

## **THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS: AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE**

Address by Senator Gareth Evans, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia, to the Women's International Forum, New York, 25 October 1995

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This has been a more frustrating and disappointing year than it should have been. Those of us passionately committed to the United Nations - and I guess that's most of us in this room, whether we like to own up to our guilty little secret or not - had badly wanted it to be a year of triumph: of celebration of the past, and of real achievement in preparing ourselves for the future.

Certainly there have been some good moments. This week has been one of them: there are not many organisations these days that can bring together over 150 Heads of State and Government to commit themselves to the kind of stirring and elevated ideas and principles contained in the 50th Anniversary Declaration. The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March, was another: very much a success in the forward looking commitments it generated to confront world poverty, unemployment and the issue of social integration. The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September, after a desperately unprepossessing start, went on to achieve real consensus on a platform for action in areas of critical concern to the advancement of women, including unequal access to health care and education, inequality with men at all levels in power sharing and decision making, and violation of the human rights of women and the girl-child. And we saw major progress made, under UN auspices, in restoring peace and security in Angola, Mozambique and Haiti.

In many of our individual countries, too, there have been achievements and anniversary events to be proud of. In Australia, for example, there was the Global Cultural Diversity Conference in Sydney in April - attended by Leia and Boutros Boutros-Ghali - which proved to be a triumphant affirmation of what unites us, rather than what divides us, around the globe, as well as giving us in Australia the opportunity to present ourselves as one of the world's real multicultural success stories (something of which I am acutely conscious personally, representing as I will in the Australian Parliament next year an

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electorate of around 120,000 people who come from no less than 126 different countries!).

But all those things said, and done, there has been some hollowness at the centre of it all which I think we have all felt. We don't seem to have been able to overcome the prevailing scepticism and cynicism about the UN constantly fostered in our media, where throwaway lines about a bloated and ineffectual bureaucracy have continued to crowd out all the positive stories which can and should be told about what the UN system has done to fight starvation, disease, environmental degradation, and assaults on human rights. We would have liked things to have gone better in some of the more difficult and protracted peace missions in which the UN has been centrally involved. We would have liked to have made more progress in shaping and beginning to implement the Agenda for Development. We would have liked to have seen the Security Council not just being talked about, but being actually restructured to make it more genuinely representative of the kind of world we now live in. And we certainly did not want to see the UN plunged into the kind of financial crisis now engulfing us, with huge problems in the short term and no obvious solutions now evident for the longer term.

What, then, is to be done about all this? What should we - the member states, and those individuals and organisations who do believe very deeply that the UN matters - be trying now to do to give substance to the orgy of rhetoric in which we have been indulging during this celebratory period? Let me give you, from an Australian perspective, ten suggestions.

### (1) Focus the UN's peace agenda on prevention

The UN's Charter responsibilities for peace and security extend right across the spectrum of possible responses to security problems - from peace maintenance to peace restoration to peace enforcement. But in a world where, as we are now all too conscious, political commitment and available resources are always likely to fall short of aspirations, it just makes more sense to concentrate on preventing conflicts occurring than trying to restore peace after the event. This is true whether one is talking about traditional inter-state disputes and conflicts, or the nowadays far more common situations of intra-state conflict.

The most familiar kind of preventive strategy is preventive diplomacy - the mobilisation of diplomatic resources to try and stop disputes sliding across the threshold into armed conflict. The ongoing efforts by various different actors in various ways to stop conflict erupting in Burundi, the Korean peninsula and the South China Sea are some current

examples of preventive diplomacy at work. But usually preventive diplomacy is a low-profile business, lacking the obvious media impact of Blue Helmet peace keeping, let alone full scale, war-waging, peace enforcement. Preventive diplomacy succeeds when things do not happen. Therein lies the political problem with any preventive activity: if it works nobody notices. It is an iron law of government, national or international, that everyone likes to be seen to be doing something: the notion that something might be inherently worth doing, or worth doing as an insurance premium to avoid a larger payout later, tends to be foreign to the political psyche. We are just going to have to put more effort into getting more people to see the point of that splendid observation attributed to Jean-Marie Lehn, who won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1986: "Only those who can see the invisible can do the impossible".

Preventive diplomacy is most successful when it is applied early, well before armed conflict is likely. But it has unfortunately been the case too often in the UN system that preventive diplomacy efforts have been attempted too late, when escalation is so advanced that a slide into hostilities is almost inevitable. Despite the importance and cost-effectiveness of preventive diplomacy, the UN devotes relatively few resources to it. There are presently only some fifty UN officials assigned to tasks immediately relevant to such diplomacy, compared with around 60,000 UN peace keepers in place at the moment - and approximately *30 million* armed service personnel world-wide. The UN must upgrade its capacity to the point where it can offer an effective dispute resolution service to its members, providing low profile, skilled, third party assistance through good offices, mediation and the like. I have argued elsewhere that this could be done very effectively for a cost of around \$US20 million a year. By comparison, the UN's peace keeping budget for 1994 was \$US3.2 billion - while the cost to the UN coalition of waging the Gulf War has been estimated at \$US70 billion!

Even more important than preventive diplomacy as a preventive strategy is, I believe, peace building. This involves action to confront the fundamental underlying causes of disputes and conflicts - to ensure that they don't occur in the first place, or that if they do arise, they won't recur. Peace building operates at two levels, within states and internationally.

In-country peace building means action - before or after conflict, and involving both the international community and individual states themselves - to achieve economic and social development, democratisation, the elimination of gender and racial discrimination, respect for minorities, and systematic improvement in the effectiveness of institutions of

government. Peace building strategies lie at the point where the peace and security, development and human rights agendas of the UN system intercept and overlap. Policies which enhance economic development and distributive justice, encourage the rule of law and protect fundamental human rights - including the right to participate through the ballot box in the making of the government decisions which fundamentally effect people's lives - are all in their own way security policies as well, addressing many of the problems which lie at the heart of violent conflict.

At the international level, peace building centres on building or strengthening international structures or regimes aimed at minimising threats to security, building confidence and trust and operating as forums for dialogue and cooperation. Examples of what I mean here are treaties governing traditionally volatile issues like the law of the sea; dispute resolution forums like the International Court of Justice; multilateral security dialogue and cooperation forums like the OSCE in Europe and the ASEAN Regional Forum in the Asia Pacific; and above all multilateral arms control and disarmament regimes.

There is no better preventive contribution the international community could be making to peace and security than achieving once and for all the elimination from the face of the globe of all weapons of mass destruction. We have taken a big step forward in this respect with the negotiation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and have taken partial steps, which need to be strengthened, with the Biological Weapons Convention. The biggest challenge of all is, of course, nuclear weapons. The Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, even supported by the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty which we all hope will be negotiated next year and by the START arms reduction treaties between the United States and the former Soviet Union, will not get us to a nuclear free world unless and until the existing declared nuclear weapons states start to get absolutely serious about elimination: not just in the never-never, but in accordance with a clearly-defined time frame. It is the United Nations - and only really the United Nations, through the Conference of Disarmament, the General Assembly and the Security Council itself - which can lead the way forward here.

## (2) Ensure that UN peace operations have clearly defined and achievable objectives

While prevention is always better than cure, there must still be some credible international capacity to deal collectively, and if necessary forcefully, with deadly conflicts and humanitarian crises that cannot be prevented or resolved by other means. Political constraints on the Security Council's ability to take such action have lessened significantly

with the end of the Cold War. But the experience of more frequent and more ambitious UN peace operations has exposed important constraints on the effectiveness of military responses under the UN flag.

The last few years have given us all too many examples of politically-influenced Security-Council mandates - driven above all by the need to be seen to be doing something - which have not been achievable in the field or which have lacked the clarity about goals and time frames which commanders could reasonably expect. We have seen missions undertaken without provision for the necessary resources, and the UN assuming a role in complex situations without sufficient thought given to how Blue Helmeted forces should interact with other international actors, whether these be regional organisations, non-governmental aid bodies or major UN organs or agencies such as the UNHCR. We have seen the problems caused when peace keeping operations, premised on the consent of the parties to the UN's presence and inherently peaceful in character, are mixed with peace enforcement missions, which presume resistance by one or more of the parties and are mandated to apply whatever force is needed to meet the operation's objectives.

The last few years have tested the limits of how far the UN's secretariat resources can stretch, and of how much member states are willing to contribute, in troops and finance, for peace keeping operations. Even with generous arrangements for seconding military staff into UN headquarters there are serious limits to the capacity of the UN Secretariat to act as a strategic headquarters handling, as is now the case, some seventeen operations around the world. For the moment, at least, there seems to be a ceiling of around 70-80,000 troops which member states are prepared collectively to make available to the Secretary-General at any one time, and there is often a considerable lag before these forces can be deployed in to the field. Purely financial constraints are making themselves felt, too. The budget for peace operations has risen ten-fold in three years, but we are now seeing that the largest contributor has decided unilaterally to cut its share of that budget , and many developing countries fear that the expansion in payments for such operations will be at the expense of funding for their priority concern of economic and social development.

One of the most evident weaknesses of UN peace operations, whether they be peace keeping or related operations under Chapter VI or peace enforcement operations under Chapter VII, has been the inability to deploy forces quickly when a crisis is emerging. The Security Council approved the immediate deployment of UNTAC in Cambodia in February 1992, but it was not actually deployed until September of that year. Similarly, it

took ten long months before the Security Council's decision to enlarge UNPROFOR to protect "safe-havens" in Bosnia was actually put into effect (and even then on a scale that was inadequate for the task). And we all remain agonisingly conscious of the failure to react in time to prevent the genocide in Rwanda. There has been a flurry of recent proposals and studies to consider how the UN could do better to deploy forces to crises more rapidly, ranging from Dutch Foreign Minister Mierlo's idea of a "UN fire brigade" - a variation on a theme long advanced by Sir Brian Urquhart - to suggestions for enhanced stand-by arrangements put forward by the Secretary-General and the Danish Government.

I have to confess that my own views have moved backwards and forwards on this issue - I have no choice but to confess, since my inconsistent statements are all on the public record! - but after devoting many hours of discussion to the subject around Europe and in New York and Washington in recent months, I now firmly believe that our priority efforts should be devoted to building the UN's headquarters capacity - to enable it to better conceptualise operations, construct their mandates, plan and organise them, and rapidly set them in train. The way forward in this respect has now been shown by the excellent Canadian study, *Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations*, just presented to the General Assembly. If there can be a really major enhancement of the UN's strategic and operational planning capacity, in a way that generates a confidence in that capability now largely lacking, then member states are likely to be much more willing to earmark and deliver military units for rapid reaction purposes. The idea of a standing volunteer UN force is one that should continue to quietly explored, but it is not an idea whose time has yet come.

### (3) Give equal weight to the UN's development agenda

The security agenda tends to dominate most popular perceptions of the UN's role, but we in the international community must never allow our attention to be diverted from the demands of the development agenda, now as pressing as ever. The key problem facing us is that within the global economy the gap between rich and poor countries, despite all efforts to resist this, has grown. The fact that some 1.3 billion of the 5.7 billion people alive today live at an unacceptable level of poverty is not only dangerous in security terms, but morally insupportable.

The United Nations of the future must, as a matter of the most urgent priority, forge a new agenda for development and reshape its relevant institutions to implement that agenda effectively. This is as important as any task it faces in the service of the human family, and

in recreating itself as an institution fit for the 21st century. The agenda is available for all to see. It has been mapped in the Secretary-General's *An Agenda for Development* and fulsomely described in the six global conferences held by the United Nations in the last four years - on children, the environment, human rights, population, social development and women. There have also been important studies by the international financial institutions and by academic institutions. We know now what we need to do. We must resolve, politically, to do it.

We know particularly that many of the institutions of the United Nations relevant to economic and social development are in need of reform. The General Assembly has created the high-level working group needed for political consensus on achieving this and related reforms. It must complete its work in this Fiftieth Anniversary year, and it must do so creatively, setting aside past vested interests in the system. We must implement the development agenda of the future in a way which ensures a productive and fair place in the global economy for all states.

(4) Explain the human rights agenda properly and get serious about implementing it

Since 1945, the international community has created an impressive-looking array of human rights institutions, including treaty-based bodies created in accordance with the provisions of the six major UN human rights instruments. But in practice this machinery has been something of a cul-de-sac - cut off from the mainstream of UN activity, largely neglected by member states, severely underfunded, understaffed, lacking coordination and simply not able to meet the steadily increasing demands placed upon it. A great deal of effort is going to have to go into refining these arrangements.

The political environment for change is strengthening, particularly following the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993. That meeting affirmed the validity of the basic concepts of the universality of human rights and the legitimate interest of the international community in violations of human rights wherever they occur. But a major task ahead of the international community is to end the disparity between the proclaimed priorities of the United Nations and its actual allocation of resources for the protection of human rights. What is needed is not so much the further proliferation of treaty bodies, thematic and country rapporteurs, experts and working groups, but giving those that now exist the capacity to do their jobs really effectively.

The task would be much assisted if more member states were to get into the habit of

talking about human rights in the way the founders intended, i.e. not just as extending to the political and civil rights so beloved of the Western democracies, but to economic, social and cultural rights as well. We must understand in this context the significance attached by developing states to the right to development and alleviation of poverty. Without the developed world recognising these aspirations as 'rights' properly so-called - and many governments remain extremely reluctant to do so - the international community risks increased divisions between governments of the North and South: certainly it makes it very much harder to argue respect for the traditional political and civil rights of free speech, association and the like.

(5) Think of the UN's agendas for peace, development and human rights as an integrated whole

It is worth emphasising the interconnectedness of the different UN agendas I have been discussing. Human rights observance has its own profound significance for peace and security. The most basic right - the right to life - is directly dependent on the maintenance of peace. Security in the post-Cold War era has as much to do with human security - the protection of individuals - as it has to do with state security and the defence of national borders. Recent experience underlines the lesson that a state whose government systematically disregards human rights, ignores the rule of law and fails to strive for equitable development and distributive justice, is a state showing clear signs of heading towards breakdown and civil strife.

In thinking about future directions for the UN, we really don't need to look much further than where we started. The challenge as I see it is essentially to reintegrate the functions of the United Nations in the way I believe the founders intended: to avoid the compartmentalisation of functions which developed and was maintained throughout the Cold War years whereby peace and security issues, development issues, and human rights and justice issues were treated as being in completely different conceptual and institutional boxes. We have to try to recapture some of the original vision built into the stated aims of the Charter. In the preamble to the Charter, and in its purposes and principles, the three basic objectives of peace (meeting the need for security), development (meeting economic needs) and human rights and justice (meeting the needs for individual and group dignity and liberty) are clearly set out. The trouble has been that in the UN, in the Cold War years, the integral relationship of its different activities has not been reflected in the organisation's structure or work methods. The distinction between 'peace and security' on the one hand and 'development' on the other has too often been a matter for sterile and



unhelpful debate, with attempts to trade off one for the other as priorities for the UN. Any viable modern concept of international peace, let alone peace within states, must recognise that the two are indissolubly bound up with each other: there can be no sustainable peace without development, and no development without peace. And human rights, in the fullest sense, not just economic and social rights but civil and political rights as well, have to come into the equation too: there is not likely to be lasting or sustainable peace in any society if material needs are satisfied, but the needs for dignity and liberty are not.

The vision I have, then, for the future of a UN is one in which all these objectives - peace, development and human rights - march comfortably together in step, with it being recognised that the UN is as much concerned with human security as state security; that the logic of its Charter preoccupation with economic, social and cultural development and human rights demands that it be so concerned; and that while there might well, and properly, continue to be a presumption against intervention in matters "essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state" (Article 2:7), there is no presumption against concern with such matters, and no absolute bar to going further than mere concern if the Security Council can be persuaded that the circumstances justify actual intervention. And my vision is of a UN that actually works, in terms of its structures and management, in a way that makes possible the achievement of these objectives.

#### (6) Be serious about organisational reform

Any organisation of the UN's size and complexity, serving as many differing constituencies with as many axes to grind, will always be a soft target for criticism. However ill-deserved some of the criticism may be - particularly when the UN is expected to deliver far more than it has in the past with manifestly inadequate resources - it is crucial that the money that is spent be well spent.

A hard look needs to be taken at the UN Secretariat, with a view to creating a more modern and efficient structure and administrative system. This should include a basic change to the senior decision-making structure of UN Headquarters in New York, to ensure that the Secretary-General has an effective chain of command to exercise authority over the whole range of major UN operations, not just in the peace and security area. I have been supporting in this context the argument for creating a new working collegiate executive of four Deputy-Secretary-Generals to work with the Secretary-General - responsible respectively for Economic and Social Affairs, Peace and Security Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs and Administration and Management. This kind of restructuring is

needed to consolidate and coordinate the more than forty separate Departments, agencies, instrumentalities and commissions that currently report directly to the Secretary-General: flat management structures may be fashionable, but I don't think any MBA graduate could bring himself or herself to recommend the UN's existing one!

A key challenge for the UN, across the whole system, is to introduce modern personnel practices, not least so far as equal opportunity for women is concerned. The UN as an organisation not only should speak for all its member states, but should also reflect the world gender balance. It does not. The proportion of women, particularly in senior positions in the Secretariat is nothing short of abysmal. We can be particularly encouraged, however, by the Secretary-General's *Strategic Plan of Action for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat (1995-2000)*. This plan, which updates previous ones, sets out a series of steps aimed at achieving real gender equality, and three targets: an overall level of 35 per cent women by the end of 1995; 25 per cent women at the senior level by 1997; and overall gender equality by the year 2000. The latter targets are extraordinarily ambitious, and will no doubt be extremely difficult to achieve in practice, but the enterprise is an extremely worthwhile one, and very long overdue.

#### (7) Find answers fast for the UN's financial problems

There is no use talking about reintegrating the UN, or reshaping its responsibilities, if the resources are not available to meet member states' demands. Of course it is the responsibility of member states themselves to rectify the current financial problems, and the perennial cash crisis faced in UN headquarters because of overdue payments. One solution is obvious enough, even if apparently unattainable in practice - all member states should meet their obligations to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

There is no doubt that the UN's current cash crisis is worse than any which has gone before, and that - particularly given prevailing attitudes in the US Congress - it does not look as though it is going to be fully, however much we work at adjusting assessment scales and exhorting member states to pay up, reminding them of the consequences of their voting rights under Article 19 if they do not, or even succeed in working out a short term borrowing arrangement with the World Bank.

I have been arguing, accordingly, that the time has come to look again very seriously at possible additional external sources of income - whether by way of a small levy on foreign

exchange transactions (which the UNDP has been studying very closely, with some encouraging early results), a small levy on international airline passengers, a small levy on issued passports, or a levy on some other transactions which have similar direct or indirect connections with the kind of benefits that the UN system provides. Any one of the methods I have specifically mentioned could raise \$3 billion or more - covering almost the whole cost of current UN peace operations - without any significant adverse economic impact on the transactions in question or those engaging in them.

Provided the member states retain absolute control over how any such income is spent, there do not seem to be any great problems of principle which should inhibit the exploration of these options. My own soundings suggest that a great many member states would welcome the initiation by the Secretary-General of an appropriate study. I have no illusions about the practical and political difficulties involved in implementing any particular such strategy - not least because there will always be some member states, as well as many private lobbies, not especially uncomfortable about having a UN that is struggling to pay its way. But if we want to take the UN seriously, as we must, we have to take its resource problems much more seriously than the international community has so far.

#### (8) Urgently grasp the nettle on Security Council restructuring

The structural problem in the UN system requiring the most urgent attention is the shape of the Security Council. We all know that the composition of the Council no longer represents the international community. Economic power has spread to new parts of the globe, just as the realities of political power have changed dramatically over the last half century. The principle of limited expansion of the Security Council - from its present 15 to 20, or a maximum of 25 - is now generally accepted, but the questions of *how many*, *how* and *who* remain the subject of intense discussion.

The time for sniffing the wind, testing the water and engaging in abstract debate about basic concepts is over. The need now is for some very hard-headed bargaining to come up with a representativeness formula that meets, to the maximum extent possible, the competing national interests involved, and for that negotiation to be concluded within the next year. If the argument drags on for much longer than that, the credibility of the UN will be dragged down with it.

Australia believes, along with many other countries, that there should be new permanent

members, certainly including Japan and Germany (who together now pay 23 per cent of the UN budget), but also from the major developing countries. To guarantee the Council's effectiveness and legitimacy there must be adequate representation from all the major developing regions - Asia, Africa and Latin America. The trick is to find a formula which does not just satisfy the aspirations of the biggest countries in each of these regions, but guarantees that Charter objectives will be well served, and also meets in some way the legitimate expectations of those countries of the next rank who have aspirations of their own. It may be that some quite complex formula involving an element of rotation will be necessary to achieve this. There is no shortage now of ideas on the table: the need, as so often, is to summon the will to follow the exercise through to conclusion.

### (9) Sell hard the UN's achievements

No organisation has suffered more than the UN from what seems to be the first rule of the Fourth Estate: that good news is not news. We have heard all about, *ad nauseam*, mission failures in Bosnia and Somalia and Rwanda. And we are now hearing, *ad nauseam*, how many of the recent advances that have occurred in peace and security have been made outside the framework of the UN - in the Middle East peace process, in Northern Ireland and with the NATO strike-led change of fortunes in Bosnia. But how much has been written or talked about the successful missions in Namibia and Mozambique, in El Salvador and Haiti, and in Cambodia, or the spectacularly successful first humanitarian phase of the Somalian operation? How much has been written to remind the world of the role that the UN has played in curbing or outlawing weapons of mass destruction? Or of the extraordinary role played by the UN in achieving decolonisation, something which writers hundreds of years hence will certainly regard as being at least as significant historically as the Cold War?

Hard as it is, the UN organisation itself and, we who care for it, have to keep on telling the story: reaching out, through all the global means of communication that are now available, to publics all over the world to make people realise that this organisation is vital to the common good, that it belongs to everyone - not just diplomats and foreign ministers - and that it is vital to the conduct of our every-day lives. We have to tell people how the UN cares for 20 million refugees and displaced persons when a great many individual states find reasons not to do so; how just one UN agency fed 52 million starving people last year; how millions of lives have been saved by the virtual elimination of ravaging diseases like small pox and polio: about how a nickel and dime spent through the UN system can buy enough vaccine to immunise one child against the triple threat of diphtheria, whooping

cough and tetanus; or about how that same amount of money spent through the UN could buy enough high dose vitamin A capsules to prevent six toddlers from going blind; or enough rehydration salts to treat one child suffering from life threatening diarrhoea; or enough iodised salt for a year's supply for four people to prevent iodine deficiency; or four condoms for family planning or AIDS protection; or 500 gms of rice or three high protein biscuits, a life saving meal.

We have to tell people, too, about how so many of the every day things we simply take for granted - like posting letters overseas, making telephone calls, travelling by air or sea, or watching a satellite TV broadcast - simply could not happen without the treaties on telecommunications, aviation safety, intellectual property rights and all the rest that are negotiated through the UN's various organs and agencies.

What is necessary here is not merely a consciousness raising exercise of traditional UN kind. Sending kits to schools is useful and admirable, but not enough. The current criticisms levelled at the United Nations are so damaging and corrosive that a more aggressive approach in attacking these criticisms has to be developed. One useful innovation in this respect might be for the UN's regional offices to play not just an information role, but a frank and overt PR role. I discovered with some bemusement, for example, that it was only last year that the UN Information Centre in Sydney was authorised to respond directly to media enquiries: it previously had to contact New York for instructions on how to respond!

#### (10) Put the cost of the UN system into perspective

It has seemed to me for some time that of all the stories that need to be told about the UN, the most necessary message to get out is that - despite all the many structural and organisational and personnel reforms that can and must be made within the system to improve its efficiency, that UN system, taking into account what it delivers and applying any reasonable standard of comparison, is simply not either unduly expensive or self-evidently bloated.

The core functions of the UN (involving the Headquarters in New York, the Offices in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, and the five regional Commissions) cost just \$US1.2 billion between them: last year's budget for the New York Police Department exceeded that by \$US600 million. The total number of personnel needed to run those UN's core functions is around 10,700: compare the local administration of my own national capital, Canberra -

just one small city in one of the UN's 185 member states - which employs some 22,000 people on the public payroll.

Add to the core functions of the UN all the related programs and organs (including UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNCTAD and International Drug Control) and you are talking about a total of around 33,000 people and a total budget (including both assessed and voluntary contributions) of \$US6.3 billion: that sounds a lot, but not quite so much when one considers, for example, that the annual global turnover of just one international accounting firm, Price Waterhouse, is around \$US4.5 billion.

Go further, and add to the core functions and the related programs all the other specialised programs and agencies of the entire UN family - that is, add agencies like the FAO, ILO, UNESCO and WHO , plus the IAEA, and put into the equation as well the Bretton Woods Institutions (the World Bank group and the IMF, which between them employ nearly 10,000 people and spend nearly \$US5 billion annually) and you are still talking about total UN personnel of just around 61,400 and a total UN system dollar cost of \$US18.2 billion.

\$US18.2 billion might be a lot of money, but just one major multinational corporation, Dow Chemical, which happens to also have 61,000 employees world-wide, has an annual revenue in excess of \$US20 billion. And 61,400 may sound like a lot of people, but not when you consider that more than this number (65,000 in fact) are employed by three Disney theme parks, in California, Florida and France. And three times as many people (183,000) sell McDonald's hamburgers around the world as work for the UN system.

Putting all this together, what do I, and Australia, want to see from the UN in its next fifty years? I don't think I can put it any more succinctly and directly than I did in addressing the General Assembly last year:

Australia wants the United Nations over the next fifty years to be an active and effective agent for the peaceful settlement of disputes. We want it to be a catalyst for international peace building, working to strengthen international law, control and reverse arms races, promote confidence and dialogue between states and address underlying causes of instability, including internal conflict. We want it to promote, in more effective coordination with the major international economic and financial institutions, equitable and sustainable

development and to coordinate responses to humanitarian crises. We want it to emerge even more strongly as a promoter of universal standards of human rights and their respect by governments. We want the UN to pursue its objectives of peace, development and human rights in an integrated, coordinated way, with these objectives complementing rather than being in competition with each other. And we want it to be an organisation assured of the wholehearted backing of its member states, and provided by them with all the financial resources it requires to meet its obligations. We want, in short, the United Nations to become the organisation which was envisaged in its Charter.

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