"Globalisation and the Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century"

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I want to start not by talking about the United Nations but by talking about what is happening in the world. Because I think that the United Nations is only of any interest in so far as it is relevant to the actual problems that people in the world are having to cope with - and that is certainly how the Secretary-General thinks about it. We don't exist for our own sake. We exist for your sake, "We the Peoples", in whose name the Charter was written.

And what is happening in the world has got a name which is not a particularly beautiful word but it is one that I think we have all got used to using after a few years: Globalization.

Well, what does it mean? What is globalization? Essentially it means that today, more than ever before, groups and individuals interact directly across frontiers without necessarily involving the state. And why is that happening? I think for two reasons. First of all there is the new technology that we all know about, the Internet, the satellites and all that, and secondly there is a series of decisions by human beings, people in power or in office in countries around the world, essentially to regulate and control less than they used to do. Why? Because states have found that prosperity is better served by releasing the creative energies of the people than by restricting them. I think that's a very broad generalization but it is surprisingly hard to find any exception to it anywhere in the world. The result is that states no longer control and often *can* no longer control, even if they want to, the movements of goods, of services -- and in services I include especially information - and even to a considerable extent the movement of people, in the way that during most of the 20th century they were in the habit of doing.

Now is that a good or a bad thing? That seems to have become the main ideological issue of our times. It has almost given the lie to the famous conclusion of Francis Fukuyama in 1989 that history had come to an end because there was no longer any real disagreement about what should be done, only a lot
of tiresome detail about peoples' interests or identity, but no grand competing projects. The liberal democratic project, if you remember, had won out because utopian socialism had folded its tents and departed from the field. Now we have a very strong clash between those who believe that globalization is a good thing and those who believe that it is a bad thing. But whether that quite qualifies for a grand ideological battle such as we knew in the 20th century I am not sure. It seems to me that those who think that globalization is a bad thing have not really - and maybe it is in the nature of their argument that they shouldn't - put forward any grand alternative schema. They are anxious, they are complaining, but essentially they are proposing a negative.

Before we take sides in this debate about whether it is a good or a bad thing, I think there's one very important thing to notice. And that is that there are very many people in the world to whom, whether good or bad, it is actually not happening yet. There are six billion and something people on this planet as far as we know, of whom roughly five billion live in developing countries. Of those five billion, half - according to the International

Telecommunications Union - have never made or received a telephone call. And there are more Internet users in Manhattan alone than in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.

Now are those people who are left on one side by this great historical movement better or worse off than the rest of us? Maybe some are better off. Maybe somewhere in the rainforest they are living beautiful integrated lives in harmony with their natural environment. We should not be too glib in equating new technology with human well-being, or assume that the most important things in life are necessarily those that can be quantified in US dollars. But I would still maintain that the vast majority of those people are impoverished, uneducated, living with poor sanitation, and exposed to endemic and epidemic disease. Their lives resemble all too closely the famous description of man in the state of nature given by Thomas Hobbes more than three hundred years ago: "Solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." So, on the whole, if I may be permitted a very broad sweeping generalization, the more people are in contact with the global economy, the more interesting and hopeful their lives and the wider the range of choices open to them. It is a very broad and sweeping generalisation - I have no doubt that everyone here can think of exceptions to it - but I think I would still maintain that it is on the whole correct.

In which case, why is the anti-globalization movement apparently so strong in the world right now? I think there are three main reasons:

First of all, as I have already indicated, the benefits of globalization are very unevenly distributed and I think there is a natural and healthy revolt against something that is so conspicuously unfair.

Secondly, even those who are affected by globalization often find the effect very bewildering. I am reminded of an American friend I had as a student at Oxford, who had one of those small Volkswagen beetle cars which were fashionable in those days, and on the front of the passenger seat on the dashboard there was a rail. I asked him what this rail was and why it was there. He said it was there to make you think that the car goes faster than it actually does. And it is called the 'Jesus rail'. And why is it called that? He said "because you are supposed to hold on to it and shout 'Jesus' when the car is going around the corner". Well, I think that is what a great many people around the world are doing right now. Some are shouting 'Jesus' and some 'Allah' and I have no doubt that there are other culturally particular ways of expressing themselves, but the cry of alarm is a recognizable one. The world gives us that feeling of going around a very sharp corner very fast and we are not sure if we are going to be thrown off the vehicle, or where exactly we are going to end up. To put it more prosaically it may mean that you may lose your job, it may mean that you will find your children watching television programmes or logging on to things on the Internet which you don't understand and which you think are probably not very healthy and you are not quite sure what sort of people your children are going to grow up as. There are many ways in which you may feel that your livelihood or your identity is being threatened by change in the world today. And it is very natural, I think, that in those circumstances people latch on to whatever seems familiar.

And the third reason - which may be a way of describing the other two or an explanation for them - is that there is a lack of rules in the social and cultural area, to match the rather surprisingly effective rules that have been introduced in the commercial area in the last ten or fifteen years, particularly with the advent of the World Trade Organization -which is why, I think, the WTO has been the focus of some of the most vocal and sharpest protests. It seems to some people as if the international community is more concerned and tougher about protecting the intellectual property rights of large multinational companies than it is about protecting the fundamental human rights of people in different parts of the world who find themselves in danger.

This, I think, is where the United Nations comes in. There *are* in fact rules in the area of the environment, agreed at the Rio conference in 1992. There are of course rules in the area of human rights set out in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights as long ago as 1948, and in more legally binding form in various covenants adopted since then; the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the International Covenant on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and so on. But, of course, these rules are not enforced in the way that the tribunals of WTO - in theory at least - can enforce the rules in the commercial area.

So that is one big function of the United Nations: it is to act as a forum and to organize the meetings where representatives of governments come together and adopt shared standard of behaviour in different areas.

Another function is to act as a source of ideas. Not just a place where people can talk, although that is very important, but also actually to stimulate interaction, relationships, what we now call policy networks, often of a quite informal nature. I think this is a very fundamental shift in people's attitudes to the UN, and maybe to the UN's own approach to its own work in the past few years. We no longer seek to do everything ourselves. We are learning what we can and cannot do and especially what we can do best in partnership with others. And the "others" can be a very wide variety of people: civil society in its broadest sense, which I would say includes the private sector. It also includes foundations, universities, think-tanks. And then of course, also partnership with and among governments. But even our understanding of governments, I think, has changed somewhat. Probably we used to think of foreign ministries, and maybe heads of state when something specially important was going on. But now I think we understand more and more that government also includes parliamentarians, who are more directly representative of the <u>people</u> who have expectations of the United Nations. And government also includes <u>local</u> government. And in many areas of the UN agenda it is actually at the local level that things can be done, and it is from the local level that we get ideas. I was very struck a few years ago when my wife was a district councillor in a rural area of England. Quite a part of her work was taken up with trying to implement Agenda 21 which had been adopted by an international conference, the famous Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. I think that this is probably not untypical. In China for instance, many people in local government are working on trying to implement different aspects of standards and policies that have been agreed internationally in events organized by the United Nations.

So this change is not something that was dreamt up by Kofi Annan. But it is certainly something that he has recognized. I think that if he were to summarize what is the contribution that he is trying to make, as Secretary-General, it is to adapt and position the United Nations in the light of these changes in the world, so that it can be more effective in these new conditions and above all, more <u>useful</u> to the peoples of its Member-States. I know he would say that if we as an Organization are to be relevant and to have a future in the 21st century we must do things that are seen as being relevant and useful by ordinary people around the world. We are an organization of Member-States. In other words we are essentially an intergovernmental organization. But, founded in the name of "we the peoples", we have a responsibility to go beyond governments, to the peoples of whom they are governments and whom, for international purposes, they represent.

I think Kofi Annan has found that he can do more as a catalyst in setting up informal policy networks, or often just putting people in touch with each other, than he can through the formal process of setting up new United Nations activities that require resources and require mandates of the General Assembly. I was struck by this anecdotal example: I was with him in Senegal last

year and his secretary always has a list of people that she has got to contact for him. She said, "oh yes, I have got to get the president of Iceland!". So we said, "why the President of Iceland? Sure you don't mean the President of Ireland?", and she started to get worried that she got it wrong. But no, it <u>was</u> the President of Iceland, because the Secretary-General had been talking to the President of Senegal who had expressed some concerns about problems to do with the fishing zones in the Atlantic, how they were regulated and how Senegal could protect its interests. And he immediately thought, Iceland has a lot of experience in that problem. He perhaps remembered the cod war between Iceland and Britain some years ago. Anyway, he wanted to put these two presidents in touch with each other to see if that could help. Now that happens to be an example where it was two heads of state. In many other cases, he would think of a professor, a famous scientist, or a top businessman - someone who, he could see, could help with a contribution to solve a particular problem that someone else was telling him about. He would put the two of them together.

Perhaps a more formalized version of that is what he is trying to do through the 'Global Compact' which I expect most of you have heard of. This was something that he proposed exactly two years ago in Davos, when he really challenged the businessmen present, who were leaders of big multinational companies, really drawing their attention to this problem of globalization that the rules and practices have not gone as far in the social, cultural and environmental areas as in the purely economic or commercial areas. He said "You know, you shouldn't wait for governments to tell you what to do. Governments have already agreed what are the standards in these areas. You should take the lead in applying those standards in your own corporate practices. The United Nations has specialized services which can help you do that - for human rights we have Mary Robinson, the High Commissioner, and her staff. For labour standards there is of course, the International Labour Organization. And for environmental issues there is the UN Environment Programme, based in Nairobi."

At that time it was just an idea, a challenge that he threw out. But his staff had been working on it with people from the private sector and also with NGOs that are interested, and indeed with the International Confederation of free Trade Unions. And last July at UN HQ in New York there was a meeting where those three parties came together: senior or Chief Executive Officers of a number of big international companies and some leading NGOs like Amnesty International, the World Wildlife Fund, and others particularly concerned with human rights or the environment and development, and the ICFTU. They basically agreed on how to take this Global Compact forward.

It is not a code of conduct. It is not the UN acquiring authority over those companies and how they behave. The companies are invited themselves to adopt these principles which are already agreed at the intergovernmental level; and once a year, on the Global Compact UN site, to post information on what they are doing to introduce those principles into their own corporate practice, and what they have learnt both in positive and negative experiences in the process. The NGOs, I think, can advise them and help them to do that, and can also act as a kind of reality check; to see that they are in fact living up to the claims that they are making.

Not all NGOs are satisfied with this. Some are very critical and saying that the UN is selling out to big capital and so-forth. Actually the UN is being quite careful about that in taking measures to protect its identity. It doesn't mean that these companies are entitled to use the UN logo for their own purposes or anything like that. I think it reflects a basic insight of the Secretary-General which is that disagreement is important, creative, useful and anyway not going to go away. One can get beyond a shouting match, one can find common ground between people with different points of view. Civil society and the private sector can sometimes work together to define objectives and to define ways of reaching them.

This approach is reflected in the Millennium Report which the Secretary-General submitted last spring in advance of the Millennium Summit. It is a kind of review of the state of the world and what the things are that need doing. It is called appropriately enough "We the Peoples...". The idea that runs through it is precisely that: the United Nations is not just the governments. It must be everyone, and everyone has something to contribute. We shouldn't just wait for states always to take the initiative. Some things can only be done by states, but very often they act only when prodded by civil society. Some recent examples would be the adoption of the Ottawa Convention banning landmines, or the adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court in Rome in 1998, or some of the measures taken for debt relief particularly in the year 2000, which was the jubilee year. There was this remarkable coalition of NGOs, "Jubilee 2000" which brought the issue up on the international agenda in a way that it hadn't been before.

We are not saying - the Secretary-General is not saying - that the nation-state is dépassé, but that it needs to be strengthened, and that it can be strengthened: first of all with closer cooperation among states, because so many problems now cut across national frontiers and are beyond the reach of any one state, even some of the biggest states, to deal with them on their own; and secondly by a more organic relationship between the state and civil society.

I was giving this talk in Turkey yesterday and someone mentioned that in Turkey there is a tradition of having a strong state and a weak civil society. I said that I think that this is an old fashioned way of looking at it. I know that it is the way that many people would look at it, but I think increasingly at the United Nations we are coming to understand that a strong state doesn't really go with a weak civil society. That a state that is trying to do everything itself and to control everybody's lives often turns out to be much weaker than it looked. Quite a lot of the problems that the United Nations is dealing with around the world today, are the legacy of states like that, who had a misapprehension of what strength is, and turned out to be weaker than they thought. I would say that the strongest states in the world today are the ones that grow out of a very vigorous civil society and that are constantly in interaction with it. I guess a shorthand way of saying this would be 'democratic' states, but democracy can take a variety of forms.

So what next? The Secretary-General is hoping that 2001will be the year when people around the world will begin to feel the effects of the Millennium Declaration. Did I mention the Millennium Declaration? It was the outcome document of the Summit of last year and it reflects, in part at least, the ideas of the Millennium Report. It is also much shorter. Some of the language is a bit heavier because this was language that had to be agreed on by some 190 governments. As there are a few diplomats among the audience they will know that this is not an easy task.

What's the most important idea in that Declaration? I would say it is the pledge to halve by the year 2015 the proportion of people in the world living in abject, extreme poverty which is defined as having an income of less than one dollar a day. That is currently 1.3 billion people. The world population is going to go on increasing between now and 2015, so if we halve the proportion that will mean that there will still be 800 million living in those conditions in 2015. So it does not sound a very ambitious goal, but actually it is a goal that would imply in most parts of Africa a growth rate of at least 7% a year between now and 2015. This is not what most of them have been achieving in the last ten years or so. So it is actually quite an ambitious goal.

It is not only defined in these rather crude monetary terms. It also talks about halving the proportion of people who do not have access to safe drinking water, and people who are suffering from hunger. And it talks about halting, and beginning to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS by the same date. I think all these targets - and perhaps most important, as the means of getting there, is universal elementary education for boys and girls by 2015 - I think

these are all aspects of the same battle. Probably one of those would not be easily achieved without the others.

How on earth is it going to be done? The resources are there. The most important resource is the talent of human beings living in developing countries. The developing countries only actually develop through the efforts of their own people. There are also resources in the form of fixed capital generated in an incredible quantity in the last few years by an almost unprecedented economic expansion in the industrial north. The question is how we mobilize those resources for development. This will be the subject of what we are not allowed to call a conference, because the US Congress thinks we have too many international conferences and it may be right (and I certainly do not think we should get the idea that the solution to every problem is simply to hold another international conference) but there will be a "high level event", an intergovernmental meeting, in the first quarter of next year specifically on the issue of financing development. While that could be just another adoption of a series of proclamations of intent and of hope, what the Secretary-General certainly hopes is that it will be an occasion for Member-States, drawing ideas from the private sector and civil society, to find practical ways of actually mobilizing resources for development. And in the hope of encouraging that, he has appointed a high level panel chaired by President Zedillo who just stepped down as President of Mexico, and including such financial luminaries as Robert Rubin, the former Secretary of the U.S. Treasury, Manmohan Singh, the finance minister who presided over economic reform in India, Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission, and a few other people of that calibre. Some people criticize this, in fact one of my former colleagues of the Financial Times said "have these people done a real job?" I think in his mind a real job meant managing a port or a factory. Perhaps he has a point because actually the same point was made by Maria Cattaui, of the International Chamber of Commerce, so there must be something to it. The way she put it is "you need to have people who actually have got experience of making investment decisions-- direct investment", because it is actually foreign direct investment which is going to make the big difference. Not so much portfolio investment, not the business of raising loans which is what bankers are good at. But still I think it is important to engage the interest of finance ministers in the industrial world. I think that this group of people will know how to get ideas from various sectors, not just the banking sector, about how that could be done.

What are the main tools that they can look at? In the first place I think it has to be private investment. It is no good supposing that government spending is going to be the main form of transfer of resources. It is private companies that can make the most difference. Of course they are investing in developing countries. The trouble is that they do so very selectively, and really it is only about ten or a dozen developing countries that get the vast majority of investment at the moment, with China taking the lion's share. Many developing countries, and especially the poorest and the smallest, tend to get left out even when they have made a great effort to create an investment-friendly climate or environment. Probably it is because they are not big enough to attract the attention of big companies. And yet, the private sector collectively could certainly benefit if these countries were opened up to investment. I think there is a role there for companies to get together and to do studies about the investment opportunities and ways in which they could kick-start the process and make some of these poorer countries more interesting from their point of view.

One obvious area in which an effort is needed, and on which the Secretary-General insisted in the Millennium Report, is the area of information technology, which, if made accessible, has the potential to bring some of the poorest countries very rapidly into a new phase of development. This technology, as compared to previous industrial revolutions, has two great advantages. One, it is much cleaner. It doesn't crunch up a vast amount of natural resources and it doesn't pollute the environment in anything like the way that the big steel factories and so on do. Secondly and related to that, it is relatively cheap. You don't need a vast investment of financial capital, you

need an investment of <u>intellectual</u> capital. And luckily brain power is the one form of power that is more or less fairly distributed among the world's peoples.

So the question is providing basic education, which would enable people to use the Internet and other forms of communication technology, and to actually bring it within their reach. That is something that the private sector can certainly help to do.

The other area which I think is crying out for a review of investment policies is health. It is not something the private sector can do on its own, but it has a part to play. I have mentioned already HIV/AIDS which is the most acute problem, especially in Africa, and a recent report shows that it is becoming a very acute problem also in Russia and in other parts of the former Soviet block. I think we need a bigger investment in the search for a vaccine. We could certainly do with bigger investment in prevention and education programmes throughout the developing world. We also have to find ways of making treatment available to the millions and millions of people who are already infected and face a slow and agonizing death. There are treatments for those living in New York that are available to them but they are way out of reach for somebody living in slums or villages in Southern Africa. Some of the pharmaceutical companies did last year get together and announced a plan to try and make some quantities of drugs available at lower prices, but I think that this falls very far short of what is needed.

Of course, the problem is not limited to HIV/AIDS. In fact, malaria probably kills more people still in Africa, and specially children - whose deaths don't get reported, because they are unfortunately considered almost routine. They die in the first year or two of their lives. There are a range of diseases which are mainly affecting tropical countries and therefore mainly affecting poor people in poor countries, and these are getting perhaps 10% of the research budgets of the world when they are affecting perhaps 80 or 90% of the people in the world. That is something which could surely change.

The Secretary-General announced in his report some initiatives which are relevant to this problem. It would be quite misleading to suggest that they provide the solution but they may be an example of the way things can be done. One is specifically in the area of public health. It's done jointly with **Web**MD and it is a health InterNetwork which is going to provide 10,000 on-line sites in hospitals and clinics throughout the developing world to enable them to get information relevant to their needs. Another is called UNITeS which is the United Nations Information Technology Service. It is in fact a consortium of volunteer groups to organize training in information communication technology for people in developing countries. Much of it is being provided by people <u>from</u> developing countries. I think that it is a widespread misconception that volunteers are essentially white eager idealistic young people who go out to the former colonial world. Of course there are such people and it is very good that there are, but a great many volunteers are actually working in their own countries or going from one developing country to another.

Clearly the developing countries themselves have to do a great deal more to make themselves attractive as a destination for investment. And in the specific area of information technology, too many of them still have state telecommunications monopolies that are charging prohibitive rates for band widths and thereby effectively pricing the Internet out of the reach for the great majority of their citizens. That's something that could be changed fairly easily.

They also need to lower tariffs and other barriers which are very often preventing products from circulating within regions of the developing world, and thereby they could enlarge their markets and make themselves more interesting to multinational companies . They certainly need to improve their communications and infrastructure and the transport costs which are prohibitive. They need to cut out corruption which is a terrible unstated tax on all economic life in many

countries. They need to show respect for the rule of law because people are unlikely to invest unless they are confident. In the past, investors have done deals with governments which turned out to be unrepresentative and illegitimate in the eyes of their people, and the thing has subsequently blown up in their face.

So democracy, or at least good governance, is a crucial element in the mix. That now has become the main focus of the United Nations Development Programme which is helping developing countries to adopt policies and decisions that actually make life better for all their people, but also in the process make them more attractive to investors. One should say it is not only a question of foreign investment. There is also the question of mobilizing the resources of your own people. The former finance minister of Argentina said that he would be satisfied with his work the day when Argentines invested their own money in the country. These are two things that actually go closely together.

But of course, industrialized countries also have a very important part to play. I would say first and foremost in making sure, since they are preaching the virtues of the market to the developing world, that their own markets are actually open to products from the developing world. So often, when a developing country actually begins to produce something that can compete in the market of an industrialized country, it finds that there is some sort of quota or tariff or non-tariff barrier limiting its access. I think that is an important thing to change, and also the industrialized world needs to reduce or eliminate the subsidies that it gives to its own farmers, which result in the dumping of a great deal of food on the world market and actually make it virtually impossible for farmers in poor countries to make a living.

I have already mentioned the issue of debt relief. Don't let anyone suppose that that problem has been solved. I think there has been a lot of progress in the past six months or a year. It has come clearly on the agenda, there have been decisions to accelerate it for specific countries, but very often when enlightened decisions are taken, the extra resources are not provided to actually make them happen. Debt relief, to my mind, is just one aspect of the larger issue of development assistance which continues to be needed and will be needed, only it will never be the whole answer. No country is going to develop by simply receiving handouts from richer countries. But there are lot of countries that will never get to the point where they can help themselves through exports, through opening up their markets, without a considerable amount of technical and financial help.

Years ago the OECD countries all pledged that they would spend 0.7% of their GDP on official development assistance. Very very few, I think it is two or three in Scandinavia, have actually reached that level and most of them are way way below it.

So development is the main thrust of what the Millennium Report and the Millennium Declaration have to offer, because it is the biggest issue for most people in the world today. But of course development has to be sustainable. And it will not be sustainable if it simply follows the same energy-intensive polluting patterns of industrialization which brought the present industrialized world where it is. That is another reason for promoting information technology because, as I said, it tends to offer a leaner and cleaner path to growth. But industrialized countries also need to work much harder to agree on ways of reducing energy consumptions and emission of greenhouse gases. I don't feel too optimistic on that with the advent of the new administration in Washington but I think that even they may soon have to face the evidence that global warming is actually happening and it's not going to slow down, let alone stop, unless there is a radical change of behaviour by the big industrial economies.

There is in fact a much broader agenda of environmental issues which were extensively discussed around the time of the Earth Summit and in the immediate aftermath, but seem to

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have slipped down the international agenda, although most of them have got more rather than less worrying if one looks at the objective facts. I think that the coming year during which we will be preparing for the follow up event, "Rio+10", which will be held in South Africa, in 2002, is a very important occasion to try and bring those issues back clearly into the public eye.

We have to knock on the head the idea that this is a "northern" issue, which is somehow competing with development - which unfortunately too many southern governments seem to believe. Actually, like almost everything else in this world, the degradation of the global environment hurts the poor much more immediately and directly than the rich. It is poor people who are being driven off their lands by desertification. It is poor people who are dying because they don't have access to clean water. And the vast majority of people who are in danger of losing their homes if the level of the ocean rises as a result of global warming are also living in poor developing countries. We have to rediscover our sense of urgency on these issues and adopt - if I may again borrow the language which I am delighted to see got through from the Secretary-General's report into the Millennium Declaration - "a new ethic of conservation and stewardship".

So what about the United Nations itself? You have noted I have said very little about conflict, about peace and security, which most people think of as the main object of the United Nations. Wasn't it after all created to save the coming generations from the scourge of war? Yes, indeed. Conflict remains the major scourge in many parts of the world, once again, mainly the poorest parts, and it is actually one of the things that is getting in the way of development. There is a terrible vicious circle there. Poor countries are more prone to conflict, and countries that are threatened by conflict find it hard to attract investment.

The world still looks to the United Nations to do peace-keeping, and increasingly to do the broader tasks that we lump together as "peace-building". That is essentially not just a question of putting troops on a line to separate combatants and then leave them there, but trying to help a society put itself together again and develop in a normal way, which is a very broad agenda indeed.

The report submitted last August, by a panel chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi, a brilliant Algerian diplomat, made some very practical recommendations about how the UN's capacity to undertake these tasks could be strengthened. It does involve a small increase in resources for the Secretariat. It is very unusual that we ask for that. We have accepted very meekly in the past six years a ceiling imposed by the rich countries, and in particular the United States, of zero percent nominal growth in the regular UN budget. In the peacekeeping budget of course there is an appropriation for each one of the peace-keeping operations, but even when it expands - as they did very rapidly in 1999 when we were suddenly given Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone - the headquarters capacity remains tiny. It is frankly such, that no national government sending its troops into any area of conflict would dream of trying to run them with such minuscule capacity at headquarters.

I think these recommendations do deserve support. Of course they are only a partial answer to the issue of protecting civilians from the effects of armed conflict. This is an area where the United Nations was perceived, rightly I'm afraid, to fail - particularly in Rwanda in 1994 when nearly a million people were massacred in the only, I think, incontrovertible case of genocide that there has been since 1945, and also in Bosnia, especially in Srebrenica in 1995, when thousands of men and boys were disarmed (many did not have arms in the first place) and were taken away and shot. They were rounded up and taken away in the presence of UN peace-keepers.

Now those peace-keepers were perhaps not mandated or equipped to actually take on the people who were doing that and fight them. It's a controversial point. As a general rule Member-States don't equip peace-keeping forces to fight wars, and the Security Council does not authorize them to do so. It may well be that the United Nations is not an appropriate body to run a war. But some form of action does sometimes need to be taken. That's why in 1999 the Secretary-General raised the issue which has become known as "humanitarian intervention". What it means, is military action taken by Member-States to save large numbers of people from imminent destruction. It is a very controversial issue because it is obviously so open to abuse. One person's humanitarian intervention can be another's invasion for self-interested purposes, even with the view some times to dismembering the country. It is an extreme measure only to be used in extreme cases.

There are many things that can and should be done to prevent things getting to the point where that question even arises. These will be the subject of further reports by the Secretary-General in the course of this year, notably on the protection of civilians and on conflict prevention.

The UN has to be strengthened not only in the area of peace and security but in general. As I say, it's not going to be a world government, and the tasks that it can undertake are limited, and it will seek to do them in partnership with others. But it needs to be adapted to work in that way. It needs to be able to manage its human resources more efficiently, to attract and motivate the most talented people. It needs to be able to provide better security to its staff, some of whom have really been left to fend for themselves and often, I regret to say, massacred in cold blood in various parts of the world. It needs itself to make better use of information technology. It is no good us preaching the virtues of that to the rest of the world if we can't actually do it in our own operations. I think most people would say it needs to be more democratic, although there might be different views of what exactly that would mean. It certainly needs to be transparent. It needs to be able to work in partnerships. It needs to be open to ideas and contributions from outside.

I think that in all these respects the Secretary-General is giving a lead. But all of them, to one degree or other, require decisions to be taken by Member-States. And that's why I consider it a very good opportunity to come and talk to an audience like this, to people in a Member-State, who are interested in international affairs, are interested in the United Nations, and can presumably have some influence on their government - the way it votes in the General Assembly and in the various committees which actually control the Secretariat at the UN.

I very much thank you for coming and listening to me.