

# How effective is the UN in Peacekeeping and mediating Conflict?

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### Introduction

Thanks for the University of St Andrews, Scotland, The United Nations and Student Association (UNYSA) and Pawel for inviting me to speak today, a place where since 1410 students from United Kingdom and around the world have come to Scotland's first university for higher learning.

Today we are going to deliberate on the effectiveness of the UN in peacekeeping, negotiating conflict and post conflict development.

United Nations works for solving present, emerging and future threats, major and minor conflicts, as at present in Darfur in Sudan, Israeli-Palestine conflict in the Middle East and the threat of looming climate change crisis. The role of UN in global politics is to deal with world problems in an effective way exploring the best solutions available in co-operation with

other major countries and international organisations like the European Union, G8, IMF, World Bank and other countries.

However, it is fair to say that the UN has its own limitations and one of them is. Peacekeeping. The peacekeeping institution is not even mentioned in the UN's original charter. Dag Hammarskjöld, UN secretary general seized the opportunity of the Suez Crisis created by Britain and France's invasion of Egypt in 1956 to persuade governments to create peacekeeping forces.

The worsening world situation is being dealt by UN peacekeeping operations by spending billions of dollars. Do you know that at any given time there are over 50 conflicts raging around the world? At the same time there are UN peacekeeping missions in 17 countries deploying 100,000 peacekeeping personnel from 119 countries. These are engaged in trying to keep peace on four continents. From Sri Lanka to Afghanistan, Sudan to Colombia ordinary civilians bear the brunt of violence. In war 90% of the casualties are women and children. Just imagine how many patients are dying in hospitals in Gaza and Baghdad due to lack of electricity and medicines owing to war. Even worse they can't even go to hospitals as they are in war zones with barriers or curfews. A decade of fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo is continuing to kill about 45000 people each month.

A report by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), says that armed violence costs Guatemala more than \$ 2.4 billion a year in keeping public security and health care. It is the same scenario in other countries where water supplies, hospitals and bridges are destroyed by war and have to be rebuilt after the war is over.

In few countries like Kashmir, Cyprus, and Congo UN peacekeepers are keeping the peace for over 40 years. The conflicts started by grandfathers are being fought by their grandchildren. If only people were able to forget the past, let go of hatred, we would be living in a different world. As human beings our greatness lies in forgiveness.

## **UN Triumphs and Failures**

### **Why the UN matters**

If the basic measure of success in international interventions is enduring peace, then the United Nations has a very good record, despite some well publicised failures. The UN's work in Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique, Eastern Slovenia, Sierra Leone and East Timor speak for themselves. For all its weaknesses, the UN is able to bring a range of capacities to bear - from mediation through humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping to support for elections and reconstruction - all in a framework of international legitimacy.

The UN matters as it is involved in all the major issues and decision of the last 60 years, since its inception. Today, it is needed more than ever to solve the complex problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the past, the UN achieved landmarks and historic events, some of which are as follows:

- It was instrumental to creation of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty which has been measured to have been successful by the fact that no nuclear bomb has been exploded after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings
- It was instrumental to the Ottawa Convention on land mines which bans all anti-personnel landmines.
- It was instrumental to implement UN Millennium Development Goals for poverty reduction.

- It was instrumental to the formation to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and promoting development, especially, women's rights and the rights of the child.
- It was instrumental in the eradication of smallpox and polio and is ahead of everyone in the fight against HIV/Aids, Malaria and TB.
- It was instrumental in creation of International Criminal Court (ICC)
- It was instrumental in the formation of Kyoto Protocol to save the planet from global warming

### **However the UN does have its limits.**

The failure of peacekeeping operations in Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia and now Darfur (Sudan), show how difficult it is to stop ethnic violence and to mediate in a very difficult and hopeless situation. The above tragedies shamed the world and lost respect for the UN and made the real task of making the organisation work, a difficult one.

This was a time when UN peacekeeping was brought to chaos. The various military commanders involved wondered how diplomats who clearly did not understand the basic rules of peacekeeping were qualified to produce a haystack of resolutions in the Security Council leading to death and danger on the ground – all the decisions taken in secret session -- and no one held accountable.

The soldiers came to believe that the politicians never intended them to fulfil the mandates and concluded that the peacekeeping exercise was a charade. The soldiers were blamed for failing to do things for which they were never mandated, staffed, financed equipped or deployed to do.

Like all institutions, UN is not perfect. There is quite a bit of misperception as to what the UN can do and cannot do, and what the UN is expected to do. There are very high expectations from the peoples of the world, which is wonderful for the organisation, but the downside is that they always feel disappointed. The other problem is that UN, is not very good at telling its story, even the successful ones, and UN need to do a better job at getting the message out. The other thing is it stands for ScapeGoat, because when things go wrong and things are terribly complicated and the governments don't know what to do with it, they dump it on the United Nations and tell their pubic: 'We have acted –we have given it to the United Nations, We have sent it the Security Council'. But the resources do not follow – material, financial and otherwise – and they don't support the operations. But they do dump on UN not realising that the UN hasn't got the means to deal with it. However it still gets all the blame for things which it was never supposed to do. People fail to realise how much UN is doing and is not being given credit for.

Today we will focus on 2 countries Rwanda and Kenya to explore how effective UN is in negotiating conflict, peacekeeping and post conflict development

### **Rwanda – why it happened, what happened and what went wrong? Lessons learnt**

The Rwandan genocide was triggered by the killing of the country's president in April 1994. The identity of the assassins remains one of the great mysteries of the 20th century. In a article in the February 2008 issue of Prospect Linda Melvern the investigative journalist has found new evidence of the French complicity to the genocide. It claims that the French military had a hand in training and arming extremist militia in Rwanda. It is acknowledged that French actions had been regretted and concluded that overall co-ordinations of the policy rested solely with the then president Francois Mitterrand, including the hand of the present president of Rwanda Paul Kagame who was the military leader at the time of genocide in 1994. It has emerged it was he who ordered the assassination of the then

Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana. This was found by a leading French judge who had evidence to that effect. However he was stopped from prosecuting because of the French law not to prosecute Heads of state.

Linda sent me two more articles one regarding the Security Councils impotence and indecisiveness of taking any action at the time of genocide and the other about the media missing the story. The genocide in Rwanda will define for our generation the failure to intervene in the face of mass human rights abuses. The UN Security Council (the council) was intimately involved in this terrible event, with the decisions it took from October 1993, when a peace keeping mission was created for Rwanda, having a decisive effect on what happened. The crucial meetings held by the council in secret and informal sessions show how a serious assessment of the situation in Rwanda was simply missing. It shows how the peacekeepers of the Council's mission to Rwanda were abandoned during the genocide and how the efforts to these UN personnel to ease the suffering of the Rwandan people were ignored by the Great Powers.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> article about the media missing the story of the Rwandan genocide in which she describes the failure of the media to tell the world about the rapes, killings and murders.

In the course of the genocide that took place in Rwanda from April 6 to July 19, 1994, at least 800,000 people were brutally slaughtered into the indescribable human tragedy that unfolded in the course of the 100 day killing spree. In recent years, there has been a vast amount of in-depth coverage of accounts by genocide survivors and bystanders. In attempting to answer the question *if the tragic genocide in Rwanda in 1994 could have been avoided or much mitigated by external military intervention*, these shocking personal histories must not be ignored.

Rwanda revealed the 'empty rhetoric' of the international community's repeated promise to 'never again' allow such an 'odious scourge' of genocide to happen. Genocide has occurred so often and so uncontested in the last fifty years that an epithet more apt in describing recent events than the oft-chanted "Never Again" is in fact "Again and Again".

Many opportunities that could have affected the course of events in the Rwandan genocide remained untapped by policy makers. To quote former U.N. Secretary General Annan, who at the time headed the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations: 'In their greatest hour of need, the world failed the people of Rwanda.'

Here are the words of the Force Commander of the UN peacekeepers in Rwanda, Lt.-General Romeo Dallaire, who with 470 volunteer soldiers – mostly from Ghana -- stayed on during the genocide. He said earlier this year:

*"The Rwandan genocide and the reaction to it were expressions of the immaturity of the human race to recognise that every human is human".*

Rwanda was a warning to us all; it is what happens if we continue to ignore human rights, and abject poverty. An absence of human rights – economic collapse, brutal dictatorship, environmental degradation – all these problems need international solutions. We urgently need revitalised and reformed international institutions. There are similarities and lessons to be learnt in what is happening in Darfur, Sudan today.

The challenge of Rwanda is for those working in human rights, universities and the media is to mobilize public opinion into a new moral and practical commitment to the promotion and enforcement of human rights all over the world. We need to guarantee international intervention when it is required. We need to heighten awareness on the part of state leaders that they will be held accountable if they decide not to act to save those who are threatened because of their ethnicity.

### **Post-conflict reconstruction in Rwanda**

Rwanda underwent a major institutional reconstruction process after the civil war and genocide of 1994. The country was devastated by wide scale conflict, no infrastructure was intact and there were no available supplies. The ruined economy was non-operational and many societal structures collapsed. The production capacity of the private sector declined, and at the same time the public sector witnessed considerable reduction of its capacity to direct the economy. National, prefecture and local administrative structures were weakened or quite simply destroyed in the wake of the war in 1990 and with the genocide of 1994. Human resources were depleted either by the mass killings or by exile. The majority of public servants and the skilled professional workforce either were killed or fled along with two million other citizens to refugee camps in surrounding countries.

The judicial infrastructure of Rwanda was seriously damaged during the events of 1994, yet judicial institutions faced the consequences of the genocide, its perpetrators as well as ordinary cases connected with public order or with the private interests of the citizens. Related problems, such as those of human and property rights, were also a priority of the judicial system after the genocide. They became increasingly important especially after the emergency relief phase was replaced by a normal and more permanent situation.

The post conflict state of Rwanda faced six major challenges relating to: a) security, b) politics, c) judiciary, d) economy e) administration, and f) social cohesion.

At the closing stages of the conflict, the main priorities of the Rwandan post-conflict administration and the strategies it adopted to address them, were the following:

a) The most urgent priority was to suppress the conflict and any pockets of resistance both within the nation and across its borders in neighbouring refugee camps. Thousands of members of the ex-Rwanda armed forces were retrained and integrated with the Rwanda patriotic army. A new national security force was created. A programme was also established that allowed and encouraged the population to participate in ensuring their security.

b) Another challenge was to work for national reconciliation, rebuild political institutions and lay a firm foundation for the country's successful growth, starting from transition arrangements and then moving towards a permanent and viable political apparatus. In order to ensure diversity representation, the accepted principle in Rwanda was the free and open competition for political power. Rwanda, unlike most post-conflict countries, allowed space for public pluralism, an active civil society and competition for ideas, influencing free media and freedom of expression. The rebuilding of political institutions proved an enormous challenge especially in light of the level of mistrust that preceded and was heightened by the genocide. A few individual projects (e.g. Local Governments Initiative. Community Development Fund) were implemented throughout the country to get an idea of the issues at hand and learn valuable lessons in order to design a system of governance that evolved out of the Rwandan culture that is democratic, building on the

reconciliation process, and above all that incorporated the energies of all sections of the Rwandan society into the development effort.

c) Special attention was given to the need to resolve the judicial/legal issues caused by the violent conflicts. To help in the creation of an open society, communities were empowered in decision making in resolving the genocide cases rapidly. In addition legal and constitutional commissions were set up to work with the population to enact a new constitution. After 1994 the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was established to represent a link between conflict resolution and the rule of law. It was necessary for the population to understand and accept the nation's rule of law. In this respect Article 159 of the Constitution established a "Mediation Committee", in each sector responsible for mediating between parties disputes involving specific matters determined by law prior to the filing of a case. In this regard, the population at decentralized levels had a significant role in the affairs of the justice system.

d) The events of the 1990-1994 also produced disastrous economic consequences. However, the situation was turned around, thanks to various national initiatives and strict financial and economic management practices.

e) In 1996-1997 civil servants who had fled the country during the genocide returned and were integrated into civil service. The Rwandan experience has shown however, that the task of rebuilding the national administration is a huge one particularly as a result of the qualitative insufficiency of the personnel needed. Following the adoption of a new constitution through a referendum on 26 May 2003, and the success of the decentralization programme, the Government of Rwanda undertook a public administration reconfiguration plan to allow it to meet new challenges and new missions imposed by the new constitution and changed capacities at local government level.

f) The political and economic crisis of 1994 brought about the destruction of the social fabric, of the human resource base, as well as the social infrastructure. In terms of capacity, the nation was destroyed. Not only was there a lack of infrastructure, human, financial, and social capital but a lack of institutional memory, in terms of what was the legal framework for public administration. In addition, there was the problem of ethnicity, which some believe can be used to explain the genocide. Strategies needed to be identified to overcome ethnic, racial, and religious divisions necessary to achieve sustainable development. Meeting the challenge of social integration was an important precondition for equal access to employment and to the economic resources of the Rwandan society, and thereby the elimination of poverty. The introduction of institutions to increase transparency and accountability improved access to opportunities seeking to discourage the negative tendencies of ethnicism, regionalism, and nepotisms in public business.

Let us now turn our attention to Kenya

### **Kenya – why it happened, what happened and what went wrong? Lessons learnt**

Widespread violence erupted in Kenya after December 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 presidential election in which Raila Odinga (Luo) claimed that President Mwai Kibaki (Kikuyu) stole the election. The violence took on a tribal nature, claimed at least 1,500 lives and displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

The post-poll crisis, which has battered the economy, tapped into simmering resentment over land, poverty and the dominance of the Kikuyu, Kibaki's tribe, in Kenyan politics and

business since independence in 1963, and the Luos who felt cheated in the 27<sup>th</sup> December elections, chasing Kikuyus from their homes and Kikuyus killing in reprisals.

There is, in fact, a whole cluster of factors contributing to unstable governance to be considered. And if Africa is to attain sustainable stability, the core challenge is the continent's propensity for authoritarian executive dictatorships, or absolute monarchies.

Indeed, the tendency of poll rigging across Africa has virtually brought the continent back to square one on the question of democracy. Kenya will have to seriously reengineer its constitution to undo the destabilizing concentrations of power and resources within narrowly based, elite backed regimes. Amending the presidential system to include a prime minister with executive powers linked to the opposition's majority, is one example of such changes, which is being implemented at present.

Another dimension of the Kenyan power struggle has been the opposition's call for federalism; a demand reflecting the marginalization of regions of the country falling outside the incumbent ruling party's power base. This is a problem resonating across the continent. One example is Northern Uganda, long terrorised by the Lord's Resistance Army.

With the pressure of international community, the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, agreed to mediate after other efforts to resolve the dispute failed.

Kofi Annan's message was clear when he said 'we have to make sure there's just one mediation process. Otherwise you have the protagonists trying to bottom shop, looking elsewhere if they don't like what you're offering. You get diplomatic tourism and that's no good.'

Both the leaders agreed to talk and work together towards uniting all Kenyans and accelerating the healing process by holding meetings with different communities.

"Kenya had been the safe haven in a tumultuous region and suddenly Kenya itself was going," Annan said. "And when you have ethnic violence, if you don't mediate quickly, you get a hopeless situation."

It took Annan some time to convince both sides that there was no way either side could run the country without the other and that will be a perfect political gridlock.

"When we talk of intervention, people think of the military," Annan said. "But under R2P, force is a last resort. Political and diplomatic intervention is the first mechanism. And I think we've seen a successful example of its application."

Jeffrey Gettleman, who has chronicled the Kenyan crisis with immense authority, speaks of "Annan Zen." Annan needed that imperturbability. The atmosphere between the Kenyan president, Mwai Kibaki, who had been declared the narrow winner of a demonstrably rigged election, and Raila Odinga, the opposition leader who felt robbed, was "very icy," Annan said. A little over a month, a remarkable power sharing outcome came to serve as a model. Call it the Nairobi paradigm or Annan's R2P marker.

Although outside pressure helped, it was Kenyans themselves who forced the deal. Television pictures of young men brandishing machetes should be set against the doveish work of many other Kenyans. Leaders in business, the media, law and religion all worked hard for reconciliation. In this at least, Kenya did rather better than, say, the former Yugoslavia.

But will February's 2008 pact, sealed with the help of Kofi Annan, a former United Nations secretary-general, bring lasting calm? A power-sharing government is expected to be at work by the end of the month. Parliament will sit without an official opposition. This week it began to pass bills allowing for the creation of a new post of prime minister (to be filled by Mr Odinga), a law to work against tribalism, a panel to investigate the election, another to draft a new constitution, and a truth and justice commission to investigate political crimes, including a history of corruption ever since independence in 1963.

### **The Role of UN in preventing conflict, and post conflict development**

The role of UN is to provide insights into governance challenges and suggest guideposts that may assist government officials, leaders and decision makers to adopt appropriate governance systems and tools as part of post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

The challenges that countries in crises and post-conflict situations face are complex, multifaceted and vary due to the variety of different historical root cause of conflict and the different political, social and geographical contexts. The strategies to address these challenges and effectively support a country on a path of recovery, development and durable peace are therefore diverse. What works in one country does not necessarily work in another. However, there are some universally shared values, principles and key elements that have been found to be sine qua non for sustainable peace. These comprise: focused and committed leadership, security, solid government structures providing basic services, building people's trust and legitimacy, information dissemination, sound civic dialogue, mediation and community participation.

UN does a good job at conflict resolution, and regional organisations and arrangements have an important role to play aswell. In some crises, a regional organisation has taken the lead. UN have a very good example here in the Balkans, in the crisis in (former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) FYROM: the lead is taken by the EU, Supported by NATO, and the UN is giving them support, but they are in the lead. UN had an example in West Africa, where (Economic Community Of West African States) ECOWAS was the first to send troops into Liberia and to Sierra Leone. The OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) tackling some issues in Europe, and the Organisation of American States active in Haiti. So UN does recognise the role of regional organisations and it cooperates with them.

In order to become more effective in peacekeeping, the UN needs to take into consideration the following points:

- Reduce the stockpile of military hardware, nuclear weapons and small arms and resources devoted to conflicts. Article 26 of the UN Charter calls for promoting the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources. Let's work to close or convert the military industrial complex which lives on the need for endless wars.
- Strengthen the evolving concept of 'Responsibility to Protect' which asserts that the international community should intervene in countries where there is an overwhelming humanitarian problem and where the host country is incapable or unwilling to protect its own citizens.
- Reassert the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
- Promote a culture of non-violence and non-killing for replacing the gun culture. It will ensure human survival and stop continued strife between religious and ethnic communities. Non-violence is an antidote to a culture of killing that pervades the

Earth. The task is challenging but for peace to prevail we have to reverse the trend of killing through hating violence, war, and mass psychological transformation for creating harmony, peace and love.

- Invest in giving peace education from children to adults all over the world. We need universal education to tackle global issues of wars, terrorism, poverty and climate change.

### **Post-conflict Development**

Post-conflict recovery and state reconstruction are complex challenges for the state and the society. They constitute, in fact the major goals to be reached when a series of specific challenges have been met. The most critical key challenges in post-conflict realities are below:

- Legitimacy Trust and Authority of the State
- Political Will for Transparency and Accountability
- Rule of Law
- Social Capital and Social Cohesion
- Reconciliation Processes
- Economic Reconstruction and Service Delivery Structures
- Security and Cross-border Movements
- Conflicts spilling across borders
- Governance Guideposts for Post-conflict Peace and Development

The solutions to be followed are below:

- It is not possible to transform government institutions without a transformation of mindsets of people and the ways in which they relate to each other and their capacities for positive engagement.
- Most fundamentally, sustained peace requires a visionary leadership in a trustful, transparent and participatory partnership with civil society.
- Any visionary post-conflict leadership needs to consider the particular importance of the contributions of all genders and vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- Decentralization is the key policy area in post-conflict settings. The dispersal of key government functions to the provincial or local levels promotes inclusion and participation, and reduces the stakes for a contest over centralized power.
- More important issue is to stop wars before they happen and that is the role of peace education and peacekeepers who can prevent conflict. For that we need to examine root causes of war. Why conflicts occur and how in the early stages, if dealt in a proper way can be stopped before they become bigger. It is here that the role of the Peacebuilding Commission comes in and if followed successfully conflicts can be dead in the water.
- The Peacebuilding Commission is a new body created in December 2005 by the UN intended to bridge the gap in the coordination of peacebuilding activities in countries just emerging from violent conflict. The Commission (or PBC) is an intergovernmental advisory body that will be a new forum to bring peacebuilding stakeholders in a selected country together to coordinate their overall strategies, and particularly to identify gaps in the international community's effort to support sustainable peace in transitioning countries. The PBC will not undertake peacebuilding activities itself, but will provide advice to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In addition to providing a new opportunity for better coordinated peacebuilding approaches across the UN system, and in cooperation with the national governments, the international financial institutions (IMF and World Bank), and major donors and troop

contributors, the PBC should help to sustain the international community's attention on a country for a longer period of time and marshal greater resources at critical moments in the peacebuilding process, especially full post-conflict reconstruction plans. The real significance of PBC is in the fact that most conflicts reoccur within 5 years of its starting. The new Commission can help to stop it. The PBC has a major role to play to stop conflict. Joining hands with its partners it can intervene before the actual conflict has been started and developed into a full blown war, and develop best-practices in making the transition from violent conflict to peace.

### **How UN, global institutions and power politics of 21<sup>st</sup> Century can effectively deal with peacekeeping and mediating conflict**

The future of peacekeeping will depend on how we manage our planet? How wisely we share the scarce resources in a over crowded world whose population is increasing, will go up to 8 billion by 2050. This scramble for water and energy security will lead to further violence and wars in the future not thought of before. They will be mass migrations leading to growing environmental wars. To find a way out we have to cooperate on a global scale to manage air, water and land resources for sustainable development

Multilateral diplomacy at international level is the best way forward in the world as dominance of new powers including China, India and Brazil, will continue to grow and the end of European and Amercian influence will continue to decline. Nations should deal with global problems like climate change and terrorism first, instead of putting their own agenda which is a recipe for disaster. Europe is a prime example that shows the world that political solutions of the wider world are possible without endangering the agenda of the nation states. This is a quantum leap in solving world problems, keeping away the unnecessary violence and wars which are creating untold suffering in the world.

It is fair to say that of all the good the UN do, the role of peacekeeping and conflict-prevention is the most difficult one. There are two main reasons for it. Firstly, powerful nations sideline the UN and attack countries like Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, without any mandate or permission from the United Nations. They conduct illegal wars to maintain their superpower status or keep a constant supply of vital strategic resources like oil.

Secondly, the thorny task of getting warring parties to the table, talk to each other, iron out differences, forgive the past, look at the future and start life of peace and prosperity. Most of the successful peace operations have gone through some of these processes like the Good Friday Peace agreement in Northern Ireland or the recent peace brokered in Kenya by Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan. The trouble with this is that some of the conflicts and wars reoccur after an average of 5 years. This is owing to the fact that conflicting parties cannot forget the past or one of the parties think they are strong enough to rule the country.

UN is well placed to deal with problems of the world. It is the one and only place where governments can have a dialogue and, solve problems and work together for a better world. Realising as it is the only game in the town, our endeavour should be to make it work in a more effective, transparent, accountable and democratic way.

### **Conclusion**

The only way lasting peace can prevail is for people to let go of their differences and hatred and build a future for living in peace and harmony.

You the students of St. Andrews University are the future leaders of the world and you can develop ideas and strategies from this meeting and start putting them into practice today as Margaret Mead said, *'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has.'*

So what steps can we all take?

- Start a good public relation awareness campaign for what UN is good at? UN is as good as we can make it.
- Write to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and your Member of Parliament about what they are doing for solving conflict in Darfur, Israeli-Palestine conflict, the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Promote non-violent solutions to wars like conflict resolution, peace education and reducing military expenditure.
- Reassert the principles of the charter of the UN.
- Participate in promoting peacekeeping for poverty reduction and preventing climate change crisis and promoting human rights.

Prevention is central to the work of the United Nations. Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Charter commits the Member States to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace. Prevention of armed conflict by peaceful means is the cheapest and most effective way to promote international peace and security. Conflict prevention must be the cornerstone of the collective security system of the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

As for peacekeeping itself, the UN needs to be quicker and stronger. The age-old dream of a UN standing force is a long way off - indeed, it may never happen. But Member States should create strategic reserves- troops, police and finance that could be deployed rapidly in UN operations. For this to accomplish, UN budget for peacekeeping should be increased substantially.

Efforts to strengthen UN peacekeeping would complement the efforts of regional groupings, such as the European Union and the African Union, who are doing the same. Indeed, we must create an interlocking system of peacekeeping capacities in which the United Nations works with regional organizations in predictable and reliable partnerships.

But with reform, UN can be far more effective instrument - in the long-term preventive efforts to fight poverty and promote human rights, in preventing terrorism and the proliferation of both small arms and weapons of mass destruction, and in preventing violence from erupting, spreading and recurring. That may require a modest investment of resources -- but this is truly a case where an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.

We have covered a lot of ground today from the role of UN in international peace and security to mediating conflict, to post conflict development. In conclusion I would like to say that our leaders need to come out of their narrow vision of national self-interest and summon political will to make bold decisions on development, security and human rights. Our world will not only be fairer and freer, but also safer and more secure. And the United Nations will be a far more effective instrument for saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war

Thank you for listening.

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The full version of this speech can be downloaded from:

- VM Centre for Peace [www.vmpeace.org](http://www.vmpeace.org)
- Action for UN Renewal [www.actionforunrenew.ndo.co.uk](http://www.actionforunrenew.ndo.co.uk)

*Vijay Mehta is an author and global activist for peace, development, human rights and the environment. Some of his notable books are The Fortune Forum Summit: For a Sustainable Future, Arms No More, and The United Nations and Its Future in the 21st Century. He is president of VM Centre for Peace ([www.vmpeace.org](http://www.vmpeace.org)), co-founder of Fortune Forum Charity, Chair of Action for UN Renewal, and co-Chair of World Disarmament Campaign.*

*He along with his daughter Renu Mehta founder of Fortune Forum ([www.fortuneforum.org](http://www.fortuneforum.org)) held two summits in London in 2006 and 2007. The summits attracted a worldwide audience of 1.3 billion people (one fifth of humanity) including print and media coverage. The keynote speakers for the first and second summit were Bill Clinton, former US President and Al Gore, former US vice-President, and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize 2007.*

*Vijay Mehta has appeared in various TV programmes including BBC World , Ajjak-24 hour Indian news channel, Iranian national TV, and Think Peace documentary, Canada, among others. The Independent, Observer and Guardian newspapers, among other journals have written about him. His life is devoted to the service of peace, humanity and our planet.*

*He is at present writing a book on climate change jointly with, Renu Mehta.*

## **Notes**

The following publications were consulted during the writing of this article.

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