

THE UN AT SIXTY: CELEBRATION OR WAKE?

In September 2005, the world's political leaders gathered in New York to reflect upon the UN's successes and failures. Framing their discussions was the report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and the Sachs report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the Secretary-General's response. Kofi Annan had described the current moment as a "fork in the road" for the UN and for global politics. Indeed, we are facing fundamental choices as a world society, choices that may result in the marginalization of the UN, or at least of its political and judicial organs. Over the last year various efforts have been made to reaffirm a strong role for the UN and to equip it to meet future challenges. Are these efforts too few and too late? Does the UN retain global political legitimacy? Is the United States interested in UN reform? Can the world do without the UN? These issues will be debated in the light of the outcomes of the September 2005 session of the UN General Assembly.

Thursday, October 6th

Bennett Lecture Hall, Flavelle House, University of Toronto Faculty of Law
78 Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto

16:00 2005-2006 Cecil A. Wright Memorial Lecture – *Human Rights and UN Reform*

The promotion and protection of human rights is one of the central purposes of the United Nations. What are the implications of current reform proposals, including the Report of the UN High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, for the UN human rights system? What is the relationship between human rights and the Millennium Development Goals?

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: **Professor Philip Alston**
Professor of Law and Director,
Center for Human Rights and Global Justice
New York University School of Law

17:30 Reception

Rowell Room, Flavelle House, University of Toronto Faculty of Law
78 Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto

Friday, October 7th

Solarium, Falconer House, University of Toronto Faculty of Law
84 Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto

8:45-9:00 *Welcome and Plan for the Day*

9:00-10:30 <i>Development, Disease and Environmental Degradation</i>

In his preface to the Overview Report of the Millennium Project, Jeffrey Sachs concludes that “[t]he triumph of the human spirit gives us the hope and confidence that extreme poverty can be cut by half by the year 2015, and indeed ended altogether within the coming years.” This wonderful vision is, of course, clouded by our past failures to deal effectively with global poverty. In addition, the ravages of HIV-AIDS continue to be felt in many parts of the world, and especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Pandemic disease threatens the social fabric of many states. Ranging from climate change to water scarcity and pollution, environmental threats multiply. The High Level Panel stressed that “[p]overty, infectious disease, environmental degradation feed one another in a deadly cycle.” Is it plausible to imagine the UN dealing effectively with these interlinked crises?

CHAIR: Prof. David Bell, York University

PANELLISTS: Dr. Ngaire Woods, University of Oxford
 Prof. David Fidler, Indiana University
 Prof. Ellen Hey, Erasmus University

COMMENTS: Elizabeth Dowdeswell, President, Nuclear Waste Management Organization

10:30-10:45 *Break*

10:45-12:15 <i>Constraining and Enabling the Use of Force</i>
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Existing norms ask us to pause and inquire whether war is necessary and just. The debate over Iraq laid bare failings in these norms. Yet the need to limit resort to war is as great as ever. International law provides a framework against which states’ actions are assessed, and imposes a heavy burden of justification. Is a given war justified as self-defense? Is there a “responsibility to protect” vulnerable populations in other states, if necessary through military intervention? Do threats to international peace and security, that would normally require Security Council action, also allow unilateral responses? Is the UN Charter framework up to the task of dealing with contemporary security threats?

CHAIR: Mr. Paul Heinbecker, Wilfrid Laurier University

PANELLISTS: Prof. Ian Johnstone, Fletcher School, Tufts University
 Prof. Mary-Ellen O’Connell, Notre Dame Law School
 Dr. Nick Wheeler, University of Wales, Aberystwyth

COMMENTS: To be announced.

12:15-14:00 *Luncheon*

14:00-15:30 <i>Preventing State Failure and Rebuilding Societies</i>

In the High Level Panel report, much emphasis is placed upon the need for better early warning mechanisms and preventive diplomacy to combat potential state failure. Is the UN the right place to invest resources to address these needs? From Cambodia to East Timor to Kosovo to Haiti, the UN has been called upon to implement massive plans for post-conflict reconstruction. How do we evaluate these efforts? What are the prospects for a new “Peacebuilding Commission” within the UN?

CHAIR: Prof. Michael Byers, University of British Columbia

PANELLISTS: Dr. Simon Chesterman, New York University
 Dr. Bertie Ramcharan, Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights a.i.
 Colonel Bernd Horn, Director, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute

COMMENTS: Prof. Catherine Lu, McGill University

15:30-15:45 *Break*

15:45-16:45 <i>Closing Roundtable on The UN at Sixty: Celebration or Wake?</i>

DISCUSSANTS: Justice Diego Garcia-Sayán, Inter-American Court of Human Rights
 Professor Kenneth Abbott, Northwestern University School of Law
 Prof. Jennifer Welsh, University of Oxford
 Mr. Paul Heinbecker, Wilfrid Laurier University
 Prof. Martha Finnemore, George Washington University

16:45-17:00 *Thanks and Closing*
Professors Jutta Brunnée and Stephen J. Toope on key ideas and ways forward.

17:00-18:00 *Reception*
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