CHAPTER 9

Sustainable Development as Process: UN Organizations and Norms

THE UNITED NATIONS' work in the development field was born decentralized and has reached advanced middle age in essentially the same state. Over the decades, scores of development-related agencies, funds, programs, commissions, and committees have continued to spring up, thereby creating an ever more complex institutional web (see Appendix A).

While we have repeatedly noted that the UN is not a world government, many readers may not fully appreciate the extent to which that is an understatement. Physical disbursement is reflective of functional fragmentation. A government has a location and ministries. But there is no real UN "capital"—New York is the main political one while Geneva the main economic and humanitarian one. But units of the UN are to be found in Vienna, Nairobi, Rome, Tokyo, and many other places. Some national governments, as in Switzerland, are also disbursed, but even by that standard the UN system is still exceptionally decentralized.

"Unpacking" the complex structure of UN development activities reveals four main clusters of somewhat autonomous activity: the United Nations proper—that is, the relevant principal organs, regional commissions, and central parts that are not specialized agencies (especially UNDP, UNICEF, and UNHCR) that operate more or less in tandem with the specialized agencies; the specialized agencies themselves; the IMF and the World Bank—which are *de jure* but not *de facto* parts of the UN system; and more recently the World Trade Organization—which is not actually part of the system. The organizations in each cluster are composed of their governing bodies and the secretariats. For the issue of development, we again meet the two main United Nations—one of states and one of international civil servants—complemented by a third one of NGOs and experts.

We start by reviewing some recent efforts at improving coordination of the many moving parts of the UN's institutional machinery. Then we look at

particular agencies and programs in order to address the question of what individual UN organizations contribute to sustainable human development. Of course we cannot be comprehensive in this regard, but we use a representative sample to provide an introduction and "feel" for the system's operations. Some observers use the term "UN family" instead of "system," which has the advantage of associating the adjective "dysfunctional" to describe the kinds of routine battles and quarrels that occur between and among agencies themselves and between agencies and the member states that compose them.

Next, and most importantly, we suggest that beyond the particular contributions of individual institutions, the UN system's collective contribution to development is more notable for nurturing agreement about ideas and principles for sustainable human development—also known as human security—than for its operational impact. Former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali wrote in 1998, "The United Nations is the mechanism in place and is best prepared to facilitate the work of achieving a new development rationale."[1] He stressed ideas and not field operations. Particularly in a world in which states and their preferred organizations beyond the UN (narrowly defined) still control many of the resources that contribute to development, like money and terms of trade, we should not overlook the important role of ideas—development rationales—that shape how resources are employed. After all, much of international relations is about ideas and changing ideas.[2] Our hope is that by the end of the chapter the reader will be familiar with the various moving parts of the UN system and how they contribute to sustainable development.

UNPACKING THE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART: COORDINATION, AGAIN

The UN—even for seasoned observers—is a bewildering alphabet soup of semi-autonomous programs, funds, committees, commissions, and agencies. At the core of this system is the General Assembly, whose agenda grows longer from year to year.[3] Its influence, however, may be the inverse. Most development issues are dealt with in the assembly's Second Committee (Economic and Financial), which is made up of representatives of all member states (in UN parlance, "a committee of the whole"). The General Assembly, for example, voted in 1983 to create what came to be called the Brundtland Commission, which was an important milestone in changing ideas about development by fusing the seemingly clashing perspectives about economic growth versus environmental protection. Over the years, however, the most important work of the assembly in the development field generally has taken place in special sessions or in global, ad hoc conferences convened to consider specific issues or topics, such as women, population, development financing, and HIV/AIDS. Normally the assembly deals with substantive ideas rather than the details of management, administration, and coordination.

A female work crew builds a road. Lesotho, 1969. (UN/DPI Photo by K. Muldoon)

The assembly elects fifty-four of its member states to sit on the Economic and Social Council, which under Article 55 of the Charter as discussed earlier is the principal organ mandated with the responsibility for promoting development and coordinating UN activities. The General Assembly, ECOSOC, and other UN governing bodies are composed of states but reliant on the UN's administrative branch—the Secretariat—for staffing and support.

As noted in the previous chapter, ECOSOC is made up of five regional and ten functional commissions that cover the gambit of development issues and concerns. It officially coordinates the work of fourteen specialized agencies and eleven UN funds and programs. Some of the five regional economic commissions have over the years been instrumental in establishing international development financial institutions and other development infrastructures within their respective regions. Prominent people and ideas from ECLAC also served as the catalyst for the creation of UNCTAD, and many of the ideas that became manifest in the call for the establishment of a New International Economic Order. The commissions reflect varying perspectives from each of the world's major geographic regions relating to such issues as the status of women, population and development, social development, science and technology for development, and sustainable development.[4]

The alphabet soup thickens when considering the numerous UN development-related bodies for which ECOSOC oversees coordination. These UN bodies include several abbreviations that we have encountered throughout this book: UNDP, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNFPA, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNEP, and WFP. These UN bodies are also only part of the much larger UN system for which ECOSOC is responsible for facilitating cooperation and coordination. The mandates and work programs of these various agencies overlap, which has made the job of coordination daunting. In an interdependent world, analysts and decision-makers see how difficult it is to separate functional specialization. But the UN system reflects exactly that functional specialization.

The UN continuously encounters the challenges of coordination. In reality, ECOSOC is something of a mailbox between the General Assembly and the rest of the socioeconomic agencies involved in development. As such, ECOSOC has had to develop supplemental coordinating arrangements.

When Kofi Annan was elected in December 1996, he was the first person to hold the office of Secretary-General who had spent his entire professional career as an international civil servant—nearly three decades working his way up through the ranks and being exposed to the best and the worst of the organization. Upon arriving in office, he committed himself and the world organization to a reform process.[5] This subject was also important for the United States, because the largest donor to both the regular and voluntary UN budgets had long been pressing for administrative reform. According to one of the chief critics of the UN, former U.S. senator Jesse Helms, the "literally hundreds of UN agencies, commissions, committees, and subcommittees [that] have proliferated" since 1945 are one of the chief problems of the organization. Thus, Helms argued that either the Secretary-General should lead a drastic reform effort or the UN could not be saved.[6] So Annan both knew the organization from the inside and was aware of pressures for administrative reform from the outside. As we have seen earlier, the same necessities for adaptation and change existed at the end of his second term. As he himself said earlier, "Reform is not an event; it is a process."[7] John Bolton put it more picturesquely: "Reform is not a one-night stand."[8]

At the heart of Annan's reform program was the reorientation and reorganization of the UN's administration and management. More change has actually taken place than is customarily appreciated. In his effort to bring unity of purpose to the diverse activities of the UN and provide clear lines of responsibility, in 1997 he created—for the first time in the UN's half-century—a cabinet structure. This Senior Management Group is made up of the various under-secretaries-general, the heads of UN funds and programs, and the deputy-secretary-general, a post created in 1998 to be responsible for overseeing the reform process and the coordination of development activities. Similarly, four thematic executive committees (Peace and Security, Humanitarian Affairs, Economic and Social Affairs, and UN Development Group) were created and charged with overseeing the coordination of policy development, management, and decision-making. The conveners of each of these committees sit on the SMG.

Two of these executive committees are of particular importance for development. The Economic and Social Affairs Executive Committee (EC-ESA) is convened by the under-secretary-general for economic and social affairs and comprises representatives from eighteen UN bodies. Like all the other executive committees, the EC-ESA serves as a consultative body for facilitating decision-making, policy development and coordination, and better management.

The United Nations Development Group Executive Committee is convened by the administrator of UNDP and includes the UNFPA, UNICEF, and WFP. This body also serves as the secretariat for the United Nations Development Group, which also was created in 1997 to provide better coordination among the numerous UN funds, programs, and other bodies that have proliferated over the years in the development area. In addition to its own operational activities, the UNDP administers several special-purpose funds and programs, including the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). And in cooperation with the World Bank and UNEP, the UNDP serves as an implementing agency for GEF, which provides concessional funding and grants for certain environmentally sound development projects.

At present, UN development activities have benefited from enhanced coordination via the office of the Secretary-General and UNDP. Given that states vote to create all sorts of UN development institutions, it falls to these two parts of the UN system to bring as much order as possible to a multifaceted process. It cannot be stressed too much that states get the kind of UN for which they vote and otherwise support or in some cases, such as the United States from time to time, neglect. If states could actually agree on what they mean by a "lean and mean" UN, one that was streamlined and efficient, they could produce just that. All too often, member states vote for or against a particular UN organization or one of its activities as a diplomatic concession to some domestic group or as part of a compromise with other states. The public display of affection or disgruntlement may or may not have a concrete follow-on in the form of necessary diplomatic and economic support.

PARTICULAR CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Many UN agencies and bodies working for sustainable development were given unrealistic mandates, and/or many overlapped with already existing parts of the UN system. The responsibility for this state of affairs rests with the states that voted to create them but without the accompanying financial resources or political will to make them cohere as effective agents. Inadequate funding reflects state policy with regard to both the administrative/assessed and supplementary/voluntary budgets of the system. The former budget is for basic administrative costs of the UN proper at headquarters and the latter for other programming. Something in the range of $8–10 billion annually is spent by the UN system (excluding the World Bank and

IMF) on development. By comparison as discussed earlier, for the Marshall Plan after World War II, the United States alone spent the equivalent in 2006 dollars of about $130 billion for the reconstruction of just one region of the world—Europe.

Nevertheless, many UN agencies and bodies play important roles by persistently pushing states to live up to their obligations or develop new ones; by participating in joint efforts that do have some discernible impact in advancing development goals; or by helping to bring a modicum of order to what we have already called a shotgun approach to development.

UNDP

The annual sponsorship of the *Human Development Report* is an important avocation, but the UNDP's main work is development work in the field. Its most senior official in developing countries, the UNDP resident representative, also acts as the resident coordinator for the UN system. As the primary unit devoted to capacity building for social and economic development, the program was created in 1965 to take the lead in providing technical assistance.[9] In this regard, it works with other UN units in a wide variety of thematic contexts. For example, it provides assistance to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in support of the UN's standard-setting and normative work in developing countries and provides integrated follow-up to the UN's global conferences of the 1990s. It works in the security realm to support elections, demobilization and reconciliation initiatives, and human rights. In the humanitarian field, the agency provides support for disaster prevention, mitigation, and preparedness; the reintegration into society of refugees, former combatants, and internally displaced persons; and the implementation of post-disaster national plans for reintegration, reconstruction, and recovery.

UNDP is also the administering agency for a number of special development-related funds and programs, including UNIFEM.[10] This particular agency was created in 1975 by the General Assembly with a mandate to support initiatives that benefit women and to bring women into mainstream development activities. Specifically, UNIFEM has focused its activities on reducing feminized poverty and violence; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance.[11] UNIFEM has served as a catalyst for coordinating gender development issues among the various development agencies.

In recent years, the UNDP has reprioritized its program around four interrelated themes: advocacy, advice, pilot projects, and partnerships. UNDP administrator until 2005, Mark Malloch Brown argued that the program's annual *Human Development Report* gives the agency a "special voice and pulpit and authority to develop alternative ideas," a view also favored by his successor, Kemal Dervis.[12] The advisory function focuses on capacity building in a variety of areas, including legal, political, and regulatory frameworks as well as infrastructure for basic social and economic development. Given the agency's limited budget, it concentrates on doing things that can serve as catalysts for mainstreaming particular policy agendas as opposed to taking on expensive large-scale projects. Technical assistance and preinvestment studies have been its portfolio since operations began in 1966.

The UNDP's partnership function is wide-ranging, focusing on integrating diverse elements of society and the private sector into development. The agency sees promoting sustainable development as requiring new forms of cooperation and involving complex interventions from a wide variety of actors—governments at all levels, NGOs, private business enterprises, and local community groups. The focus is on empowering people and creating the conditions necessary for "people-centered" development. The guiding philosophy is that "people should guide both the state and the market, which need to work in tandem, with people sufficiently empowered to exert a more effective influence over both."[13] In brief, the UNDP's underlying theme is getting the product to the poor and empowering them with the capacity for good governance. Priority is placed on democratization and empowerment through participation.

Of course, empowerment, like most development activities, requires resources, especially financial resources and a commitment from the central government. In this regard, the UNDP, working with the UNCDF, has undertaken an initiative to provide what is called microfinance—providing financial services to the poor at the local level. Its Special Unit for Microfinance is devoted to supporting the creation of start-up microfinancial institutions in rural areas in the poorest countries. The underlying philosophy is simple: "The program is predicated on the concept that most donor support has been so far directed towards large and successful organizations, and that small amounts of capital (up to $150,000) invested primarily in recipient organizations displaying vision, commitment and competence, can help widen tomorrow's market of successful microfinancial institutions."[14]

At the end of the last chapter, we asked, "What is the value added of the UNDP?" The answer to this question, of course, needs to be viewed in the context of the shrinking financial resources for multilateral development assistance over the last two decades. In the past few years, the UNDP's core operating budget has been diminished and the size of the headquarters staff cut by a quarter. Reflecting on his first years in office, former UNDP administrator Malloch Brown opined: "When I took office the agenda was clear: Reform of UNDP. . . . the message was close to reform or die."[15] By the time he left the agency to become chief of staff for the Secretary-General, and then the deputy secretary-general, the UNDP was at the forefront of the MDG process. But as Malloch Brown has acknowledged, "in the final analysis, we cannot judge our reform by its impact on UNDP alone, but rather on how we help strengthen the critical role of the United Nations system as a whole in all aspects of development cooperation."[16]

UNCTAD

This institution began as a debating forum and think tank for developing countries and their advocates who sought a counterforum to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which had resulted when the ITO was not approved by the U.S.

Congress in the late 1940s. For most of its existence, it largely served that function. The conference itself meets in formal session every four years, but its Trade and Development Board (TDB) meets annually, and the secretariat in Geneva operates continuously. UNCTAD served as the focal point for the formulation and articulation of NIEO ideas. However, the end of the Cold War brought with it hard times. After the creation of the WTO, UNCTAD adopted a more conciliatory tone by seeking finally to end impediments to trade in agricultural products.[17]

More recently, UNCTAD has come into Kofi Annan's initiative to forge new and innovative partnerships with other international organizations, local governments, NGOs, the private sector, and civil society. UNCTAD's role has taken a wide variety of forms and complexions. In 1999, for example, UNCTAD, along with UNDP and Habitat, initiated a global partnership—World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty (WACAP)—with civil society, the private sector, and local governments to carry out the goal of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. This alliance quickly became formalized and has grown substantially. Its primary goal is to strengthen the network and partnership between cities around the world. During the Third UN Conference on Least Developed Countries in Brussels in 2001, WACAP organized a parallel "Mayors Meeting," bringing together representatives from 216 cities around the world. The primary purpose of this conference was action. A "city-to-city solidarity market" was held in which demands of assistance were matched with offers. On the spot, twelve formal agreements of cooperation were concluded between cities in Belgium and cities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The requests of another 120 cities from developing regions were tendered and are currently either under consideration or being related to cities throughout the world through the numerous global, regional, and national city networks that also participated at the meeting.[18] At its conference in São Paulo in 2004, UNCTAD member states agreed to better integrate the work of civil society, the private sector, and academia into its work.[19]

UNICEF

The UN Children's Fund is often called and is actually better known by its acronym, and its work ranges from child and maternal health care and basic education to water and sanitation.[20] UNICEF has special initiatives dealing with HIV/AIDS, participation and rights of adolescent girls, tobacco-free youth, adolescent health and development, and school health, hygiene, and nutrition. It also initiates specific appeals to meet challenging crises. In 2003, for example, UNICEF undertook an appeal to deal with a series of overlapping and overwhelming crises in six southern African countries. Extreme poverty, a severe drought, HIV/AIDS, and an educational crisis have put more than 2.4 million children under the age of five and their more than 10 million family members in imminent risk of dying.

The reference to "family members" means that UNICEF focuses as much on women and mothers as on children—there is no UN organization for men! Underdevelopment is gendered, in that females bear the brunt of poverty according to UN and other statistics.[21] They are often denied adequate education and health care and are victims of various forms of discrimination. The exclusion of women from key decision-making positions and their lower political and social status have meant that women in underdeveloped countries constitute a "new global underclass."[22] UNICEF is confronting and trying to change this reality.

UNICEF is a full and active partner in the UN's sustainable human development efforts. A key focus in this regard is girls' education in the context of "education for every child," especially the "girl child." Education is seen as the path to empowerment. The agency's executive director has argued forcefully that "there can be no significant or sustainable transformation in societies and no significant reduction in poverty until girls receive the quality basic education they need to take their rightful place as equal partners in development."[23]

UNICEF led preparations for the 2002 UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, where member states adopted the Declaration and Plan of Action, "A World Fit for Children." It was intended to commit governments to a specific set of goals for youth and an associated timetable for achieving them. In May 2003, UNICEF issued its first report card on the attainment of those commitments. In the report, *The United Nations Special Session on Children: A First Anniversary Report on Follow-up*, the authors noted that "the world's attention and resources have been diverted to crises and war while pressing yet hidden challenges facing humankind—fighting HIV/AIDS, child illness and malnutrition, illiteracy and child abuse—have been sidelined." In 2003 when much of the world was focused on "regime change" in Iraq, the UNICEF executive director Carol Bellamy voiced this criticism:

> The children of Iraq are important, but there are 2.1 billion children in this world, half of them living in abject poverty, 150 million who are malnourished, 120 million who never go to school, and 11 million who die from totally preventable causes every year. These are the things that governments must focus on with consistency and rigor.[24]

In the domain of child welfare, once again states endorse worthy goals and reiterate them, but they do not always follow up on the ground. As former executive director Bellamy said in 2003, "the global follow-up to last year's commitments has gone forward."[25] Yet, UNICEF reported that "most countries have barely begun to implement the targets, with only half of the world's governments even taking the first step of developing an action plan."[26]

Commission on Sustainable Development

Growing out of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the CSD was given dual responsibilities for overseeing the implementation of the provisions of Agenda 21, the policy blueprint for the environment, and coordinating the sustainable development activities of the various organizations within the UN system.[27] Agreement

did not readily follow, however, over many important details about how this new commission was to be empowered to fulfill its mandate effectively. Although CSD was assigned the role of being the primary mechanism within the UN system for coordinating sustainable development, its relationship to UNEP, the World Bank, the Committee of International Development Institutions on the Environment, and other intergovernmental entities was vaguely defined.

The CSD also has a mandate to strengthen and integrate the role of major societal groups and civic actors as effective participants in sustainable development decision-making at all levels. The text of Agenda 21 specifically addressed the roles of ten major groups: NGOs, indigenous peoples, local governments, workers, businesses, scientific communities, farmers, women, children, and youth. Exactly how this mandate for mainstreaming was to be institutionalized in practice, however, was left undefined. Only eighteen NGOs were represented at the first CSD meeting, although ECOSOC had authorized the CSD to consider including all 1,400 NGOs represented at the Earth Summit. In addition, the Secretary-General was to appoint a high-level advisory panel to the CSD, consisting of between fifteen and twenty-five eminent persons. As recognized in both Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration, fulfilling this mandate effectively is the fundamental cornerstone for successful implementation of sustainable development programs and practices. The mandate poses a challenge for the CSD as well as for the UN system and multilateral organizations more generally. Establishing an effective relationship between the sovereignty-based world of states and intergovernmental organizations with global civil society within which that interstate order exists was an elusive quest during the first sixty years of the UN's existence.[28]

Yet the CSD has served as a focal point for reviewing and assessing progress toward the fulfillment of Agenda 21 goals and objectives. In May 2003, the CSD decided to organize its multiyear program of work around two-year "implementation cycles," beginning in 2004–2005 and running to 2016–2017. Each work cycle is to focus on a specific thematic cluster of topics and cross-cutting issues. For 2004–2005, for example, the thematic cluster included water, sanitation, and human settlements with a dozen cross-cutting issues: poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, sustainable development in a globalizing world, health and sustainable development, sustainable development of small island developing states (SIDS), sustainable development of Africa, other regional initiatives, means of implementation, institutional framework for sustainable development, gender equality, and education. The second two-year cycle focuses on energy, industrial development, air pollution and climate change, with the same cross-cutting issues. Each two-year implementation cycle includes a "Review Year," during which time progress toward implementing sustainable development goals will be assessed, and a "Policy Year," in which decisions will be taken about how to speed up implementation and mobilize additional support.

UNEP

The UN Environment Programme was created in 1973 to serve as the UN's main mechanism for "policy review and coordination" on environmental issues, including those associated with development, but what can it really do? Its Governing Council consists of fifty-eight members elected by the General Assembly. It meets biennially and reports to the General Assembly through ECOSOC. Its main mandate is to encourage and coordinate environmental activities within the UN system. The work of the program is carried out through a modest secretariat headed by an executive director. The agency is based in Nairobi, Kenya, and is financed through the UN regular budget.

The UNEP, like the CSD, was assigned the function of forging interagency cooperation throughout the UN system to promote environmental protection. Since environmental concerns cut across virtually every conceivable area of human economic activity, this was indeed a broad mandate. The problem was, however, that neither UNEP nor CSD was given primary responsibility to take on operational functions that might interfere with the work of other organizations.

At the same time, both UNEP and CSD were superimposed on existing interorganizational systems. When UNEP was created, a number of UN agencies—including UNESCO, FAO, WHO, and WMO—were already engaged in environmental work. In addition, several UNESCO-related scientific programs—including the International Oceanographic Commission, the International Hydrological Program, and the intergovernmental Man and the Biosphere project—either were functioning or were in the early stages of development. The CSD was dropped into an even more complex and somewhat chaotic multiorganizational system. Although it possessed the potential to serve as a complement to the coordination work of UNEP, the history of international organizations would seem to suggest that CSD was just as likely to act as a fierce competitor.

The process of system-wide interagency coordination in ecodevelopment evolved slowly through trial and error. In UNEP's early years, a comprehensive procedure for system-wide review, called joint programming, was adopted. Interagency discussions focused on selected environmental topics. The objective of these discussions was to identify gaps in existing knowledge and practices and to design strategies to fill them. Over the years, these exercises expanded from bilateral to multilateral thematic programming.

Perhaps UNEP's most important role is generating international norms and setting standards to protect the human environment rather than concrete projects to help improve air quality or protect forests or enforce norms on the books. The agency has played an instrumental role in the negotiation and adoption of a number of major international environmental conventions, including the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Convention on Climate Change, and the Convention on Biodiversity. Although UNEP does administer certain environmental projects, it is not primarily a project-executing agency in the sense of

most other UN specialized agencies. Also, UNEP is not a source of financing—unlike UNDP, the World Bank group, and other multilateral funding agencies. It does, however, disperse modest funds through its Environment Fund. However, the waters surrounding its somewhat confused mandate have been muddied further with the creation of the CSD and still more overlapping functions.

Effective project implementation requires coordination at the operational level in the field. Although UNEP itself does not execute country programs, it cooperates with numerous other organizations in overseeing the implementation of projects that are supported by the UNEP Environment Fund. Many of these projects are executed by "cooperating agencies" (that is, UN system agencies and bodies), primarily FAO, UNESCO, WHO, WMO, and UNCHS (UN Center for Human Settlements, or Habitat). Other resources from this fund support project implementation by other intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, research institutions, and other civic-based bodies (referred to in UNEP as supporting organizations). When projects also include UNDP sources, the resident coordinator in the country serves as the primary point person for orchestrating the UN system's environmental activities in the field.

This overlapping jurisdiction on coordination adds a significant degree of complexity and ambiguity to UNEP's functions. The trend toward greater decentralization, regionalism, and involvement of civic-based entities in global governance complicates the already problematic task of making the UN function coherently, for the environment as for other substantive areas. In addition to dwindling funds, a number of major donor governments, including the United States, preferred to bypass UNEP regarding financial matters. In such a position, UNEP remains a technical agency concentrating largely on environmental monitoring and assessment. The importance of this role is seen with UNEP's coordination of scientific information on ozone depletion effectively becoming an expert lobby backing up diplomatic efforts to produce broad and binding agreement.[29]

So what can UNEP reasonably be expected to accomplish? The short answer is very little, certainly in comparison with the sweeping challenges of its mandate. The task of coordinating the environmental activities of the diverse array of institutional actors and arrangements is a conundrum. Many UN bodies are legally and practically autonomous; many of them were active in environmental work before the formation of UNEP and have access to far more significant technical and financial resources. Once again, the UN appears as the logical choice for coordination, but UNEP has neither the authority nor the organizational wherewithal to coordinate the globe's network of institutions.

Other Development Agencies

UNESCO began in the 1960s a wide variety of other environmental concerns that cut across its main areas of competence—science, education, culture, and communications. Of course, these areas are very much key to development, however defined. In 1965, a ten-year program, the International Hydrological Decade, was

launched to promote the study of hydrological resources, including water pollution. This early environmental focus was strengthened with the hosting of the Biosphere Conference, the 1970 Helsinki Interdisciplinary Symposium on Man's Role in Changing His Environment, and the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. UNESCO has been responsible for the creation of a number of affiliated bodies, such as the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC). This particular body has been important in promoting international marine scientific research with special emphasis on pollution prevention. Since the late 1980s, the UNESCO secretariat in Paris has emphasized coordination of the environmentally related activities and programs within its various divisions. It has been actively involved in follow-up activities to the 1992 UNCED and the implementation of a variety of related agreements.

For many years, UNESCO has had a special relationship with the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and with its member unions in the environmental area. The ICSU is an NGO comprising scientific academies, research councils, and scientific unions. It facilitates and coordinates the work of large international research programs, such as the International Biological Programme (IBP) and the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP). In 1969 the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) was established within ICSU. This committee has been responsible for reviewing information on the implications of human-induced environmental change. Two decades later, in 1989, the Advisory Committee on the Environment was created to provide counsel to the ICSU Executive Board on all ICSU activities related to the environment and global change and to provide a link with external bodies in this regard.

In addition to UNESCO, most other agencies within the UN system have operational mandates linked to ecodevelopment. The environmental relationships of some of these bodies are more obvious and more direct than others. Most, if not all, of the work of the World Meteorological Organization, for instance, focuses on ecodevelopment. Its broad, heavily scientific mandate includes atmospheric pollution, meteorological aspects of water pollution, climate change, the effects of pollution on climate change and vegetation, and the relationship between climate, weather, and agricultural practices. Along with the IOC and ICSU, the WMO cosponsors the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP). This joint initiative examines the dynamic aspects of the earth's climate system and stands as a counterpart to the IGBP, which studies biological and chemical aspects of global change.

The work of the World Health Organization, at its Geneva headquarters and in the field, focuses broadly on the relationship between human beings and their environments with regard to their health ramifications. This institution is concerned with controlling environmental pollution in all forms as well as all other environmental factors that affect health. The agency undertakes pollution surveys and initiates programs for improving methods for measuring pollution and for designing programs for pollution abatement and control. Just as UNICEF has taken more of a human rights approach to its concern for children around

the world, so the WHO has been trying to get states to view adequate health care as a human right. The WHO has undertaken a major effort to reduce the use of tobacco in its various forms and has come close to facilitating in many countries a similar ban to those in effect in many U.S. states. Here again we see part of the UN system collecting and disseminating scientific information, then trying to advance ideas based on that knowledge—in this case to improve health. The WHO has led the international community frontline response to emerging deadly diseases such a SARS, a rare but deadly respiratory disease, and the avian (bird) flu. The avian bird flu is of particular concern because it has a high mortality when it infects humans. Fearing a worldwide pandemic, WHO has been instrumental in tracking and isolating the deadly virus and in educating governments.

The FAO has an array of activities on ecodevelopment based both at its headquarters in Rome and in its operational projects. They include sustainable water management through water harvesting, agriculture investment, radioactive contamination, contamination of food by pesticides, and marine pollution related to fisheries. The agency works to establish criteria for water quality management, soil and water resource management, pesticide control, fisheries management, and general control of pollution. Several important environmental conventions fall under FAO auspices, including the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

Marine pollution is important to the work of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), established in 1948 as the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization. At the heart of this agency's work in London are concerns about legal liability and the rights of parties to seek redress from pollution by ships and equipment operating in marine areas, as well as how to prevent such pollution. Over the years, the agency has promoted more than two dozen international conventions and protocols, ranging from the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution at Sea by Oil in 1959 to the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness Response and Cooperation in 1990. In fulfilling its environment-related mandate, the IMO has maintained close working relations with UNEP, FAO, ILO, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, UNCTAD, and WHO, as well as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and National Resources (IUCN, also known as the World Conservation Union), the International Chamber of Shipping, and various other nongovernmental organizations.

The ecodevelopment work of some UN agencies often may not be obvious. But the International Civil Aviation Organization, for example, deals with aircraft noise pollution from its headquarters in Montreal. The ILO has an interest in the impact of various forms of pollution on the working environment. Of course the ILO, as noted in Chapter 6, tries to ensure that the pursuit of economic growth is accompanied by attention to labor rights. Environmental concerns related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, such as radioactive waste management, fall within the realm of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

One of the most important international environmental organizations is the hybrid IUCN. It comprises states, governmental agencies, and international and national NGOs. Although possessing only a small secretariat, it conducts a remarkably wide range of activities through numerous standing commissions and committees. The IUCN helped forge the conceptual link between development and environment. With the World Wide Fund for Nature and UNEP, and in association with FAO and UNESCO, the IUCN launched the World Conservation Strategy in 1980. As a precursor to sustainable development, this initiative set forth principles promoting the sustainable use of the earth's living resources.

Global environmental norms have spread through international conventions and declarations.[30] An extensive codification of international environmental law dealing with marine pollution, for example, has come about in this way since the late 1960s. As discussed, the IMO has played an instrumental role in developing an international maritime pollution regime, with important contributions also coming from UNEP and the multiyear negotiations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

Additionally, the Global Environmental Facility provides grants to developing countries for environment-related projects and facilitates networking and cooperation among donors. It operates in four main issue areas—protection of the ozone layer, international waters, biodiversity, and climate change—and is charged with working with other UN agencies, regional development banks, and bilateral donors in integrated technical assistance and investment projects. This limited coordination role has been complemented in recent years by the work of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy. This body has organized collaborative efforts among five other UN agencies: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Despite such attempts to engender cooperation and undertake coordination within and among the diverse field of actors in this issue arena, fragmentation abounds.

Although the activities discussed above are often associated with specific UN agencies or UN-sponsored conferences, they transcend the formal structures of these organizations. A proper evaluation of particular UN actors requires that we broaden our focus to acknowledge a cumulative impact through joint undertakings. As a leading scholar has concluded, it is very difficult to say with precision why any particular international organization succeeds or fails.[31] In the final analysis, what is important is the collective impact of the UN system in promoting sustainable human development and human security. In this regard, the story is not complete without incorporating the work of the Bretton Woods institutions.

THE UN AND THE IMF AND WORLD BANK

For most of the UN's existence the Washington-based international financial institutions functioned almost completely autonomously from the UN proper. In many depictions of the so-called UN system, including in Appendix A, dotted lines

connected to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund suggested their *de facto* if not *de jure* independent status. Earlier we referred to Kofi Annan's "Quiet Revolution,"[32] part of which has sought to redress this situation and bring the UN and the international financial institutions into closer working relations.

The subject is immensely important, starting with budgets and finances. The UN system is chronically starved for adequate financial support. The regular budget of the UN itself amounts to about $1.9 billion in 2006 and 2007—excluding enforcement and peacekeeping operations—with total spending through the entire UN system of core and specialized bodies of about $10–12 billion per year. By comparison, the World Bank dispenses about $30 billion each year in loans. Or, the United States is estimated to have spent about $20 billion in preparing for and fighting the 2003 war in Iraq, and it is spending $4–5 billion per month for the occupation of Iraq. As one critic noted, "roughly half the U.N.'s annual operating budget could be paid out of Halliburton graft alone."[33]

Beyond finances, a greater integration of the IFIs and UN institutions is needed for policy coherence in the development field. The World Bank, especially in regard to a narrow and rather technical approach to economic growth, leaves out many important aspects of the development process.[34] At the same time, the UN system manifests a broader and coherent development rationale through the MDGs. One important initiative has been the revitalization of the Administrative Committee on Coordination by transforming it into a Chief Executive Board for Coordination.

Beginning in 1998, a new spirit of cooperation emerged between the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions under the leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and then World Bank president James Wolfensohn.[35] Given the history of noncooperation between the IFIs and the UN system, this was quite extraordinary. To keep things moving forward in 2002, the General Assembly decided to host a special high-level meeting among representatives of the World Bank, IMF, WTO, and civil society to evaluate progress made since the International Conference on Financing Development, held earlier that year in Monterrey.[36] In April 2003, ECOSOC convened another high-level meeting to discuss policy coherence in implementing the Monterrey Commitments. For the first time, WTO was participating as an active partner.

In this context, the director of the WTO, managing director of the IMF, and president of the World Bank made a joint plea to the Group of 8. The G-8, or the "club" of the richest seven industrialized countries in the West, were formerly known as the G-7 but were joined by Russia beginning in mid-2003, and the possible addition of China would make it the G-9.[37] These international officials called upon the industrialized countries to provide the political guidance and follow-through on commitments that are needed to move trade negotiations and the development agenda forward.[38] So far, however, the G-8 has demonstrated little collective leadership and guidance in this regard. And voices have been raised in some important circles arguing that the Bank now has such a broad agenda that its programs are unwieldy; consequently, so the argument runs, the Bank should get back to basics.[39]

In spite of promising steps toward integration and cooperation and in spite of rhetoric coming from Washington about the need for greater attention to the "softer" sides of development, the UN and the IFIs still primarily reflect different views as to the causes of underdevelopment and poverty and the appropriate strategy for tackling these difficult issues. The UN still tends to have a Keynesian approach that requires a strong role for the state in promoting development and eliminating poverty, while the IMF/World Bank is skeptical of state solutions, opting for markets and private initiatives instead. In spring 2005 the appointment of Paul Wolfowitz, a staunch neoconservative and former deputy secretary of defense in the George W. Bush administration, suggests the long-standing neoliberal model of development is alive and well at the World Bank.

NORM CREATION AND COHERENCE: HISTORY OF IDEAS

At the same time, however, a reasonably coherent framework has emerged at the UN both regarding the fight against poverty and the promotion of human development. This consensual framework is the product of extensive multilateral development diplomacy and related institutional processes of recent decades and especially the global, ad hoc conferences of the 1990s that are chronicled in Table 9.1. Building on the activities of the UN's first three development decades (1960–1989), international conversations since the end of the Cold War have transformed the global development debate and UN discourse in general. The 2000 Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit represent just two—albeit two very important—links in a growing chain of multilateral global conferences and activities focusing on development-related issues and problems.

The 2000 Millennium Declaration, approved by the General Assembly in resolution 55/2, expressed a shared commitment to a number of lofty objectives: eradicate extreme poverty; reduce hunger; improve human health and the human environment; create enabling environments at the national and international levels conducive to development; promote good governance both domestically and internationally; mobilize financial resources required for development; and deal comprehensively and effectively with debt problems. In line with the evolving global development framework, the assembled world leaders resolved to: promote gender equality and the empowerment of women; develop and implement strategies to increase employment opportunities; encourage the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs more widely available in developing countries; develop strong partnerships with civil society; and ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all.

Capacity building, good governance, and popular participation are all essential ingredients for promoting sustainability. The MDGs lie at the center of this

TABLE 9.1 Chronology of Selected Development-Related Conferences, 1990–2005

1990—	World Summit for Children (WSC)
	Second World Climate Conference
	World Conference on Education for All
	Second UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries
1992—	UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)
	International Conference on Nutrition
1993—	UNCTAD VIII: Eighth Session of the Conference on Trade and Development
1994—	Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States
	International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)
	World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction
1995—	Fourth UN World Conference on Women
	World Summit for Social Development
1996—	Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II)
	World Food Summit
	UNCTAD IX: Ninth Session of the Conference on Trade and Development
1997—	Special Session of UN General Assembly on Sustainable Development
1998—	World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth
1999—	Special Session of UN General Assembly on Small Island Developing States
	Special Session of UN General Assembly on Population and Development
2000—	UNCTAD X: Tenth Session of the Conference on Trade and Development
	Special Session of the UN General Assembly on World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalised World
	World Education Forum
	Millennium Summit
2001—	Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries
	Special Session of UN General Assembly on the Problem of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in All Its Aspects
	International Conference on Fresh Water
	First Session of the UN Forum on Forests
	Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Human Settlement in the New Millennium
2002—	International Conference of Financing for Development
	Special Session of UN General Assembly on Children
	World Food Summit: Five Years Later
	World Summit on Sustainable Development
	Second World Assembly on Aging
2003—	World Summit on the Information Society: The First Phase
	International Ministerial Conference on Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donors

TABLE 9.1 *(continued)*

2004—	Session of the Commission on Population and Development
2005—	World Conference on Disaster Reduction
	World Summit on the Information Society: The Second Phase
	Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
	Session of the Commission for Social Development
	World Summit
	International Meeting for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

global development agenda. They have been commonly accepted throughout the UN system, and by the IFIs, as a framework for guiding development policies and assessing progress. They are viewed as being mutually reinforcing with the overarching objective being reduction of poverty.

The 2005 World Summit reiterated the UN's commitment to the MDGs. The MDGs were reaffirmed by President George W. Bush during his speech to the General Assembly, albeit after trying to remove the goals from the agenda altogether. Achieving consensus on goals is one thing, arriving at consensus on the strategies for achieving those goals is quite another. A North-North tension manifested between the Keynesian-oriented Europe and the neoliberal United States. Europe sought more management and regulation of market forces while the United States pursued market-oriented solutions. However, we are getting ahead of the story and should return to the historical roots of the debate.

From Stockholm to Rio de Janeiro

To understand fully the nature and extent of the current synthesis, one must look back to a conference held three decades ago in Stockholm—the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. It was during the preparations for this conference that development and environment became integrated. More specifically, at a meeting of experts in Founex, Switzerland, UNCHE secretary-general Maurice Strong probed the concept of "ecodevelopment" that would serve as a foundation on which the sustainable development dialogue would be built. Of course, the Club of Rome and others had put forward similar notions. Yet these largely intellectual exercises did not carry the same force or impact as the Founex report.[40]

Under the leadership of Strong, the participants were able to bridge some important political divides, in particular the clash of priorities between developing countries in pursuit of economic growth and developed countries concerned about conservation of natural resources. The clash was captured by India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who opened the Stockholm conference by arguing that in developing countries "poverty is the greatest polluter."[41] By arguing that long-term development was necessary to combat the poverty that contributed to pollution but that such growth also depended on dealing with shorter-term

Brazilian president Collor de Mello acknowledges the applause of world leaders after he formally closes the UN Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992. (UN Photo 180108/T. Prendergast)

environmental problems, Strong was able to bridge divergent North-South divide. He also suggested that the governments of industrialized countries help defray the costs of environmental protection that developing countries would be forced to bear. The concept of "additionality," meaning to increase resources in order to apply them to a new problem rather than to subtract them from another use, helped overcome skepticism in the South over global economic inequities.[42]

Two decades later, the issues were revisited. Readers will recall that in between an important intellectual development had been the Brundtland Commission's reframing of the solution to the conflict in 1987 as "sustainable development." The preparations for and activities surrounding what also was known as the Earth Summit far exceeded almost all normal conceptions of a conference, as did the extensive documentation.[43] The Rio process was massive. In addition to the intergovernmental conference, which incorporated a summit meeting of heads of state or government during its final days, the Rio gathering included a series of related events, unparalleled in scope and sponsored by civic-based entities that together were referred to as the Global Forum. These parallel activities drew tens of thousands of participants and an estimated 200,000 onlookers. A record number of national governmental delegations attended the Earth Summit, and some 1,400 NGOs with approximately 18,000 participants were at the parallel Global Forum.

The "road to Rio,"[44] then, was long and arduous. Participants were engaged in the preparatory process almost continuously for three years. Maurice Strong, who

after twenty years was selected to serve again as secretary-general of the conference secretariat, repeated what he had said about UNCHE, namely that in many important respects "the process was the policy."[45] The process of building consensus was regarded by many participants as being just as important an outcome of UNCED as any set of declarations, treaties, or other specific products. However, that process was not always an easy one, and the end products were not satisfactory to a majority of the participants. After three years of laborious and often tedious negotiations, for example, the specification of timetables, qualitative and quantitative targets, and acceptable limits still eluded negotiators as they rushed to finalize agreement on the conventions, statements of principles, and plan of action.

These continuing North-South tensions also reflect competing worldviews that underpinned multilateral politics. Southern governments were skeptical of the Northern push to impose ecological imperatives on the global development agenda. From their perspective, ozone depletion, hazardous waste pollution, and global warming were products of industrialization and overconsumption in the North, but suddenly the new priority to protect the environment was to come at the expense of development in the South. Cooperation from developing countries was conditioned on the North's willingness to pay the bill for at least part of its past environmental sins. If the North wanted the active partnership of the South in redressing these problems, Northern donor governments should make available additional financial and technical resources.

These North-South tensions were brought into particularly sharp focus during the debate over deforestation. Southern negotiators, led by the Brazilians, Indians, and Malaysians—many of the same countries that reacted negatively when sovereignty was under siege in the security and human rights arenas—forcefully resisted any incursion into the principle of sovereignty over natural resources. Similarly, tensions prevailed in drafting the Rio Declaration, which was to guide governments and nongovernmental actors in implementing the many provisions of Agenda 21. With its unmistakable flavor of compromise between negotiators from industrialized countries and developing ones, this declaration integrated many of the most important elements of the development and environment perspectives of both sides. Even as the rights to exploit resources within a state's geographical boundaries were reaffirmed, the responsibility of states to exercise control over environmentally damaging activities within their boundaries also was proclaimed. In addition, among the twenty-seven principles embodied in the declaration was one stating that the cost of pollution should be borne at the source and should be reflected in product cost at all stages of production.

Two legally binding international conventions—on biodiversity and on climate change—were incorporated as part of the larger Rio process. The Convention on Biodiversity requires signatories to pursue economic development in such a way as to preserve existing species and ecosystems. The Convention on Climate Change embodies a general set of principles and obligations aimed at reducing greenhouse gases. Due largely to the intransigent position of the first

Bush administration during the negotiation process, formal intergovernmental negotiations over the creation of these two legal conventions proved to be difficult to finalize. The final documents emerging from the Earth Summit represented "framework conventions." Although these conventions designated general principles and obligations, specific timetables and targets were left unspecified and subject to future negotiations over protocols—that is, additional treaties.

Agenda 21 comprised over 600 pages and covered a large gamut of issues. Although most of this text was agreed to before UNCED, a number of contentious items were carried to the Earth Summit itself. In keeping with the general tenor of debates, problems included issues related to biodiversity, biotechnology, deforestation, and institutional and procedural issues involving financing, technology transfer, and institutional arrangements for carrying out the elements of the action agenda.

A number of these issues proved to be intractable and remained unresolved at the close of UNCED. Foremost among them was how to generate the financial resources needed to implement the program of action and associated activities. Estimates varied; the calculations made by the UNCED secretariat put the price tag at well over $100 billion per year for the first decade alone. These figures reflected the massive scope of the components inherent in the marriage between development and environment as they had come together within the Rio process.

Linked to the issue of financing was governance. At the core is the question: who decides when and how such resources are to be spent? As the negotiations during the Rio process clearly revealed, some minimal basic agreement about governance is a prerequisite for agreement over financing. Again, North-South tensions fueled the debate.

The Northern negotiators, led by Washington, pressed to have all such financing channeled through the World Bank group. In that setting, the locus of control would be well established, with the G-8s possessing effective veto power. Also, the World Bank and the IMF tended to approach environmental protection through markets. The Global Environment Facility was in place and might be expanded to encompass a broader mandate.

This proposed solution, however, was not acceptable to most Southern participants, who preferred what they called a "more democratic" arrangement. These governments proposed the creation of a new "green fund," which would operate on more egalitarian voting principles. Most major Northern donors found this proposal wholly unacceptable. For them to commit significant levels of funding, some guarantee of control was required. A compromise was achieved to enhance the South's participation while retaining for donor states elements of control. Interim financing for Agenda 21 implementation would be provided under the aegis of the World Bank group. The GEF would be expanded and its rules altered to provide for decision-making by consensus among equally represented groupings of donors and recipients. The governance issue has, at least temporarily, been put to rest. But the matter of securing the requisite financial resources remains problematic, with only a very small fraction of the necessary funds actually committed to date.

Beyond Rio

In the years immediately following the Earth Summit, two overriding challenges arose. The first was how to generate and sustain effective cooperation. This problem had both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Effective cooperation would be required horizontally across different autonomous organizational domains, legal jurisdictions, and sectors of society as well as vertically across different levels of social aggregation, from individuals in their roles in groups and communities to representative governance in international forums.

The second challenge was how to reorient UN discourse and practice to overcome the constraints inherent in the organization's legal foundations in state sovereignty. The UN's involvement in ecodevelopment rejoins our earlier treatment of its activities in international peace and security and human rights matters. They all highlight the limits of working with a system circumscribed by the concept of sovereignty. The foundations of the UN Charter, especially Article 2 (7), and the institutional structures and practices of multilateral diplomacy, constrain attempts to incorporate nonstate and market actors into a full partnership in global policy processes.

These challenges seem forbidding, but as the heads of government at Rio pointed out, the costs of not rising to the challenge could be perilous. As they warned in the preamble of Agenda 21, "Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being." The Agenda 21 text argues that only by creating global partnerships and involving all sectors of world society can the world's peoples expect "the fulfillment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better-protected and better-managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future." Creating the necessary global partnerships on an unprecedented scale will, in turn, require meeting the twin challenges of cooperating effectively and moving beyond the confines of sovereignty. Before exploring the nature and scope of those challenges, however, we need a better understanding of the dynamic interplay of the forces and tensions that have given shape to the contemporary discourse and practice of sustainable development.

The debate over sustainable development places people-centered development at the core of the UN's work. This was also the case in respect to issues such as population, human settlements, health, food, and women. This shifting focus was captured in the names of special organizational campaigns, programmatic slogans, and conference titles reflected in Table 9.1. This evolving emphasis on people-centered development was given enhanced visibility through the reports of a series of special high-level, independent global commissions comprising

eminent persons, which had begun with the Pearson Commission in 1969 but shifted away from an almost exclusive focus on governments and economic development toward engaging other actors in the work of the world organization. We have spoken about the three most prominent recent ones—on global governance (1995), intervention and state sovereignty (2001), and human security (2003)—as essential contributions to the normative climate.[46]

The role sustainable development played in traversing the turf and ideological divide that otherwise separates actors in the global arena provides insight about the future of the UN's development work. In the Rio process and beyond, sustainability has served as an important bridge in institutional bargaining. The associated political processes have been characterized by bargaining among autonomous and self-interested participants striving for consensus. Operating under a veil of uncertainty about the likely effects of their alternative choices, participants engage in transnational alliance formation and politics that link issues. Many may be associated with specific communities of knowledge, but the political process is a pluralistic one in which groups of participants perceive and act on differing perceptions of problems, values, interests, and stakes.

Despite numerous difficulties, the general ideas articulated at Rio on behalf of sustainable development increasingly took hold. In the mid-1990s the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board decision 94/14 adopted "sustainable human development" as a new mission for technical assistance. Like other development concepts before it, sustainable human development was viewed as a prerequisite for creating and maintaining a secure and peaceful world order. The barrage of political discourse over development in the 1990s led most member states to expect the UN to play a meaningful role in bringing about the realization of such a goal.

The decade of the 1990s witnessed an almost continuous negotiating process. As is obvious from Table 9.1, member states were constantly involved in or preparing for or actually attending a major international social-economic gathering. And this became especially the case when planning follow-up sessions at five- and ten-year intervals. But conferencing was not the only significant process. In the early years of his administration, former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and his top staff argued that the UN should concentrate on issues in which it had the comparative advantage. From this perspective, development assistance, which is much broader than critical-aid programs and which substitutes environmentally degrading practices for sustainable ones, should be left to the multilateral development banks and other funding institutions that are presumably far better endowed and equipped for such activities.

In May 1994, Boutros-Ghali presented the General Assembly with his *An Agenda for Development*,[47] a companion but ignored volume to his *An Agenda for Peace* that figured so prominently in our earlier discussions. Declaring development to be a fundamental human right, he presented a general framework within which he highlighted the interdependent nature of peace, economy, civil society, democracy, social justice, and environment as indispensable components of the

Scene at the Non-Governmental Organizations Forum held in Huairou, China, as part of the Fourth UN World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, September 4–15, 1995. (UN/DPI Photo/M. Grant)

development process. In the context of all of these activities, a general agreement was emerging, at least at the level of principle, that "development" means something much broader than simply economic growth. Development increasingly came to be viewed in human, as opposed to exclusively national economic, terms. Reality always lags rhetoric, but UN documents now clearly indicate that "development" signifies not only improved material welfare with adequate attention to sustainability but also improved human rights and social justice.

In a related fashion, the concept of "good governance" came into common use within UN developmental circles in the 1980s and 1990s. The emergence of the idea of good governance can be traced to international concerns with state-dominated models of economic and social development so prevalent throughout the socialist bloc and much of the Third World in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. International efforts, especially since the 1980s, have emphasized support for political democratization (including elections, accountability, and human rights) and economic liberalization.

In its *Human Development Report 1994*, the UNDP provided a basic framework for focusing discourse. It suggested that the UN's development work should be based on at least five "new pillars": new concepts of human security, new models of sustainable human development, new partnerships between states and markets, new patterns of national and global governance, and new forms of international cooperation. Each subsequent *Human Development Report* has served to elaborate, extend, and clarify specific aspects of the development–human security nexus:

Refugees returning to Cambodia in 1992 under the oversight of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia were offered different forms of UNHCR assistance, including a house plot and house kit. (UNCHR Photo/K. Gooi)

funding priorities (1991); global markets (1992); democracy (1993); environment (1994); gender (1995); growth (1996); poverty (1997); consumption patterns (1998); globalization (1999); human rights (2000); sustainable livelihoods (2001); democracy (2002); millennium development goals (2003); cultural liberty (2004); and international cooperation (2005).

Participation and empowerment have been two of the priority themes running throughout these annual reports. Placing the emphasis on people, rather than states and macro-level growth, was an important rhetorical and actual advance, in particular for the most marginalized elements of society. The emphasis also helped incorporate civil society and the for-profit sector as central elements of the development equation. The way to eradicate poverty, the UNDP reports have argued, is to empower the poor and marginalized elements of society to provide for the satisfaction of their own basic needs and values. The notion of popular sovereignty has come to eclipse older conceptions of state sovereignty (that is, sovereignty of the people not of the sovereign).

In attempting to correct the euphoria that had surrounded the so-called Washington consensus of the 1980s and early 1990s, arguments within the UN often have sought to counterbalance or dilute the approaches in vogue since the Reagan and Thatcher administrations—namely, that anything the government can do, the private sector can do better; and that more open markets, free trade, and capital flows are necessarily beneficial to everyone, everywhere.

In a departure from its previous orthodoxy and as a sign of the pendulum's swing, the World Bank's *World Development Report 1997* emphasized that the state is capable of, and should perform the role of, producing welfare-enhancing outcomes.[48] The report's subtitle, *The State in a Changing World*, was indicative of a reversal led by Joseph Stiglitz, then controversial chief economist and senior vice-president of the Bank.[49] Essentially, in contrast to the wave of economic liberalization programs of the 1980s, various political liberalization efforts of the 1990s gradually came to place a greater emphasis on good government, human rights, the role of law and individual access to justice, and basic freedoms. Stiglitz won the 2001 Nobel Prize for Economic Science after his resignation from the World Bank over substantive differences.

Reflections and More Recent Developments

The UN's primary contribution to development over time has been to alter the emphasis in the good governance debate that originally had been cast as the mirror image of the state-dominated model of economic and social development of previous decades. Today's discussions about good governance stress improving the leadership and management of democracies, including the "deepening" of democracy and more active roles for nonstate actors.

Yet the thinking about new patterns of governance remained rather vague and unspecified. Decentralization of power is lauded as one of the best ways to bring about the empowerment of people, but decentralization at whatever level—local, state, national, and global—can result in empowering elites even more rather than empowering people in the sense of popular participation. New participants may lack the time, motivation, and skills to participate, leaving entrenched elites with unchallenged power. This point is important because sustainable growth and development require the active participation of people at all levels of governance.

With regard to UN structure, the most difficult choice may be between the traditional focus on the specialized agencies and the growing need to raise environmental concerns in broader, cross-cutting arenas and in interagency settings in which turf consciousness usually outweighs cooperative instincts. In the post-UNCED era, the discourse of environmentalism is clearly moving in the direction of cross-cutting themes. The traditional ecosystemic focus on air, land, water, and species is giving way to a social-systems focus on international trade, global finance, sovereignty, development, and other key processes and institutions. The old focus was consistent with the UN's functional organization into specialized agencies and bodies. The emerging focus demands a new forum.[50]

In this regard, the special initiatives with system-wide coordination and partnership building discussed above have tended to reinforce the evolving consensus over the UN system development strategy. At both the Ministerial Conference of the WTO held in Doha, Qatar, in September 2001 and the summit-level UN-sponsored Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, in

March 2002, for example, donor countries expressed an increased commitment to fight poverty. In addition to the new spirit of cooperation between the UN and the IFIs noted earlier, the Monterrey gathering for the first time brought together stakeholders representing governments, business, civil society, and international institutions for a formal exchange of views. The "Monterrey Consensus," as that conference's outcome document was called, recognized the need to increase official development significantly in order to meet the MDGs.[51]

The World Summit on Sustainable Development followed from August 26 to September 4. Coming ten years after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 represented an attempt to reinvigorate the sustainable development activities in the wake of deepening poverty and environmental degradation. New targets were set, timetables established, and commitments agreed on. Yet, as the UN website for Johannesburg Summit 2002 made clear, "there were no silver bullet solutions . . . no magic and no miracle—only the realization that practical and sustained steps were needed to address many of the world's most pressing problems." The summit reflected a new approach to conferencing and to sustainable development more generally. It was a dialogue among major stakeholders from governments, civil society, and the private sector. Instead of concentrating primarily on the production of treaties and other outcome documents, participants focused on the creation of new partnerships to bring additional resources to bear for sustainable development initiatives.

Also, as discussed earlier, Secretary-General Annan and core administrative staff in the UNDP and elsewhere have aggressively been building an array of partnerships with civil society and the private sector. Predictably, these activities—most especially through the Global Compact with business—have brought with them another dimension of the challenge to sovereignty debate.[52] The notion of the Global Compact is predicated on the assumption that development, especially for poorer developing countries, cannot occur through governmental or intergovernmental means alone, even when augmented by assistance from the multitude of nongovernmental development assistance organizations. Neither can it occur through unbridled market forces alone. Creating local, national, and international enabling environments is essential, and a broad-based partnership involving all relevant "stakeholders" is required.

Of course, this may be deemed inappropriate or unacceptable for some—often of quite diverse and even opposing ideological perspectives—that see various particular types of stakeholders as being unacceptable or illegitimate partners.[53] Nonetheless, the Global Compact has been steadily expanding. As of December 2005, nearly 2,000 corporate partners had joined the agreement—a substantial increase since the previous edition of this textbook because in December 2002 there were 700. One of the principles that underpins the Global Compact is that UN organizations should "undertake a deeper examination of issues related to corporate governance" in the context of developing countries'

A visiting foreign official inspects a solar cooker at a research facility in Gansu Province in China. The Natural Energy Research Institute focuses on new forms of energy-producing products. (UN Photo 150767/D. Lovejoy)

specific legal, social, and cultural environments in order "to develop and implement international accounting, reporting and auditing standards." While encouraging information sharing about potential investment opportunities, the UN development framework cautions that "international institutions involved in supporting FDI [foreign direct investment] flows should evaluate the development impact of investment flows in recipient countries, including social development concerns."[54]

The Global Compact represents only one dimension of the UN system's evolving partnership with the private sector. As noted previously, beginning under administrator Malloch Brown and continuing with Kamal Derviş, the UNDP has reprioritized its functions around four themes: advocacy, advice, pilot projects, and partnerships. The partnership function is wide-ranging. It begins with the UN and the IFIs, but it expands far beyond the intergovernmental system. It entails building and expanding constructive partnerships with civil society, the private sector, and local authorities. Underpinning this strategy is the belief that "people should guide both the state and the market, which need to work together in tandem, with people sufficiently empowered to exert a more effective influence over both."[55] Critical to this endeavor is creating in these varied constituencies an identity of being "stakeholders."

Within the developing world this initiative to forge new partnerships has taken a variety of complexions. In general there has been a move to strengthen

the UNDP and other UN agencies' direct involvement with diverse elements of society—including NGOs, the private sector, and civil society organizations. Similar efforts have also been made in the IFIs. While active engagement with NGOs has been widely recognized for some time as an essential input into the development process, cooperation with private sector entities at the country level has been less widely publicized. However, these measures are not without controversy. Yet, in a world with scarce and dwindling financial resources and limited access to technology, the prospects of gaining greater access is difficult to resist, despite many potential stumbling blocks and drawbacks.

THE UN'S SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Sustainable human development is part of an overall human security framework that has been in the making since the early 1990s—although many could argue that the combination of security, human rights, and sustainable development in separate streams has constituted the history of international organization.[56] In this regard, UNDP's *Human Development Report 1994* provides a useful point of departure.[57]

Making human beings secure, the approach argues, means more than protecting them from armed violence and alleviating their suffering. If international organizations are to contribute meaningfully to the promotion of human security, security needs to be defined in much broader terms than protection from threats to physical well-being from military violence. It is worth noting, as we did in the first two parts of this volume, that protecting civilians in war zones or from thuggish repression is itself far from guaranteed. Doing both simultaneously, as the human security concept proposes, is logical but hardly easy. The *Human Development Report 1994* was a precursor to one a decade later from the Commission on Human Security in that both agreed this concept "must stress the security of people, not only of nations.[58] Thus, the way that citizens and their governments, and also scholars and international officials think about security would be altered: people and their needs would trump such calculations as bombs and bullets, and considerations like access to food would be as important as military budgets. Thus sustainable human development can be viewed as a process of improving and sustaining human security.

Sustainable development, like human security, is a qualitative condition that entails individual and collective perceptions of low threats to physical and psychological well-being from all agents and forces that could degrade lives, values, and property. At a minimum, people may be considered secure if they are protected from the threat of the physical destruction of their lives or property as a result of assault from others. At the opposite extreme, maximum human security can be imagined in a totally threat-free environment where human beings are protected against all threats to their lives, values, and property. Various qualities of human security can be imagined depending on the

A water pump powered by solar energy at Thies, Senegal. (UN Photo 150182/S. Sprague)

relative ordering of the priorities that people place on the satisfaction of various needs, values, and interests.

Human security bridges the traditional divisions of international organizational agendas, where questions of "war and peace" have been separated from "economic and social" ones. According to this new conceptualization, peace as the lack of direct violence is only one attribute of a secure environment, and international organizational action is the means of establishing this peace. Further, the notion of human security focuses the attention of international organizations directly on individuals and their circumstances, thereby constituting a subtle challenge to state sovereignty. Making people psychologically secure may, under some circumstances, be the antithesis of making the governments of states and their territorial boundaries physically secure, especially when states themselves are the perpetrators of individual insecurities. Pressing international organizations into the service of individually focused human security could therefore constitute an incremental step toward circumventing or marginalizing states and legitimizing supranational governance.

Most important, conceptualizing the mission of multilateral organizations as one of comprehensively promoting human security rather than separately promoting economic and social development, sustainable development, military security, human rights, and a variety of other goals frees the policy imagination to contemplate holistically the nature and variety of threats to individual environments. Although critics rightly point out that such a blanket concept can lead to fuzzy thinking with little intellectual traction,[59] human security can free

the policy imagination to consider how such threats may be removed and to formulate policy prescriptions for how international organizations might contribute to removing them. Because the sources of human insecurity vary from region to region, so, too, will the definition of human security and the missions of international organizations. It may be that in many, if not most, cases multilateral agencies are not very appropriate, efficient, or effective mechanisms for transferring material development assistance. They appear to be relatively better suited to promoting and enhancing human security via policies, programs, and activities that focus on nonmaterial resource transfers and exchanges, including training and the exchange of ideas and information. But such a shift of institutional focus requires rethinking the nature and meaning of sustainable human development.

The foundations for sustainable human development require individuals, groups, and communities to take charge of their own destinies. They thereby themselves become engaged significantly in the satisfaction of their own needs, values, and interests. In short, they control their own futures. "Human development is development of the people for the people by the people. . . . Development for the people means ensuring that the economic growth they generate is distributed widely and fairly. . . . [D]evelopment by the people [means] giving everyone a chance to participate."[60] Yet the concept of popular participation has proven to be woolly and the debate about its meaning, unfocused. In the World Bank, for example, popular participation has at various times and in various contexts been articulated as and associated with the "empowerment" of NGOs and the enhancement of their involvement in making Bank policy; increased bank accountability and control of the Bank's programs, projects, and activities by "domestic" actors; and the active engagement in project planning of previously excluded individuals and groups with an emphasis on the importance of local knowledge and the satisfaction of local needs.

These aspects of participation are important, but this discourse has so far done little to change the essential course of the Bank's policy so as to enhance its role in promoting human security or to construct new models of development focusing on the satisfaction of basic human needs and values. Development models and institutional policies that fail to take adequate account of human needs may actually work to erode human security and inhibit sustainable human development.

In the next chapter, this new global development agenda is examined in the context of new threats in the form of globalization. It is important to stress here in closing this chapter that the UN's development agenda is an ever-evolving process, as the reader is undoubtedly aware by now. There is a definite new unity of purpose as most world leaders acknowledge that "security" in the twenty-first century means "human security" and that the UN's development agenda is a necessary component. However, will there be sufficient international political will to move fast enough to balance the various forces and tensions inherent in

the processes of globalization, HIV/AIDS, extreme poverty, terrorism, and other social maladies? It is to these forces and tensions and the global response to them that we now turn.

NOTES

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3. For a brief and complete introduction, see M.J. Peterson, *The UN General Assembly* (London: Routledge, 2005). Each year the UN Association of the United States publishes an introduction to key issues. For example, see the one done for the 60th anniversary by Angela Drakulich, ed., *A Global Agenda: Issues before the 60th General Assembly of the United Nations* (New York: UNA-USA, 2005).

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5. Kofi A. Annan, *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform* (New York: UN, 1997).

6. Jesse Helms, "Saving the U.N.: A Challenge to the Next Secretary General," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 5 (1996): 2–7, at 5.

7. Kofi Annan, *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform*, UN document A/51/950, July 14, 1997, para. 25.

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15. Mark Malloch Brown, "Opening Statement at the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board," New York, June 10, 2003, 1.

16. Ibid., 11.

17. See Ian Taylor, *UN Conference on Trade and Development* (London: Routledge, 2007 forthcoming 2007).

18. UNCTAD-UNDP-HABITAT Press Release, May 16, 2001.

19. UNCTAD, UNCTAD and Civil Society, available at: http://www.unctad.org/Templates/StartPage.asp?intItemID=3455&lang=1.

20. See Yves Beigbeder, *New Challenges for UNICEF: Children, Women, and Human Rights* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

21. See Devaki Jain, *Women, Development, and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

22. See further Mayra Buvnic, "Women in Poverty: A New Global Underclass," *Foreign Policy* no. 108 (1997): 38–54.

23. www.unicef.org/programme/girlseducation/25_2005/index.htm.

24. UNICEF Press Release, May 8, 2003.

25. UNICEF, *The United Nations Special Session on Children: A First Anniversary Report on Follow-up*, May 8, 2003.

26. UN News Centre, "Countries slow to act on 2002 summit goals to better children's lives—UNICEF," May 27, 2003.

27. For an overview of the CSD and other institutions, see Elizabeth R. DeSombre, *Global Environmental Institutions* (London: Routledge, 2006).

28. For an overview, see Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Mark Kaldor, *Global Civil Society 2001* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

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30. See, for example, Norman J. Vig and Regina S. Axelrod, eds., *The Global Environment: Institutions, Law, and Policy* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1999).

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32. Kofi Annan, "The Quiet Revolution," *Global Governance* 4, no. 2 (1998): 123–138.

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52. See John Gerard Ruggie, "global_governance.net: The Global Compact as Learning Network," *Global Governance* 7, no. 4 (2001): 371–378; and Jean-Philippe Thérien and Vincent Pouliot, "The Global Compact: Shifting the Politics of International Development?" *Global Governance* 12, no. 1 (2006): 55–75.

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CHAPTER 10

The UN, Development, and Globalization

GLOBALIZATION, OF COURSE, is not new a phenomenon. Yet the forces and processes associated with it, as well as opportunities and challenges, are ever more apparent in a post–September 11 world. While globalization yields many benefits, especially to those in wealthier countries, it has brought with it a scale of inequality unprecedented in human history. Secretary-General Kofi Annan reflected on this problem in his report *"We the Peoples": The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*, in which he wrote: "The benefits of globalization are plain to see: faster economic growth, higher living standards, accelerated innovation and diffusion of technology and management skills, new economic opportunities for individuals and countries alike." Yet these benefits are distributed very unequally and inequitably. They are "highly concentrated among a relatively small number of countries and are spread unevenly within them."[1]

The impact of globalization varies dramatically from region to region and case to case. As underscored in an earlier report by Annan, the "actual experience of globalization, to a great degree, varied with the level of development at which a country experienced it."[2] In some cases, where national economies were well positioned in terms of capacity and economic orientation, rapid economic growth has ensued. Elsewhere the result has been much less positive, contributing to increased poverty, inequality, marginalization, and human insecurity. In some places globalization may actually undermine many of the development efforts by UN agencies.

The Millennium Declaration identified challenges related to globalization as the key issue confronting the international community of states. UN member states accordingly pledged to act "to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people."[3] At the same time, philosopher and critic Thomas Pogge tells us that they were trying to weasel out of what they had agreed on. He has shown that over time rich states have moved to reduce, not