



² The text of General Assembly resolution 65/94 accompanies this document as Annex 3.

³ See document A/66/100 of 15 June 2011 and document A/66/250, of 16 September 2011. Item 123 entitled “Strengthening of the United Nations system” in letter b) includes the theme “Central role of the United Nations system in global governance.”

⁴ We must underline the important role played by the President of the sixty five session of the General Assembly, **Joseph Deiss**, from Switzerland, who called the attention to this issue and considered it as one of its priorities, under the title “Central role of the United Nations in global governance”.

⁵ Strictly speaking, the term “multilateral” refers to any concerted action among several States on a specific issue. However, the spirit of the term in the Charter of the United Nations refers more to collective intergovernmental action through mechanisms that ensure that all relevant interests are considered in the discussion prior to decision-making. It is intended to ensure that all affected countries are given a voice and participation. In this sense, multilateral collective action represents the “international community”. In the chapter I authored entitled, *The Multilateral diplomacy of Chile*, which will appear soon in a book on Chile’s foreign policy edited by Mario Artaza and Cesar Ross. I refer to the issue as follows: In international relations Multilateralism distinguishes itself as a sphere of negotiation for building agreements and commitments for collective action to confront the major issues on

4. For the United Nations⁶ the catalyst for this concern about the diminished role of the organization in global governance was the recognition, in 2009 and 2010, that the Group of 20,⁷ an informal grouping of the world's major and emerging economic powers, has been the mechanism utilised for coordinating the global response to the current global economic crisis, circumventing and marginalizing the universal institutions of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods Institutions⁸ among the sidelined actors.

B. “Multilateralism”: What do we mean by that?

5. Given the globalization and interdependence that exists today among nations, and with the magnitude of global problems we all face, we are all multilateralists. But this does not tell the full story. What sort of multilateralism are we speaking about?⁹
6. Classic multilateralism, which is universal, inclusive and democratic, based on rules and institutions, currently finds itself at risk of becoming sidelined by other multilateral mechanisms for collective action.
7. In matters of international peace and security, the Security Council once again finds itself being circumvented in situations for which actions are needed to counter crises that affect international peace and security, while the prospects of reaching an agreement on reforming and expanding the Council are not promising.
8. Similar dynamics affect other issues, such as disarmament, arms control and nuclear weapons non-proliferation. The entire multilateral disarmament machinery of the United Nations is stalled, and no substantive progress has been made regarding implementation of the 3 pillar of Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. As these situations

the international agenda. In a world transformed by globalization, the agenda of multilateral issues included

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unfold, agreements and mechanisms spring up that represent limited groups of countries and use a variety of participation systems.

9. With serious and urgent environmental problems that need to be addressed, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development has not reached any agreed conclusions in two years. The most recent multilateral commitments, such as the Copenhagen Accord and the Cancún Accord, did not produce agreements substantive enough to make significant gains on the environmental agenda. Meanwhile, intergovernmental groups appear to work on issues without involving the global mechanisms.
10. In the midst of a serious global economic recession —the Great Recession—the Doha Round, the lengthy multilateral trade negotiations begun under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 seem destined to fail. In the absence of progress at the multilateral level, the liberalization and regulation of foreign trade is being advanced instead through regional, plurilateral and bilateral mechanisms.
11. The promised new international financial architecture does not appear to be moving forward, and the Bretton Woods Institutions continue to be criticized for the methods they employ in choosing officials and making decisions.
12. Summarizing, architecture for global governance does exist, and it possesses inclusive institutions and mechanisms, principally those of the United Nations system. Yet this architecture does not appear to be given use.
13. Many of the decisions, particularly those that deal with major world issues, are being made —for better or worse— in multilateral mechanisms outside the United Nations system.¹⁰

¹⁰ The issue has been the object of valuable academic reflections, outstanding among which are the studies and seminars sponsored by **The Stanley Foundation** at a conference held in Terrytown on 26-29 March 2010. These reflections can be found in the document “The United Nations and the G-20; Ensuring Complementary Efforts”. See also the Foundation’s policy analysis brief for March/

14. In some cases this may be attributed to gaps of inclusive governance mechanism (when an issue is not reflected in the framework of the United Nations system of institutions and mechanisms). But in many cases major powers avoid addressing issues within the framework of existing multilateral mechanisms, either because they do not offer political support to global institutions they may consider inefficient or because they prefer to avoid overly open debate and the political paralysis that can ensue within mechanisms whose rules call for consensus and require a unanimous vote to approve a decision.
15. Some have explained this preference for groups or clubs of countries over global mechanisms as a trade-off between “legitimacy” (the global bodies) and “effectiveness” (groups restricted to the main actors). However, over the long term the inclusive institutions, such as the United Nations system, have in most cases demonstrated effectiveness and efficiency, while actions by the “Gs” have not always proven to be effective.

C. The United Nations in global governance

16. We are heading to live in practice by a sort of *à la carte multilateralism* rather than by multilateralism according the United Nations Charter. Rules-based regimes, mechanisms and institutions are being replaced by ad hoc groupings of countries sometime alluded as “*coalitions of the willing*”.¹¹
17. Critics of this trend allege that *à la carte* multilateralism is “opportunistic” and selective, built around the major powers, a multilateralism of the “elite” (or “multilateralism of clubs”) that circumvents the United Nations.
18. Conversely, those in favour see it otherwise, as “minimalist” or “smart” form of multilateralism that avoids the paralysis of global institutions by bringing into the decision-making process only those countries necessary to the resolving of problems.¹²
19. To the extent that the “Gs” or membership-restrictive multilateral mechanisms act along the same lines as the global institutions, there is seemingly not much to criticize.
20. We should not pretend the United Nations system has exclusive right to deal with issues of global governance, nor that it should be against to all other mechanism that from different perspectives can and should help in the management of the main issues of the

¹¹ A useful resource on the concept of “coalitions of the willing (to act)” is Working Paper 1 of the *Centre pour l’innovation dans la gouvernance internationale*, “Stretching the Model of ‘Coalitions of the Willing’”, by **Andrew F. Cooper**.

¹² See “Minilateralism” by **Moses Naim**, *Foreign Policy* magazine, July/August 2009.

global agenda. What it is necessary is coordination and convergence of efforts with the global mechanism and institutions¹³.

21. However, the ever-present problem is how to ensure that proper consideration is afforded to the interests and sensitivities of countries that cannot join these mechanisms, either because they are not one of the major powers or because they lack systemic relevance to the progress of the world economy—which is indeed the case for most countries. Because these countries do have a voice and a vote in the global institutions, the challenge lies in finding a way to ensure that the decisions of membership-restrictive mechanisms will align with the actions of the global institutions.
22. At the same time, proponents of ensuring that inclusive multilateralism remains the prime mechanism for addressing global issues with full legitimacy urge for efforts to reform the global institutions and mechanisms, in particular those of the United Nations system, so they will be up to the task of responding to today’s world challenges in an effective and timely manner.¹⁴
23. The introduction of streamlined methods and adequate incentives seems essential to developing inclusive multilateral diplomacy. Secretariats will require renewed efficiency as well as skilled and visionary leadership.
24. As relates to global governance, perhaps the problem with multilateralism is not one that pits effectiveness against inclusiveness. It has been suggested that what is needed in multilateral venues are mechanisms for collective action that involve the indispensable major actors while ensuring that all global interests and perspectives are adequately represented.¹⁵

¹³ For example, in the areas of fisheries and regarding Antarctica we have well defined and rule based Groups and regimes providing pragmatic solutions in the framework of globally defined general principles. As regards to conventional arms it is a good example the Oslo process that lead to the Convention on Cluster ammunitions and on international trade we have cases, as the Asia-Pacific Economic Council, which are examples of intergovernmental converging processes with the principles and purposes of the World Trade Organization.

¹⁴ A major effort is made in this regard by 28 small and medium-sized countries, convened by Singapore, at the United Nations in New York. This “Global Governance Group” (3G) called for a revitalized and effective United Nations, to advocate inclusive multilateralism in response to the Group of 20, yet conserving a constructive and understanding attitude between the United Nations and the Group of 20. The participating countries are: Bahamas (the), Bahrain, Barbados, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Philippines (the), Qatar, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

¹⁵ Of note on this matter is the proposal by **José Antonio Ocampo** in his article “Rethinking Global Economic and Social Governance”, in *Journal of Globalization and Development*, Volume 1, issue 1, 2010. Also of interest is the

25. Yet, in connection with the previous point, the international community seems to lack a political mechanism of the highest order for system-wide coherence and coordination of global economic, social and environmental issues. For example, actions in the three pillars (the economic, social and environmental dimensions) of sustainable development are so segmented that the United Nations is unable to provide consistency and guidance at the highest political levels in ways that would benefit the sustainable development on a global scale.¹⁶

D. Global economic governance as a priority

26. General Assembly resolution 65/94 recognizes that the issue of global governance is political in nature and applies to multiple as

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