

Rosario Green, *The United Nations Towards the Year 2000*

The UN is advancing towards the 21st century with a history of success, some failures, important transformations in its recent behavior, and a series of topics within its agenda that provide, half a century after its inception, a projection which is at once contemporary and fit to the needs of the immediate future. This essay examines three of the greatest challenges to humanity which the UN is firmly determined to solve: peace, development, and democratization. Peace and development are closely linked; one cannot exist without the other. Together, they encourage a process of democratization which can support them in turn. Democratization also generates democracy. The UN and its member states must be capable to face up to the 21st century, and to construct both a lasting peace and a level of sustainable development which will allow the processes of democracy to take root.

Olga Pellicer, *Light and Shadows in the United Nations' 50th Anniversary*

The 90's were a decade that was initially full of optimism regarding the UN's capacity for participating in the solution of the great international problems which characterize the final years of the 20th century. Recent developments have diminished this optimism. Whilst it is the case that the UN has made important contributions towards the reestablishment of peace in many conflicts, through the use of instruments such as mediation, good offices, functions of support for dialogue and negotiation, etc., some of its recent actions, especially those linked to the use of force, have not joined the international community in a unanimous consensus. This, together with the international organization's difficulties with the process of reform, its recurrent financial crises, and the political manipulation to

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which it is subjected by the most powerful nations, amongst other problems, bring incertitude and disenchantment toward the United Nations. The responsibility of reaching the ideals established in the 1945 San Francisco Charter shall now fall upon the UN's member nations.

Carlos Bernal, *Towards a Stronger International Court of Justice*

The International Court of Justice is competent in the solution of those controversies which are put forward for its consideration by member states. The last 50 years have witnessed a search for means to increase the Court's competence, and in general to strengthen its position as the foremost forum for the peaceful solution of conflict. The Cold War precluded the Court from taking matters into consideration that could have been submitted by the Security Council. However, the important changes that have taken place in recent years make possible that, 50 years since it was established, the Court's capabilities can now be enhanced. In this sense, it is important to reflect on the Court's system of obligatory competence. Given Mexico's important role in the codification and progressive development of international law, it may now be necessary for this country to reexamine the reservation which was included in the Mexican facultative declaration, in order that it must be the Court which decides whether a given matter falls, or does not fall, within a state's internal jurisdiction before accepting the competence to judge.

Juan Manuel Gómez-Robledo, *Humanitarian International Law: The New Demands for the Maintenance of Peace*

The advertised stability of the post-Cold War period is belied by a number of conflicts which threaten public order and which cause serious problems for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Many of these conflicts take place within States, rather than amongst them. Interstate conflicts now acquire a new dimension which is reflected in a new world agenda which amongst other things, imbues the development of humanitarian law with a new dynamic. Beyond the traditional principles of this international law and the participation of international institutions such as the International Red Cross Committee or UNICEF, the new dynamic has included the participation of the Security Council in order to promote and ensure respect for humanitarian international law. The role taken on by the Security Council in this matter, together with attempts to create a system of supervision for the application of international law which transcends the will of specific States, faces growing difficulties.

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Diana L. Ponce Nava, *International Law on the Environment and Development: The Mexican Contribution*

The last 30 years have witnessed the growth of a new perspective on problems of the environment and their links to development. This has issued international juridical instruments which have generated radical transformations within international law. Mexico has been a key agent in the development of international law regarding the environment, and has adapted internal legislation to correspond to the evolution of such development. However, the development of international law has also led to the adoption of intrusive international rules regarding what goes on at a national level. Internal instrumentation of commitments acquired internationally tends to create problems. This has led to Mexico's adoption of laws which, through intragovernmental consultation and public scrutiny, limit the discretion enjoyed by authorities in the application of rules and laws.

Kenza García-Robles, *The Intrinsic Crisis of the Security Council*

A political crisis has always existed within the Security Council. The interplay of power and interests between the great powers — the permanent members of this organism — and their close allies impose important limitations upon the Council's capacity to maintain its "primordial responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security". The high level of cooperation between members of the council by the end of the Cold War has diminished, faced by the tendency of the powers to act outside the Council or even the United Nations itself. The reasons which made it possible, in the immediate post Cold War period, for the Council to overcome the difficulties which had for more than 45 years impeded it from functioning adequately, are now weakening due to the great powers' tendency to avoid attending to the multilateral instance created for the maintenance of international peace and security, as they feel that it diminishes their capacity of decision on matters of security.

Joel Hernández, *The United Nation's Peacekeeping Operations: From Optimism to Caution*

The optimism which was born after the Cold War regarding the United Nation's peacekeeping operations has receded in the face of a growing caution regarding the efficacy and capacity for such actions in the future. The principles which guided the establishment of peacekeeping operations have evolved, partly due to the very

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expectatives raised by their implementation. The rise of such operations can be appreciated in the increase in number and function of those deployed towards the end of the Cold War. However, these very operations face criticism due to their frequent inability to resolve conflicts, the financial difficulties which they pose for the UN, the risks incurred by their contingencies, etc. It seems increasingly clear that the UN has a limited capacity for conflict resolution, and that very often this is beyond collective action. The UN's peacekeeping operations, in order to increase their chances for success in the future, must be more selective, enjoy a greater level of consensus from the international community, and adhere to the principles which have governed their establishment and from which they derive their legitimacy.

Mónica Serrano, *The International Regime of Nuclear Non-Proliferation*

The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union has had an important effect upon two interrelated areas: nuclear proliferation and regional stability. In recent years, a series of changes have signaled an era of greater international cooperation in the control of weapons of mass destruction. A study of the growth and evolution of the norms of nuclear nonproliferation, an analysis of the very regime of nonproliferation, will show that it has both virtues and deficiencies; that whilst much has been achieved, there are still important challenges to be faced. One of these is the tendency to gain greater control over weapons of mass destruction through organizations with increasingly intrusive powers. The reach and validity enjoyed by the nonproliferation regime is dependent on the degree of acceptance that this tendency must gain in the future amongst the UN's member States.

Aída González Martínez, *The UN and the Improvement on the Condition of Women*

The UN has played an important role in the improvement of the situation and condition of women's lives. This is due, firstly, to the UN's being provided with a framework for this purpose; and secondly, to its having developed institutions with adequate mandates and functions. Moreover, through the UN, States have negotiated and accepted international juridical instruments which are destined to improve women's juridical, social and economic condition. This essay analyzes the preceding issues, as well as the objectives of the three international conferences which the UN has held to deal with women's issues. The final section examines the purposes and expectatives of the Fourth United Nations Women's Conference, to be held in Beijing, China.

José Luis Bernal Rodríguez, *The UN and the Promotion of Social Development*

In a globalized and interdependent world, it seems increasingly evident that there is a need to promote formulas of cooperation which will benefit all members of the international community. An awareness of the importance of promoting the less industrialized nations' struggle towards development, especially for the least advanced ones, is linked to new approaches for the treatment of social problems. Great advances have been made in the construction of a new "agenda for development", which must respond to the needs of most Nations, as was shown at Copenhagen, and in the documents and commitments which emerged from there. As we come closer to the UN's 50th anniversary, the international society's concerns show evidence of the emergence of a new social agenda which was not previously apparent in international organizations.

Pedro González Olvera, *The Issue of Development, the UN, and the New World Order*

The new world agenda which emerged towards the end of the cold war did not include amongst its priorities the issue of development, which is of fundamental interest to the majority of Nations, and concentrated rather on issues which were of importance to the developed Nations. 1992 witnessed an apparent inflection, with the approval of resolution 47/181 "A Programme of Development" by the General Assembly, and the documents which, as a result, were elaborated by the Secretary General. Additional proposals can be found in "The Spirit of Cartagena", final document of the VIII UNCTAD, as well as in the *Reports on Human Development* from the UNDP. However, more than a strategy for development, what appears to have emerged is a new philosophy of development which corresponds to the empire of market economics: help and assistance diminish steadily, the importance granted to such issues fades, and it now even seems possible that the UN might abandon the commitments it assumed regarding this matter in 1960. If the issue of development is not paid serious attention, the risk of a global eruption will persist.

Francisco Escobar Vega and Francisco Javier Gutiérrez Guzmán, *The UN and the Demographic Challenge*

The problems posed by the population explosion have not fallen without the UN's range of concerns as, practically from its inception, the UN created institutions to analyze the growth of population, its territorial distribution, and the links which

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such phenomena bear with economic and social development. This essay describes and analyzes the activities of the ECOSOC's population division, and, particularly, those of the United Nations Fund for Activities on Population, granting a special emphasis to Mexico's contribution in those areas where it is competent. Also, it proposes the creation of a United Nations Development Fund, to integrate the UN's activities on interrelated topics such as the environment, population, the participation of women, sustainable development, etcetera.

Berenice Díaz Ceballos Parada, *The United Nations and the International Protection of Human Rights*

Between 1945 and 1989, the UN achieved the adoption of over 90 international juridical instruments, destined to ensure the protection of human rights. It has also promoted the establishment of mechanisms for supervision, charged with observing the extent to which commitments assumed by member States are kept. This process was not free from difficulties, the first of which was tied to the very definition and scope of the concept of human rights. After 1989, the end of the Cold War period, and the conformation of a new world agenda, the promotion of human rights gained greater impetus. However, this has meant new challenges, as was shown at the Vienna Summit. The tendency towards a progressive consolidation of the Western perspective, which prioritizes the protection of civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural rights is one example. The political use of the Human Rights Commission, the creation of new mechanisms which do not always enjoy widespread international consensus, etc., are additional challenges which must be overcome.

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