentally changed the way people contemplate, act, connect, work and earn their livelihood. Over a period of time – perhaps generations – could move towards more direct global democracy that is holistic and inclusive. At the very least, global issues should have direct input from global citizens via the Internet instead of only through nations’ ambassadors.[10]

The model starts from discussing selected issues that arise in the UN. The delegates of each member will list questions related to the selected issues. A secure, easily accessible online platform will be provided for the citizens to cast their votes. There should be an appropriate minimum age for voters. Next, the results from the voting will be passed to a panel of experts in each country to study. They can summarise the implications of the results, future actions and its eventual costs and benefits. These experts should represent a cross section of stakeholders on the issue concerned. The outcome of the study will be presented to the delegates, who in turn will present the overall results of the issues to the UN for further steps.

By giving all stakeholders, including average global citizens and NGOs the right to vote on key issues raised by the delegates, it allows the UN to become more representative and inclusive, and potentially solve some longstanding issues. Thus the UN is better prepared for the challenges brought about by a fluctuating global environment.
Part II: Reforms to the Office of the Secretary-General

Significant reform within the UN is necessary in order to pave the way towards a governance model that is able to effectively address the most pressing threats and risks to humanity. These reforms particularly focus on the operating structure and functions of the UN, its relevant offices and constituent bodies.

The rigidity of the UN and its bureaucracy are often cited as major stumbling blocks to the effectiveness of the organisation and its ability to respond to the pressing issues of the day. It will likely negatively impact, perhaps even more so, the management of threats and risks of the future. The rigidity of the UN and the need for reform is something that the UN, its member states and major stakeholders themselves recognise – and acted on in the past. There have been multiple attempts and studies by various commissions and review teams of reforming different aspects of the UN.

This paper proposes that the creation of a new more effective governance model needs to include reforms to the Office of the Secretary-General itself. The Secretary-General is the apex administrator at the global organisation, serving as a symbol of the ideals of the UN and a spokesman for the interests of the citizens of the world, in particular the poor and vulnerable among them. The office carries with it a heavy responsibility – as a diplomat, advocate, civil servant and CEO.[11]

Two suggestions are put forward in this regard:
1. Creating an additional post of a second Deputy Secretary-General.
2. Giving the Secretary-General the power to call for resolutions that have been vetoed to be debated and voted on again.

A SECOND DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

The post of Deputy Secretary-General was established by the UNGA at the end of 1997 as part of the then reform of the UN.[12] The Deputy Secretary-General helps manage many of the administrative responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat operations, and ensure coherence of the various activities and programmes under the remit of the UN.

Currently, the official mandate of the Deputy Secretary-General is as follows:[13]

- To assist the Secretary-General in managing the operations of the Secretariat;
- To act for the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters in the absence of the Secretary-General and in other cases as may be decided by the Secretary-General;
- To support the Secretary-General in ensuring inter-sectoral and inter-institutional coherence of activities and programmes and to support the Secretary-General in elevating the profile and leadership of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres, including further efforts to strengthen the United Nations as a leading centre for development policy and development assistance;
• To represent the Secretary-General at conferences, official functions and ceremonial and other occasions as may be decided by the Secretary-General; and

• To undertake such assignments as may be determined by the Secretary-General.

Given the need for reform at the UN and calls for the UN to be more effective in managing and preparing for pressing threats and risks to humanity, the proposal for an additional post of a Deputy Secretary-General will allow for a more focused and better managed division of duties in assisting the Secretary-General.

Aside from the mandate listed above, the additional duties of the two Deputy Secretary-Generals are as follows:

Deputy Secretary-General 1
• To assist and act for the Secretary-General in all internal administrative matters, particularly on the ongoing reform and transformation efforts within the UN.

Deputy Secretary-General 2
• To assist and act for the Secretary-General in dealing with the various external and global issues that UN has to manage; and
• This includes issues concerning the management and preparation of pressing threats and risks to humanity.

The creation of the new post of a second Deputy Secretary-General will free up the Secretary-General's time, allowing him or her to focus on being more of a General, than a Secretary. It will also ease the burden of the sole Deputy Secretary-General.

THE ROLE OF THE SECOND DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL
The role of the Deputy Secretary-General 2 is to communicate the Secretary-General's vision and goals with clarity to various stakeholders, and coordinate multi-stakeholder task forces that align with the Secretary-General's agenda.

Concerning vision and goals, the performance of the Secretary-General has thus far been characterised by personality. While Kofi Annan is renowned as an activist that stands up for least developed countries, Ban Ki-Moon's tenure as the Secretary-General is marked by the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretary-General may be swayed by the politics of the time to achieve what is possible. Yet depending on the personality, certain issues may be pushed forth while others may take a firm backseat.

Hence, the process of declaring the Secretary-General’s vision should be formalised so that the Secretary-General will have certain goals to meet while in office. This invigorates the UN Secretary-General’s office with purpose, especially if input is taken from social movements and the general population. Daily functions of the UN and UN bodies may continue under the purview of the Deputy Secretary-General 1 and under the guidance of the UNGA while the Secretary-General’s vision will be carried out by Deputy Secretary-General 2.
Concerning stakeholders, the UN have pursued multi-stakeholder partnerships since the UN Fund for International Partnerships was established in 1998. In 2008, the Economic and Social Council was mandated to hold multi-stakeholder platforms, which were later named Partnership Forums, with representatives from the private sector and philanthropic communities, NGOs and academia.[14] Multi-stakeholder partnerships are usually across themes such as environmental sustainability, global public health, gender equality, education and jobs. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda also highlighted these partnerships as means of mobilising human and financial resources, expertise, technology and knowledge.

Some of the multi-stakeholder partnerships initiated by former Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon are Global Pulse (2009), Every Woman Every Child (2010), Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) (2011), The Zero Hunger Challenge (2012), and The Climate Summit (2014). Yet the weaknesses of such partnerships include the lack of indicators for measurable impact and accountability.

By having the Deputy Secretary-General oversee the multi-stakeholder task forces, he/she will guide their progress and troubleshoot issues that emerge. In addition, the Deputy Secretary-General can also be part of the conversations with the grassroots. Hence enhancing his/her capacity to translate the Secretary-General’s vision to local actors. The multi-stakeholder task forces may consist of local government officials, private sector, civil society, social movements, non-governmental organisation and entrepreneurs or these actors may nominate an expert to participate and contribute in task force activities.

TECHNOLOGIES AS A WAY FORWARD: AN EXAMPLE

Among the ways the Deputy Secretary-General can contribute to the existing UN system is in the usage of technologies to meet UN goals and the Secretary-General’s vision. Technology can contribute greatly to human development, economy and governance systems. The 2016 World Development Report titled “Digital Dividends” stated that digital technologies can bring more choice, greater convenience and provide opportunities, especially to areas that are poor or disadvantaged. Examples cited were in Kenya where the cost of sending remittances dropped by up to 90 percent after the introduction of a digital payment system and India’s Ababa programme which allows for greater inclusivity in decision-making.

For the UN, the pathway towards reaping digital dividends can be two-fold. Firstly, the UN require knowledge of technology that can address issues plaguing the world. Science, technology and innovation (STI) are needed in areas of human development such as achieving poverty eradication, addressing water and sanitation issues as well as tackling climate change. However, technology’s greatest barrier is access and the ecosystem. Technology transfer may be limited by issues such as infrastructure, cyber governance and an absence of adequate human capital. Therefore, the UN has to encourage processes that build ecosystems in the direction of UN-endorsed values and goals.

Secondly, technologies are needed to enhance UN governance systems. The development of a real-time monitoring and evaluation system for the United Nations World Food Programme in Cambodia in 2014 broke down silos to streamline the delivery of services.[15] Both of these responsibilities require cooperation with the local governments, private sector, civil society, social
movements, non-governmental organisation and entrepreneurs. The private sector, civil society and entrepreneurs play major roles in the development of science, technology and innovation, especially as these actors are specialised and experts in their fields. Cooperation should be inclusive and may include participation from non-governmental bodies such as the Intermediate Technology Development Group, in the search of identifying solutions that are cost-effective and appropriate.

The UN system have measures and means to facilitate technology transfers. UN bodies such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and UN Regional Commissions are equipped with initiatives that stimulate science, technology and innovation, especially in least developed countries. These bodies offer a range of services to encourage technology transfers such as frameworks for capacity building, policy analysis, and data on a range of issues. While advice and data seem readily available from UN bodies, coordination through a multi-stakeholder approach seem fewer. Additionally, the burgeoning system may not facilitate great information transfer between UN bodies.

The Deputy Secretary-General 2 may function as the cog needed to coordinate different UN bodies and stakeholders, especially in this case of using technology as means of solving problems faced by UN. The Deputy Secretary-General 2 can call for ad-hoc multi-stakeholder meetings that look into specific topics with the intention of realising the UN Secretary-General’s vision. The meetings should utilise the entire offerings of the UN apparatus to coordinate with different stakeholders in order to achieve the aim of the UN Secretary-General. By making the meetings ad-hoc, the proposal minimises the expansion of the UN bureaucracy. Additionally, the ad-hoc meetings increase the UN’s ability to encourage synergy between stakeholders, thus building trust that paves the way to better ecosystems. However, due to the structure of these meetings, the meetings may remain of high priority during the UN Secretary-General’s tenure and may debilitate in importance once the UN Secretary-General ends his service. While goals may stop short of full realisation, this system may also avoid redundant goals instituted into the UN system.

In the case of UN’s second duty with technologies, which is to enhance the efficiency of their services, the Deputy Secretary-General 2 can call for annual revisions which identify technologies that are cost-effective and are capable of enhancing UN’s delivery of services. These revisions coordinate with Deputy Secretary-General 1’s assessment of UN’s performance.

GIVING THE SECRETARY-GENERAL THE POWER TO CALL FOR RESOLUTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN VETOED TO BE DEBATED AND VOTED ON AGAIN

An oft cited complain by UN detractors is its lack of democracy. As it stands, the UNSC holds primary competence to address issues concerning the maintenance of peace and security. On this, status quo proponents put forth that this lack of democracy is a small price to pay to preserve the great power balancing necessary to maintain global stability.

The main reason for this is the UNSC Permanent Members’ negative vote. This negative vote, with the effect of a veto, is the primary obstacle for meaningful and
necessary Resolutions to move towards the resolution of many conflicts, threats and risks around the world. This is because the larger global peace agenda might, and in fact does, fall prey to the relatively to the smaller but significantly more influential and powerful interests of a negative vote holder.

While certain states have tried to circumvent this through the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principles, its effect has been wholly uncertain. The current situation in Syria, Yemen and in Myanmar’s Rakhine State bears unfortunate witness to this.

Currently, issues on peace and security are only deliberated in the UNSC, with minimal input, of the rest of the UNGA. While acknowledging that states with a special interest are oftentimes invited to provide input to the UNSC proceedings, this comes without a voting right on the issue.[16] This seems paradoxical considering that a state that is recognised to have a special interest in the matter at hand can present its views but cannot have a say in the democratic process to determine its outcome and solution.

Further, the lack of democratic participation and equal voting rights has had the effect of incapacitating the UN from taking meaningful action to prevent conflict. While the UN Charter makes no explicit mention of democracy, the fact that the Charter begins with “We the Peoples” alludes to the fact that the “people” are still the source of legitimacy for states. This is in line with democratic ideals.

Additionally, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights explicitly mentions the concept of democracy by stating “the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government”. Acknowledging the pressing and irrefutable need for UNSC reform, any further democratisation of the UNSC processes can only be a positive.

In line with the broader goal of making the UN’s top civil servant more of a General than a Secretary and to further the democratisation agenda of the UNSC, it is proposed that the UN Secretary-General be given an enhanced role.

Here, it is suggested that the Secretary-General is granted additional responsibility to bring pressing matters affecting peace and security to the attention of the UNGA through the GCDJ, provided that the UNSC had failed to satisfy the UNGA or the GCDJ. As the UN Secretary-General, he/she possesses not only the mandated right, but also a moral legitimacy to take action. By bringing attention to the UNGA the member states of the GCDJ would then vote on the issue.

With regards to the voting procedure in the UNGA, it is suggested that a simple majority vote will be insufficient for matters of peace and security. Instead, it is put forth that a super-majority vote of two-thirds is needed for it to pass the UNGA. Through this, there will be a democratisation of issues concerning peace and security, giving more powers to the smaller countries that have thus far, gone by relatively unnoticed. Underpinning the workability of democratising the UNSC is the fact that the UNGA possesses democratic legitimacy, and the nudging of the Permanent Member to shift its initial position of casting a negative vote hinges on wanting to avoid international embarrassment.
**3. Motivation**

1. **CORE VALUES**
   As its name implies, the Global Council for Development and Justice (GCDJ) will focus on sustainable development and social justice. Its other criteria are human rights, good governance and environmental protection. The Regional Neighbourhoods (RNs), as constituents of the GCDJ, will be similarly inclined.

   By establishing a House of social movement and the people (UN HSMP), the UN will cease to be solely nation state focused and better represent the views of the many peoples and social movements, such as the ecological, the spiritual, the alternative-development, indigenous peoples and women. Reforms that emphasize on commonality and equality among citizens of the world will bring about more tolerance, understanding, and peaceful coexistence. The result would be a global society committed to cultural, ethnic and racial pluralism – a commitment in which individuals representing different cultural, ethnic and racial communities interact in a dynamic and collaborative way while maintaining and valuing their differences. Such an interaction will produce an environment in which different perspectives are equally valued and utilised in the decision-making process.

   By allowing the Secretary-General the power to call for resolutions that have been vetoed to be debated and voted on again, it adds greater emphasis to the core values of the United Nations. It ensures that issues that are of significant importance to the global community – but which are sometimes held hostage or obstructed by the Permanent Five that hold the power of the negative vote – will be given greater attention, representation and traction.

2. **DECISION-MAKING CAPACITY**
   The GCDJ will function as an autonomous body but in cooperation with the United Nations (UN) and its agencies. It will complement the UN and its agencies, with which it will enjoy mutual respect and demonstrate mutual understanding.

   Citizens have a right as well as a responsibility to become equal participants in the governance of their common global home. By establishing a UN HSMP under the UNGA, democratic participation and decision-making capacity will improve, making the UNGA more effective. Above all, citizen representation at the UN is vital to help strengthen the organization and propel major reform. Governments, preoccupied with national interest, cannot fully commit to undertake the necessary reforms.

   Reforms to the Office of the Secretary-General will steer it towards a more seamless and comprehensive decision-making process. The creation of a second Deputy Secretary-General post will allow for greater decision-making capacity for the Secretary-General, who can be more personally involved in the issues as well as delegate more efficiently to his/her two Deputies.

3. **EFFECTIVENESS**
   The GCDJ will be as effective as the UNGA will make it. Its component RNs will be as effective as each country’s national government will want it to be. In both cases, maximum effectiveness is expected since all countries concerned will want to protect their own interests.
The establishment of a UN HSMP will be an essential part in reforming the United Nations. Initially, the House could have a basic consultative function. In the long run, it could exercise genuine global oversight over most of the international issues. The House can help to raise awareness of critical international issues before they erupt, and function as a watchdog in ensuring that reforms and regulations are implemented effectively and expeditiously. At the same time, it can gather feedback from people at grass-roots level and in social movements to find novel solutions for pressing global problems.

With two Deputy Secretary-Generals to aid the Secretary-General, the latter will have more effective support in managing foreseeable risks and future global challenges. One Deputy Secretary-General will be dedicated to administrative tasks, which currently consume much of the Secretary-General’s and existing Deputy Secretary-General’s time. The second will assist the Secretary-General in managing the various global issues and challenges.

4. RESOURCE AND FINANCING
Resources and financing will be the responsibility of each country concerned. Costs will be minimized with most communications and meetings undertaken electronically. If any country urgently requires funds to fulfil its role in a RN, the other countries in its RN may help provide it.

5. TRUST AND INSIGHT
The various sectors in each country – government, private (commercial) sector, voluntary civil society – will contribute valuable insights from their respective activities and experience. Working together to represent the common national interest, they will constitute and shape their country’s participation.

6. FLEXIBILITY
The roles of individual countries, RNs and the GCDJ and their relation to UN agencies are clear. However, in the early stages, some mutual adjustment may be required. The result will be shaped by an international consensus as determined by the UNGA.

Also, the second Deputy Secretary-General will be able to call for ad-hoc multi-stakeholder councils, which are agile in membership and flexible in operations.

7. PROTECTION AGAINST THE ABUSE OF POWER
Peer pressure from other RN countries at the regional level and from other RNs at the international level in the GCDJ will motivate all countries to contribute through participation and limit any excesses. Domestic negotiations among government, the private sector and civil society will shape the national position.

The UN HSMP will act as a check and balance mechanism, limiting the power of national governments and providing a harmonious interrelationship between the people and social institutions and the organs of government.

Reforms to the office of the Secretary-General will abide strictly to all existing norms, conventions and limitations placed on the UN. The aim is to avoid creating conditions that would lead to any potential abuse of power by the world body or institutions within it. Although the Secretary-General will have the authority to bring issues to the attention of the UNGA as well as the GCDJ, the
Secretary-General will have no unilateral power to force through resolutions that have been vetoed.

Reforms to the Secretary-General’s office will also adhere to the highest standards of transparency and ensure that there will be no undue influence by interested parties and other stakeholders. The Deputy Secretary-General 2 is accountable to the Secretary-General and UN processes. In calling for the ad-hoc councils, the Deputy Secretary-General 2 has to call for inclusive councils.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY
As long as there is popular pressure, regional and global networks (RNs and the GCJD) will help keep country participation accountable and true to the common declared values and principles of an international consensus.
References