

The UN's Role in Development: Issues of Reform and Funding



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UN Reform: Main Problematique

- Should UN have a 'Development' Role?
- What should 'Development Role' Include?
- US Exceptionalism : Major Impediment
- Burden-sharing: EU/Japan Hang-up
- Conflict/Overlap across UN, BWI and EU
- Universality/Legitimacy of UN: True/False?
- Role of Developing Countries in the UN?
- Preference for Ad-hoc-ism (Flexibility?) by donors and recipients

UN Reform: Internal Dilemmas

- Far Too Many UN Funds/Programmes:
No Consensus on Real Rationalisation
- Administrative Costs: Too High
- Administrative Foul-Ups: Too Many
- Accountability: Tough to Enforce
- Confused Mandates/Roles/Functions
- Excessive Overlap of Activities
- Specialised Agencies: Turf Protection
- Inter-Agency Co-ordination: Minimal
- In-Country UN 'House': Jury still Out
- Unclear what Donors are paying for

UN Reform: National Govt. Issues

REFORM PROSPECTS COMPROMISED BY:

- Preference for Bilateral Discretion
- Multilateral Budgets: BW vs. EU vs. UN
- Treasury/FO Conflict: BW (TR) vs. UN (FO)
- Line Ministry support for S. Agencies
- Donors don't have coherent Strategy or Defined Priorities across UN-FP's & SA's.
- National Policy Incoherence on:
Dev. vs. Other Objectives, Strategies, Tactics
- Parliamentary Oversight: Practicality?

UN Reform: What/Why – How?

- Intra-Agency Reform: Considerable Progress
- MYFF: Some headway, uncertainty reduced
- Operational Focus: Improved but?
- Inter-Agency Co-ordination: Still Imperfect
- UN-BWI Co-ordination: Improving but?
- Staff/Management Quality: Improving but?
- Removal of Politics from Staffing: ???
- Political Appointment of Key Leaders: ???
- Problem not with Agency Superstructure
- Problem with Foundations and Architecture
- UN 'Culture': Bureaucratic, Unresponsive, Political

Reform vs. Funding Asymmetries

- Reforms not matched by +Funds/Certainty
- Core Funding Still a Major Problem (<25%)
- Basis of CF Assessments needs Revisiting
- Reduced Uncertainty on VF with MYFF
- All Donors not committed to MYFF
- MYFF often hijacked by exigent priorities
- Distorting Effects of Afghanistan/Iraq on
 - Resource Mobilisation from Donors
 - Resource Allocation across Countries
- UN System faces major challenges: in Africa, Central Asia, Pacific, Caribbean

Available Options: Funding

- Increase Core Funding
- Change basis of Assessments
- Solidify greater % of Voluntary Funds
- More MI dev country inputs to CF/VF
- Increase Formal Funding Partnerships
- Transit to 'Dirty' Replenishments
- Group UN-F/P's for Replenishments
- Tack Multi-Year UN-F/P Funding to IDA Replenishments (using same Burden-Sharing Principles/Rules)

Available Options: Reforms

- Continue Incremental Reform in each F/P-SA
- Improve Inter-Agency Co-ordination: HQ/Field
- Rationalise UN-Funds/Programmes Incrementally
- Make Extant UN System more Coherent

- Radically Reform Basic UN-F/P Architecture
- Create Single UN Development Agency UN-AID
- Rationalise then Fold extant F/Ps within UN-AID
- Compel UN-AID Co-ordination with Sp. Agencies via Donor-Imposed Budget Protocols
- Focus UN-AID on SOFT Orgware and Technical Asst.
- Make UN-AID Primarily Responsible for Institution and Capacity Building (to avoid conflicts of interest for IFIs who now fund and provide TA).