Is the UN development system ready for a changed world?' and 'How should a modern UN development system look?' are questions that have recently been raised. Political, economic, social developments, sustainability and environmental considerations, as well as the emergence of new development actors have all led development practitioners, academics, governments, civil society organisations and others to refocus attention on UN development reform. To assist participants of reform discussions in their negotiation and decision-making processes, this paper summarises a variety of large-scale development reform proposals and places the 2015 context.

To help the reader maintain clarity and oversight in the myriad of reform proposals, this paper separates reform proposals relating to function from those relating to structure used by Bruce Jenkins and Bruce Jones (2013). The kind of financial, operational and governance form a UN fit for purpose should take has equally led to many suggestions ranging from giving the UN a prominent role in setting global norms and standards, gathering and evaluating data, providing policy advice, creating global alliances and engaging in a variety of thematic areas. While the significant cost-savings that can be generated as a result of UN development reform have been considered, an issue that so far has only been debated on the side line is how to integrate the three currently separate pillars of peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and development. With consultations on UN development reform having advanced steadily soon the next phase towards finding common consensus, decision-making and eventually implementation.

FIT FOR PURPOSE?
UN DEVELOPMENT REFORM IN THE POST-2015 CONTEXT
A summary of selected reform options

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March 2015
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This report was commissioned by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with the intention of providing a clearer overview of the different UN development reform options currently discussed. The report focuses solely on UN development system reform aiming to distil and summarise the different UN development reform options proposed, without commenting or judging the feasibility or validity of each option. With new reform proposals appearing and older ones reappearing, the report can never claim to be a complete overview of all existing literature but is to be regarded as a living document whose function it is to support UN development reform consultations. A short version of the report was presented to attendants of the Utstein Group meeting in Bonn, Germany in December 2014.

The views expressed in the report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the BMZ or GIZ.

// SUMMARY

‘Is the UN development system ready for a changed world?’, ‘Can it deliver on the expectations of a post-2015 agenda?, ‘How should a modern UN development system look like?’

These are questions that have recently been raised. Political, economical and social developments, sustainability and environmental considerations, as well as the emergence of new development actors have all led development practitioners, academics, governments, civil society organisations and others to re-focus attention on UN development reform. To assist participants of reform discussions in their negotiation and decision-making processes, this paper summarises a variety of small- and large scale UN development reform proposals and places them in a post-2015 context.

To help the reader maintain clarity and oversight in the myriad of reform proposals, this paper separates reform proposals relating to function from those relating to form, drawing on the structure used by Bruce Jenks and Bruce Jones (2013). The functions the UN development system, especially in a post-2015 era, should execute have led to a variety of proposals ranging from giving the UN a prominent role in setting global norms and standards, gathering and evaluating data, providing policy advice, creating global alliances and engaging in a variety of thematic areas. At the same time the kind of financial, operational and governance form which a UN fit for purpose should take has led to many suggestions ranging from pooling funds, merging resources into a central budget, aligning funding modalities to different types of UN development functions, establishing an International Aid Fund, delineating, grouping or merging UN entities, to creating a single UN development agency, scaling up Delivering as One, creating one UN back office and UN civil service, empowering or replacing ECOSOC and merging Boards.

Whereas the significant cost-savings that can be generated as a result of UN development reform have been considered, an issue that so far has only been debated on the side line is how to integrate the three currently separate pillars of peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and development.

With consultations on UN development reform having steadily advanced there will soon be a need to move discussions into the next phase towards finding common consensus, decision-making and eventually implementation. The immediate next steps therefore would need to include:

- Concretizing and making vague reform recommendations more specific
- Consolidating different ideas and combining them into holistic reform packages
- Developing reform proposals on how to align peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and development
- Finding a lead that spearheads the reform process and lays out the reform path such as a High-level panel but also including the recently launched ECOSOC dialogues on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system.
// 1. POST-2015 AND THE NEED FOR A REFORMED UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration by world leaders in the year 2000, the world has undergone many changes: new middle-income countries have emerged further distinguishing themselves from other developing and least developed countries, more people have been lifted out of poverty, and technological innovation has helped to unlock the potential of developing countries. At the same time the terror attacks in New York and Washington in September 2001 have shifted political and security landscapes, the financial crisis in 2008 has led to economic stagnation, climate change, sustainable energy production and consumption now demand more collective responses.

In the development sphere new actors, such as corporate and private foundations, with considerable leverage and financial resources, have joined the development space whilst challenging traditional ways of providing development assistance.

All of these changes have impacted development considerations and will influence the form and shape of the new post-2015 agenda. For many the post-2015 agenda is an opportunity to be more ambitious and overcome the limitations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were primarily concerned with providing national public goods while omitting issues such as inclusion or sustainability 1. A much stronger focus on the provision of global public goods, sustainability, equality, equitable growth and collective partnership approaches can therefore be expected to form part of the post-2015 agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the context of this changed world and post-2015 development context, the role of the UN development system with its wide legitimacy and an extensive range of assets at its disposal, is being discussed. Questions such as: ‘Is the UN development system ready for this changed and more complex world?’, ‘Can it deliver on the expectations of the post-2015 agenda?’, ‘How can the UN development system be made fit for purpose?’ have all been raised and have created new momentum for UN reform.

// 2. COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

While different views and suggestions exist on how a reformed UN development system should look, most discussions start with a review of what it currently offers, especially vis-à-vis other development actors, and where its shortcomings lie. Such a review of the comparative advantages and shortcomings have guided and informed many of the reform proposals put forward.

Comparative advantages and shortcomings that are frequently listed in the literature on UN development reform are as follows 2:

**Comparative advantages**

- The organisation has broad global legitimacy.
- Its neutral status and impartiality make it an approachable development partner for developed and developing countries alike.
- The UN development system has strong convening power and its platforms for global dialogue support the setting of global norms and standards, joint decision and policy-making.
- The UN development system has a strong ability to mobilize resources around common issues.

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1. DaO
2. Delivering as One
3. New Secretary General
4. Financial Crisis
5. HLP Report Post-2015
6. New Bank (BRICS)
7. MDGs conclude
• Through its global presence and comprehensive cross-sectorial mandate the UN’s development pillar can tackle development challenges in a holistic manner.

• Particularly in situations of conflict, crisis and recovery the UN development system has surge capacity and expertise that helps affected countries in addressing urgent needs.

• UN development work combines normative with programme and operational work.

• Through its wide reaching access to information and best practices the UN development system is an open and accessible knowledge hub.

• The UN development pillar has a wide range of assets at its disposal such as financial resources, strong in-country presence and a large number of staff.

Shortcomings

• The UN development system is fragmented with many non-integrated UN entities. Fragmentation and UN entities’ self-interest weaken the organisation and reduce its weight and leverage in comparison to other development actors while also affecting the quality of assistance that developing countries receive.

• Several UN entities carry similar mandates and duplicate or overlap activities. There is inadequate attention to generating joint results; silo approaches are common.

• UN development assistance does not always adequately address the needs of programme countries.

• The set up of governing bodies is not always representational. Complex governance structures and a multitude of Boards have also led to high transaction costs while weakening efficiency and impact.

• Common institutional processes are regulated differently by differing entities. Harmonisation efforts have not been far-reaching enough and continue to hamper cross-agency collaboration whilst diverting resources for development activities into administrative and coordination efforts.

• The organisational performance and effectiveness of UN entities differs from entity to entity. The relevance of the UN development system in addressing development challenges is decreasing.

• Even though the UN has a wide reaching and global development portfolio it plays only a limited role in generating development data and showing the impact it has helped create. This limits the organisation in mobilizing support and underscoring its legitimacy and weight.

• Insecure and unpredictable funding, over reliance on a few donor countries and an imbalance between core and non-core resources curtail long-term planning. UN entities competition for financial resources leads to high transaction costs.

// 3. MAKING THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM FIT FOR PURPOSE

Discussions around ‘Making the UN development system fit for purpose’ or ‘Reforming the UN development system’ have accompanied the United Nations since its inception in 1945. Many of the challenges faced by the organisation today are not necessarily new and have been debated at different points in time.

The Millennium Summit in 2000 and the Summit in 2005, which mandated the establishment of the High-level panel on system-wide coherence, provided the last big impulse for UN development reform. In particular, the challenges associated with implementing the ambitious MDG agenda had prompted many to question the UN’s ability to deliver and resulted in recommendations being put forward on how the UN’s development pillar should be restructured, some of which by now have been realised.

While some remain critical about the ability of the post-2015 agenda to drive a transformation of the UN development system, the focus on reform has nevertheless once again gained momentum and features in current and upcoming dialogues, conferences, summits and negotiation processes. It has encouraged many development stakeholders to make propositions on how the UN development system should be reformed and brought in line to meet the demands and requirements of a changed world.
While generally the majority of observers do not question the legitimacy of the UN and believe there is a role to play for UN entities in a post-2015 era, the views on how a reformed UN development system should look like differ widely. Reform proposals, therefore, come in different shapes and sizes and with different types of focus.

While some options focus more on operational and financial reform issues other reform proposals concentrate more on governance structures, programme harmonization or UN in-country presence.

Reform options also move along a continuum of small and large-scale solutions. In some instances reform ideas are cautious and close to maintaining the status quo, while in other cases they are bold going as far as to suggest replacing multilateral organisations, such as the UN, as a whole.

Regardless whether reform proposals are small- or large-scale, most authors favour a progressive realisation approach, meaning that UN development reform should be phased and start with smaller steps while over time moving towards more substantial change. This would help make reform more realistic and achievable and would be a more effective approach than aiming for substantial change all at once.

To assist participants in fit for purpose discussions in their negotiation and decision-making processes, this paper summarises a variety of concrete, small- and large-scale UN development reform proposals and places them in a post-2015 context. In order to clarify and to establish an overview of the myriad reform proposals which have been made, this paper employs the structure used by Bruce Jenks and Bruce Jones (2013) in their article on UN development, in which they separate form from function.

Taking a ‘big picture approach’ to reform, Jenks and Jones argue that before any proposals can be made on how to restructure the UN development’s financial, operational and governance systems or increase efficiency and effectiveness also at country-level, the questions ‘What should the UN focus on?’, ‘Where does the UN add value?’ need to be addressed first. In short - function precedes form; defining what the UN will do should precede thinking on how it will be done.

By using this approach a more holistic view of UN reform becomes possible. However, to support the current ECOSOC dialogues on longer-term positioning of the UN development system the paper has also aligned itself, as much as possible, with the structure proposed by Jenks/Aklilu (2014), who provided a guiding input paper to the ECOSOC dialogue in December 2014.

The guiding thoughts behind the selection of reform proposals below have been clarity and variety. As this paper aims to be a practical tool the reform proposals favoured in this paper are those that provide very concrete and detailed solutions, as opposed to contributions, which are of a more general nature. Furthermore, the aim was to provide readers with a wide spectrum of reform options. Proposals ranging from small- to large-scale and from both North and South have therefore been included.

Indisputably, discussions and negotiations around UN development reform are very complex and many of the reform recommendations presented here are intertwined, build on or complement each other, rather than being mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, by trying to simplify the discussions it is hoped a better overview can be provided.

**FUNCTIONS**

**WHAT SHOULD THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM DO?**

The post-2015 development agenda is driven by change. Political, social, economic and environmental changes have impacted the development sphere demanding new approaches and solutions. The UN development system today and in the past has been a great contributor towards addressing global development challenges. How the UN development system can best contribute in the future, in a post-2015 context, complement other development actors with more financial resources and leverage and play out its comparative advantages has led to discussions about the UN’s core functions.

Functions that, according to some, should feature prominently within the UN development system include the following:
Setting and monitoring international norms and standards

There is wide and common agreement that the convening power of the UN development system and its platforms for global dialogue provide the basis for a strong focus on normative standards.

Since its inception the UN, especially through its specialized agencies, has played a major role in setting binding global norms and standards. Its wide legitimacy, convening power and expertise in facilitating internationally binding norms have led many, to assign the UN a key function in this field.

Browne/Weiss (2014) take this proposal further arguing for an even wider role. Instead of only facilitating normative agreements, the UN should also play a key role in monitoring their compliance and overseeing that agreed norms and standards are met. Such a monitoring function could be supported by civil society organisations.

Measure impact and create data

To overcome the UN development system’s weakness in measuring its impact, providing evidence of results achieved and creating development data, the UN Secretary General in his recent synthesis report on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda (UN 2014), as well as current ECOSOC discussions, points to a much more prominent role for the UN development system in engaging in the collection of disaggregated data, accessing non-traditional data sources and developing new development measurements, indicators and targets, whilst generally making better use of the benefits of the digital revolution.

In order to comprehensively address the issue of measurement and monitoring the UN Secretary General proposes to set up a multi-stakeholder Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, which would mobilise and coordinate activities related to connecting data more closely to sustainable development (UN 2014).

UNDG (2014) similarly stresses the importance of a stronger focus on data especially at country level. By intensifying the UN’s work on strengthening national and especially sub-national statistical capacities and addressing data ‘dark spots’ to generate better data for development, the UN would make a distinct contribution to the implementation of the SDGs while helping to build data capacity in developing countries.

A strong measurement and monitoring role for the UN development system is also envisioned by some vis-à-vis the SDGs. Roberto Bissio (2015) sees the UN development system as playing a key role in monitoring the implementation of the SDGs. Using the Universal Period Review as inspiration (the UPR is a UN human rights review mechanism in which governments, civil society and other stakeholders assess a country’s human rights situation) an extended and complementary post-2015 UPR review could be adopted. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, created at the Rio+20 summit and mandated to monitor the implementation of sustainable development commitments, Bissio argues, would be an appropriate body to implement the Post-2015 UPR. The Political Forum could furthermore assess if cross-border impact has been created through national policies and how well international institutions perform in influencing sustainable development.

The European Commission (EC 2015) also regards the UN’s High Level Political Forum as having a key role in maintaining political commitment for the SDGs and facilitating a review of progress and best practices, including the provision of guidance on how to implement the sustainable development agenda. During this review process the Forum can also tap into the monitoring expertise of UN bodies, as well as non-UN entities.

Provide policy advice, especially to middle-income countries

A major change that has marked the 21st century and is firmly rooted in the post-2015 agenda is the emergence of collective challenges such as climate change, epidemics and maintaining biodiversity. Combined with the emergence of more middle-income countries, which are able to handle service delivery themselves, the development needs of countries are starting to gradually shift.

Instead of focusing on traditional service delivery, especially in middle-income countries, some au-
thors believe that the UN’s comparative advantage lies instead in the provision of up-stream policy advice. Countries struggle to address crosscutting, cross-government and multidimensional issues. The UN should therefore provide advice, share knowledge and focus its work around building substantive policy agendas.

In this context the type of assistance provided by the UN development system should also be more flexible and be more adjusted to the development status of a country.

Build partnerships/ multi-party alliances

In the post-2015 context, with a much stronger focus on finding joint solutions and approaches and leveraging and accessing financial and non-financial resources, there needs to be more focus on building more extensive partnerships that go beyond the UN’s architecture. Advocated for, among others, by the UNDG (2014), the High-level panel on the post-2015 agenda (UN 2013) and featuring in the current ECOSOC dialogue on longer-term positioning of the UN development system (Jenks/Aklilu 2014), it is believed that by encompassing more open spaces and larger networks, stronger alliances and coalitions can be built, which are able to induce change and create sizeable impact. Whilst such broad multi-party partnerships help to consolidate and strengthen development efforts more generally, Jenks/Aklilu (2014) further suggest utilising such broad partnerships as an instrument for leveraging resources and expertise and as a means to spur on innovation and organisational change within the UN development system.

Another type of partnership - issue-based partnerships - can also help in focusing and concentrating development efforts. Organised around a specific thematic issue, issue-based partnerships, such as ‘Sustainable Energy for all’, ‘Every Women Every Child’ or the suggested ‘Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data’ (see above), have the ability to leverage specific expertise and draw talents and know-how from many different institutions within and outside the UN and concentrate it around a common focused theme. Authors such as Hendra (2014) advocate for this broad, inclusive, yet focused type of partnership, which helps to create better results and greater impact, while ensuring a holistic and streamlined approach of all actors involved. Furthermore, it has the advantage that financial resources can be pooled.

A stronger role for the UN at country level in building broader partnerships is envisioned by Wennubst/Mahn (2013) who see a stronger role for the UN in assisting national governments in setting up an enabling environment for partnership building.

However, with a stronger focus on partnerships an accountability framework will be needed that monitors and reinforces the partnership process (Jenks/Aklilu 2014).

Thematic priority areas

In terms of concrete thematic areas to focus on, the recent Future United Nations Development System (FUNDS) global perception survey (Future UN 2014) provides some guidance. At least 90 per cent of respondents feel that the following areas should be given high priority by the UN in the future: emphasising human development, promoting human rights and global values, becoming more responsive to global crises, developing and implementing the new post-2015 goals, enhancing the role of women, good governance.

The majority of respondents to the FUNDS survey also support capacity building as a future UN priority area. As also noted in the UN Secretary General’s 2015 quadrennial comprehensive policy review report (UN 2015), programme country governments have identified the United Nations as a preferred provider of support for national capacity development, noting in particular the coordination of capacity-building activities at the country level as one of the most significant activities the United Nations could take on to reduce the workload of national partners.

The FUNDS survey has also revealed a strong support for the UN’s work on humanitarian assistance with the majority of respondents finding that the UN has the highest impact in the function of ‘humanitarian relief’.

As part of human development efforts, the focus of the UN development system on poverty reduction has also been discussed. In his report ‘A Life of Dignity for All’ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon cites
a focus on the eradication of poverty as an indispen-
sable requirement for sustainable development (UN 2013a). He underlines it further in his 2015 quadrennial comprehensive policy review where he notes that the UN’s focus on poverty reduction is well recognized by programme countries. A large majority of governments agree that the UN was effective in ensuring that adequate attention and resources were given to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable parts of society and that furthermore the UN’s contribution has been especially significant in the area of poverty reduction (UN 2015).

Although many different thematic priority areas for the UN development system have been debated, there have also been calls to concentrate the UN’s focus on a few limited topics, as noted by Silke Weinlich in her paper on analysis of policy positions and action of key states (2011). In her discussion she points to those who believe the UN development system’s impact can be most improved by concentrating on a few limited topics, those where it can create the biggest impact. Having gained particular expertise, vis-à-vis other development institutions, in the areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, the provision of global public goods, democratic governance, gender, humanitarian aid and environment these should be core UN focus areas. In contrast, macroeconomics, trade and financial policies should be left to the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, who have acquired much more expertise in these fields.

However, limiting the UN development system’s focus is not an option favoured by all. In his latest report on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda the UN Secretary General sees a comprehensive and holistic role for the UN in shaping and implementing the post-2015 agenda (UN 2014). The position of a wider thematic UN mandate is also one favoured by developing countries, as noted by von Freiesleben (2008). Developing countries, he notes, value the diversity and variety that diverse structures bring and therefore vote against monolithic arrangements which reduce the margin of choice. Furthermore, do developing countries regard a limitation of the UN’s work to selected topics as undermining and diluting the work of UN entities therefore leaning more towards a broader UN mandate.

**FORM**

**HOW SHOULD THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM LOOK LIKE?**

Apart from the need to review the different functions of the UN development system and align them with the demands of a changed world, if different types of functions are to be pursued in an effective and sustainable way that creates lasting impact, the UN development system needs to be adjusted in its form and structure. Some of the recommendations on how to restructure financial, organisational/capacity and governance arrangements are listed in this section.

While financial, organisational and governance reforms would not only streamline and consolidate existing structures and therefore introduce more coherence and harmonisation of approaches, the additional benefit of cost-effectiveness is also driving the thinking behind reform. Already the High-level panel on system wide coherence (UN 2006) noted that the potential savings by merging or consolidating duplicative functions has the potential to release annual savings, possibly in the range of 20 per cent per annum.

Helgason (2015) also believes that significant financial benefits are possible if full interoperability across entities in both programming and operations is ensured. He estimates that the annual cost savings could potentially be in the order of magnitude between $2.4 and $4.8 billion per year.

However, cost-calculations are not always easy to make as Bernstein/Brunei (2012) point out in the context of sustainable development reform. Since reform proposals are not always very detailed and concrete they do not always allow for accurate cost estimations to be made but merely point to the areas where cost savings can be expected.

**FINANCE AND FUNDING**

With funding having shifted from being predominantly core to being predominantly non-core, aid becoming more bilateral and burdening the UN with additional reporting and management requirements (OECD 2014) and UN entities competing for limited financial resources, there has been a strong focus
on reforming the financial structures of the UN development system.

Some of the options discussed include the following:

- **Pool funding with soft earmarking**

A funding modality, which reduces transaction costs, and creates an opportunity to concentrate resources around a common issue, is pooled funding.

John Hendra (2014) as well as UNDG (2014) and the UN Secretary General in his 2015 quadrennial comprehensive policy review report (UN 2015), highlight the advantages of pooled funding. Pooled funding with soft ear marking around shared goals and high-level outcomes has demonstrated that it can reduce transaction costs and increase coherence while also being a way to promote enhanced aid effectiveness and counterbalance high fragmentation. Multi-donor trust funds, thematic funds, ‘One United Nations’ funds’ as well as expanded funding windows and joint programmes serve as good examples of what would be important to build on in the future. Pooled funding is also a modality that can support issue-based partnerships, which often bring together a wide range of UN and non-UN partners.

- **Merge resources into a central UN development budget**

It has also been suggested that by creating a centrally merged UN development budget funding modalities could be streamlined and coordinated.

Seen as a way to overcome competition for financial resources among UN entities and a way to reduce the high transaction costs associated with complex budgetary structures, some suggest merging budgets into a single budgetary framework. This would mean that all funds, programmes and specialised agencies would be funded through a single budget.

The High-level panel (UN 2006) takes a similar approach and suggests setting up a funding mechanism for voluntary donor funding - the MDG funding mechanism- which would provide multi-year funding for One UN country programmes and well performing agencies. The Sustainable Development Board assisted by a Finance and Performance Unit, would govern the Fund and based on evaluations and the spending performance of the UN system and UN agencies make funding decisions and allocations.

- **Align funding modalities to types of UN development functions**

In order to overcome the unpredictability of funding, the current imbalance of core and non-core resources and the ability to pursue key functions, such as setting norms and standards in the long run, current ECOSOC discussions on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system (Jenks/Aklilu 2014) and authors such as Jenks/Jones (2013) propose to align funding modalities to different types of UN development functions.

More specifically, Jenks/Jones propose four functions with the following funding modalities:

Firstly, securing presence and convening power, but especially setting normative frameworks and international standards, are functions, which should not be financially dependent on a few selected partners. This function should therefore be funded through regular budgets and be assessed as an integral cost of UN membership.

The second UN development function, the ‘provision of global public goods’ similarly requires a collective response and multi-party involvement. However, with different countries having varying interests in respect to particular public goods, providing funding through negotiated pledges would be the most suitable way to fund this activity.

Humanitarian operations and crisis country programmes on the other hand would require a hybrid funding modality. Since humanitarian crises occur on a regular basis basic funding is to be secured through negotiated pledges. Nevertheless, as humanitarian operations are also very country specific, some donors will have more interest in supporting UN operations in one particular country than others. The UN’s humanitarian function should therefore be augmented with trust funds and earmarked funding.

The fourth and final function relates to anti-poverty and capacity work, which represents a major part of UN development activities. Since such programmes are supported by countries to varying degrees, this function is best suited for core voluntary contribu-
tions, which has typified the core funding of the UN’s development programmes and funds. Such core voluntary funding can be supplemented by non-core contributions however without creating an imbalance between core and non-core funding.

• Establish an International Development Aid Fund

The multiplicity of funding sources that currently exist strain not only the UN development system but also other development organisations, as well as recipient countries who need to coordinate different aid strands. To simplify the funding system for development assistance more generally and introduce more coherence Roger Riddell (2007) suggests establishing an International Development Aid Fund, which would be attached to an International Aid Office.

The Aid Fund would act as a single window for all development finance. Funds would be disbursed in two ways: Depending on recipient countries’ capacities funds would either be allocated to governments directly or would pass through a National Aid Implementation Agency (NAIA), which would need to be established. The NAIA’s responsibility would lie in disbursing the funds and subcontracting professional agents, including bilateral and multilateral agencies, which are able to implement development activities. Such a set up would have the advantage that many aid agencies in-country would scale down, while national ownership and a more coordinated development response would be generated. It would furthermore, give aid recipient countries the choice of selecting the partner they most wish to work with on a specific technical or sectoral issue, while creating a more competitive environment for aid and development expertise.

Regardless of which financial reform option has been proposed, an argument going across much of the literature has been the need for donors and Member States to review their own funding commitments and processes. As long as Members States regard the UN development system as a consultancy firm, where some items can be picked and others discarded, Hjelmaker (2014) believes, inefficiencies and competition for resources are perpetuated.

The BMZ (2006), OECD (2014), as well as Member States such as Belgium (2005), among others, have noted their role in readjusting UN financial structures and have reiterated the need to rebalance core and non-core contributions and introduce a multi-year funding scheme that allows for more long-term planning.

ORGANISATION/ CAPACITY

The co-existence of many fragmented UN entities, which have often evolved along side each other with overlapping mandates and activities, non-harmonised organisational structures and business processes, has led to continuous criticism and called into life initiatives such as the Nordic UN reform project in the early 1990s, in which four Nordic countries joined forces to propose new ways of increasing the UN’s effectiveness and efficiency.

With an ambitious post-2015 agenda on the horizon, the need for organisational efficiency and capacity has again become apparent prompting some of the following reform proposals:

• Delineate UN entities’ roles and mandates

The High-level panel (UN 2006) makes it clear that a single United Nations entity, one that would merge all UN entities into one, would not be desirable. Many individual agencies, the panel believes, can best achieve their role in providing development assistance by operating individually. However, the panel does note that unnecessary duplications and a clearer delineation of roles and mandates is an important part in safeguarding the effectiveness of the UN’s work. They therefore propose delineating the roles of funds, programmes and specialized agencies to ensure mandates are complementary and build on each other. While this could mean consolidating and partially merging where necessary, the overall tendency would be to maintain the current architecture only to harmonise it better.

• Group and merge UN entities

The Netherlands in their contribution to a senior level meeting at the OECD in 2005 take a different approach and see a need for a stronger grouping of UN entities, which would entail partially merging entities. The Netherlands suggest grouping agencies, funds and programmes along three pillars into: a UN Development Agency, a UN Humanitarian Agency and a UN Environment Organisation.
The Netherlands offer different options as to what extent existing agencies should be subsumed under each pillar. In its most fundamental restructuring option the Netherlands suggest creating a single UN development agency, which comprises the development policy and programme activities of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNCTAD, UNIDO, UN Habitat, UNDCP, UNDCF, UNV, UNIFEM, and UNAIDS. The UN Humanitarian Agency would comprise the humanitarian policy and programme activities of WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP/BCPR and UNRWA and the UN Environment Organisation would comprise the norm setting and environment policy programmes of UNDP, UN Habitat, UNEP, GEF and multilateral environment treaties.

While this option would mean bringing UN entities under three umbrellas and merging all programme and policy activities, the Netherlands also provide a ‘lighter option’ where it would see some of the agencies under each pillar being maintained and only some being merged. For instance UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA would be maintained as UN development organisations (e.g. UNIDO, UNV, UNDCP among others would be merged into UNDP). In the humanitarian pillar WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR and UNDP/BCPR would be maintained with UNRWA being merged into UNHCR, and in the environment pillar a UN Environment Organisation would be created that merges the work of UNDP, UN Habitat, UNEP and multilateral environment treaties.

The Netherlands though makes it clear that these proposals are not to be seen as blueprints and different models can be considered, they nevertheless suggest a restructuring along the pillars of development, humanitarian work and environment.

- Create one single UN development agency vs. maintaining diversity

Belgium, for instance, regards the establishment of one single ‘UN Development Agency’ (2005) as the ideal model. Under this model the fragmented UN development system would be brought back into one structure and merge the work of UN funds and programmes, including that of humanitarian agencies. Staff, resources and activities would be integrated also at field level. Specialised Agencies would cease to have country level representation and receive extra budgetary resources through the UN Development Agency to guarantee coherence with the Development Agency.

However, similarly to the reform proposition of concentrating the work of the UN development system around a few core themes, merging UN entities into a single development agency is a proposal others find problematic. The South Centre, an inter-governmental organisation of developing countries, for instance, sees a danger in merging entities (2007). With fewer agencies the diversity of approaches, perspectives and methodologies would be lost along with the creativity different entities bring in addressing development challenges. However, the South Centre does see a need for better harmonisation among UN entities, thus aligning themselves with the proposals of the High-level panel on system-wide coherence, which advocates a better delineation of UN entities’ mandates.

- Scale up Delivering as One

The positive feedback and promising results that have been achieved at country level through the ‘Delivering as One’ (Dao) initiative have led many to support the continuation of DaO. As noted in the UN Secretary General’s 2015 quadrennial comprehensive policy review report, an increasing number of governments indicate an interest in ‘Delivering as One’, or elements of it (UN 2015).

There is also common consensus that at country level many UN development reform recommendations have been initiated and led the UN to speak more with ‘one voice’, but there is also consensus that these efforts need to be scaled up.

John Hendra (2014), for instance, argues that a bigger shift from process to joint delivering of results is now needed. With many UN country offices having adopted the Delivering as One approach the next step in the reform process needs to be a full roll out of the Standard Operating Procedures which bring UN entities closer in planning and delivering results, in harmonising business practices and in creating the needed incentives for reform at headquarters. UNDG (2014) similarly sees the universal application of the Standard Operational Procedure of Delivering as One and their progressive realisation as a key way for creating more UN wide coherence.

Browne/Weiss (2014) differentiate DaO further, stating that in upper-middle and higher income countries...
the UN development system should be confined to a single office, which acts simultaneously as a mouthpiece for the UN as a whole.

Creating more coherence at programme level through an UNDAF+ is suggested by Wenubst/Mahn (2013). Establishing the UNDAF around a few core, system-wide competencies and allotting tasks to specific agencies guided by system-wide mandates would ensure that national priorities are better met. This however would require a strengthened Resident Coordinator whose managerial authority to allocate funds at country level would have to be increased.

The need to increase the authority and powers of the Resident Coordinator (RC) is also supported by the BMZ (2006). BMZ argues that only if the RC exerts genuine authority, i.e. can instruct the UN Country Team and monitor the work also of Specialised Agencies, can genuine strides towards reform be made.

A closer collaboration at programme level is also envisioned by calling for more issue-based teams at country level (UNDG 2014, Hendra 2014). These types of teams would be much better able to draw technical, policy and operational capacities together and would be much better equipped to address development challenges.

- **Set up one UN back office, harmonise business practices**

The fragmentation of the UN development system has also led to fragmentation of business practices with several UN entities running similar but parallel business services. For better cost efficiency and harmonisation among UN entities UNDG in its Vision and Framework for UN operational activities (2014) sees the establishment of a unified UN back office as a prerequisite for delivering the post-2015 agenda. Under a One UN back office operational, logistical, ICT and administrative support would be shared at country level. Additionally an operations issue-based group, also at global level, would be set up together with a High-level Committee on Management. This operations group would look to develop common UN procurement services, human resource rules and enterprise resource planning systems.

More operational efficiency also featured strongly in the High-level panel report (UN 2006) where the authors note the need to make resource planning, human resources, common services fully compatible within the UN system. The panel further sees a particular role for the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and believes it should lead efforts in improving management efficiency, transparency and accountability.

Evaluations, evaluation methodologies and benchmarking should also be common, a point that can also be found in current ECOSOC dialogues which debate the consolidation of the UN development system’s assets and experience in the sphere of statistics and data collection (Jenks/Aklilu 2014).

Wenubst/Mahn (2013) on the other hand see a stronger role for the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). Already aimed at improving organisational efficiency, effectiveness and operational harmonization, it should be upgraded to a QCPR+ so that it can function more as a system wide reform and coordination strategy.

- **Create a more coherent and aligned civil service**

The importance of staff and accessing the right expertise at the right time, which is difficult to provide within a fragmented human resource structure, has led some to argue for a more coherent UN international civil service, which would facilitate staff mobility across agencies and allow for more flexible deployment and better access to existing expertise (UNDG 2014).

The UN Secretary General in his latest report ‘The Road to Dignity by 2030’ (UN 2014) also points to the importance of a mobile and diverse workforce. He believes, that only when the expertise of the different UN entities can be leveraged and brought together in addressing complex multi-sectoral challenges will the UN be able to support the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Reforming the UN development system’s organisational structures and setting up a practical approach could include establishing a number of issues based task forces. These task forces would become instruments of change and facilitate a better alignment with changing needs (Jenks/Aklilu 2014).
**GOVERNANCE**

The multitude of Boards and parallel running governance structures, procedures and decision-making processes have often been regarded as producing high-transaction costs, diverting staff time into administrative issues, hindering efficiency and reducing the impact that can be created. As Schwartzberg (2013) notes although many essential institutions are in place they are not optimally constituted and have weak methods of allocating decision-making power which in turn calls into question their fairness and legitimacy.

Discussions around reforming governance structures have often looked at the role of ECOSOC, the UN’s main body for coordination and social and economic development, and the composition and structure of programmes’ and funds’ Boards and their relationship to ECOSOC. Some of the reform proposals put forward include the following:

- **Empower ECOSOC**

  The High-level panel on UN system-wide coherence (UN 2006) sees the need to empower ECOSOC through a closer involvement of its members at the highest possible level. It believes that by setting up a Global Leaders Forum, comprised of leaders of half of ECOSOC’s members, a platform would be created which would provide guidance and leadership on development issues, developing policy frameworks and promoting consensus building among governments.

- **Replace ECOSOC**

  Instead of empowering ECOSOC, Messner/Maxwell/Nuscheler/Siegle (2005) suggest replacing ECOSOC. Only if ECOSOC decisions become more binding can the current independence of the Bretton Woods institutions be overcome. They therefore suggest replacing ECOSOC with a Council for Global Development and Environment (CGDE). This Council, they argue, would provide guidance on development and environmental policies, including for Bretton Woods institutions, which would lead to more effective coordination and coherence, as it would also manage the entire UN development budget. Such a reformed ECOSOC, they note, would correspond and carry the same weight as the UN Security Council.

  The former UNDP Administrator, Kemal Dervis, similarly proposes to replace ECOSOC with a UN Economic and Social Security Council (UNESC) (2005). This new Council would have the same leverage as the Security Council and therefore be positioned at a higher level with a much stronger mandate than ECOSOC. The UNESC would oversee global economic, social and environmental governance and serve as a coordination structure for all UN entities, including the WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions. While entities would retain operational control, the new Council would provide an overall binding framework for all of the UN’s development pillar.

- **Merge Boards**

  In order to consolidate the different Boards the High-level panel on system-wide coherence (UN 2006) advocates for merging the Boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP into one single Sustainable Development Board that reports to ECOSOC. The Sustainable Development Board would be responsible for maintaining strategic overview and coherence, approve One UN country programmes, review the performance of the Resident Coordinator system, consider and comment on the implementation of strategic plans of UN entities, as well as overseeing funding mechanisms and allocations of resources based on performance evaluations.

  A similar option is proposed by Helgason (2015) who suggests merging the four Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP into one single fulltime Joint Executive Board. It would be organized around segments for individual entities and special sessions to regulate activities of common concern.

  The composition of the Joint Executive Board would be anchored in the principle of equitable geographical distribution, including “variable geometry” but with strong constituency-based elements to help ensure that Board membership reflects the income profile of Member States and the share of each region of UN operational activities for development.

  The Board would be guided by the commission on the status of women, and population and development, for policy and normative guidance, but also initiate harmonisation of all programming and business practices, rules, policies and regulations and
ensure full interoperability of enterprise resource planning systems for enhanced coherence and efficiency. Board documentation would also be simplified and harmonized and a joint inter-agency planning unit/network would ensure that system-wide mandates are effectively integrated into strategic plans of the respective entities. The UNDG Chair and UNDP Administrator would serve as Development Coordinators vis-à-vis the Joint Executive Board.

Helgason (2015) also offers a more far-reaching and large-scale option by suggesting the establishment of a fulltime Development Board, a central organ that would manage and control the operational activities of all 19 funds and other entities reporting to the General Assembly and ECOSOC. Such a Board would elevate the development-related work of the UN development system, with the Development Board having a status not far from that of the UN Security Council.

The existing Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, WFP and UN-Women would be integrated into the Development Board. The Development Board would regulate the operational activities of other funds and programmes reporting to the General Assembly such as UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNCTAD, UNHCR, UNAIDS, UNODC and UNRWA, with their existing governing bodies focusing on policy, norm- and standard-setting, advocacy and public relations-related work but would also regulate the operational activities of the regional commissions and the relevant Secretariat departments.

The Board would initiate harmonisation of all programming and business practices, rules, policies and regulations. Joint planning units would ensure coherence between mandates and commissions on the status of women, narcotic drugs, crime prevention and criminal justice, population, science and technology and others, as relevant, would provide policy and norm-setting guidance to the Development Board.

As in the Joint Executive Board the composition of the Development Board would be anchored in the principle of equitable geographical distribution, including “variable geometry”. The UNDP Administrator and UNDG Chair would serve as Development Coordinators.

- Create one central development body – International Aid Office

To overcome the multiple aid structures, which characterise international development assistance, Riddell (2007) suggests setting up an International Aid Office, possibly administered by the UN. This Aid Office would oversee and ensure the effective functioning of all aid provided globally, mainly through the International Development Aid Fund. The Aid Office would be responsible for setting up funding criteria and based on assessments and consultations with recipient countries and other stakeholders would decide on the allocation of resources to recipient countries. The role of the Aid Office would therefore be to consolidate the provision and delivery of aid.

// 4. INTEGRATING PEACEKEEPING, HUMANITARIAN AID AND DEVELOPMENT

Reforming the UN development system has been a topic of much debate and many different types of proposals have been put forward. Reform proposals have centred around form, i.e. how the UN development system should look like in terms of financial, operational and governance structures and around the UN’s function, i.e. ‘what’ should be the UN’s focus.

However, one topic in the context of UN development reform that seems to have been only marginally discussed and only by a few selected authors, is the interlinkage between the UN’s development, humanitarian and peacekeeping pillars. It can be observed that in many cases discussions limit themselves to finding solutions on how to integrate and align the development and humanitarian pillar or the development and peacebuilding pillar but very few discussions look at how to integrate all three pillars at once.

The non-integration between developmental and humanitarian activities is noted by the UN Secretary-General in his quadrennial comprehensive policy review report (UN 2015). While pointing to the need for a strong partnership between the humanitarian and development arms of the United Nations he also notes the current distinction and non-har-
monised classification of development-related and humanitarian assistance-related activities.

To better integrate humanitarian and developmental work an older proposal from Belgium (2005) suggests merging UN entities into one single ‘UN Development Agency’ including humanitarian agencies31. UNDG (2014) equally envisions a closer integration between development and humanitarian activities by suggesting the merging of development and humanitarian financing.

In contrast, Andy Knight (2014) has looked in particular at how to align UN development efforts and peacebuilding arguing that peacebuilding and development are so closely connected and intertwined that more efforts need to be made to bring both pillars together.

Apart from these broad and non-concrete discussions, when seen in contrast with debates around UN governance or organisational reform, it seems that few reform options, especially in a post-2015 context, have been put forward. Recent reports on peacebuilding reform also only marginally link to development. The newly established High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, under the leadership of Jose Ramos-Horta, might provide an opportunity to discuss how different UN pillars can be better integrated to support the implementation of the SDGs.

Discussions around UN development reform, especially in the context of the post-2015 agenda and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, would therefore require agreement in how far reform efforts are to be limited to the development sphere and in how far they should include the peacebuilding and humanitarian aid pillars. If the latter pillars are to be included, more reform options would need to be developed in order to initiate fruitful discussions.

Michael von der Schulenburg (2014) has developed one of the few reform options addressing all three pillars. He argues that instead of aiming to reform the entire UN system and shake up vested interests, UN development reform should instead be implemented in peacebuilding missions only. Since UN missions in fragile and conflict-ridden countries are time bound and more targeted, creating an integrated and coherent UN approach, which also connects the parallelly running UN pillars, is more feasible. Such a concentrated UN reform effort would also be more acceptable to UN agencies as well as UN Member States, who show great interest in peacebuilding operations.

Seen in a wider context, apart from looking at the integration of the different UN pillars and their interplay, it would also be important to look in how far the UN is able to address issues that cut across all pillars, such as environmental, human rights or gender issues. Such cross-cutting issues would equally require an integrated approach.

5. MOVING REFORM DISCUSSIONS TOWARDS DECISION-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Current UN development reform discussions have steadily advanced as can be seen in the numerous reform recommendations that have been made. The challenge now is to move discussions towards finding common consensus, decision-making and eventually implementation.

Looking at how to move current UN development reform discussions into the next phase, several shortcomings would first need to be addressed.

As became clear during the writing of this report, even though many different reform ideas exist, the majority tend to be vague and stop short of making concrete recommendations. This at times makes it difficult to grasp the comprehensiveness of a proposal and evaluate the implications it implies.

Generally, UN development reform proposals also tend to restrict themselves to a particular reform topic rather than regarding reform in a holistic manner. Using Jenks’/Jones’ (2013) distinction of function and form it becomes clear that in most cases thinking on UN development reform concentrates around the question of form (financial, organisational, governance) and to a lesser extent around the question of function. Only in selected cases have authors developed reform proposals, which link both to function and form. With many recommendations being very particular and limited in scope however, it is difficult to single out concrete reform packages that could be discussed in their totality.
At this stage one can therefore only cluster recommendations and divide them into large scale and small-scale solutions.

To a large extent what is missing from discussions is also a more extensive debate in how far peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and development and their alignment should feature in the post-2015 reform process. If they are to feature, then more reform proposals would need to be developed.

To move reform discussions to the next stage would therefore require:

- Concretizing and making vague reform recommendations more specific so that their potential impact and cost-effectiveness can be better assessed.

- Consolidating different ideas and combining them into holistic reform packages covering function and form that can be discussed and assessed in their entirety.

- Developing reform proposals on how to align peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and development.

But moving beyond discussion alone would also require common agreement among Member States and a leading force that spearheads the reform process and lays out the path to reform.

In this regard Browne/Weiss (2014), for instance, propose to establish a High-level panel, which would offer a vision for the role of the UN development system in the post-2015 era. The recently launched ECOSOC dialogue on longer-term positioning of the UN development system can also take a leadership role and provide a good platform for intergovernmental debates while also generating a consultative process that is perceived by Member States as both effective and inclusive. Upcoming UN conferences, summits and forums furthermore provide an opportunity for discussion and for moving the debate forward into a decision-making and implementation modus. Undoubtedly, the most challenging task will be to build consensus among all UN Member States.

UPCOMING FORUMS FEATURING UN DEVELOPMENT REFORM (SELECTED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting ‘Strengthening Integration, Implementation and Review - the HLPF after 2015’</td>
<td>26 June - 8 July 2015</td>
<td>New York, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN Summit to Adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda</td>
<td>25-27 Sept 2015</td>
<td>New York, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Climate Summit</td>
<td>6 Dec 2015</td>
<td>Paris, France</td>
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<td>QCPR negotiations and passing of reforms</td>
<td>Oct 2016</td>
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<td>New UN Secretary General</td>
<td>2017</td>
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### Chapter 3: What should the UN development system do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting and monitoring international norms and standards</th>
<th>Measure impact and create data</th>
<th>Provide policy advice, especially to middle-income countries</th>
<th>Build partnerships/multi-party alliances</th>
<th>Focus on thematic priority areas:</th>
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<td>• human development, including poverty reduction</td>
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<td>• human rights and global values</td>
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<td>• enhancing the role of women</td>
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<td>• humanitarian assistance</td>
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### Chapter 3: How should the UN development system look like?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance and Funding</th>
<th>Pool funding with soft ear marking</th>
<th>Merge resources into a central UN budget</th>
<th>Align funding modalities to type of UN functions</th>
<th>Establish an International Development Aid Fund</th>
<th>Scale up ‘Delivering as One’</th>
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<td>• Harmonise operations and business practices; apply SOP’s</td>
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<td>• Create programme coherence</td>
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<td>• Empower the Resident Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<th>Organisation/ Capacity</th>
<th>Delineate UN entities’ roles and mandates</th>
<th>Group and merge UN entities</th>
<th>Set up one UN back office</th>
<th>Create coherent UN Civil Service</th>
<th>Create one single UN development agency</th>
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<tr>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Empower ECOSOC with another institution carrying similar weight as the Security Council</th>
<th>Replace ECOSOC</th>
<th>Merge Boards of different UN entities and create:</th>
<th>Create one central global development body</th>
<th>Create one central global development body</th>
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<td>Replace ECOSOC</td>
<td>• Sustainable Development Board (UNDP,UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP)</td>
<td>• International Aid Office</td>
<td>Scale up ‘Delivering as One’</td>
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<td>Replace ECOSOC</td>
<td>• Fulltime Joint Executive Board (merge four Executive Boards)</td>
<td>• Fulltime Development Board (19 funds and programmes)</td>
<td>Create one central global development body</td>
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<td>Replace ECOSOC</td>
<td>• Fulltime Development Board (19 funds and programmes)</td>
<td>• Fulltime Development Board (19 funds and programmes)</td>
<td>Create one central global development body</td>
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### Chapter 4: Integrating peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and development

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merge/integrate humanitarian aid and development</th>
<th>Merge/integrate peacebuilding and development</th>
<th>Integrate all three pillars in context of peacebuilding missions only</th>
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The recent Future United Nations Development System (FUNDS) global perception survey lists many of the items mentioned here (Future UN 2014).

Bertrand (2005).

Authors such as Hulme and Wilkinson (2014) for instance.

Maxwell (2005) for instance suggests to start with pilot programmes which are then expanded.

Wennubst/ Mahn (2013), Hendra (2014) among others have also made a similar distinction and separated ‘what the UN should do’ from ‘how the UN should look like’.

In response to ECOSOC resolution 2014/14 Jenks/Aklilu (2014) drew out the implications the post-2015 agenda has on the UN development system and structured their paper around the following six elements: Functions, Finance, Partnerships, Organisation/Capacity, Impact, Governance.

This focus on detail and concreteness means that the paper can only offer a selected overview of reform proposals made.

In order to provide a balanced approach to UN development reform, attention was paid to including voices from both North and South. Although institutions such as the South Centre have strongly engaged in development reform discussions, concrete reform proposals from the South (at least in writing) seem to be less frequent. Any concrete proposals from the South though would need to be integrated into current debates. This would also help to balance discussions and ensure an inclusive dialogue.

Such as the High-level panel on the post-2015 development agenda (UN 2013) or the recent informal ECOSOC dialogues on longer-term positioning of the UN development system (Jenks/Aklilu 2014)

ECOSOC dialogues on longer-term positioning of the UN development system

Such as Hendra (201), Jenks/Jones (2013), the UN Development Group (UNDG 2014).

The independent FUNDS survey collected responses from 3400 people worldwide who are familiar with the United Nations on the topics of UN functions, challenges, effectiveness, relevancy and impact.

In the same survey 87 per cent of respondents selected ‘concentrating more on conflict prone states (fragile states) and reconstruction’ as an area that should be given high priority by the UN in the future.

Such as Messner/ Maxwell/ Nuscheler/ Siegle (2005)

See page 12

See page 13

This proposal can also be found in Weinlich (2011).

Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway

Since 2010 UNIFEM is part of UN Women. UN Women merged four gender related entities and was created as an outcome of the discussions initiated by the High-level panel on system-wide coherence.

This proposal can also be found in Weinlich (2011).

See page 7

This proposal can also be found in Weinlich (2011).
Such a common United Nations service centre is currently being piloted at the country level (see UN 2015).

Some discussions also focus on the governance reform of specific organisations but these have been omitted as this paper aims to provide an overview of reform of the UN development system as a whole.

Variable geometry is an innovative, constituency-based system of representation that is currently used in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG). Under this model each seat in the OWG is shared by 1-4 Member States (rotational representation). These self-organized country teams decide among themselves how they will be represented in the meetings of the OWG.

These include: UNDP (including UNCDF, UNV), UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UN-Women, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNCTAD, UNHCR, UNAIDS, UNODC, UNRWA, the five regional commissions (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA) and relevant Secretariat departments (OCHA, DESA).

See page 9

This proposal can also be found in Weinlich (2011).

This proposal can also be found in Weinlich (2011).
Belgium, the Delegation of (2005): Towards a redesign of the UN Development Architecture; contributed by the Delegation of Belgium: Development Co-Operation Directorate, Development Assistance Committee.


Helgason K.Sv. (2015): Email to BMZ March 2015 (items raised in email planned for upcoming publication).


Netherlands, the Delegation of (2005): Towards a redesign of the UN Development Architecture; contributed by the Delegation of the Netherlands: Development Co-Operation Directorate, Development Assistance Committee.

Riddell, R. C (2007): Does Foreign Aid really work?, Oxford University Press


