



**Global  
Challenges  
Foundation**

# **Cataco: A Catalyst for Collaboration**

## **Author**

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The submission proposes the creation of a global, state-independent agency that facilitates treaties and agreements between various actors for the common good. Owned by the UN, it selects personnel on ability and merit in a hierarchical organization. The agency provides services for negotiating treaties, as well as indirect aid in implementing and enforcing them. Ultimately, the agency relies on the idea that governance and collaboration are often about the skills and the tools, as they are about shared goals and values. Emphasis is on swift action and feasibility, rather than globally binding goals.





# 1. Abstract

We propose the founding of Cataco, a global, state-independent agency that facilitates treaties and agreements between various actors for the common good of life on this planet. Cataco can facilitate treaties between any sets of parties, be it nations, international organizations, cities, corporations, NGOs or others, on any matters where such a treaty can be expected to further the good of humanity and life in general. It may act by

- Initiating processes to create treaties
- Facilitating negotiations for treaties
- Drafting treaties
- Depositing treaties
- Monitoring the implementation of treaties
- Helping in resolving disputes arising from treaties
- Helping in enforcing treaties

A typical treaty project of Cataco starts with a prospective party or parties contacting it, to request its help in creating a treaty or agreement of some kind, or with Cataco itself identifying a possible opportunity for such a treaty, and contacting the prospective parties. Examples could be nations wanting to agree to mutual reductions in weapons of mass destruction; various NGOs, health ministries and pharmaceutical companies wanting to found a common research centre to find solutions to a regional or global health issue; or companies wanting to join forces in developing open tools for cybersecurity. Cataco then evaluates whether the proposal fits its mission of furthering the common good of humanity. Assuming it judges this to be the case, negotiating and drafting a treaty then begins, with Cataco taking a facilitating role, acting as an intermediary and providing expertise in negotiation techniques, legal matters, or the subject in question, and an impartial point of view.

Assuming agreement is reached and a treaty is signed and ratified, Cataco's involvement may or may not end there. Often it may act as a depositary for the treaty. It may provide services in monitoring the success of and compliance with the treaty, with possible sanctions and rewards depending on compliance. It may also help in resolving disputes arising from the treaty, by providing services such as arbitration. Although Cataco does not wield direct military or economical power, it may also aid in enforcement of the treaty through indirect means, by for instance acting as a financial intermediary with the power to withhold funds.

Cataco's highest governing body is its Board of Governors. The Board is elected in a rotating manner through annual elections by the United Nations General Assembly. The most important role of the Board is monitoring Cataco's activities, to ensure it is diligently following its mission statement. The Board also appoints the Director, who is the chief executive of Cataco. Below the Director, Cataco is divided into four departments: The Department of Negotiations to facilitate treaty negotiations; the Department of Deposits to act as a treaty depositary; the Department of Monitoring to provide services in monitoring treaties; and the Department of Disputes to provide dispute resolution services to treaty parties. Each department is lead by a single person, the head of the department, who is appointed by the Board under the recommendation of the Director. In addition to the departments, Cataco also has several divisions, that provide supporting



services, such as internal research, human resources and financial services. Cataco is funded from the United Nations budget.

Key to Cataco's ability to deliver an impact is its willingness to deal with any parties. In recent decades, power has been drifting away from sovereign states, to companies, civil society, local governments, and regional and international bodies. Moreover, many promising steps in solving current issues have come from non-state sources. Examples include voluntary commitments to climate action by local governments and cities [1,2,3]; companies joining various movements and programs such as fair trade and environmental certification programs, often under pressure from NGOs and consumers [4,5,6]; and companies and NGOs joining forces to push for responsible use of and democratic access to technology [7,8]. Cataco aims to tap into this potential in non-state actors, by bringing them together, and offering professional services to facilitate all stages of co-operation, starting from initiatives, through negotiating and agreeing, all the way to implementation and compliance. The aim is to create a culture of treaties, pacts and deals, similar to and even stronger than what exists between states, and give the tools necessary for many small but willing streams of various origins to grow into a strong river, that can effectively take on a given global challenge.

Central design goals in this proposal are to make Cataco agile, swift acting, and low in bureaucracy. It is modeled more after consulting companies than global governance institutions. Its organization structure is a straight-forward hierarchy, with much power concentrated to key individuals, and everything overseen by the Board, which represents the political influence. This makes Cataco both flexible and scalable. Its design is inspired by the idea that governance and collaboration are often as much about the skills and the tools related to the process, as they are about shared goals and values. For solving global challenges, the key word for what Cataco provides is not "influence" or "power, but "expertise". It is a low-cost solution, that relies on avenues of influence that have proven to be efficient. Unlike a grand global governance framework, it can stay functional and keep delivering an impact in any conditions, as long as any will towards co-operation exists. It can adapt to any changes in global power structures or in the issues that humanity faces. There are no significant obstacles to its immediate founding, given its uncontroversial role and the fact that it does not aim to supplant any existing powers, but to complement them. Cataco can start small, and scale up as available resources, the demand for its services and the respect of its ability to deliver, grow.

## **2. Description of the model**

### **I. MOTIVATION, MISSION, AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN**

Humanity's power to influence its environment continues to increase at an accelerating rate. At the same time, economic and social phenomena continue to grow in geographic reach, and we are becoming evermore interconnected at every scale. As a consequence, at an increasing pace we are faced with problems that have a scope that far exceeds the boundaries of any one state. Examples include global warming and other large-scale environmental damage, the possibility of global armed conflict, and global pandemics.



Our interconnectedness in the realm of governance has kept growing too, but not at a comparable pace to that of the economic and social spheres, or the potential impact of our collective actions. States hold sovereign power, and all co-operation reaching beyond state boundaries must cope with this, often through great struggle. Regionally, considerable integration between states has happened, most notably in Europe, although there are no guarantees that this will continue. Truly global international co-operation is almost synonymous with the United Nations and its various agencies. Although much progress has been made through the UN, it has long been evident that it is not strong enough as an institution to truly fill the void of global governance.

We should then ask, how the UN could be fixed or replaced with a better solution. Its greatest short-comings are slowness to act, inability to make binding decisions on even slightly contentious matters, and inability to enforce its decisions. Fixing especially the latter two, in which ever way it is done, would require infringing more on state sovereignty, and transferring more power from the national level to the UN or other global governance body. Even though a stronger system of global governance surely is what is ultimately needed, building one overarching framework would at any time be a huge undertaking that would take a long time to yield results. In the current political climate, where growing nationalism and fragmentation are the trend especially in the West, where a huge portion of the power in international affairs still lies, it seems like a most uncertain and daunting goal to take.

At the same time as the taking even the first steps in building a stronger unified framework for global governance seems almost insurmountable, smaller successes are constantly reached on individuals issues. Moreover, they often come from sources other than state power, sometimes unexpectedly so. For the longest time a global treaty combating climate change seemed impossible to reach. However, at the same time, individual states and regional powers, as well as cities, provinces, municipalities, individuals and companies, were constantly accelerating their involvement in the matter, either on their own or in small groups and pacts. Once the Paris Agreement was finally reached, it felt like inter-state co-operation was finally catching up to other layers of the global society. In addition, the Paris Agreement succeeded in large part due to the voluntary nature of commitments [9], and thus can be seen as another blow to the idea of globally enforceable common standards. As a cherry on the cake, when the US declared its intention to withdraw from the agreement, numerous bodies within the US, most notably cities and states, declared that they would voluntarily continue to implement the agreement, regardless of what the US federal government does [10].

Observing the above-described developments lead us to two key ideas, that inspire this proposal. First, that in the current international environment, if results need to be reached relatively quickly, they must be based on voluntary participation. Enforceable, binding global deals, especially if they would be backed by hard economic or military power, are simply too much to ask for at the moment, and insisting on common standards that every state must follow will lead to no deals at all. Second, that actors other than states should be given more stage, and willingness to co-operate between any parties should be embraced and supported. If a treaty only covers cities on one continent, so be it. If they only agree to work together on a specific subproblem of some grand issue, and without binding commitments, so be it. If states fail to collectively impose tight work safety



regulations on a business sector, but companies are willing to voluntarily commit to weaker regulations overseen by an NGO, so be it. A deal is always better than no deal. In addition to its immediate effects, it puts more pressure on other actors, and paves the way for more co-operation in the future.

These are the key ideas that lead us to propose the founding of Cataco. It is not a body of international governance in itself, but a catalyst for more cohesive, efficient, extensive and quicker action, where will to act exists. We define the mission of Cataco as follows.

“Cataco facilitates the creation and implementation of and compliance with treaties or other agreements between any parties, where doing so can be expected to further the common good of humanity, and life in general, recognizing the equal value of all human beings. It prioritizes facilitating agreements where doing so would have a high positive impact with a high probability of success.”

Cataco does this by facilitating negotiations and by aiding implementation and compliance, through for instance monitoring and arbitration. Its aim is to be a point of contact and bring together various parties around a negotiation table; to provide expertise, support and leadership during the process of forging an agreement; to provide secretarial services related implementing an agreement; and to provide expertise and an impartial point of view, when success is monitored or compliance is evaluated, and sanctions or rewards may be called for.

Three short clarifications about Cataco’s mission are in order: First, the clause in the mission statement about “furthering the common good humanity, and life in general” does not imply that every treaty should have a global impact. It only means that in every decision, all possible effects on any living being on the planet should be taken into consideration, and the net effect of Cataco’s actions should be maximally positive in this perspective. Second we use the word “treaty” to refer to deals, pacts, covenants or other agreements of all forms. (We use the expression “treaty project” to refer to a case, where Cataco undertakes facilitating a treaty.) Such treaties may be bi- or multi-lateral, and they may or may not be legally enforceable under international law, national legislation, or otherwise. Third, the guiding principles are deliberately vague about what exactly constitutes “common good”. This is to future-proof the organization against changing needs, and to avoid bureaucratizing decision making processes. Whether something constitutes common good is left for the various internal and external oversight bodies of Cataco to judge, as we describe later.

In designing Cataco, the following guiding principles have directed all aspects of the design.

#### **i) Pragmatism.**

Cataco aims for maximum positive impact, operating within the constraints of the existing, established power structures. Its role is to supplement, not replace, current powers. It does not insist on democracy at every stage, and remains detached from any ideologies or values beyond its mission of furthering the global good. It aims for maximum positive impact starting tomorrow, using approaches that we have seen to produce results so far.



### **ii) Scalability.**

One could found Cataco and have it running, staffed with a handful of people and tackling small scale issues, immediately. As it starts to make a name for itself, build networks within various sectors of the global society, and gain the trust and respect of various parties, it can easily scale up, both in terms of the size and the number challenges it takes on, with no clear limit in sight.

### **iii) Lack of focus.**

Cataco would not exist to solve any single challenge in global governance. It is a tool to facilitate coordinated action towards whatever goal there exists will to reach. In other words, it is a catalyst for existing movements that align with its high-level mission, rather than a driving power itself. This allows it to adapt to changing times with ease.

### **iv) Agnosticism towards the source of power.**

Cataco does not ask how or why an actor has power over something, or whether this power is legitimate. It is only interested in whether this actor is willing to commit to using that power for the common good. Thus it may facilitate deals between dictators, recognized and unrecognized governments, individual public organizations (say, various police forces around a continent), corporations or NGOs of any kind, or any other actors.

## **II. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE**

The organization structure of Cataco consists of the Board of Governors, the Director, four departments and multiple divisions.

The Board of Governors is the highest authority within Cataco. It mainly acts by appointing the Director and overseeing the activities of the organization.

The Director runs the operations of Cataco. She/he gives recommendations for the heads of the departments, prepares the budget, oversees and coordinates the work of the departments and divisions, decides which treaty projects Cataco should undertake, and in general ensures that Cataco is working in accordance with its mission as effectively as possible.

All the departments and divisions report to the Director. They operate in a mutually flat hierarchy, meaning no department or division is subordinate to another. The four departments are responsible for the core functions of Cataco. They are the Department of Negotiations, in charge of facilitating treaty negotiations; the Department of Deposits, that functions as a treaty depositary; the Department of Monitoring, that evaluates whether the goals or terms of a treaty have been met; and the Department of Disputes, that provides dispute resolution services for treaty parties. They are distinguished from the divisions, such as Division of Finance and Division of Research, which ultimately serve to support the core functions provided by the departments.

The aim of the organization structure of Cataco is to allow for efficient and unhindered action. It is designed more like a company than a governance body. Each department and division are under direct control of a single person, and have clearly defined roles and objectives. The people for these roles are to be appointed based on merit and competency, not political bargaining.



## **II A. Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors of Cataco (or simply the Board) is its highest governing body. It consists of fifteen members, elected by the external oversight body, the UN General Assembly, as explained in Section III.

The Board convenes once a year, or more often if requested by at least two board members. Its responsibility is to make sure that Cataco is acting effectively in furthering its mission. In principle, the Board has supreme authority within Cataco. The only things it can not change are the mission statement and the process for appointing Board members. However, under normal operating conditions, it is expected to restrict its involvement to the following:

- i)* Appointing the Director. The Board also determines the Director's compensation, and may replace her/him at will.
- ii)* Appointing the heads of departments (but not divisions) and set their compensation, upon the recommendation of the Director.
- iii)* Approving the budget of Cataco, prepared by the Director.
- iv)* Continuously monitoring and evaluating the activities of Cataco, to ensure that it is acting in accordance with its mission.

Thus, as long as things are running smoothly, the main function of the Board is to appoint the Director. Beyond that, the Board acts as an oversight body, approving appointments and budgets proposed by the director, and monitoring Cataco's activities. For this last purpose, the Board receives an annual report from the Director, in addition to being entitled and expected to request further information on any activities of Cataco at any point, to be able maintain confidence that the mission statement is being respected. The Board may also give advice to the executive management on strategic matters, and for instance reorganize the internal structure of Cataco (say, by creating new departments), as agreed with the Director, but should refrain from interfering with day-to-day management. Even if the Board is not happy with the way Cataco is managed, in normal circumstances action should be limited to changing the head of one or several departments or divisions, in mutual understanding with the Director, or changing the Director. Only under exceptional circumstances should the Board interfere with the running of Cataco in other ways.

The Director and the heads of departments are allowed to attend all the Board meetings unless otherwise decided by the Board, and take part in discussions. However, they have no voting power in the meetings, and are not considered members of the Board. Heads of divisions, such as the Division of Research and the Division of Finance, and possibly other personnel, such as leaders of certain treaty negotiations, will probably also often attend Board meetings, invited by the Board. The Board may also structure itself, by for instance appointing a Chairperson or other special roles, or by creating committees within the Board, as it sees fit.

## **II B. The Director**

The Director is the chief executive of Cataco. She/he is appointed by the Board of Governors, typically for a fixed term of five years, although exceptions to term length may be made. The Director is supported by the Office of the Director, consisting mainly of secretarial staff.





The Director provides both strategic leadership and executive management. She/he is accountable to the Board for making sure that Cataco is operating optimally to further its mission. She/he makes recommendations to the Board for the heads of departments and prepares the budget, although in practice the Division of Finance would place a large role in the budgetary process.

One the main duties of the Director is to make the strategic decisions over which subject areas Cataco should focus on, and the final calls on which treaty projects it should take part in and prioritize. Because of this, the Director will probably in her/his daily work co-operate closely with the Department of Negotiations, which will often need to make value judgments over which treaties to pursue, how, and with which aims. The Director would normally be less involved in the work of the other departments, since holding and publishing treaties, and questions of evaluation and dispute resolution require less strategic leadership. However, there too, the Director is accountable to the Board for the proper and just functioning of Cataco, and has the power to overrule the heads of departments. The Director meddling in individual cases where Cataco is expected pass impartial judgment, such as arbitration and evaluation cases, is frowned upon, and expected to happen only when both the Board and the Director see the functioning of the respective department as having been compromised.

Furthermore, the Director provides high-level management of all the departments and divisions of Cataco, and ensures smooth operation of the organization as a whole. For this purpose she/he may find it useful to hire additional managerial staff within the Office of the Director, especially as Cataco grows in size. The Director is free to change the organization structure of the divisions and create and abolish them as needed.

### **II C. Department of Negotiations**

The Department of Negotiations is perhaps the most important of Cataco's branches, as it will likely take part in almost every treaty project, and is at the core of furthering the organization's mission.

The Department of Negotiations is the point of contact for any parties that would like to request Cataco's help with a treaty. It may also actively initiate treaty projects, by contacting prospective parties and proposing negotiations on a topic that it sees as possibly fruitful. Assuming the Director approves the treaty project, the Department of Negotiations then puts together a team of people with relevant expertise, who are tasked with facilitating the negotiations in question. Their involvement in the process may vary from providing advisory support to the negotiating parties as needed, to setting up the negotiations from start to finish, actively seeking new parties to take part in the treaty, designing and drafting the treaty, and convincing participants to sign. The negotiator teams may change and adapt as needed, vary drastically in size and composition within and between projects, and include full-time staff of Cataco as well as outside experts. The involvement of the Department of Negotiations typically ends either when a treaty is signed and ratified by all parties, or as negotiations are dropped. In both cases it then reports the outcome to the Director.

The Department of Negotiations may also similarly take part in the process to amend a treaty, regardless of whether the treaty was originally negotiated with the help of Cataco or not. Similarly, in the case of treaties that remain open for





signature, the Department of Negotiations may continue to lobby for more parties to join the treaty.

The role of Cataco's negotiators is similar to that of peace negotiators provided by third parties, such as UN special envoys and special representatives, but extended to matters other than conflict resolution and prevention. There is also a close analogy to the business world, where bringing in external consults to aid in forging various deals, such as mergers and acquisitions, is a common practice. Part of the aim of Cataco is to provide a channel for bringing the same kind of focused, professional negotiatory expertise into various negotiation tables for matters of global concern, from environmental issues to disarmament to international health and science policy.

The Department of Negotiations is lead by the Head of Negotiations, who is appointed by the Board under the recommendation of the Director. The rest of the organizational structure is up to her/him to decide. We expect that part of that structure will be teams specialized in certain subject areas, such as peace treaties, public health issues and cyber security. As these teams gather expertise and influence, they will more effectively not only aid in making negotiations successful, but also act as driving forces behind new treaty projects, by actively contacting prominent actors in their field, leveraging their networks of contacts.

#### **II D. Department of Deposits**

The Department of Deposits serves the role of a treaty depositary. It may hold treaties on behalf of the parties, and perform services such as publishing and translating them (see Reference 11 for typical functions of a treaty depositary). The Department of Deposits is lead by a single person, the Head of Deposits, appointed by the Board under the recommendation of the Director. The rest of the organizational structure is for her/him to decide.

#### **II E. Department of Monitoring**

In some cases, a treaty may include articles that call for a neutral third party to monitor whether parties are complying with a treaty, or whether the goals of the treaty are being reached. Cataco's Department of Monitoring exists to perform this role, if the parties of a treaty so wish.

Monitoring can include several levels of engagement. It may be based on receiving information reported by the treaty parties and analyzing it, or it may include actively collecting information. It may be done simply for informational purposes, or the results may lead to sanctions or rewards, as dictated in the treaty. For instance, participating cities may want to know, whether they have collectively been able to reach the CO2 cuts that they have been aiming for, and the Department of Monitoring could prepare annual reports for them, based on self-reported data. In a different case, the Department of Disputes could be monitoring a labor regulation treaty, and send observers out to the field to verify that a company is following workplace condition regulations that it has agreed to follow.

Especially for larger treaties, new organizations may be created for the purpose of monitoring individual treaties. Cataco's Department of Monitoring may help in their founding and setup.



Monitoring procedures may be stipulated in the articles of the treaty, requested by treaty parties, or requested by for instance the Department of Disputes. They can be either public or confidential, as suits a given treaty. However, the Department of Monitoring should advocate for open proceedings where possible. It can provide monitoring services for treaties regardless of whether they were negotiated with the help of Cataco.

The Department of Monitoring is lead by a single person, the Head of Monitoring, appointed by the Board under the recommendation of the Director. The rest of the organizational structure is for her/him to decide. Since monitoring often requires deep expertise in the matter at hand, the Department may request help from the Division of Research, external expert institutions such as NGOs and various UN agencies, or independent experts and consults.

## **II F. Department of Disputes**

Inevitably, disputes and disagreements will arise between treaty parties. To help settle such cases, Cataco's Department of Disputes offers various dispute resolution services, such as mediation and arbitration. These are available to parties of any treaties, although Cataco (mainly the Director and the Head of Disputes) may choose to prioritize some cases over others, and give preference to treaties that, in their articles, designate Cataco as the dispute resolution service to be used.

Note that the Department of Disputes does not aim to act as a court: As is usual in alternate dispute resolution procedures, bureaucracy should remain light and procedures swift, compared to full-fledged court proceedings. Arbitration decisions made the Department may be legally binding under some national or international law, but court judgment is still left to the relevant court, such as the International Court of Justice.

The Department of Disputes may employ dispute resolution and legal experts as permanent staff, as well as subject specific experts, and it may draw additional expertise from other departments and divisions of Cataco, or from outside Cataco. It does not insist on a fixed format for its dispute resolution procedures that would be applied to all treaties, but it may have standard procedures that it advocates for in most cases (in collaboration with the Department of Negotiations). The procedures can be either public or confidential, as suits a given treaty. However, the Department of Disputes should advocate for public proceedings where reasonable.

Note that many international arbitration and alternate dispute resolution institutions (i.e. not courts) already exist, such as the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, the International Chamber of Commerce, and the London Court of International Arbitration. The purpose of the Department of Disputes is to offer an alternative, and fill in the gaps where no institutions with the necessary scope and expertise exist. However, in some cases, even if a treaty is negotiated with the help of Cataco, giving arbitration power to some other institution may be the best course of action, especially if a specialized dispute resolution organization for a given subject exists. For larger treaties, whole new organizations may be founded for this purpose, with the Department of Compliance possibly playing a role in their founding.



The Department of Disputes is led by a single person, the Head of Disputes, appointed by the Board under the recommendation of the Director. The rest of the organizational structure is for her/him to decide.

## **II G. Divisions**

In addition to the departments that are responsible for the core functions of Cataco and are in contact with treaty parties, the organization has several divisions with more supportive roles, internal to Cataco. These include things such as human resources, finance and IT. Divisions may be created and reorganized as seen necessary by the Director, and they may be structured in whatever way seen fit. Two divisions will most probably exist, that deserve a short mention of their own: The Divisions of Finance and Research.

The Division of Finance has as its main function to handle the finances of Cataco itself, in close collaboration with the Office of the Director, as well as working with the Office of the Director in preparing the budget. However, in addition to this, in some treaty projects, Cataco's Division of Finance could be tasked with functioning as an escrow, or otherwise as an impartial third party to hold assets, as stipulated in a treaty. As an example, the Green Climate Fund of the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change has as its temporary trustee the World Bank, and the process of finding a permanent trustee is on-going [12]. Cataco's Division of Finance could fill this role. The Division of Finance could also be used in various enforcement mechanisms of treaties, that require a financial third party. A possible scenario would be an article in a treaty that requires parties to submit a payment to be held on an account managed by the Division of Finance. This payment would be returned to the original party if they comply with the terms of the treaty, a judgment that would be trusted to Department of Monitoring, or other similar, external body. If the need for such financial intermediary services would arise often, and the Division of Finance would end up constantly performing significant duties beyond the internal finances of Cataco, the option to promote it to the status of a department should be considered.

The role of the Division of Research is to support the other divisions and departments in fulfilling their duties by providing data, knowledge, expertise and analysis. When the help of the Division of Research is requested by one of the other departments, it may conduct the necessary research itself, or ask for other expert organizations, such as NGOs or UN agencies, for help. For instance, the Department of Negotiations may request information and expertise on a specific health issue when necessary for some stage of a negotiation, or the Department of Monitoring may ask the Division of Research to evaluate the total environmental impact of a certain policy change, to evaluate what some treaty has achieved.

## **III. FOUNDING, FUNDING, AND RELATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Cataco can fulfill its mission independently of other international organizations, and does not need a specific institutional framework around it. However, it can benefit from connecting to a broader framework, and we propose that it be founded as an agency of the United Nations. This provides three key benefits:

*i)* External oversight, by the framework that is the closest existing approximation to global democracy.



*ii)* A stable source of funding, coming from a public source, with a fair distribution of burden.

*iii)* A status for Cataco that is independent of any national legislation.

In the future, Cataco could be migrated to function under some other framework, that could provide the above benefits and possibly more.

As a UN agency, the role of Cataco is somewhat differ from that of most other such agencies. Whereas many other agencies are co-operative efforts of UN member states and loosely tied to the UN, Cataco functions more as a company-like organization under UN General Assembly “ownership”. The Board of Governors of Cataco is appointed by the General Assembly, and the funding for Cataco comes from the UN budget, but beyond this, the UN has no direct influence on Cataco’s operation. This ensures its unrestrained functioning, free from the hindrances of international diplomacy. In special circumstances, the General Assembly may serve one special function, if needed: If the foundations of Cataco, namely its mission statement and the process for electing its Board, need revising, the General Assembly has the power to change them.

### **III A. Electing the Board of Governors**

The fifteen members of the Board are nominated by UN member states, and elected for terms of three years, with five representatives being replaced every year. The slow rotation ensures continuous, smooth functioning of the Board, and minimizes the risk of unnecessary disruption. Each year when five board members step down, candidates are nominated to replace them, the General Assembly votes on the candidates, and the five most popular candidates take the vacant seats. Three additional restrictions apply in the election process:

*i)* Only countries that did not hold a seat on the Board prior to the election, may nominate a candidate. (By “holding a seat” we mean having originally nominated this candidate to serve on the Board. Note that the Board member is not expected to especially further the interests of their nominator.) This ensures that no state has two seats on the Board, nor will any state always have a seat on the Board, as there is always be a year-long gap from a state losing their seat to them being able to nominate a candidate again (a gap during which they may, however, vote). This encourages a balance of influences on the Board, and healthy rotation of its members.

*ii)* Only countries that did not originally vote for any of the candidates that will remain on the Board after the election, get to vote or nominate candidates. This means that if a state votes for a candidate and this candidate wins, their vote will be tied to this candidate for the duration of her/his term: In the next two elections, that take part during this term, the state can not take part in electing the rest of the Board. This prevents any block of powerful states from dominating the election year after year.

*iii)* A candidate nominated by a state can not be a citizen of this state. This encourages nominating candidates based on merit.

An exception to the above is the founding of Cataco, where all fifteen board members are elected at once, with all states being able to nominate candidates



and vote. In this initial election, the five candidates with the most votes take up seats on the Board for the next three years, the next five candidates for two years, and the next five candidates for one year, so that normal rotation of the Board can begin the following year.

We expect this election process to lead to the formation of blocks of states, that often rally around a common candidate, nominated by one of these states. Otherwise, a single state among the several hundred UN members will probably have a hard time getting sufficient support for their candidate, unless the candidate is exceptionally outstanding. At every election cycle, the ones who backed a winning candidate three years prior would be free to vote again. If a block of states would be happy with the person they had representing them on the Board for the last three years, they could choose to renominate the same person, although the nomination would need to come from a different state this time. Voting at each cycle would also be all the states whose chosen candidates did not win in any of the three previous elections, and they could either form their own blocks or join a block whose term is ending, bringing new influences onto the Board. This is of course only speculation about the dynamics that would take place under such a voting system, but serves to illustrate why we have chosen to design it as we have.

### **III B. Funding**

Cataco is funded as a part of the UN budget. The extent of this funding is to be determined as a part of the UN budget, by the UN General Assembly. The budget of Cataco is then written within the constraints of the funding coming from the UN. In other words, the General Assembly tells Cataco how much it will get, as a lump sum, and Cataco then decides how to spend it. This is to avoid over-politicising the budget of Cataco, by subjecting it to the enormous budgetary process of the UN as a whole, as well as to not unnecessarily burden the UN secretariat with the details of Cataco's internal budget.

In addition to this, Cataco could generate income from its operations, by for instance setting a fee on settling disputes. Whether this is necessary or appropriate, and whether such funds should be directed back to the UN or used by Cataco itself, is left for the Board to judge.

### **III C. An alternative**

If founding Cataco as a UN agency would for some reason fail, or having it tied to the UN would be considered too cumbersome or otherwise undesirable, Cataco could also be founded as an independent nonprofit organization under some national legislation. The Global Challenges Foundation could play a central role in its founding, if it so chooses. As a nonprofit, Cataco's funding would come from charitable donations, from individuals or institutions, possibly through an endowment fund. The role of the Board should be somewhat revised and possibly expanded, and additional oversight measures, such as independent audits, should be put in place, but for the most part, the design of Cataco could be used as it has been described here.



## 3. Motivation

### 1. CORE VALUES

Everything Cataco does revolves around its mission statement, according to which it is to act to “further the common good of humanity, and life in general, recognizing the equal value of all human beings.” In following this mission, Cataco is ultimately accountable to the UN General Assembly, and if it was to err in its ways, mechanisms exist to correct its course, as described below.

Crucially, Cataco also has very little incentive to ever violate its mission statement. Due to its nature as a facilitating third party, it has little stake of its own in its treaty projects. Moreover, since both the Board and the executive leadership are appointed based on ability and merit, the individuals governing and managing Cataco have few political favors to return or diplomatic pressures to take into account, further ensuring that decisions are made with the common good as the goal.

### 2. DECISION-MAKING CAPACITY

Keeping Cataco highly functional and unhindered by the usual burdens in diplomacy, politics and governance is one of the key goals of its design.

Cataco’s organization structure is lightweight and flexible. Much power is concentrated to individuals such as the Director and the heads of departments, who are then free to organize the hierarchy below them as they see fit. Moreover, these individuals are a team, centered around the Director, with no reason to hold conflicting interests.

Overall, the staff of Cataco resembles more a team of legal, diplomatic and subject-specific problem-solvers, rather than politicians or policy-makers. For instance, the Department of Negotiations functions more like a consulting company than a governmental or intergovernmental organization, with the implications being agility and efficiency. The vast majority of its work is done by negotiator teams, consisting of experts on specific topics and on negotiation processes in general, with no other goal than to have the maximum number of parties reach the most impactful deal possible. Similarly, the Department of Disputes provides alternative dispute resolution services, which are valued as more efficient and flexible alternatives to court litigation.

The political influence, represented by the Board, has the role of an oversight body, more than a day-to-day governing body. In addition, the election system for the Board encourages electing people of ability and merit, with broad support, rather than having every state attempting to further their own interests. The Board is also kept relatively small, and its membership rotates continuously, such that changing a majority of the Board always takes at least two election cycles. This further helps in keeping the Board functional, even during possible turbulent times in the UN General Assembly.

### 3. EFFECTIVENESS

By its nature as a catalyst, Cataco lies in the middle of the road in terms of its capacity to deliver an impact. While it lacks the power to force and enforce treaties that a single, unified governance framework could have, it is capable of delivering results quickly and under difficult conditions, and is never frozen to complete





passivity. Regardless of the issue, as long as some shared will towards a solution exists, Cataco is able deliver an impact. It has no single points of failure that would paralyze it, and where a single, overarching framework would often deliver either a globally binding treaty or nothing, Cataco can deliver partial results, and build from there. In addition to helping a treaty to be signed in the first place, it can lobby during negotiations for stronger and more binding commitments, and aid in compliance and enforcement. Moreover, for the same reasons as listed above for why the decision-making capacity of Cataco can be expected to remain high, it can fulfill its purpose with efficiency and professionalism, unhindered by many burdens of diplomacy and bureaucracy that slow down most international agencies.

Especially we would like to stress the importance of the fact that Cataco is willing to help in the forging of treaties between any parties, and not only states. In recent history more and more power has drifted away from nation states. Transnational corporations now command revenues larger than the GDPs of many countries, many states have willingly given some of their sovereignty over to organizations such as the EU, and through continuing urbanization some cities now have more population and influence than many states. Cataco embraces these changes, and any future such changes to come, by considering all sources of power and influence equal in its attempt to direct this power towards the good of us all. We see a huge opportunity for Cataco to help create the same kind of culture and basis for collaboration that was created in the 20th century between nation states, and more, but now between actors of other kinds. Examples of non-state sectors of the global society organizing their action already exist, many of them new and budding. Examples include the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group [1], United Cities and Local Governments [13], and the concerted effort by numerous NGOs (Electronic Frontier Foundation, Greenpeace, etc.) and companies (Facebook, Google, Netflix, etc.), to come together to defend so called net neutrality [8]. These examples underline the potential that could be tapped into by creating an organization specifically for catalysing such co-operation.

Finally, a crucial strong point of Cataco with respect to delivering results, is that due to its lightweight nature, it could be founded and operational essentially immediately. It could start delivering an impact tomorrow, and easily scale up in size and reach as it solidifies its status and reputation, and gains expertise. Cataco is the start-up model for solving global challenges: Start small, move fast, be agile, seize opportunities where they arise.

#### **4. RESOURCES AND FINANCING**

Just like Cataco is able to flexibly scale and adapt to varying amounts of demand for its services, it can also adapt to varying amounts of resources. Running a small scale organization with a handful of people may already produce results, especially if efforts are focused to a certain subject area. On the other hand Cataco could also scale up to thousands of people, several offices and a wide range of topics, if the funding body, the UN General Assembly, sees that as a fruitful investment. Since the funding comes from the budget of the UN (at least mostly, see below), the burden is shared globally by all states.

An interesting open question, to which we do not give a definite recommendation, is whether Cataco should charge for some of its services. This would broaden the source of funding to include actors other than states, and make the burden be shouldered by those who benefit from Cataco's services. However, care must



be taken to not create financial barriers for utilizing Cataco's services, since this would be counter-productive to its mission. The most prudent practice to follow is left for the Board to choose, as a part of its duty to approve the budget.

## **5. TRUST AND INSIGHT**

Cataco in itself is a significantly transparent organization. The procedure for appointing its Board, being part of the meetings of the UN General Assembly, is public. The Board meetings, for the part that they deal with matters internal to Cataco, such as appointing the executive leadership, can be kept public, as can its budget and many reports of its operations. Furthermore, as Cataco will probably play a role in founding many new organizations as part of its treaty projects, it has the opportunity to advocate for openness in the design of these organizations.

Insight into Cataco's activities often means insight into individual treaty projects, and for them, the amount of transparency varies depending on the treaty and the treaty parties. Cataco follows the principle of "open by default", advocating for transparency when possible, but to guarantee maximum possible impact, it can not be insisted on. In many cases parties will willingly make some or all of the processes of a treaty project public. For instance, if the parties are public entities, such as local or state governments, public proceedings will often be natural to them. In some cases, parties may prefer transparency since it could have a positive impact on their public image. For instance, if industry leaders in some field would commit together to transitioning to renewable energy sources and funding research into their further development, they would presumably want their good deeds to be widely known and appreciated. In other situations, however, parties, especially commercial ones, may demand confidentiality. For instance, arbitration proceedings regarding an alleged violation of a commitment to fair wages would probably be kept in private, under demands from the defendant. In such cases, considering Cataco's role as an intermediary, some limitations to insight into its actions are understandable and acceptable, and since Cataco has little stake of its own in these processes, does not significantly compromise public trust in Cataco. Furthermore, all of Cataco's actions are scrutinized by the Board, whose election through an open process in the UN General Assembly roots Cataco on democratic grounds, further inducing public trust.

## **6. FLEXIBILITY**

To a great degree, the flexibility of Cataco is built into its very mission: Since the purpose of the organization is to facilitate and enhance co-operation between existing actors with power, whatever and whoever they may be, it naturally adapts to changes in power structures. One can imagine many entirely different ways of structuring global power, some of which may even dispose of nation states completely, and in almost all such scenarios Cataco as defined in this proposal can serve an important and useful function. Similarly, due to the agnosticism of Cataco towards the exact issues it aids in solving, it can thrive under a wide range of conditions.

On top of this, several mechanisms allow Cataco to adapt even further. First of all, its organization structure is purposefully defined only on a high level, and much is left to the discretion of the Director and the heads of departments, allowing them to swiftly and effortlessly restructure the workings of Cataco if needed.

If more drastic changes are needed, such as changing the whole internal governance structure of Cataco, the Board has unlimited power to implement such



changes as needed. The Board by its nature is somewhat less agile to act than the executive management of organization, but especially given the non-ideological and apolitical basis of the whole organization, decisions can be passed with relative ease compared to many other international organizations.

Finally, if the very foundations of Cataco, the mission statement that defines what the purpose and the direction of the organization, ever need changing or revising, the UN General Assembly has the power to do this. It also has the power to change the process for electing Board members. The General Assembly could even dissolve Cataco, if it has for some reason become entirely dysfunctional or unnecessary, or move it to be governed under some other framework of global governance.

## **7. PROTECTION AGAINST THE ABUSE OF POWER**

Let us first comment on the potential for abuse of power within Cataco. As a facilitator, Cataco only holds power indirectly. It can not, by itself, meddle in affairs that would be outside of its mandate. The worst it can do is direct its negotiation and mediations efforts towards goals that favor some parties, or pass unjust judgment in arbitration or monitoring cases. If it was to do so, prospective treaty parties would quickly stop seeking its services, providing a market mechanism to keep Cataco in check.

On top of this, the main control system is provided by the Board, which is to oversee the actions of Cataco and the people of power within it. The Board represents the UN General Assembly, and its election system encourages candidates outside the direct influence of any single nation, with a balance over different nations, making it as neutral and incorruptible as possible. Although the Board in principle has broad powers, it is only expected to use them sparingly. Moreover, the board members can be expected to keep each other in check, since they have all been voted for by different states. If any executive or employee of Cataco would abuse their position, the flexible internal structure of Cataco would allow the management to take prompt action, and failing this, the Board could at its will change any of the people in charge within the organization.

## **8. ACCOUNTABILITY**

The chain of accountability within Cataco is simple. The personnel of each division and department are accountable to the head of the division or department, who in turn is accountable to the Director. The Director and the heads of departments are directly accountable to the Board. The Board is accountable in turn to the UN General Assembly, through an election system. Note also that, unlike in some other organizations, involvement of the Board in governing and managing Cataco is limited, and in fact monitoring and oversight are its most important role.

Two additional, indirect channels of accountability also exist. As described above in the Section 7, Cataco is accountable to its “market”, i.e., prospective treaty parties. If they would find that Cataco is doing its job poorly, whether by mismanaging negotiations, showing questionable judgment in arbitration cases, or otherwise, parties would simply stop making use of Cataco’s services, rendering it powerless. Cataco is also more directly accountable to the UN General Assembly through its funding, which comes from the UN budget. If, for some reason, the control mechanism of the Board would prove insufficient, the General Assembly could simply defund the organization.



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