

MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

ENHANCING THE UN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT

STEPHEN BROWNE AND THOMAS G. WEISS

“Harmonize business practices among agencies and simplify bureaucratic procedures that slow the UN down.”

“The current system is outdated and inefficient.... Countries, food agencies, and donors aren't working together in a focused and coordinated way to provide the help small farmers need, when they need it.... The [UN] food agencies have taken on projects that weren't strategic because they needed any funding they could get simply to stay in business.”

(Bill Gates, February 2012)

“Streamline organization structure and cut out the waste. Utilize NGO capacity more.”

“Create a unified UN Development System structure [allowing agencies to continue based on thematic area] with a single set of administrative and financial norms, a single information system, a single program at the country level, and an internationally respected development figure as its president.”

(NGO representative, Spain)



World Federation of United Nations Associations



The Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies

engages in research, graduate training, and public education about international affairs and contemporary global problem-solving with a focus on multilateralism and international institutions. Founded in 1973 as the Ralph Bunche Institute on the United Nations, it was renamed in 2001 and given a broader interdisciplinary scope with the mandate to support and further strengthen international studies at The Graduate Center. Under the directorship of Thomas G. Weiss, presidential professor of political science, the institute provides a congenial setting for the activities by faculty and visiting scholars with international portfolios and research; and it facilitates the mentoring of graduate students.

The Future of the United Nations Development System (FUNDS)

project is one of the key ongoing activities at the Ralph Bunche Institute, to support and help accelerate the universally acknowledged need for change in the UN development system to make it more effective and responsive to global challenges up to, but especially beyond 2015, the target date for the MDGs and the beginning of a follow-on phase. Recognizing the many frustrations that have accompanied UN reform efforts, the project envisages a carefully staged process designed to help build consensus around some necessary changes. This consensus should not just be within the “first UN” (governments) and “second UN” (secretariats) but also—and especially—the “third UN” (NGOs, the private sector, academia, the media, and civil society).

The World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

is a global nonprofit membership organization working for a stronger and more effective United Nations. Established in 1946, we represent and coordinate a membership of over 100 national United Nations Associations and their thousands of members. WFUNA is the largest international network of people supporting and engaging with the United Nations.

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MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

FOREWORD BY
BONIAN GOLMOHAMMADI

The topic of development has taken center stage this year as the much-anticipated Rio+20 Earth Summit was held, the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is fast approaching, and conversations are increasingly shifting to the potential new generation of Sustainable Development Goals. The secretary-general recently announced the formation of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network—tasked to utilize academic and technical expertise to find solutions for some of the world’s most pressing environmental, social, and economic problems—and appointed a High-level Panel on Post-2015 Development Agenda, made up of world leaders and experts on development issues. The work is just beginning, and participation has to be wide and inclusive.

Change, namely accelerated structural reform of the UN Development System, is clearly necessary for the organization to effectively address today’s multifaceted development needs. The authors of this report, Stephen Browne and Thomas G. Weiss, underline three challenges currently facing the UN’s development activities: the lack of systemwide coherence; the possible increasing irrelevance for contemporary development problems; and lack of political will. They organize the UN community into three groups of stakeholders: the First UN (member states), the Second UN (secretariats), and the Third UN (civil society, academia, and the private sector). Each of these “UNs” has a vested interest in—as the title of this publication so aptly puts it—“Making Change Happen” in the UN’s development pillar.

This study summarizes and analyzes the results of two impressive “global perception surveys” conducted by the Future of the Development System (FUNDS) Project of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies. In fact, WFUNA is a partner, having consulted our own membership as stakeholders about their views concerning the status and the future of the UN Development System. I commend the authors for opening up this dialogue to a wider range of stakeholders and bringing their poignant observations and suggestions to the table. The report analyzes a wide variety of perceptions, and, as a result, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of WFUNA. Nevertheless, they are valuable contributions about a topic that requires serious attention as well as further research and discussion.

WFUNA’s mission is to work to build a better world by strengthening and improving the United Nations through the engagement of people who share a global mind-set and support international cooperation—global citizens. The goal of this report is very much in line with the fundamental principles of our organization, as it presents the viewpoints of global citizens from all parts of the UN community in an effort to enhance dialogue and contribute to building a United Nations that is better able to respond to the world’s development needs. We are delighted to have collaborated and published this report and will publish similar studies on other UN topics as we grow our research and publications portfolio in the future.



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1. THREE ENDEMIC PROBLEMS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

CHALLENGE #1: DECENTRALIZATION AND RIVALRY

The first challenge is the UN system's very institutional structure. Development activities account for about 60 percent of total annual UN spending (more than US \$13 billion), employing 50,000 people, a majority of the organization's full-time staff. The so-called system that engages in development activities in developing and transition-economy countries includes more than 30 organizations (variously called funds, programmes, offices, and agencies). There is also an equivalent number of supportive functional commissions and research and training organizations, which are not included among the UNDS organizations considered here. The World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are formal components of the UN, but they are independently governed and administered and thus are not normally counted as part of the UNDS. Their analyses and investments clearly constitute crucial inputs, however, and a clearer demarcation between the UNDS and the so-called Bretton Woods institutions, including the World Trade Organization (WTO), is clearly necessary.

What is the UN Development "System"? Even defining it presents a challenge. The term itself connotes more coherence and centralization than is the case, which is why many prefer the label of UN "family," because, like many such units, the UN version is dysfunctional. Development is usually described as one of the four pillars of the UN, the others being peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and human rights. As distinct from the other three pillars, the various organizations that make up the UNDS share long-term development objectives and subscribe to the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Almost every part of the UNDS is also a member of the High-level Committee on Programmes and the UN Development Group (UNDG), which oversees operational activities at the field level. To that extent, therefore, there is a "system" behind the UN's development pillar.

The importance of having a system, moreover, is no more in evidence than in the UN's attempts to face up to the major longer-term development challenges. Whether at the global level—confronting challenges of environmental management, climate change, food security, migration, and many other issues—or at the country level,

The world needs a strong UN Development System (UNDS). There is a vast, complex, and multifaceted development agenda with many critical domains that can only be addressed by a global, value-driven organization. Twenty-first-century concerns call for new approaches and responses from the United Nations rather than a tired regurgitation of past successes and explanations for failures. The world body's own internal shortcomings, however, hamper innovation. This paper begins by identifying three perennial problems that impede change: decentralization, ineffectiveness, and vested interests. It then discusses a 2012 worldwide survey sponsored by FUNDS, the findings of which not only suggest widespread disgruntlement with today's development system but also support for bolder thinking about making change happen, the topic of the final section.

which involves marshaling a range of expertise to address more local problems, coalitions of the different organizations and agencies in the development pillar (technical, normative, and operational) need to come together if the UN is to make an impact. While the longer-term development vocation of the UN can be easily identified, in some fragile states, as well as countries in reconstruction, these functions of the UN need to be combined with other main roles of peacekeeping (and peacemaking), humanitarian relief, and the promotion of rights and justice.

Few would deny that the system is atomized. “For some of the UN system clan members, the word ‘coordination’ tends to summon up visions of ignorant meddlers pushing microphones and cameras into their realms,” notes longtime UN observer Leon Gordenker. “For others, it means combining talents to achieve better results. It may also offer a channel by which some help can be made available for UN peace-maintaining tasks. Perhaps for all, it signifies yet more meetings and documents. For none does it mean hierarchical commands from somewhere on high.”¹

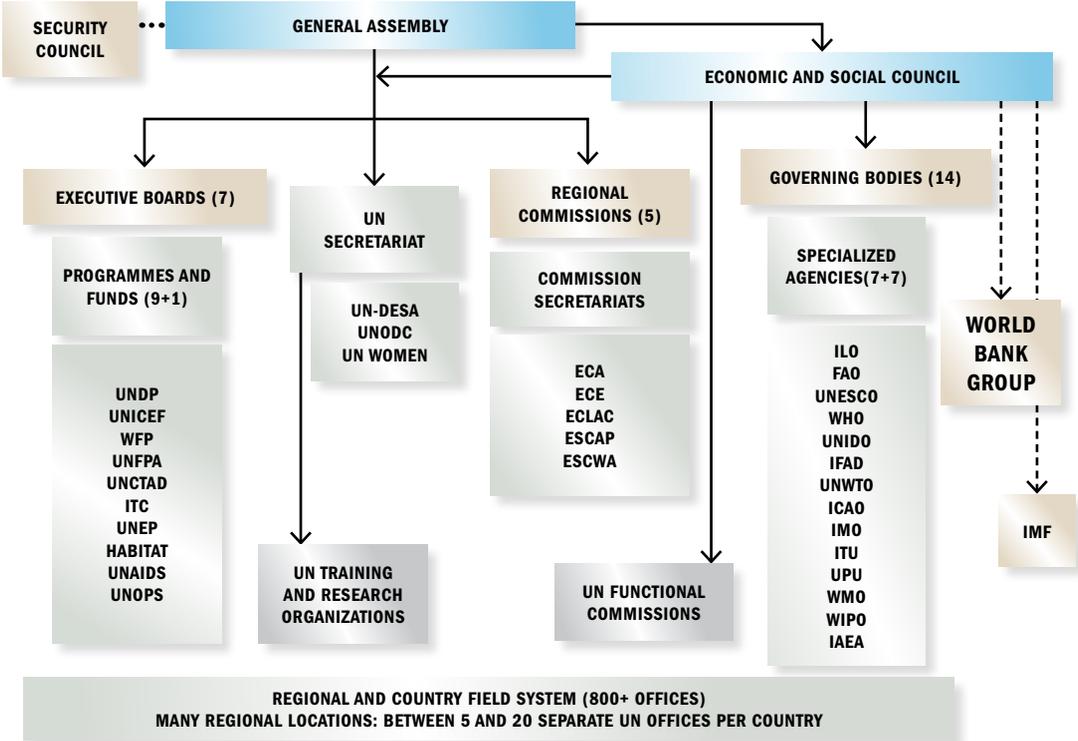
A major feature of the UNDS is its division into the organizations and programs under the authority of the UN General Assembly and the secretary-general on the one hand, and on the other hand, the specialized agencies, with their own systems of governance. Clearly there are different constitutional and funding implications that are essential to take into account for making change happen in the “system.” For our purposes, however, both types are included in Figure 1, which provides a simplified overview of the UNDS (including the fact that the World Bank and the IMF are de jure but not de facto in the organogram), and Box 1 provides a key to essential acronyms.

Another dimension of the complex array of development-focused entities is physical dispersion. The seats of the different entities are in 15 different countries (and 16 cities). There are more than 1,000 representative offices of the UNDS worldwide (and more than 1,400 for the UN as a whole, including peacekeeping and the humanitarian organizations). The number of offices, moreover, is growing. The result, as many observers have put it, is a UNDS that is “punching below its weight”² because outcomes are far less than should be expected from the resources committed by donors.

A strong center would compensate for dispersion, but none exists. The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) could play that role, but does not. For operational purposes, the majority (but not all) of the UNDS organizations are members of the UNDG whose functions are mainly taken up with time-consuming and costly consultations on process, as well as oversight of the more than 130 UN country teams, which encompass all the entities of the UN system that carry out operational activities for development, emergency, recovery, and transition in programme countries. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) administrator chairs the UNDG but lacks the authority and expertise to give shape and direction to all UN programmes. Moreover, the UNDP’s position in the system is itself ambiguous. As former administrator Mark Malloch Brown puts it, there are “long-running institutional tensions between UNDP’s role as the coordinator of the UN system and as a development agency in its own right.” It is hard for a putative center to be both coordinator and competitor.³

1. Leon Gordenker, “United Nations System,” in *Global Governance and International Organization*, eds. Thomas G. Weiss and Rorden Wilkinson (London: Routledge, forthcoming).
2. Bruce Jenks and Bruce D. Jones, “Punching Below Its Weight: The UN Development System at a Crossroads,” draft October 2011, Center for International Cooperation; and Bruce Jenks, “Emerging Issues in Development Operations,” draft April 2012, UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs.
3. Mark Malloch Brown, endorsement for Stephen Browne, *The United Nations Development Programme and System* (London: Routledge, 2011).

FIGURE 1: UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM



BOX 1: THE UN'S DEVELOPMENT ALPHABET SOUP

FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

		SEAT (FOUNDING YEAR)
UNDP	UN Development Programme	New York (1965)
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund	New York (1946)
WFP	World Food Programme	Rome (1963)
UNFPA	UN Population Fund	New York (1969)
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development	Geneva (1964)
ITC**	International Trade Centre	Geneva (1964)
UNEP	UN Environment Programme	Nairobi (1972)
UN-HABITAT	Human Settlements	Nairobi (1978)
UNAIDS	UN Joint Programme on HIV and AIDS	Geneva (1996)
UNEGEEW	UN Women	New York (2011)

UN SECRETARIAT

UNDESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs	New York (1945)
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime	Vienna (1997)*
UNOPS	UN Office for Project Services	Copenhagen (1973)

REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

ECA	Economic Commission for Africa	Addis Ababa (1958)
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe	Geneva (1947)
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Santiago (1948)
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	Bangkok (1949)
ESCWA	Economic Commission for Western Asia	Beirut (1973)

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

ILO	International Labour Organization	Geneva (1919)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN	Rome (1945)
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Paris (1945)
WHO	World Health Organization	Geneva (1948)*
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization	Vienna (1985)#
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	Rome (1977)
UNWTO	UN World Tourism Organization	Madrid (2003)*#
ICAO**	International Civil Aviation Organization	Montreal (1945)
IMO**	International Maritime Organization	London (1958)*
ITU	International Telecommunication Union	Geneva (1865)*
UPU**	Universal Postal Union	Berne (1874)
WMO	World Meteorological Organization	Geneva (1951)
WIPO**	World Intellectual Property Organization	Geneva (1970)*
IAEA**	International Atomic Energy Agency	Vienna (1957)

TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS**

UNITAR	UN Institute for Training and Research	Geneva (1963)
UNICRI	UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute	Geneva (1969)
UNIDIR	UN Institute for Disarmament Research	Geneva (1980)
UNRISD	UN Research Institute for Social Development	Geneva (1963)
UNU	UN University	Tokyo (1973)

FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS**

Sustainable Development	New York (1992)
Narcotic Drugs	Vienna (1997)
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice	Vienna (1992)
Science and Technology for Development	Geneva (1992)
Status of Women	New York (1946)
Population and Development	New York (1946)
Social Development	New York (1946)
Statistics	New York (1947)
UN Forum on Forests	New York (2000)

NOTES:

Date of joining UN as specialized agency;
 * different name/status prior to establishment of UN system;
 ** not a member of the UN Development Group

The undg is a subordinate body of the Chief Executives Board (CEB), which comprises all the heads of UN organizations and agencies and is chaired by the secretary-general, whose writ, however, is limited. He nominally oversees the clusters of bodies reporting directly to the General Assembly, which also have their own governance mechanisms. He has even less influence over the 14 specialized agencies that have their own memberships and are independently governed, each with a separate budget, culture, oversight structure, and headquarters (often not in the same city as its principal partners). All parts of the system are ultimately answerable to ECOSOC, which has been characterized as “the UN’s most unwieldy and least powerful deliberative body.”⁴ Successive reform efforts have proposed centralizing authority, either by appointing a director-general or assigning the task of overseeing the system to the deputy secretary-general. But none has materialized. A significant opportunity was missed in 1997, for instance, when the deputy post was created as part of an earlier reform initiative. However, the second most senior person in the UN hierarchy was not selected to be a globally renowned specialist but to reflect geographical balance. Moreover, deputies have not been given a mandate to be the de facto UNDS heads, but rather to replace the secretary-general for all manner of tasks.

The lack of coordination and overlapping jurisdictions are compounded by the absence of central financing, which allows official donors to exercise selective patronage across the system. Agencies are driven to compete for funds to sustain their mandates, resulting in a combination of mission creep and defensive turf-consciousness. In these circumstances, bureaucracies are not amenable to fundamental change and collaboration.

With the efforts of the different parts of the system poorly focused and coordinated, and with competition and duplication among them, coherent UN development positions on many pressing global issues are nonexistent or hard to discern.

4. Thomas G. Weiss, “ECOSOC Is Dead, Long Live ECOSOC,” *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Perspectives*, 2010.

5. This framework is used by Thomas G. Weiss and Ramesh Thakur, *Global Governance and the UN: An Unfinished Journey* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

CHALLENGE #2: INEFFECTIVENESS AND IRRELEVANCE

The second endemic problem, ineffectiveness, is underlined by the growing number of alternatives to the UNDS, such as large international NGOs, private foundations, regional unions, and corporate programs, which have emerged to meet challenges that the system has failed to address adequately or not at all. A growing number of alternatives are perceived to be more approachable, responsive, and cost effective than the UN, thus making the UNDS seem less relevant than in the past. Its separate parts, while competing amongst themselves, are increasingly failing to “compete” with external organizations and mechanisms, many of which have similar sets of values and more representative governance structures. Parts of the UNDS lack the requisite skills, are bureaucratically cumbersome, and deliver weak products and services. Even where they are technically stronger, they may be relevant and effective but poor at propagating their messages.

The UN Charter defined “cooperation” as the fundamental rationale to sustain the world organization’s development pillar. Indeed, global cooperation is the essence of the UN’s pursuit of economic and social development, distinguishing it from, for example, bilateral aid. In theory, there are five gaps in global governance that the UNDS has or could fill: knowledge, norms, policy, institutions, and compliance.⁵ In practice, UN cooperation has taken four broadly different shapes with tasks that are worth spelling out here: setting technical standards; agreeing on cooperation modalities as well as norms and conventions; furnishing information and conducting research; and providing technical assistance. In each case, there are a growing number of alternatives to the UNDS.

The first and most straightforward task is setting the “technical standards” function. States find a common purpose in international cooperation in order to resolve problems caused by interdependence.

Growing interstate communications led to the establishment of the International Telecommunication Union and the Universal Postal Union in the 19th century⁶ because of the imperative to apportion international wave bands and to allow mail to travel across borders. These two UN specialized agencies, along with five others created subsequently—the International Atomic Energy Agency, International Civil Aviation Organization, International Maritime Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, and World Meteorological Organization—are normally viewed as the seven purest of functional and technical agencies, responding to specific and universal technical needs. They establish common technical standards that are fundamental to international collaboration. Some other parts of the system are also “functionalist”⁷ insofar as they help develop universal standards—for instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) for health (and, with the Food and Agriculture Organization, food safety) and International Labour Organization (ILO) for the workplace.

Hence, the UNDS continues to be an essential and perhaps unrivaled source of technical standards. Whether it concerns the allocation of bandwidth (ITU), international postal conventions (UPU), maritime and air safety standards (IMO and ICAO), the tracing of nuclear materials (IAEA), or copyrights and patents (WIPO), there is a UN technical agency acting as custodian. In a more broadly developmental vein, WHO is there to certify pharmaceutical drugs and set global health standards (such as safe air or water pollution levels); WHO and FAO oversee the Codex Alimentarius, governing food safety; and the ILO is the repository of labor standards.

It is legitimate to question, however, the UN’s relevance in technical standard-setting in some domains, particularly since governments no longer monopolize public services. The International

Organization for Standardization (ISO) is as old as the UN and has used “voluntary consensus standard-setting” involving governments, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to set industrial standards.⁸ The ISO has successfully branched out from industrial “nuts and bolts” to standards in work processes, quality management, environmental regulation, and, most recently, corporate social responsibility. A more modern example is the role of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)⁹, a US-based NGO that took on the registration and management of domain names. Internet users have successfully resisted attempts by some governments to bring ICANN’s activities under the auspices of ITU, arguing that Internet governance should involve all information society stakeholders. This theme of wider and wider partnerships is a dominant reality in contemporary global governance.

The second and perhaps more idealistic task derives from the need for cooperation through international organizations wherever there are shared perceptions of a problem and a readiness to develop a consensus around values and norms embodied by such organizations. The cognitive basis of such organizations is societal as well as state based, and also involves epistemic communities—including international networks—of nongovernmental interests, and advocacy groups are essential partners. This “cognitive condition”¹⁰ is the basis of interstate cooperation through the UN and the closest approximation to global governance in such critical areas as environmental management (UN Environment Programme), regional cooperation (UN Regional Commissions), health epidemics (WHO), and drug control (UN Office on Drugs and Crime).

In order to advance and safeguard progress in critical developmental areas, international cooperation often leads to global conventions (e.g., the

6. Craig Murphy, *International Organization and Industrial Change: Global Governance Since 1850* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

7. David Mitrany, *A Working Peace System* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1966).

8. Craig Murphy and JoAnne Yates, *The International Organization for Standardization* (London: Routledge, 2009).

9. John Mathison, *Internet Governance: The New Frontier in Global Institutions* (London: Routledge, 2009).

10. Volker Rittberger and Bernhard Zangl, *International Organization: Polity, Politics and Policies* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

Montreal and Kyoto Protocols and the Stockholm Convention by UNEP; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and the most widely ratified agreement of all, UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child). The various human rights conventions are also part of these idealistic functions of UN cooperation. As ongoing negotiations on climate change illustrate, however, the development of new universal global regimes is a hazardous process that showcases the clashing perspectives and interests of member states.

While intergovernmental cooperation has resulted in a substantial number of conventions, part of their effectiveness depends on defining goals and ensuring compliance by member states. The Vienna Convention on ozone-depleting substances is a good example because it led to the Montreal Protocol and a dedicated funding mechanism to support the work of emission reduction, with UN organizations and the World Bank carrying out much of the work. In the area of health, the United Nations system (and WHO and UNICEF, in particular) has conducted successful campaigns to eradicate or control diseases, either of a chronic sort (e.g., smallpox, polio, tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS) or epidemics (e.g., SARS and avian flu).

Some other global conventions, such as those for women and children, have also instituted monitoring mechanisms through which member states are required to report on derogations from goals. The UNDS has helped to draw attention to human needs but has not necessarily been effective in encouraging imperative policy changes and compliance.

When going beyond the words of conventions into the actions of binding agreements, the UN's hands are tied, and its overall record is generally agreed to have been less than sterling. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the series of conferences of the parties (COPs) seeking agreement on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Although national parliaments work on the basis of majorities (sometimes of two-thirds of the membership, for important decisions), UN

proceedings work on consensus, effectively giving a veto to even the smallest states and driving the process to the lowest common denominator. As a result, on an issue as vital as climate change, member states do not feel under any duress if they find themselves in a minority.

The machinations of the COP are just the most eloquent current example of why alternative modes of international cooperation, or global governance, are needed to avoid UN-style inter-governmental gridlock. When the 2008–2009 economic and financial meltdown threatened Northern economies, the G7/8 expanded to the G20 at head-of-government level and agreed on a program of international stimulus.¹¹ The action demonstrated two things: the importance of crises in catalyzing change (the proposal to enlarge the G7/8 had been discussed for years) and the growing irrelevance of the UNDS in global economic governance (it had been almost completely left on the sidelines).

UN organizations can only do what member states approve and agree to fund. The late US diplomat Richard Holbrooke argued that blaming the United Nations for lousy performances was like blaming the hapless New York Knicks on Madison Square Garden, the arena where that poorly performing basketball team has played for decades. Holbrooke's metaphor applies to the UNDS as well because governments sometimes use the world organization's arena to demonstrate the necessary political will to formulate a policy or make a decision, but usually do not follow through.

The third type of cooperation task is the generation of public goods in the form of statistics, surveys, and studies. From the outset, the UN has collected statistics from its member governments, screened and processed them for robustness and comparability, and published regular compendiums on a wide range of subjects. The system of national accounts, for instance, was a major step forward.¹² Many organizations also publish annual surveys or reports on the "state of" their development domain (State of the World's Children from UNICEF, State

11. Andrew Cooper and Ramesh Thakur, *The Group of 20 (G20)* (London: Routledge: 2013).

12. Michael Ward, *Quantifying the World: UN Ideas and Statistics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

of the World's Cities from UN-Habitat, World Health Report from WHO, and so on). There is also extensive and often solid research from many parts of the UNDS.

The UN's public information goods have served the world well. Statistical compendiums have had privileged access to the statistics of national governments. The UN still plays an authoritative role in the estimation and projections of world population. It has also been a source of sound research on the state of the world, seen from the perspective of different development domains, and has contributed a host of essential ideas, including the important human development paradigm.¹³ But there has been no coalescence by the system around a set of development values—no recognizable “New York Consensus,” even around human development. Moreover, there is a plethora of alternative sources of high-quality development research and data, including the World Bank and numerous think tanks and university institutes.

The fourth type of UN development task consists of technical cooperation, which is the transfer of expertise (technical assistance, or TA) from richer to poorer countries and which expanded over time to include a host of capacity-building activities. However, United Nations TA was shrouded in controversy from the beginning. Postwar anti-welfare arguments favored loans over grants, particularly if the donor funds were to be channeled through a system that diluted control over the destination of aid. There were early efforts by the UN to encourage full or partial cost sharing with the beneficiary countries, but these attempts were actually opposed by some of the developed countries.¹⁴ The result was a donor-dominated system of patronage through which rich countries exerted their influence, which was manifest in various ways: through dominance in UNDS governance bodies, through the reserving of senior UN positions, and through earmarking donations by

purpose and destination. Indeed, multi-bilateral funding is seen by many as a sleight-of-hand move to finance bilateral priorities and avoid funding core (and more independent) activities by the UNDS.

Today, earmarked (“non-core”) contributions to UNDP and many other UN organizations from the traditional donors are substantially larger than their “core” contributions. In 2008, for instance, roughly 70 percent of contributions to the UNDS were earmarked.¹⁵ Thus, far from embracing the principles of multilateralism, the UN's most widespread and most visible form of assistance has increasingly become an adjunct of bilateral aid, following the agendas of donors rather than more objective perceptions of development needs.

A growing source of funding for the UNDS is other global multilateral funds (MLFs). The MLF that supports the goals of the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer funds UNDP, UNEP, and UNIDO as well as the World Bank. The Global Environment Facility (GEF), created in 1992, originally channeled funding through the World Bank, UNDP, and UNEP, but the number of recipients has since been broadened to include other organizations, both within and outside the UNDS.

In the last decade, major new multilateral funds have emerged in the field of health, and today it is estimated that there are as many as 90 if research and advocacy organizations are included.¹⁶ In 2000, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) was launched as a partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO, UNICEF, and the World Bank. The GAVI Alliance, as it is now known, has since expanded to include governments, the private sector (companies and philanthropists), and NGOs of various stripes. It counts 24 members on its board, drawn from the full range of alliance partners.

13. Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij, and Thomas G. Weiss, *UN Ideas That Changed the World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

14. David Blaloch, *Aid for Development* (London: Fabian Society, 1958).

15. Silke Weinlich, *Reforming Development Cooperation at the United Nations: An Analysis of Policy Position and Actions of Key States on Reform Options* (Bonn: DIE, 2011).

16. Paul Isenman and Alexander Shakow, “Donor Schizophrenia and Aid Effectiveness: The Role of Global Funds,” Practice Paper Volume 2010, no. 5 (Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, 2010).

Apart from the mingling of contributions from the private and public sectors, an original aspect of GAVI funding, initiated in 2003, is its use of bonds. Under a mechanism known as the International Finance Facility for Immunization (IFFIm), GAVI is authorized to issue “vaccine bonds.” The 10 contributing governments to the IFFIm include Brazil and South Africa. Another new multibillion-dollar source of health assistance outside the UNDS is the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (i.e., the “Global Fund,” or GF). Despite the urging from then UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, they were not given to the UN (WHO or UNAIDS) to administer.

The MLF, GEF, GAVI, and GF are all substantial funds managed separately (and governed differently) from the UNDS, thus continuing the proliferation of the multilateral system—in this case, all in Geneva and located in the same neighborhood as WHO. All four sources continue to channel funds through different parts of the UNDS. But the Gates Foundation and other sources of private financing for development have explicitly stated their unwillingness to establish new mechanisms within the UNDS because of concerns about perceived sloth and inadequate transparency.

The UNDS has been able to sustain and increase the volume of its technical cooperation activities because of growing earmarked contributions from rich-country donors and other multilateral organizations. The single largest donor to the UNDS today is the European Commission (EC).¹⁷ But since the EC is itself a multilateral agency, supported by most of Europe’s major donor countries, the funding is secondhand and channeled through the UNDS for implementation purposes. Thus, whether the funding is bilateral or multilateral, the UNDS has increasingly become—in its TA guise—less of a donor imparting assistance in accordance with its traditional mandates and more of an implementing tool of donors, enhancing the patronage function that was built into the system from the outset and further diluting the principles of independent multilateralism.

This reality is taking place along with the growing availability of funds, energy, and expertise from NGOs and corporations. And in terms of the relative “punch” from UN development cooperation, worker remittances and foreign direct investment also dwarf UNDS inputs.

CHALLENGE #3: VESTED INTERESTS AND LACK OF POLITICAL WILL

Most attempts at reforming the system have fallen short of their goals. Behind failure is the system’s third endemic problem: vested interests. For member states (the First UN), the reliance on consensus guarantees the lowest common denominator, or a system that is too friendly to fail. The main donor countries increasingly use parts of the system for steering their development interests. Developing countries enjoy the patronage of the UN, in all its forms, and consistently and uncritically back the continuing expansion of staffing and funds (or the flip side: resist streamlining and consolidation). Although the amounts may not be significant, especially in larger developing countries, resources from the UNDS are made available without strings. While donor and recipient states alike lack incentives for reform, secretariat staff (the Second UN) enjoy secure and well-remunerated employment and relish continuity and the security that comes from the guaranteed yearly funding for their organization’s line items in government budgets. While it is not impossible that a state eliminates funding for a particular agency—e.g., the United States, the United Kingdom, and Singapore for UNESCO in the 1980s, and the United States, Canada, and Israel in 2011—such a tactic is rare. In fact, even reductions are relatively infrequent. Inertia reigns supreme.

Yet the most recent attempt to conceptualize meaningful structural reform revealed a potential undercurrent of support for more radical change that increasingly needs to draw upon what should

17. “Analysis of the Funding of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System for 2009,” ECOSOC document E/2011/107, May 2011.

have become familiar to the reader as the “three United Nations”: governments (the First UN), international civil servants (the Second UN), and civil society and the private sector (the Third UN).¹⁸ In 2006, his last year in office, Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Deputy Secretary-General Mark Malloch Brown (that is, the two highest-ranking members of the Second UN) established the High-level Panel (HLP) on UN System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance, and the environment. The HLP was representative of the First UN: Co-chaired by three serving prime ministers (from Mozambique, Norway, and Pakistan), the panel also included three former or future heads of government (from Chile, Tanzania, and the United Kingdom). There were no representatives from the private sector or civil society (the Third UN), but the panel consulted them extensively.

To the reform minded, the HLP’s diagnosis had a familiar ring—indeed, echoing Sir Robert Jackson, whose classic 1969 report called UN’s work in development “often fragmented and weak” and “without a brain.”¹⁹ Its governance and funding arrangements “contributed to policy incoherence, duplication, and operational ineffectiveness across the system.” Furthermore, cooperation between organizations was “hindered by competition for funding, mission creep, and by outdated business practices.”²⁰

During its deliberations, some of the panel’s more innovative draft proposals were diluted under pressure from governments and UN organizations. For example, a group of 13 developed countries—including most of the major donors to the UNDS—called for shuttering the UN Conference on Trade and Development, which was opposed by the developing countries.²¹ The HLP’s recommendation to close the UN’s five regional commissions met

with a similar fate. However, some of the more modest recommendations have had some impact. The panel’s report, *Delivering as One* (DaO), contained 10 sets of recommendations, the first of which proposed a more unified and coherent UN structure at the country level (see Box 2). Given the fact (not acknowledged by the HLP) that the UN had successfully established 12 fully unified offices in Eastern Europe from 1992 to 1994, this was scarcely revolutionary. However, convergence in countries was one of the most actively pursued recommendations, even if it has fallen well behind its implementation targets. The HLP’s recommendation no. 9 has also been implemented more comprehensively. By the end of 2010, UN Women was established through a merger of four other programs—a first in the history of the UN because four institutions disappeared or were consolidated into a single agency.

For a report already weakened and watered down by compromised language, we give a score of two and a half out of 10 for results—disappointing at best. While some recommendations have been partially pursued, there has been no progress toward creating a “sustainable development board” and a post of development coordinator, both of which were intended to help unify the system globally.

The Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development called for upgrading UNEP and creating a “high-level political forum” on sustainable development. But both proposals fall short of the aspirations of the High-level Panel.

18. This concept first appeared in Thomas G. Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis, and Richard Jolly’s “The ‘Third’ United Nations,” *Global Governance* 15, no. 1 (2009): 123–42.

19. UNDP, *The Capacity of the UN Development System* (Geneva: UN, 1969), document DP/5.

20. United Nations, *Delivering as One*, Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence, *Delivering as One* (New York: UN, 2006), 10.

21. Jonas von Freiesleben, “System-wide Coherence,” in *Managing Change at the United Nations*, ed. Center for UN Reform Education (New York: Center for UN Reform, 2008).

BOX 2: HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON UN SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE, SCORECARD

	RECOMMENDATION	STATUS	SCORE
1.	Establishment of One United Nations at the country level, with one leader, one program, one budget and, where appropriate, one office (five One UN pilots initially; 20 by 2009; 40 by 2012).	Partially implemented. Below target number of pilot countries. No single UN budgets per country.	½
2.	Establishment of a Sustainable Development Board to oversee the One UN country programs.	Not implemented, even after discussion at Rio+20 Conference	0
3.	Appointment of a Development Coordinator, with responsibility for the performance and accountability of UN development activities.	Not implemented.	0
4.	Establishment of an independent task force to further eliminate duplication within the UN system and consolidate UN entities, where necessary.	Not implemented.	0
5.	Establishment of a Millennium Development Goals funding mechanism to provide multiyear funding for the One UN country programs as well as for agencies that are performing well.	Not implemented. (MDG Achievement Fund created as extension of Spanish bilateral aid).	0
6.	UN organizations committed to and demonstrating reform to receive full, multiyear core funding.	Multiyear core funding commitment by some donors.	½
7.	Enhancement of UN role in responding to humanitarian disasters and emergencies (several proposals).	Partially implemented.	½
8.	The UN Environment Programme to be upgraded and given real authority as the environmental policy pillar of the UN system (several proposals).	Not implemented. Under discussion at Rio+20 Conference, June 2012.	0
9.	Establishment of one dynamic UN entity focused on gender equality and women's empowerment.	Implemented in 2010.	1
10.	UN secretary-general, World Bank president, and IMF managing director to set up a process to review, update, and conclude formal agreements on their respective roles and relations at the global and country levels.	Not implemented.	0

Source: Secretary-General's High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence, *Delivering as One* (New York: UN, 2007); FUNDS project.

2. THE FUTURE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND THE FUNDS SURVEY

As indicated above, the decision to create UN Women in July 2010 was an encouraging institutional breakthrough and constitutes a precedent for other much-needed structural consolidation. Patiently negotiated over four years, it was a step forward and should help reduce the risk of duplication in an important and growing area of the UN's work. While no formal UN institution had previously been shuttered as an anachronism—including the Trusteeship Council, which has had no business since 1994—at least UN Women consolidated four previously weaker and autonomous units. It would have been an even more crucial precedent had the consolidation also folded in the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and avoided creating yet another governing body.

In other areas, the UN's limited reform efforts have scarcely diminished the system's problems. In 2012, an evaluation of the flagship DaO program was completed at the country level. Curiously (or not, given the UN's limited institutional memory), the evaluation made no reference to the unified UN offices that were created two decades earlier—the subsequent failure of which would have shined a spotlight on the most egregious aspects of agency rivalry.²² The evaluation found good progress in the eight pilot countries on “enhancing country ownership.” Everywhere else, progress was moderate or nonexistent, even though the initiative is mainly about process rather than structure. Tellingly, the report found that “since so many high-level systemic elements have not been changed, the marginal cost of enhanced coordination at country level is increasing. Only

significant systemic change could make country-level coordination easier and cheaper.”²³

Thus, country coordination problems have not diminished, and ironically they may have actually been exacerbated by DaO. The route to coherence at the country level has been via increasingly complex convergence—but not integration. Joint country projects, often with an obligatory minimum of UN organizations all working in parallel, have only added to the complexity of conceiving, approving, and implementing activities. And, given the seemingly unlimited UN appetite for the invention of elaborate coordination procedures, the real problems of effective delivery are subordinated to the tasks of getting the procedures to work. Ironically, convergence has led to higher, not lower, transaction costs—a concern that was the subject of further deliberation when hundreds of participants descended on Tirana in June 2012 for the fifth annual DaO review.

Most importantly, whatever changes have taken place were in the field and not in headquarters (HQ)—indeed, not necessarily with support or even active hostility from HQ. In short, and reading between the lines, the evaluation report does not praise DaO as an overall success but rather emphasizes that states should agree on more fundamental changes at HQ levels—and make sure individual organizations comply—for country-level coordination to produce better results.

Despite limited progress, the last half-dozen years amply demonstrate that the paths leading to a stronger, more cohesive, and relevant UN

22. When the UN established its own “unified offices” in most of the newly independent former Soviet republics in 1992, UNDP supplied the UN representatives in most cases (otherwise the deputies), and for two years the system successfully “delivered as one” at the country level. The experiment soon unraveled, however. Almost from the outset, individual UN agencies lobbied hard with government representatives in New York to undermine UNDP's primacy and allow them to establish their own representative offices. By 1994, unified offices gave way to the more unwieldy (and far more costly) country teams. In UN circles, unified offices were almost never spoken of again because of the dissension they had caused. It boded ill for renewed attempts to achieve more coherence at the country level.

23. “Independent Evaluation of the Lessons Learned from *Delivering as One*,” Final Draft Report (New York: April 2012), Lessons 14, 24.

resemble those to hell and are paved with good intentions. DaO demonstrated that meaningful and necessary reforms are in the heads of those who lead governments and secretariats. The obstacles to change are in the cumbersome processes of first deliberation and then implementation, which give full rein to entrenched interests or at least do not attenuate the worst inclinations to protect turf. We should not be surprised: These are features of all major institutional reform. In the case of the UN, conservatism takes comfort in numbers. Original ideas become engulfed in compromise and due process.

A longer-brewing problem is the need to create more synergies in post-conflict and transition countries between, on the one hand, the overall UN system's peacekeeping, human rights, and peace-building capacities and, on the other hand, the capacities of the UNDS.

If more dramatic ideas about reform are to prevail, reform needs champions—and not just at the most senior levels of governments and secretariats, but everywhere. The proposition driving this research project is the following: The more such champions, the better the odds for change. The expansion of the embrace of the Third UN in multilateralism is an essential step in enhancing the salience and potential impact of the UN inter-governmental machinery.

To test the depth of concern for change in the UNDS, the Future of the UNDS (FUNDS) project of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies conducted two global perception surveys of the UNDS in 2010 and 2012. In each case, there were more than 3,200 respondents from around the world, yielding more than 6,500 separate responses. The 2012 survey was more detailed than the 2010 version, but there was a striking similarity in responses. This second section continues with the details of the survey population and then the findings of the most recent survey as the basis for both substantial and substantive change in the UNDS, incremental and longer term.

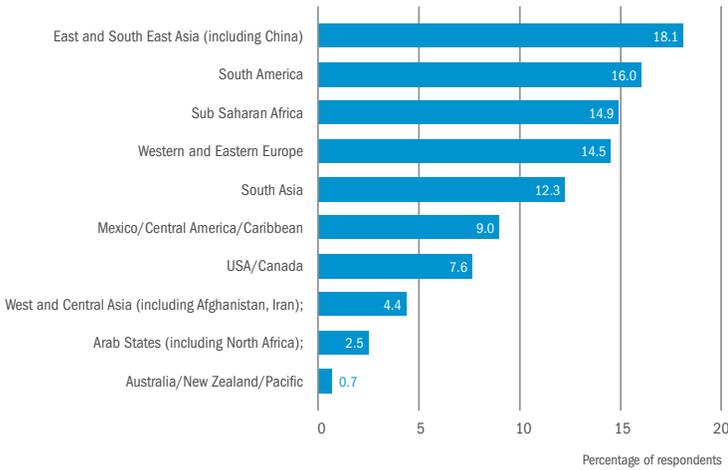
SURVEY POPULATION

The 2012 survey had 3,345 respondents (about 14 percent of almost 26,000) and was based on a trilingual questionnaire (English, French, and Spanish). It was one of the largest global inquiries on the UNDS in recent years and was designed and conducted by Dalberg Research, a Copenhagen-based public-opinion consultancy with substantial experience working with the UN. There was no reason to pull punches or disguise findings, as was the case in separate surveys conducted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).²⁴

The FUNDS respondents came from all regions (see Figure 2). Twenty-two percent were members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC, from the North) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and 78 percent were non-DAC countries (i.e., the global South). The BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China), as well as middle-income countries (including Mexico, Peru, and Turkey), accounted for nearly one-fifth of respondents. The three most represented countries were India, the United States, and Peru. More than 10 percent of respondents were located in the main seats of the UNDS (New York, Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi, Addis Ababa, and Bangkok).

24 <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/2012qcpr.htm>

FIGURE 2: REGIONAL LOCATION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS



All major categories of stakeholders were reasonably well represented (See Figure 3): Forty-one percent of respondents came from the public sector (national governments and intergovernmental organizations, including the UN) and 59 percent of respondents from the non-state sector (private sector, NGO, and academia). In terms of current occupations, the breakdown of the “three UNs” was as follows: First UN, 25 percent; Second UN, 11 percent; and Third UN, 64 percent. Given career mobility, it is worth noting that almost one-third of respondents had worked for the UN at some stage.

FIGURE 3: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS



STRUCTURAL DISTINCTIONS AND TIMING

In terms of institutional structures, the data from the survey are best organized under three categories: possible short-term, medium-term, and longer-term changes.

SHORT-TERM CHANGES

The survey sought feedback from respondents regarding their views about six organizational challenges facing the UNDS today: internal organizational structures; access to competencies; ineffectiveness; emergence of alternative mechanisms to the UN; lack of financial resources; and lack of adaptability. The survey found that all these options were considered significant challenges. The only exception was recorded by UN respondents regarding their views concerning access to specialized competencies, which suggests a lack of confidence by the UN in the qualities of its own expertise. The two priorities by occupational and geographical group were lack of financial resources and internal organizational structures. The third priority was the emergence of alternative (non-UN) mechanisms and ineffectiveness. Interestingly, those working for the UN ranked ineffectiveness as the third most important challenge (see Tables 1 and 2). The areas in which the UN was judged to be most and least effective are analyzed further below.

Respondents from developed and developing countries agreed on the top two priorities. But developed countries listed ineffectiveness and emergence of alternative (non-UN) mechanisms as the third and fourth most important challenges, while developing countries listed emergence of alternative (non-UN) mechanisms and lack of suppleness or adaptability.

TABLE 1: MOST IMPORTANT SHORT-TERM CHALLENGES BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

	FIRST UN	SECOND UN	THIRD UN			
	GOVERNMENTS	UN	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	PRIVATE SECTOR	ACADEMIA
PRIORITIES	Financial resources	Financial resources	Organizational structures	Organizational structures	Financial resources	Financial resources
	Organizational structures	Organizational structures	Financial resources	Financial resources	Organizational structures	Organizational structures
	Emergence of alternative (non-UN) mechanisms	Ineffectiveness	Ineffectiveness	Ineffectiveness	Emergence of alternative (non-UN) mechanisms	Emergence of alternative (non-UN) mechanisms

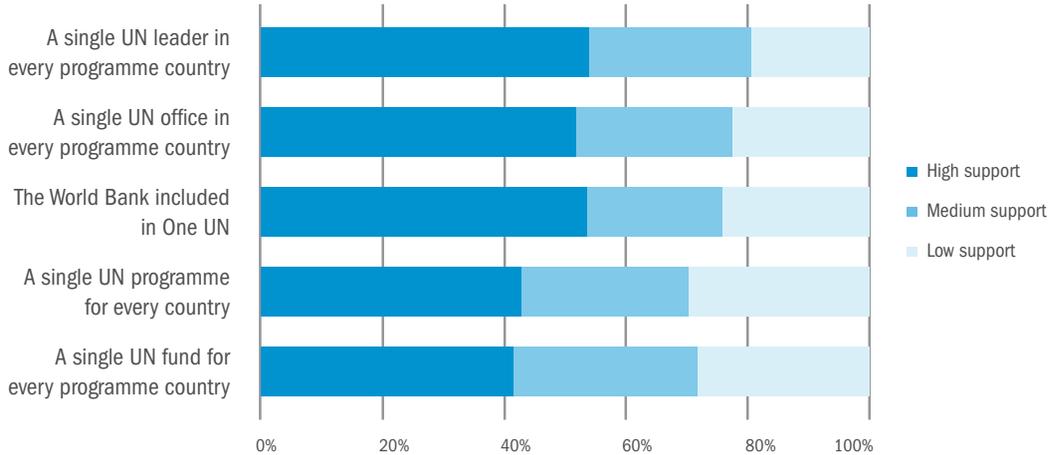
TABLE 2: MOST IMPORTANT SHORT-TERM CHALLENGES, BY NORTH/SOUTH GROUP

	NORTH	SOUTH
PRIORITIES	Organizational structures	Financial resources
	Access to competences	Organizational structures
	Ineffectiveness	Emergence of alternative (non-UN) mechanisms
	Emergence of alternative (non-UN) mechanisms	Lack of adaptability

A second set of structural issues concerned support for convergence at the country and global levels. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for: a single UN leader in every program country; a single UN office in every program country; a single UN program for every country; a single UN fund for every country; and the World Bank Group included as One UN.

The DaO principles provide one way to measure the quality of UNDS programs in selected countries, and they received high marks overall: There was high or medium support of 72 to 80 percent for the four main aspects of the concept—one leader, one office, one program, and one fund—as well as the desirability of including the World Bank in One UN (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: DAO AND ENHANCING PERFORMANCE



Respondents made one thing very clear: designating a single country leader for development is essential. Two aspects in particular were rated as the highest priority: a single UN leader in every program country (81 percent) and a single UN office (77 percent). These desirable outcomes contrast distinctly with current realities on the ground. So far there is a single leader in only one pilot country, Cape Verde. The single office, or “UN House,” has been established in 59 countries, but in very few cases has this measure actually meant merged administrative services. In some countries, where clustering is considered to bring additional security risks, the UN has moved away from the “One Office” concept.

Governments (First UN) put the single UN office at the top of their priorities (see Table 3). Otherwise, like UN staff of the Second UN, their preferences

were similar to the overall pattern. The main difference by occupational groups was in the priority attached to including the World Bank Group in the “One UN concept”: International organizations put the priority lower, and academia put it higher.

For respondents from the global North, incorporating the World Bank Group was the third highest priority, while for the South it was the second highest—clearly a notion with profound potential impact on the nature of the delivery and scope of the UNDS (see Table 4). Fully 50 percent of respondents in developing countries gave the proposal high support. Different reasons may be attributed for this preference, but the comments of respondents indicated a desire for the UN and World Bank to play distinct but more coordinated roles (see Box 3).

TABLE 3: SUPPORT FOR DAO PRINCIPLES AT COUNTRY LEVEL BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

	FIRST UN	SECOND UN	THIRD UN			
	GOVERNMENTS	UN	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	PRIVATE SECTOR	ACADEMIA
TOP PRIORITIES	Single UN Office	Single UN leader per country	World Bank included in One UN			
	Single UN leader per country	Single UN Office	Single UN Office	Single UN Office	Single UN Office	Single UN leader per country
	World Bank included in One UN	World Bank included in One UN	Single UN program per country	World Bank included in One UN	World Bank included in One UN	Single UN Office
	Single UN program per country	Single UN program per country	Single UN fund per country	Single UN fund per country	Single UN program per country	Single UN program per country
	Single UN fund per country	Single UN fund per country	World Bank included in One UN	Single UN program per country	Single UN fund per country	Single UN fund per country

TABLE 4: SUPPORT FOR DAO PRINCIPLES AT COUNTRY LEVEL BY NORTH/SOUTH GROUP

	NORTH	SOUTH
PRIORITIES	Single UN leader per country	Single UN leader per country
	Single UN Office	World Bank included in One UN
	World Bank included in One UN	Single UN Office

BOX 3: COMMENTS ON DAO

“Create a unified UN Development System structure [allowing agencies to continue based on thematic area], with a single set of administrative and financial norms, a single information system, a single program at the country level, and an internationally respected development figure as its president.”

“Inclusion and enhancement of organizations like World Bank and IMF would turn out to be more fruitful in bringing about more holistic development efforts.”

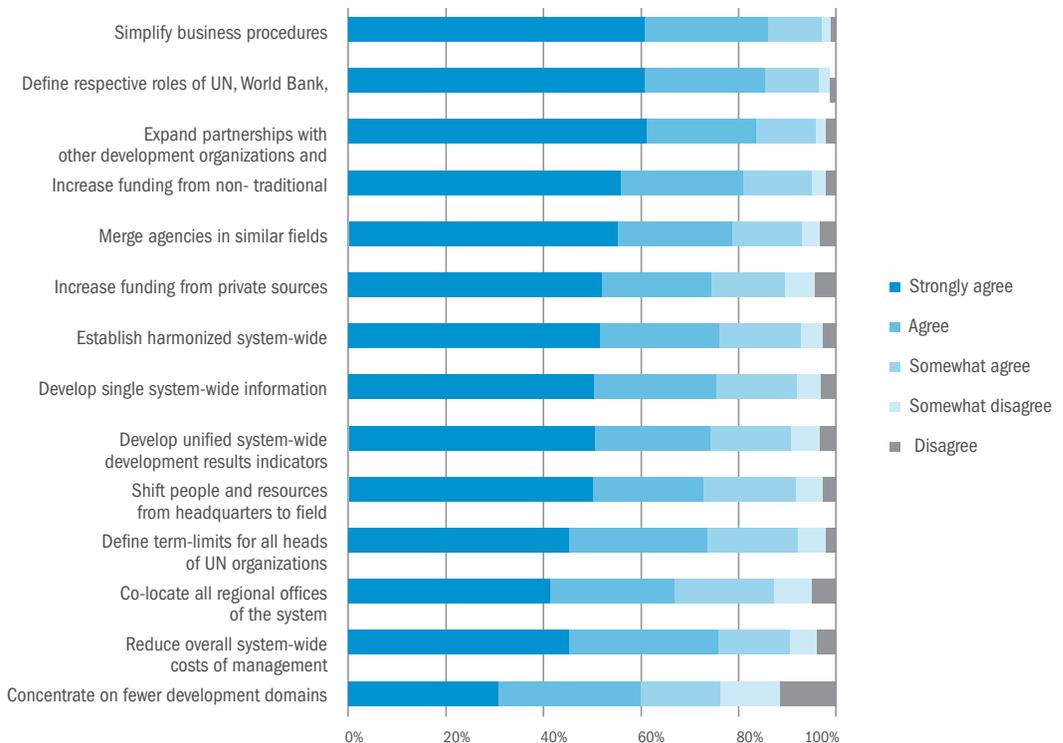
“Apply Delivering as One model in all countries with UN presence.”

MEDIUM-TERM CHANGES

Looking ahead, respondents were asked about desirable structural changes to be considered over the next five years. A total of 14 options were considered, and almost all were strongly supported (see Figure 5). The universal support for change of any or all varieties suggests the avid thirst for it.

A plea for less bureaucracy was a powerful message. For the respondent population as a whole, the top three priorities were the simplification of business procedures; defining the respective roles of the United Nations, World Bank, and IMF at the country level; and expanding partnerships with NGOs and the private sector. There was support for the merger of agencies in similar fields, but less support for reducing the number of development domains. There was less strong support for the co-location of all UN regional offices (see Boxes 4 and 5).

FIGURE 5: MEDIUM-TERM STRUCTURAL PRIORITIES



BOX 4: COMMENTS ON UN BUREAUCRACY

“Harmonize business practices among agencies and simplify bureaucratic procedures that slow the UN down.”

“Streamline organization structure and cut out the waste. Utilize NGO capacity more.”

“As someone who works for a multilateral, it is amazing to me that even amongst all us large, bureaucratic global entities, the UN has the worst reputation and track record of all on administrative inefficiencies.”

“Reduce the amount of bureaucratic procedures by decentralization.”

“Reduce transaction costs—not necessarily financial, but in terms of the extremely long financial disbursement and procurement procedures that significantly reduce the ability of the office to implement its planned activities in a timely and efficient manner.”

“Incorporate a shift in management efficiency to ensure that staff is motivated to deliver on expected outcomes and better manage funds, and to have all UN agencies working together towards a single delivery outcome.”

“Eliminate/reduce the perception that most of the UN funds are taken up by UN staff and their activities to the detriment of the recipients.”

“Bringing down management, staff, and overhead costs through greater application of technology (reduction of nontechnical staff) is going to be [the] key factor for survival and expansion of UN technical cooperation assistance programs.”

“UN must have a managerial accountability system to ensure results.”

“Reduce running costs; replace wasteful administrative practices with those better adapted to each domain. Increase the technical competence of UN staff, and reduce the more administrative and diplomatic aspects of their work. Improve staff management so as to retain those who are more competent and motivated.”

TABLE 5: MEDIUM-TERM STRUCTURAL PRIORITIES BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

	FIRST UN	SECOND UN	THIRD UN			
	GOVERNMENTS	UN	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	PRIVATE SECTOR	ACADEMIA
TOP PRIORITIES	Define roles of UN, WB and IMF	Simplify business procedures	Simplify business procedures	Define roles of UN, WB and IMF	Expand partnerships	Define roles of UN, WB and IMF
	Simplify business procedures	Expand partnerships	Expand partnerships	Simplify business procedures	Simplify business procedures	Simplify business procedures
	Expand partnerships	Increase funding from nontraditional sources	Define roles of UN, WB and IMF	Expand partnerships	Define roles of UN, WB and IMF	Expand partnerships
	Increase funding from nontraditional sources	Define roles of UN, WB and IMF	Merge agencies in similar fields	Increase funding from nontraditional sources	Increase funding from nontraditional sources	Merge agencies in similar fields
	Develop single system-wide information and communications platform	Merge agencies in similar fields	Define term limits for all heads of UN organizations	Merge agencies in similar fields	Merge agencies in similar fields	Increase funding from nontraditional sources
	Establish harmonized system-wide independent evaluation system	Reduce overall system-wide costs of management	Increase funding from nontraditional sources	Establish harmonized system-wide independent evaluation system	Increase funding from private sources	Increase funding from private sources
	Increase funding from private sources	Increase funding from private sources	Develop single system-wide information and communications platform	Shift people and resources from headquarters to field	Establish harmonized system-wide independent evaluation system	Develop single system-wide information and communications platform
	Merge agencies in similar fields	Develop single system-wide information and communications platform	Increase funding from private sources	Develop single system-wide information and communications platform	Reduce overall system-wide costs of management	Reduce overall system-wide costs of management

TABLE 6: MEDIUM-TERM STRUCTURAL PRIORITIES BY NORTH/SOUTH GROUP

	NORTH	SOUTH
PRIORITIES	Simplify business procedures	Simplify business procedures
	Expand partnerships	Expand partnerships
	Increase funding from nontraditional sources	Define roles of UN, WB and IMF
	Define roles of UN, WB and IMF	Increase funding from nontraditional sources
	Merge agencies in similar fields	Development domains agencies in similar fields
	Reduce overall system-wide costs of management	Establish harmonized system-wide independent evaluation system
	Shift people and resources from headquarters to field	Increase funding from private sources
	Establish harmonized system-wide independent evaluation system	

Governments (First UN) placed a relatively higher priority on defining the respective roles of the UN, World Bank Group, and IMF, and on a UN-wide information and communication system (see Table 5). They placed less priority on the merger of agencies than on the Second UN respondents themselves, who were less favorable to system-wide evaluation. Otherwise, there were broadly similar preferences across occupational groups. The main exception was the lower preference of NGOs for private sources of UN funding.

Between respondents from the global North (DAC) and global South (non-DAC), there was a striking similarity of responses (see Table 6). The top two priorities, simplify business procedures and expand partnerships, were identical. Those from industrialized

countries attached relatively more importance to increases in funding from nontraditional sources, while those from developing countries more strongly favored private sector funding. The least support was for the UN to concentrate on fewer development domains (see Figure 6).

Respondents from developing countries feel stronger about reform than those in industrialized ones, and Figure 7 summarizes these responses. The five main priorities for medium-term change are shown in the top right of the diagram. The fact that the large majority of favored changes lie above the 45 degree line (bottom left to top right) reveals that respondents in the South are distinctly more in favor of reform than those in the North.

FIGURE 6: MEDIUM-TERM STRUCTURAL PRIORITIES (DAC AND NON-DAC COUNTRIES)

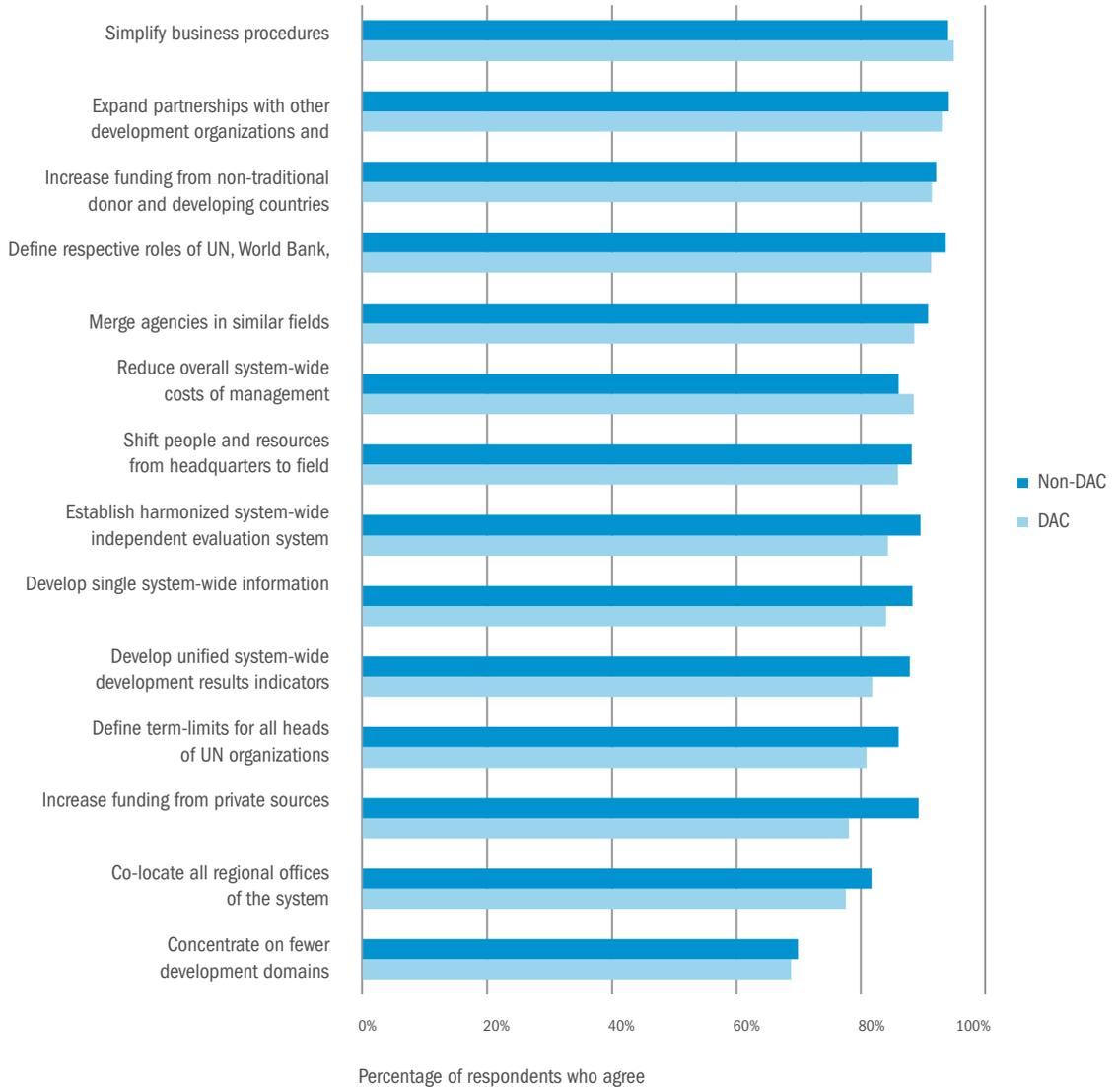
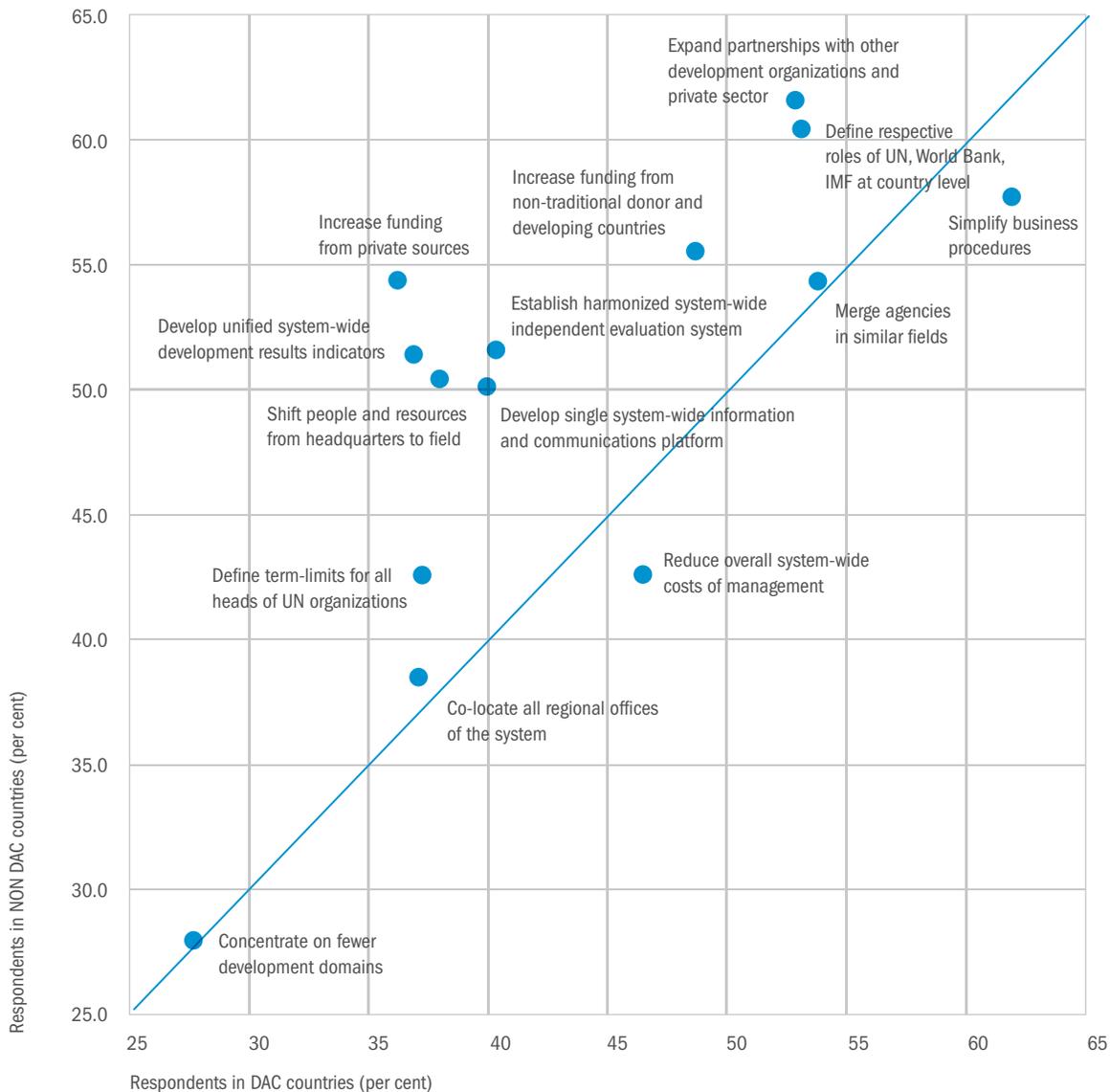


FIGURE 7: NORTH AND SOUTH VIEWS ON MEDIUM-TERM CHANGES



BOX 5: COMMENTS ON UN CONSOLIDATION

“Strengthen the core agencies and merge agencies with overlapping mandates.”

“Streamline the whole structure of the UN. You have too many agents and many of them don’t do much of anything, even as they live out lavish lifestyles. Moreover, the UN should be completely independent from other organizations, such as the World Bank and the IMF.”

“More communication, even between divisions within agencies. Lots of work is being done twice [or three or five times], even in the same office building. There really needs to be better defined mandates, perhaps some merging/reshuffling of agencies to avoid duplication.”

“Increase efficiency and avoid duplication among agencies—which would also remove the “competition” among different agencies and align the mandates of the agencies [offering a clear mapping of who is doing what is required].”

“Eliminate agency redundancy, focusing on reducing the ‘general’ nature of the UNDP [perhaps returning to the way things were up until 1994]. Integrate more regional offices, incorporating a general overview [but not direct control] from the respective regional commission.”

“Clearly defining mandates to avoid overlapping and more coordination. Keep only the most important agencies that by their nature could not be objectively covered by governments or private sector.”

“Given better capabilities in other parts of the international development system [e.g., IMF, World Bank, regional development banks], the UN should exit from all activities that these agencies undertake. The UN should then focus on what it can do best: building consensus, keeping peace, raising visibility on global issues, and the like. Get out of other areas of direct operations.”

“There are too many competing agencies competing for funds from the same donors to fulfill each agency mandate. This leads to inefficient and ineffective program design and implementation, and increases transaction costs.”

“The UN needs to build coordinated—but less hierarchical—missions, where employees in the field can more easily affect change and improve efficiency.”

“Reduce intra-UN agency overlaps; e.g., there should be a single, unified, and coordinated approach to issues in one country.”

“Reduction in the number of agencies. Put all the regional entities of the system under one roof. Encourage funding from nontraditional donors as well as developing countries. Define the roles of the UN, World Bank, and IMF in each country.”

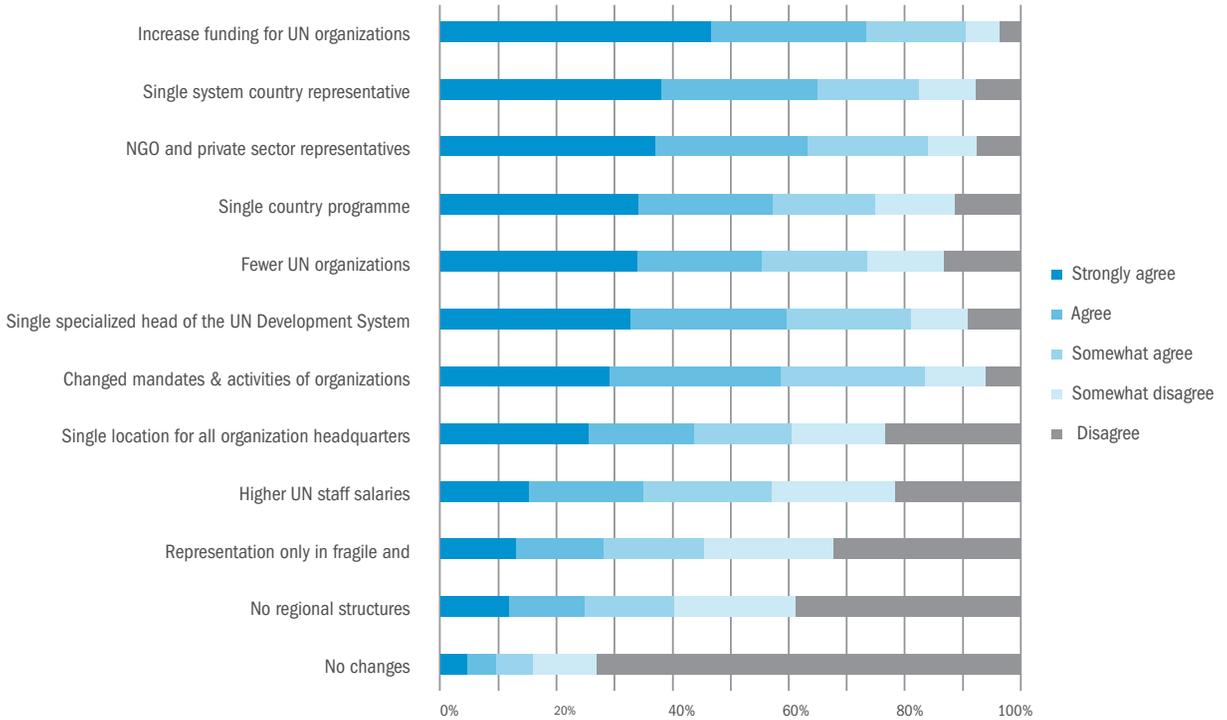
LONGER-TERM CHANGES

In an attempt to tease out more substantial ideas about making change in the UNDS happen, respondents were asked to consider 12 desirable longer-term structural changes by 2025 (see Figure 8). Overall, more than 80 percent agreed on the importance of the following five: increased funding for UN organizations; a single UNDS country representative; NGO and private sector representation in UN governing bodies; a single specialized head of the UNDS; and changed mandates and activities of UNDS organizations. A possible shortcoming of

the survey could be the absence of truly out-of-the-box options, or transformational change.

All occupational groups attached importance to increased funding. Interestingly, the First UN (governments) put a relatively high priority on representation of NGOs and the private sector in UN governing bodies (see Table 7), a preference expressed by developing country respondents as we see below. The Second UN’s respondents also listed “fewer UN organizations” as a high priority.

FIGURE 8: DESIRABLE FUNDS CHANGES BY 2025



More funding but fewer organizations would be the short summary of findings. The differences between responses from developed and developing countries on desired long-term changes were marked (see Table 8 and Figure 9) and perhaps contained important insights underlying tactics and strategies for making change happen. Respondents from the global North and South agreed about the need for increased funding and for a single UNDS country representative. In the case of developed countries, increased funding was linked to fewer UN organizations, whereas this was not a priority in the South. Indeed, as indicated earlier, comments from respondents in the global South suggest that any reduction in UN machinery or funding is interpreted, almost

viscerally, as yet another indication of Northern indifference or hostility. However, respondents from both the global South and North enumerated changed mandates as a priority. A high priority for the global South, but not for the North, was the single specialized head of the UNDS. For Southern respondents, and perhaps counter to conventional wisdom, NGO and private sector representation in UN governing bodies was a higher priority than for counterparts in the North.

The other areas in which the South was significantly more supportive than the North included higher UN staff salaries, no regional structures, and representation limited to fragile states. There was limited support for no changes by 2025.

FIGURE 9: DESIRABLE UNDS CHANGES 2025, NORTH AND SOUTH

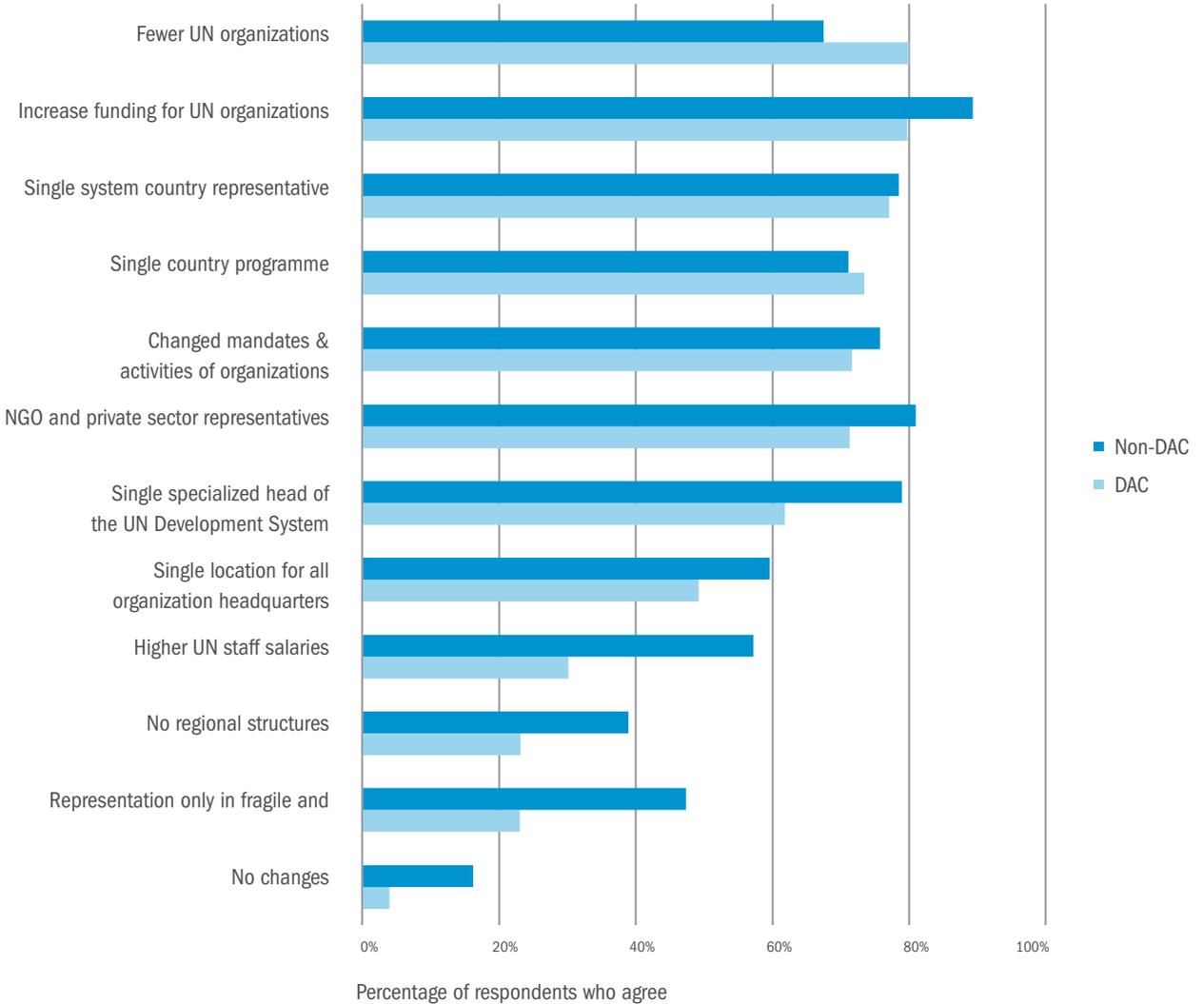


TABLE 7: LONG-TERM STRUCTURAL PRIORITIES (UP TO 2025) BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

	FIRST UN	SECOND UN	THIRD UN			
	GOVERNMENTS	UN	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	PRIVATE SECTOR	ACADEMIA
TOP PRIORITIES	Increased funding for UN organizations	Increased funding for UN organizations	Fewer UN organizations	NGO and private sector representation in governing bodies	Increased funding for UN organizations	Increased funding for UN organizations
	Single UNDS country representative	Single UNDS country representative	Single UNDS country representative	Increased funding for UN organizations	Single UNDS country representative	NGO and private sector representation in governing bodies
	Single specialized head of UNDS	Single country program	Increased funding for UN organizations	Single UNDS country representative	NGO and private sector representation in governing bodies	Single specialized head of UNDS
	NGO and private sector representation in governing bodies	Fewer UN organizations	NGO and private sector representation in governing bodies	Single specialized head of UNDS	Single country program	Single UNDS country representative
	Single country program	NGO and private sector representation in governing bodies	Single specialized head of UNDS	Fewer UN organizations	Single specialized head of UNDS	Single country program
	Changed mandates and activities of organizations	Changed mandates and activities of organizations	Single location for all organization headquarters	Changed mandates and activities of organizations	Changed mandates and activities of organizations	Changed mandates and activities of organizations

TABLE 8: LONG-TERM STRUCTURAL PRIORITIES (UP TO 2025) BY NORTH/SOUTH

	NORTH	SOUTH
PRIORITIES	Fewer UN organizations	Increased funding for UN organizations
	Increased funding for UN organizations	NGO and private sector representation on governing bodies
	Single UNDS country representative	Single specialized head of UNDS
	Single country program	Single UNDS country representative
	Changed mandates and activities of organizations	Changed mandates and activities of organizations
	NGO and private sector representation on governing bodies	Single country program

RELEVANCE

The survey asked respondents for their opinions about the “relevance” of different UN organizations. For this questionnaire, the term referred to the importance of each organization in both advocacy and solving actual development problems. Respondents were asked to declare their familiarity with the UNDS organizations, and the ranking was based on the answers of those who declared themselves relatively better versed on particular organizations. Overall, the different organizations were ranked as shown in Figure 10. By a significant margin, the two agencies judged most “relevant” to the UN’s development mission were WHO and UNICEF. At the other end of the scale, seven agencies, including three of the regional commissions, fell below a 50 percent rating.

FIGURE 10: RELEVANCE OF UNDS ORGANIZATIONS FOR TODAY'S PROBLEMS

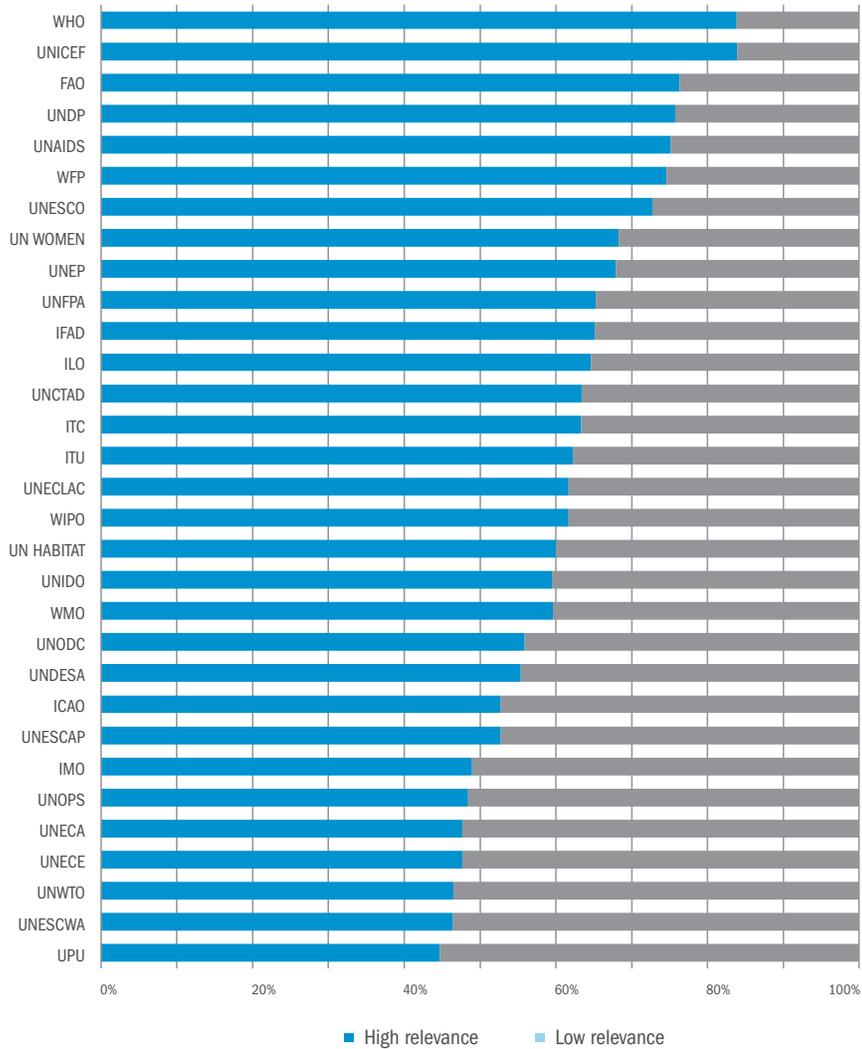


Figure 11 reflects the views of the First UN about its own UNDS. Again, WHO and UNICEF were considered the most developmentally relevant. Four of the five regional commissions had low relevance, the exception being UNECLAC. In West Asia, UNESCWA in particular received a very low relevance rating.

The Second UN showed the widest variation in perceptions of relevance (see Figure 12), probably reflecting the fact that a large majority of UN staff members hold quite firm opinions about the performance of colleagues and are therefore the harshest critics. Ten agencies (one third of the total) were considered more irrelevant than relevant, including four of the five regional commissions. At the same time, the Second UN was very highly supportive of UNICEF, WHO, and WFP.

FIGURE 11: GOVERNMENT PERCEPTIONS OF RELEVANCE OF UNDS ORGANIZATIONS

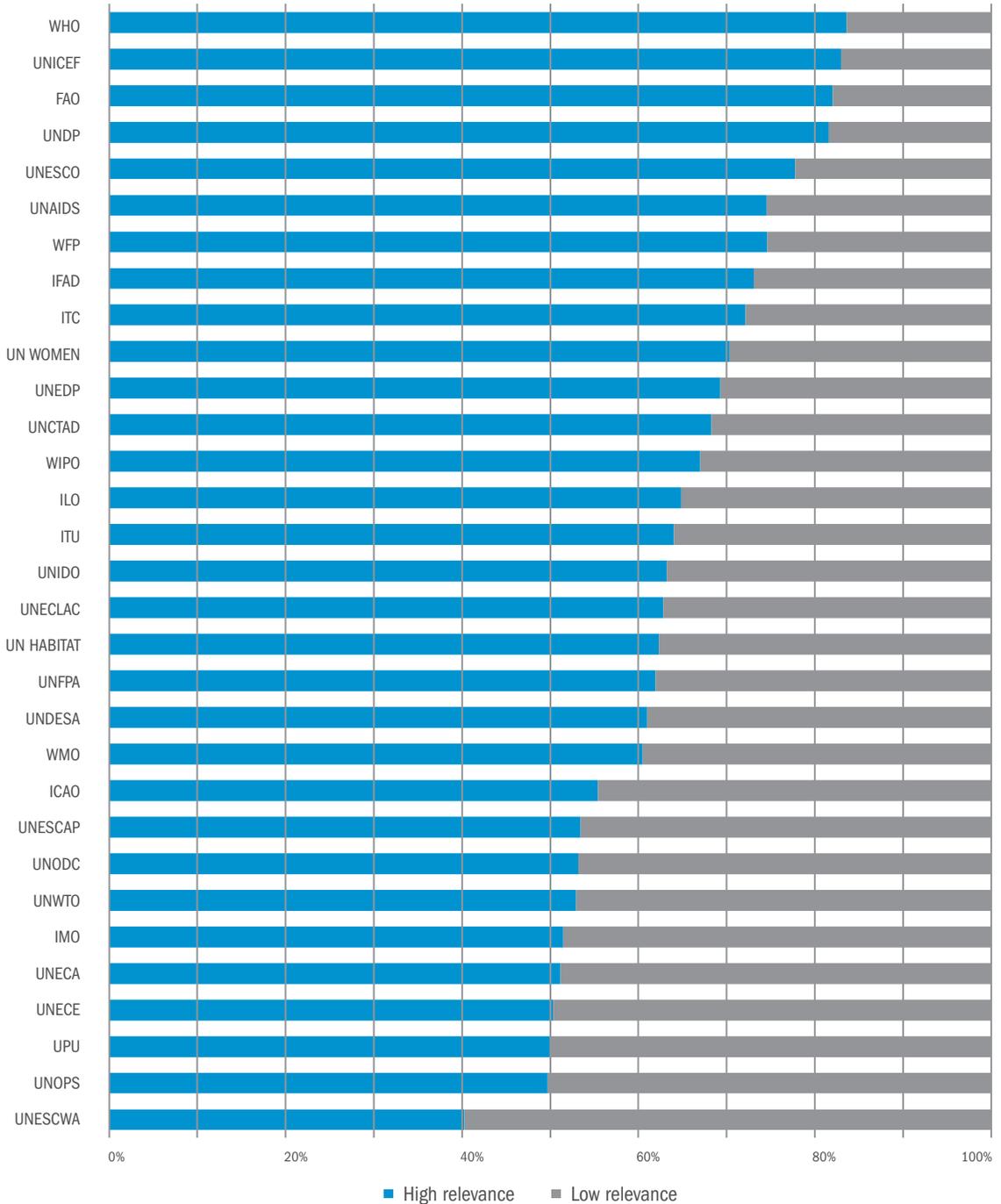


FIGURE 12: UN STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF RELEVANCE OF UNDS ORGANIZATIONS

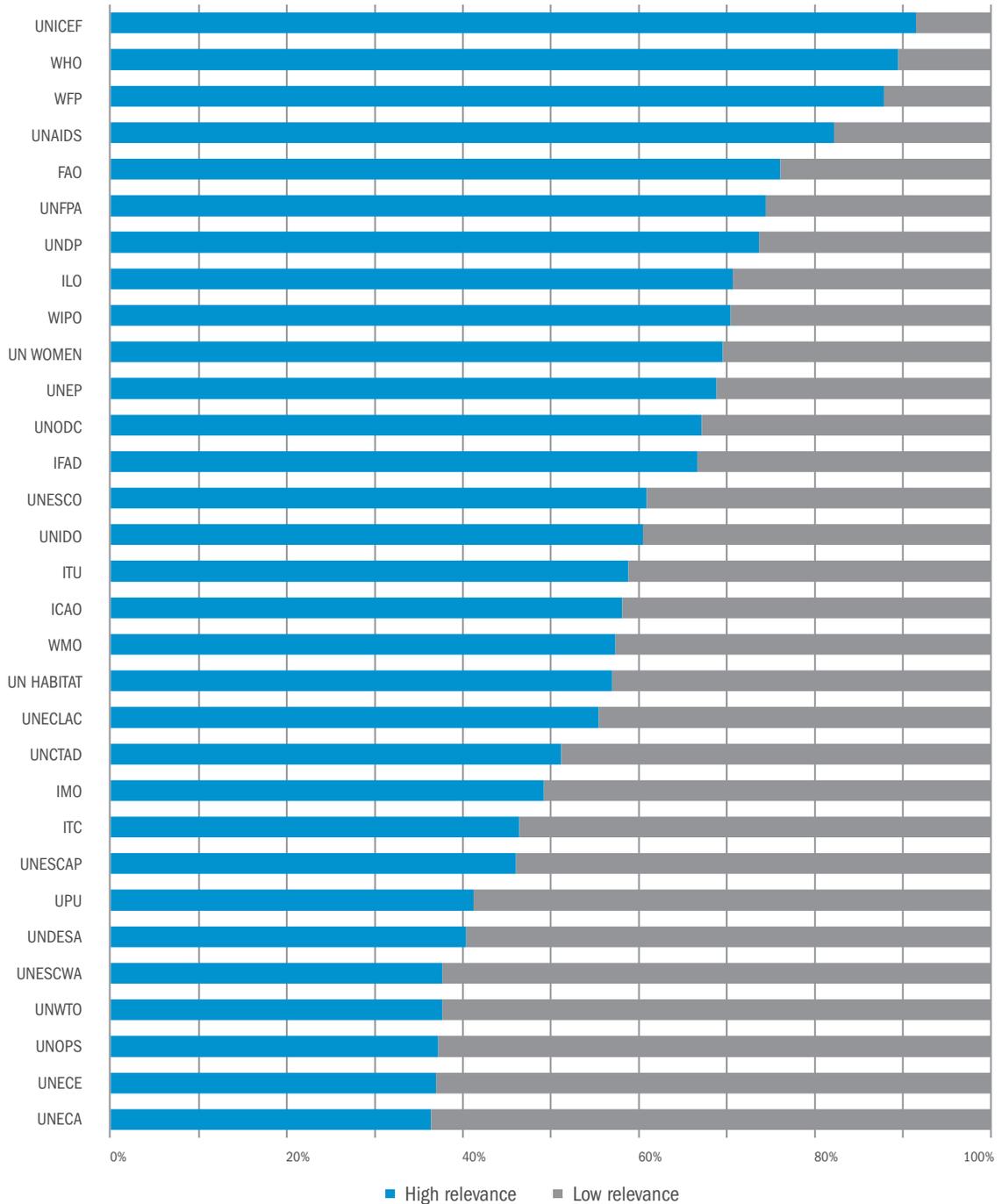
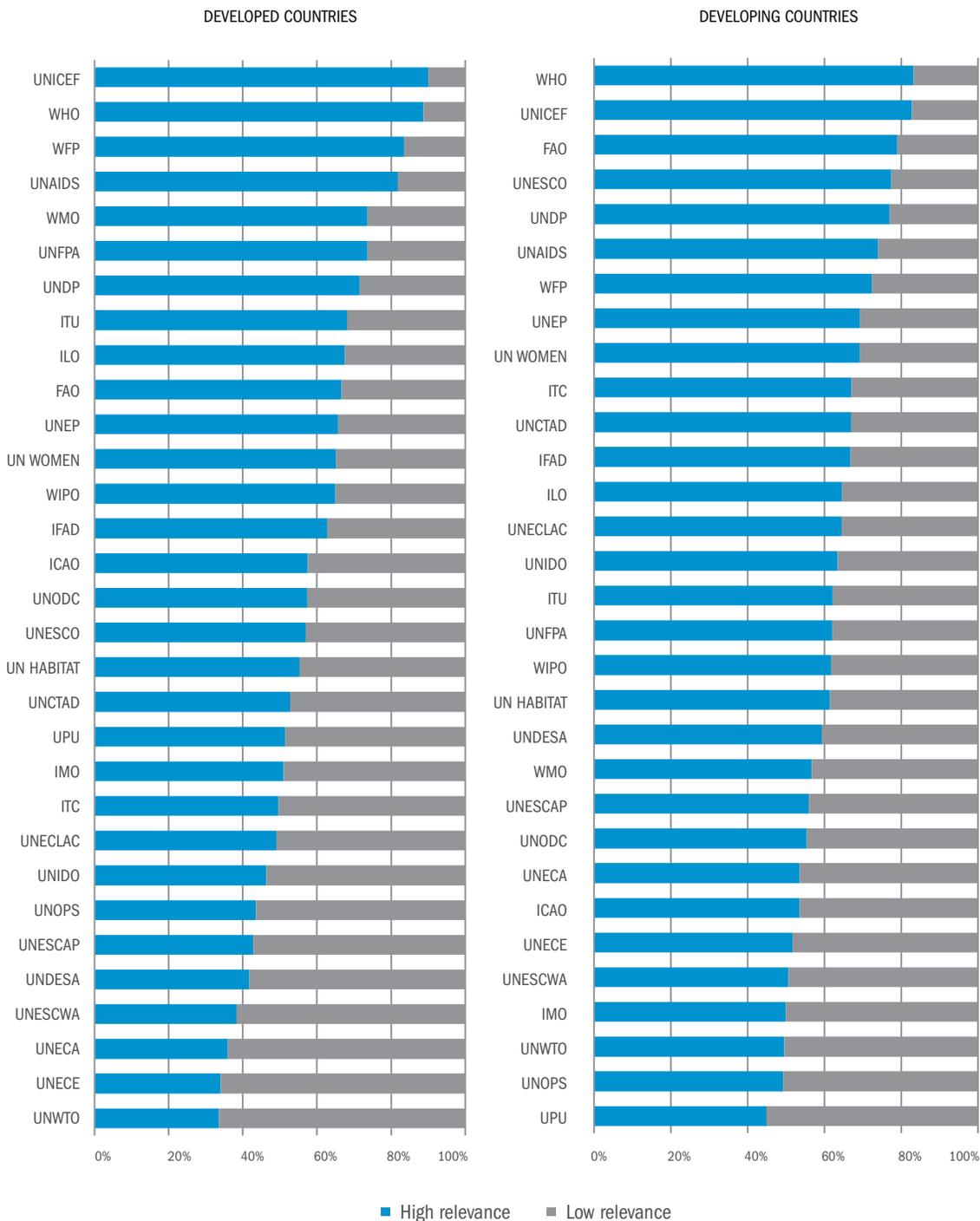


FIGURE 13: RELEVANCE OF UN ORGANIZATIONS, VIEWS FROM THE NORTH AND GLOBAL SOUTH



Disaggregating the opinions of the global South and North (again, among respondents declaring themselves to be familiar with designated UN organizations), the rankings show distinct differences for some organizations (see Figure 13). While the top two organizations were still UNICEF and WHO, the five regional commissions ranked low by developed-country respondents were ranked higher by those from developing countries. More respondents in developing countries than in developed countries also considered many other organizations significantly more relevant—including FAO, UNESCO, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNIDO, and ITC. Organizations judged notably less relevant by developing countries included the regulatory agencies (ITU, WMO, ICAO, IMO, WIPO, and UPU) as well as UNFPA (17th instead of 6th), WMO (21st instead of fifth), UNAIDS, UNEP, and UNODC. In the latter case, a possible interpretation of such differences is that developing countries tend to count more relevant those organizations over which they consider to have more influence and less relevant those that they perceive to be more strongly influenced by donors. And, depending on their economy and stage of development, developing countries are likely to emphasize such “harder” and more productive sectors as agriculture, industry, and trade. Meanwhile, the North responds more readily and enthusiastically to emergencies, extreme poverty, and population, so WFP, UNAIDS, UNDP, and UNFPA fare well in ratings there.

EFFECTIVENESS

Relevance and effectiveness are not always linked. Agencies can be considered highly relevant in what they do, but not effective in doing it—or vice versa, doing less essential and pertinent work well. Respondents were asked to characterize three types of effectiveness: by domain; in terms of factors affecting performance; and across functions.

DEVELOPMENT DOMAINS

The survey also asked respondents to judge the effectiveness of the UNDS in different domains. Overall, there was a wide and striking range of perceptions (see Figure 14). The UNDS was considered to be most effective in the “softer” social areas of health, human rights, education, and gender, but least effective in services and tourism, drug control, and transportation (corresponding closely with the results of the 2010 survey).

FIGURE 14: EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDS IN DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT DOMAINS

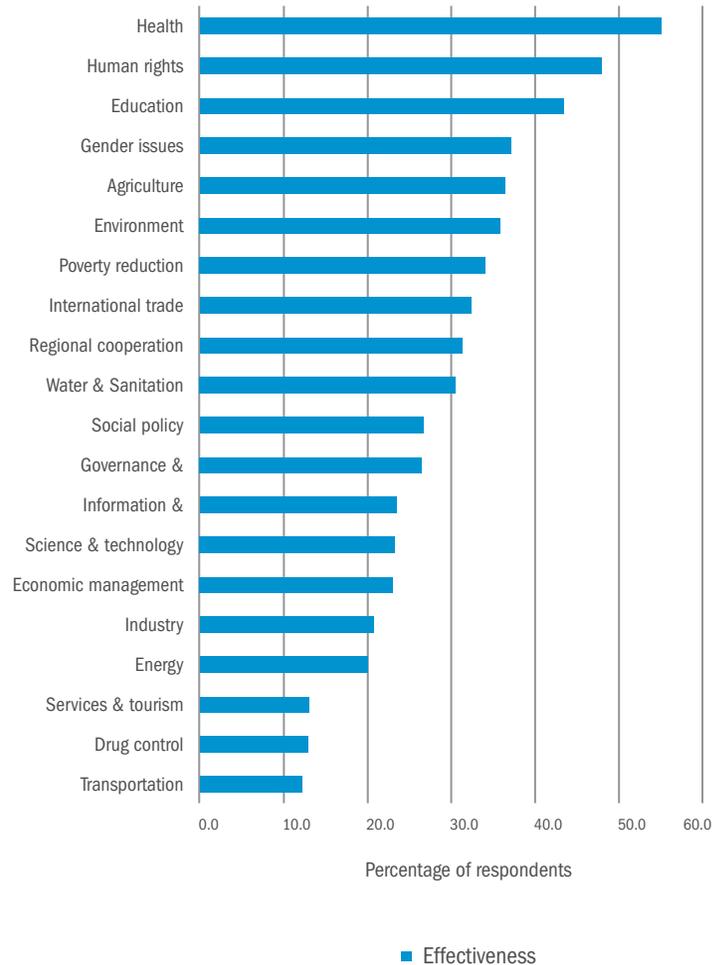
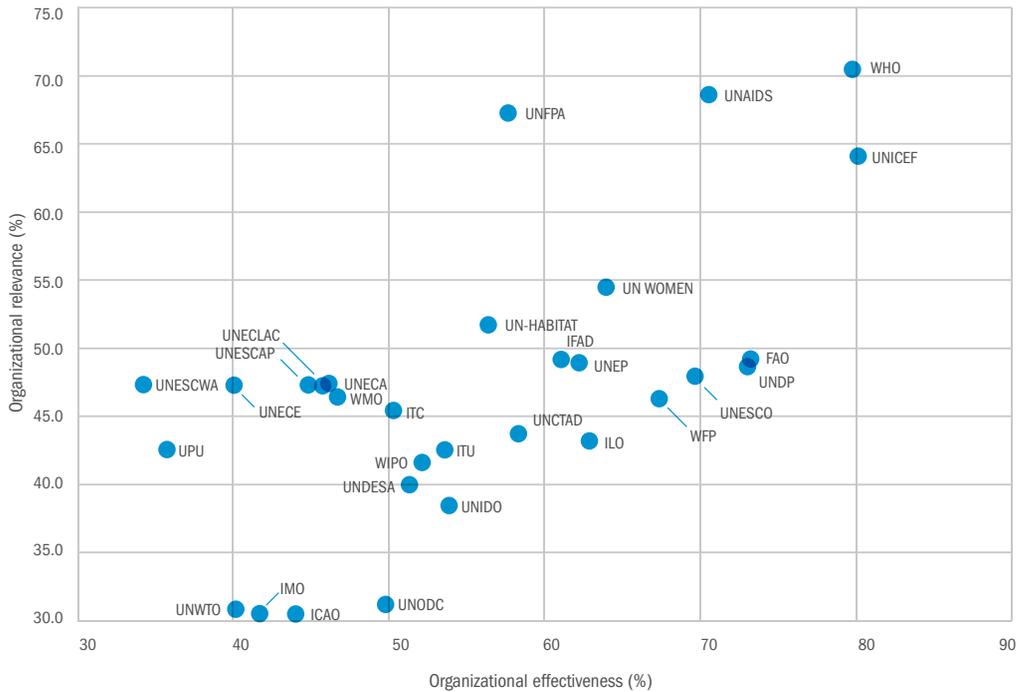


FIGURE 15: DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRY PERCEPTION OF UNDS EFFECTIVENESS BY DOMAIN



Source: FUNDS Survey 2012

FIGURE 16: PERCEPTIONS OF RELEVANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INDIVIDUAL UNDS ORGANIZATIONS



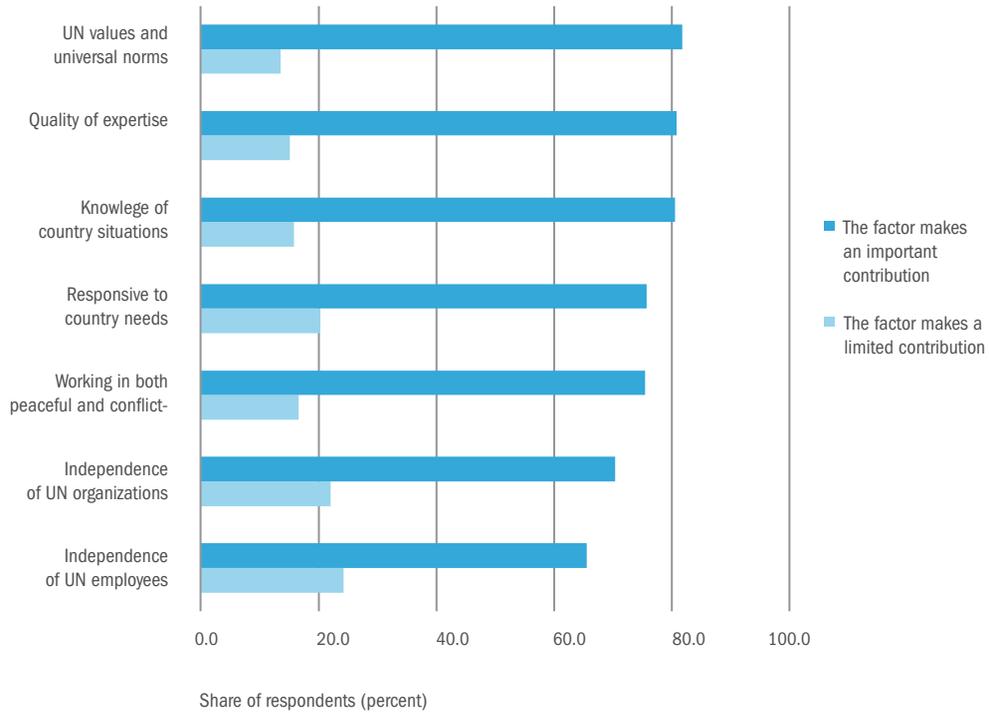
Distinguishing global North and South does not reveal marked differences (see Figure 15), except in a few areas. Respondents in developed countries considered that the UN is relatively more effective in poverty reduction, water and sanitation, social policy, governance, energy, transportation and drug control, while those in developing countries felt the UN was relatively more effective in international trade, information and communications, industry and economic management.

Figure 16 combines perceptions of the effectiveness of UN organizations and the relevance of domains in which they work. For example, WHO’s effectiveness is plotted with perceptions of the importance of health, and the IMO and ICAO, against transportation. Some other agencies are active in several development domains, and their relevance is determined by using a weighted average of the relative importance of their activities in these

domains. The graphic reveals that the three organizations considered by the survey to be by far the most relevant and effective are WHO, UNICEF, and UNAIDS. The result is notable because WHO has recently received a lot of negative publicity about its restructuring efforts and works in a development domain that is probably the most competitive.

One possible explanation is that health—unlike some other domains—is considered a critical area in which there are some essential functions that only a global public organization can reliably and objectively perform. These include the certification of safety standards (of medicines and such environmental conditions as water and air quality) and the coordination of global responses to chronic diseases as well as pandemics such as SARS and avian flu.

FIGURE 17: FEATURES OF UNDS EFFECTIVENESS



FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE

By asking what factors contribute to the overall performance of the UNDS, the survey sought to discover perceptions about special features—if not the uniqueness, then at least the comparative advantage—of UN development cooperation. Responses were solicited about the weight of seven explanations: UN values and universal norms; quality of expertise; knowledge of country situations; responsiveness to country needs; working in both peaceful and conflict-prone countries; independence of UN organizations; and independence of UN staff.

The aggregated results are as shown in Figure 17. The general perception is that most of these features of effectiveness are significant, the main possible exceptions being the independence of organizations and staff and their responsiveness. Some of the comments of respondents reflect these concerns (see Box 6).

TABLE 9: FACTORS OF UN EFFECTIVENESS, PERCEPTIONS BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

	FIRST UN	SECOND UN	THIRD UN			
	GOVERNMENTS	UN	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	PRIVATE SECTOR	ACADEMIA
TOP PRIORITIES	Quality of expertise	Knowledge of country situations	UN values and norms	Quality of expertise	Knowledge of country situations	UN values and norms
	UN values and norms	UN values and norms	Knowledge of country situations	UN values and norms	UN values and norms	Quality of expertise
	Knowledge of country situations	Responsive to country needs	Quality of expertise	Knowledge of country situations	Quality of expertise	Knowledge of country situations
	Responsive to country needs	Working in peaceful and conflict-prone countries	Responsive to country needs	Working in peaceful and conflict-prone countries	Responsive to country needs	Working in peaceful and conflict-prone countries
	Working in peaceful and conflict-prone countries	Quality of expertise	Working in peaceful and conflict-prone countries	Responsive to country needs	Working in peaceful and conflict-prone countries	Responsive to country needs
	Independence of UN organizations					

TABLE 10: FACTORS OF UN EFFECTIVENESS, PERCEPTIONS BY NORTH/SOUTH GROUP

	NORTH	SOUTH
PRIORITIES	Knowledge of country situations	Quality of expertise
	UN values and norms	UN values and norms
	Working in peaceful and conflict-prone countries	Knowledge of country situations
	Quality of expertise	Responsive to country needs

BOX 6: COMMENTS ON UNDS INDEPENDENCE

“Reduce political influence within the organization.”

“Reduce donor influence.”

“Stop your dependency on the five ‘powers’ and carry out your efforts in a democratic manner, ensuring representation of all people rather than nations.”

“It is important to see an increase in the influence exerted by the major ‘new’ powers, such as India, Brazil, Turkey, and South Korea.”

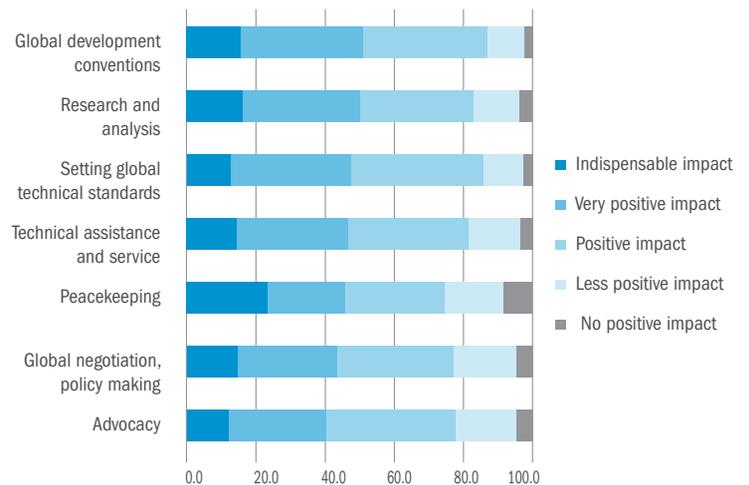
Table 9 illustrates the importance that respondents from all occupational groups place on UN values and universal norms—in each case one of the top two priorities. This finding coincides with the comparative advantage of the world organization as demonstrated in the 17 volumes from a decade of research by the United Nations Intellectual History Project.²⁵ Two other priorities—knowledge of country situations and quality of expertise—were also virtually indistinguishable in the responses from members of the First, Second, and Third United Nations. The only exception was the lower ranking given by the UN to its own expertise. The independence of the UN and its staff received a lower rating in all occupational groups.

There were few differences of perception between respondents from the North and global South (see Table 10). The quality of UN expertise and responsiveness are more highly valued by those in developing countries. Northern respondents tended to attach more importance to the UN’s knowledge of countries and widespread field presence.

COMPARISON ACROSS FUNCTIONS

The survey also indicates that global agreements are elusive but essential, not least because they permit or even foster a range of concrete actions by nongovernmental partners without the funding or approval of governments. The survey sought judgments about six major functions of the UNDS and compared them with another specific area of UN activity, namely peacekeeping. The overall results are shown in Figure 18 and reveal that the UN’s work in developing global development conventions is considered to have the most positive impact, followed by research and analysis and setting global standards (technical and nontechnical).

FIGURE 18: UNDS IMPACT BY TYPE OF COOPERATION



25. For details, see www.unhistory.org.

These priorities are broadly reflected in the analysis by occupational group (see Table 11), which nevertheless contains some interesting contrasts. The priorities that are underlined in the table scored more highly (above 3.5 out of 5). Technical assistance is only a third- or fourth-ranked priority, as is peacekeeping (which may be explained by the development specialization of respondents because security specialists tend to give the UN high marks).

Advocacy is not considered a high priority by any occupational group but is ranked third by respondents in developed countries (see Table 12). The North/South responses show a strong contrast. While technical assistance is ranked fourth by both groups, there is no agreement about the importance of other functions.

TABLE 11: UNDS IMPACT PERCEIVED BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

	FIRST UN	SECOND UN	THIRD UN			
	GOVERNMENTS	UN	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	PRIVATE SECTOR	ACADEMIA
TOP PRIORITIES	<u>Research and analysis</u>	<u>Global development conventions</u>	Global development conventions	Research and analysis	Global development conventions	<u>Global development conventions</u>
	<u>Global development conventions</u>	<u>Setting global standards</u>	Setting global standards	Global development conventions	Research and analysis	<u>Research and analysis</u>
	Technical assistance	Technical assistance	Research and analysis	Setting global standards	Peacekeeping	Setting global standards
	Setting global standards	Peacekeeping	Peacekeeping	Technical assistance	Setting global standards, Technical assistance	Technical assistance

TABLE 12: UNDS IMPACT PERCEIVED BY NORTH/SOUTH GROUP

	NORTH	SOUTH
TOP PRIORITIES	Global negotiation, policy-making	Global development conventions
	Peacekeeping	Setting global standards
	Advocacy	Research and analysis
	Technical assistance	Technical assistance

THE FUTURE AGENDA AND READINESS FOR CHANGE

The survey makes clear that the UN means sustainable human development. But how should the agenda of the UNDS evolve? The survey asked respondents for their views on nine possible future directions (see Figure 19). An emphasis on human development and sustainability was the most popular proposal, followed by response to global crises, human rights and values, good governance, and capacity building. There was less support for the next generation of development goals, the promotion of women in development, and a more exclusive focus on fragile states.

The top priority among respondents from the First UN (governments) was responsiveness to global crises. Those from the Second UN were primarily concerned with capacity building, increasingly the bill of fare in UN operations. And human development was highest on the agenda of the Third UN, which also put relatively more emphasis on human rights and good governance (see Table 13). Again, the differences between the global South and North were insignificant for overall scores, but the perceptions were distinct (see Table 14). The promotion of human rights and capacity building were more popular among respondents from the North, while those from the global South were more favorable to good governance and responsiveness to global crises.

FIGURE 19: FUTURE UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

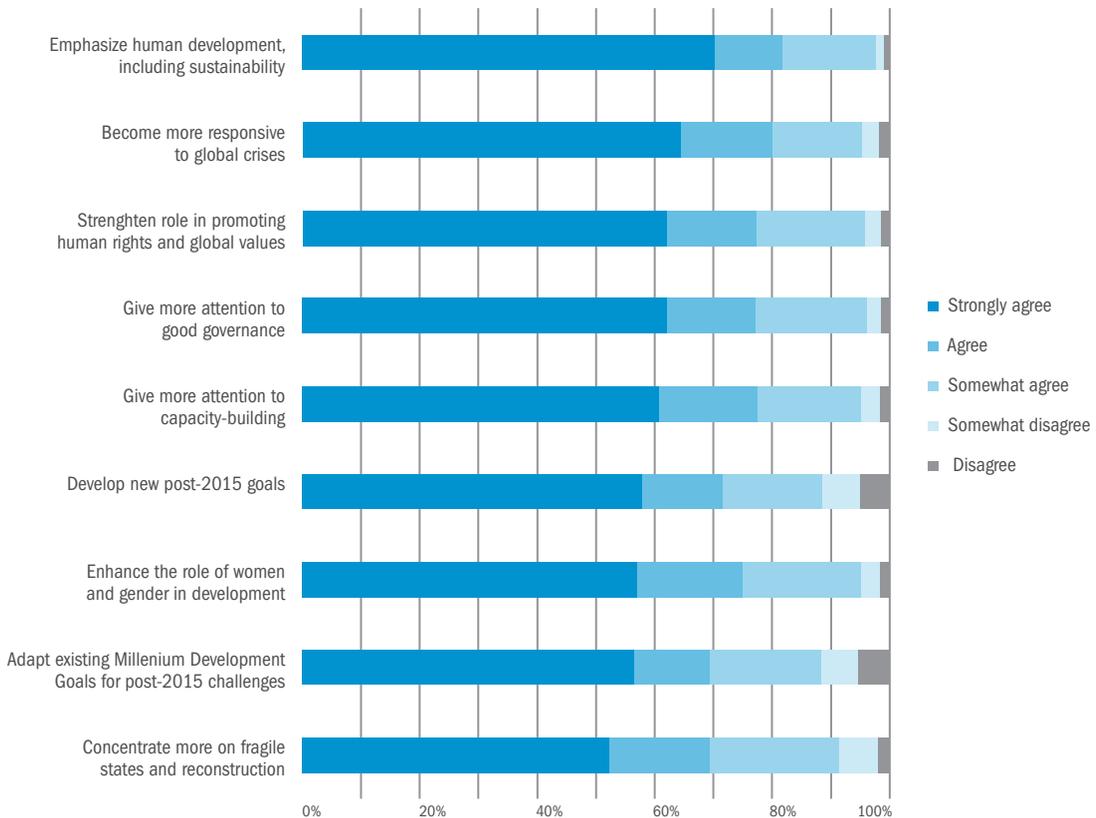


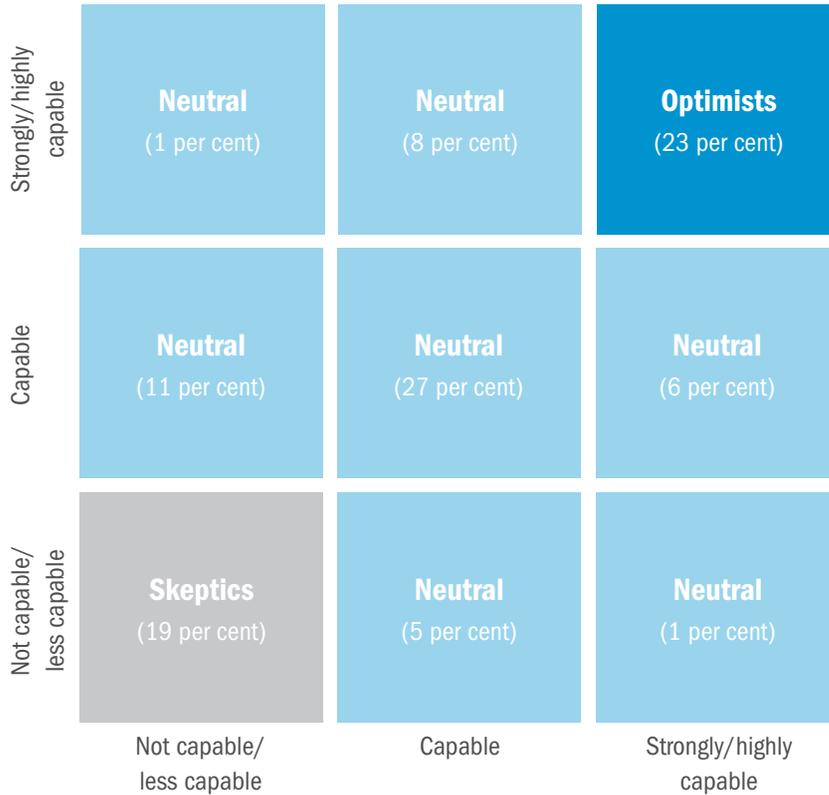
TABLE 13: FUTURE UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

	FIRST UN	SECOND UN	THIRD UN			
	GOVERNMENTS	UN	INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS	PRIVATE SECTOR	ACADEMIA
TOP PRIORITIES	Be more responsive to global crises	More attention to capacity building	More attention to capacity building	Emphasize human development	Emphasize human development	Emphasize human development
	Emphasize human development	Be more responsive to global crises	Emphasize human development	Promote human rights	Be more responsive to global crises	More attention to capacity building
	More attention to capacity building	Emphasize human development	Be more responsive to global crises	Promote good governance	Promote good governance	Promote human rights
	Promote human rights	Emphasize the role of women	Promote good governance	Be more responsive to global crises	Promote human rights	Be more responsive to global crises
	Promote good governance	Promote human rights	Emphasize the role of women	More attention to capacity building	Emphasize the role of women	Promote good governance
	Emphasize the role of women	Promote good governance	Promote human rights	Emphasize the role of women	Develop new post-2015 goals	Develop new post-2015 goals

TABLE 14: FUTURE UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BY NORTH/SOUTH GROUP

	NORTH	SOUTH
PRIORITIES	Emphasize human development	Emphasize human development
	Promote human rights	Promote good governance
	Promote good governance	Be more responsive to global crises
	More attention to capacity building	Promote human rights
	Be more responsive to global crises	Emphasize the role of women

FIGURE 20: OPTIMISTS AND SKEPTICS ABOUT UN CHANGE



But can the system change, and are secretariats ready to pay the price? The survey also asked respondents for their judgment on whether the UNDS had the capacity to change organizationally and meet emerging development challenges. Overall, the responses on both questions were rather equally divided between those who believed the UNDS had the capacity to change and those who thought it did not. As the diagram in Figure 20 illustrates, “optimists” about change (23 percent) slightly outnumbered “skeptics” (19 percent).

However, there was a marked contrast in perceptions between the global South and North (see Figures 21 and 22). The respondents from developing countries were more optimistic about the capacity of the UNDS to handle organizational change and face up to new development challenges, whereas among the industrialized countries, the pessimists easily outnumbered the optimists. Applying other filters to the data, younger respondents—perhaps not surprisingly—were more sanguine than their older counterparts.

FIGURE 21: UNDS ABILITY TO HANDLE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

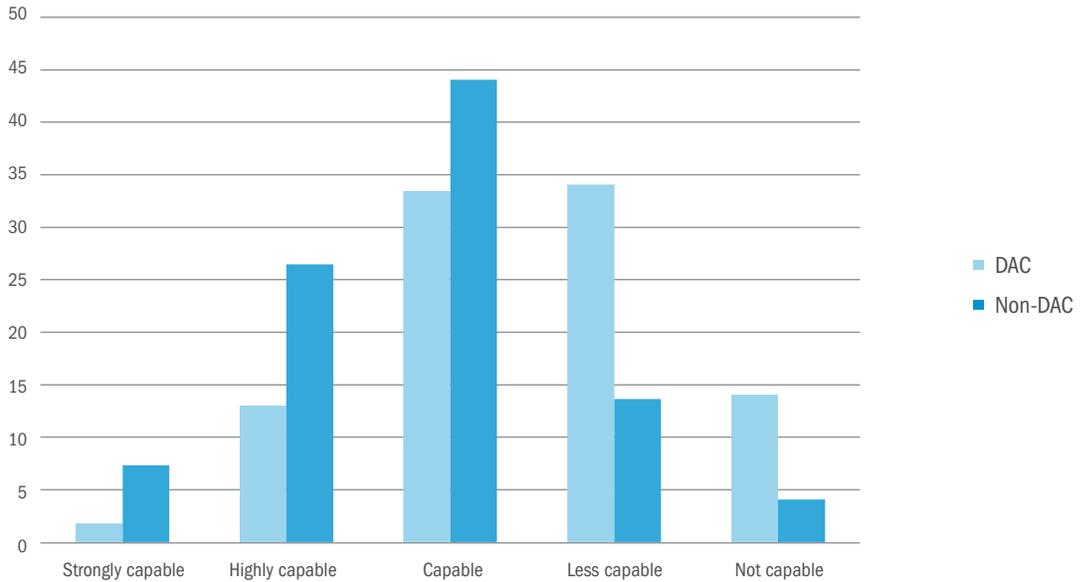
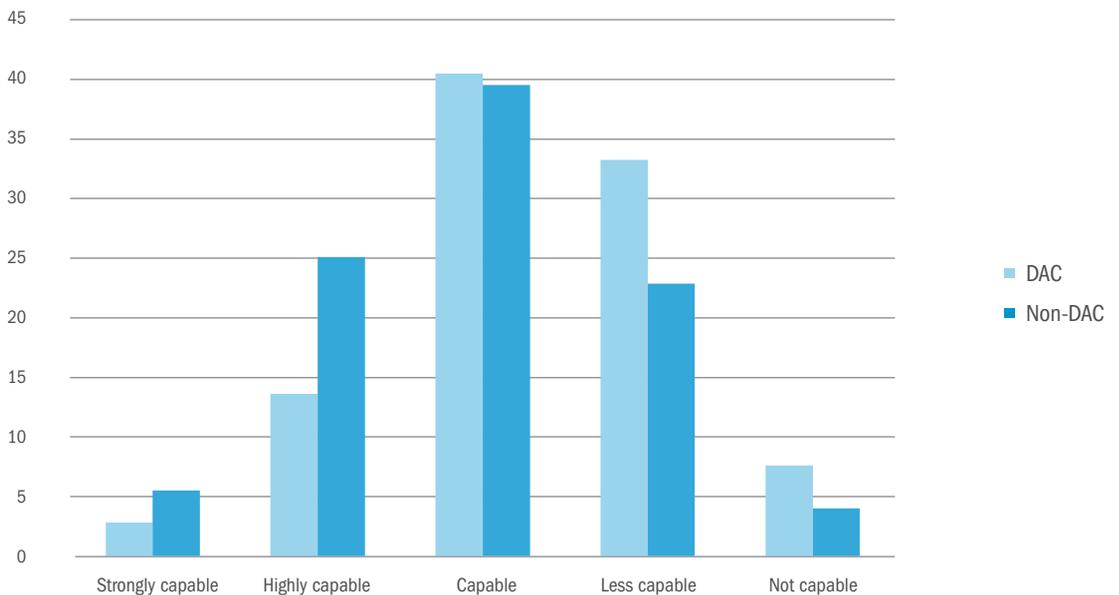


FIGURE 22: UNDS ABILITY TO HANDLE NEW CHALLENGES



3. CONCLUSIONS: MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN— OR AT LEAST THINKABLE

In the first part of this paper we outlined three endemic problems confronting the UNDS. Overcoming the third—vested interests and concomitant lack of political will—is undoubtedly the key to overcoming structural decentralization and ineffectiveness. The surveys of 2010 and 2012 confirmed the widespread recognition of the need for radical change—a view that permeates not only the Third UN, but, to a lesser extent, governments and secretariats. The potential champions of reform are numerous, but many are isolated and make their claims with low decibel levels while others are simply frustrated and on the sidelines.

More targeted surveys, along with evidence-based research, are indispensable in order to identify where, organizationally, the UN needs to reform; how substantively it can reorient and adjust; and what the most feasible sequencing of changes is. As well as the requirement to continue accelerating the pace of incremental changes in the short term, there clearly is a requirement to go out in time and engage in more “blue sky” or “out-of-the-box” thinking about transforming the UNDS.

For those who feel the UNDS remains the best means of addressing many of the causes of global fragility, it is essential to do more than merely reiterate a commitment to change. Fortunately, the present offers possibilities to make change happen or prepare the way with blueprints for the moment when another crisis erupts. The following are some of the opportunities that emerged from the 2012 survey within the First, Second, and Third United Nations that are feasible in the short term—the astute reader will notice the parenthetical comment in this chapter’s heading to qualify our perhaps overly sanguine

title with “Making Change Happen—or At Least Thinkable.” The suggestions below do not replace the requirement to examine more radical changes in the UNDS further into the future, something that the FUNDS project proposes to pursue in its next phase.

FIRST UN

1. Take the survey findings to intergovernmental forums: Through UN permanent missions, the voices of the many survey respondents can be heard in the discussions about improving UN operations, including the Comprehensive Policy Review in 2012. The next review, to be scheduled in two or three years, provides an occasion around which to advocate for change.
2. Fund reform: The major contributors to the UN can make their single greatest contribution to reform by agreeing to combine their resources destined for the UN exclusively into single country funding mechanisms managed by a single country coordinator. Clearly a variable geometry of funding is required, but co-mingling of the bulk of funds for specific issues would diminish—although not eliminate—wasteful competition among UN entities. Without it, no significant reform is even remotely possible. Donors should cease pretending to be interested in better performance while continuing to parcel out UN funding to satisfy domestic lobbies, inside and outside of government. Incentives for core funding should be designed to reward change rather than inertia or excuses for the difficulty in moving beyond business as usual.

SECOND UN

3. Accelerate the implementation of the High-level Panel's recommendations: The vast majority of the 10 recommendations from 2006 remain dead letters. One modest hope lies in the second mandate of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who may be tempted to take more vigorous steps than in the past as part of building a possible legacy. The appointment of the popular and seasoned Jan Eliasson as deputy secretary-general is another source of optimism because he personally has grappled with reform—as president of the General Assembly and as an under-secretary-general whose humanitarian mandate emerged from a modest reform in 1992. This combination could accelerate a process of genuine questioning, remove defensiveness, and reward bold action. The appointment of a Korean-born president of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim, could also assist in contributing to a more satisfactory demarcation of mandates and responsibilities and possibilities for synergy between the UN and Bretton Woods institutions. The history of reform suggests that the beginning of new terms in office is often the moment to move robustly.
4. Take advantage of the new MDG and SDG panels: In addition to their recommendations on a post-2015 agenda, these authoritative groups should be encouraged to revisit the recommendations of previous panels and tie suggestions about the future Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals to a UNDS better able to respond to contemporary challenges that these goals are supposed to address.
5. Rethink staff remuneration: While comparisons with the for-profit sector have limited applicability to the international civil service, nonetheless, incentives might well be introduced for staff members to reward demonstrated efforts to enhance collaboration rather than reward turf protection.

THIRD UN

6. Continue surveys: Initiatives like the Ralph Bunche Institute/FUNDS Project should continue to determine more about the expectations for and the payoffs from reform, more particularly to probe specific explanations for views about what is good, bad, and indifferent about the UNDS and what impedes change. Perceptions are not reality, but they are essential building blocks for constituencies to back change.
7. Expand research: Taking as a point of departure the ground-breaking work by the independent UN Intellectual History Project, more basic research would help to expand diagnoses of UNDS strengths and weaknesses, develop proposals for beneficial change, and explore alternative scenarios about a future system. Four important sets of tensions should be distinguished: the UN's roles as a source of ideas (norm entrepreneur, standard setter, and knowledge manager) versus the delivery of operational services (technical assistance and capacity building); the differences between inputs (the structure of the so-called system) versus outputs (the nature of development); effectiveness (cost-benefit in relation to alternatives) versus relevance (impact); and the distinctions between necessary adaptations and incremental progress (e.g., in procedures and techniques) versus more substantial and even transformative changes (e.g., in structures, incentives, and organizational "culture").

ALL THREE UNS

8. Build networks: Too little attention has been paid to the publics who support or resist change in the UN system. Various processes of creative dialogue should be used to better link champions of change across sectors and continents and to encourage a global dialogue on reforming the UNDS. The key sources of legitimacy and the main comparative advantage of the United Nations reflect the universal character of the world organization (First UN), which would be enhanced by a more productive and mobile professional staff (Second UN) with better policies for partnerships with civil society and the private sector (Third UN). The FUNDS project can help provide a forum—a nonthreatening public space, or "island"—within which a growing dialogue on change within the UNDS can be fostered.

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