

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Following is the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, submitted to the General Assembly and dated 27 August 1998. The Assembly took note of it on 5 October (**decision 53/404**).

Introduction

1. Nearly a decade has passed since the end of the cold war, but the contours of the new era remain poorly understood. Nations large and small are grappling with new responsibilities and new constraints. Unpredictability and surprise have become almost commonplace. Uncertainty exists, in some cases even anxiety, about new roles that may be required of multilateral organizations, and more broadly about their place in the international community. Indeed, the peoples of the United Nations, in whose name the Charter is written, are searching for new ways to define how they are united in community though divided by custom and conviction, power and interests.

2. Notwithstanding the extraordinary achievements of multilateralism during the past half century, too many voices remain unheard, too much pain persists and too many additional opportunities for human betterment are forgone for us to rest satisfied with the way things work today. These still unmet challenges must remain uppermost on the United Nations agenda. The Millennium Assembly to be held in September 2000 affords a unique opportunity for the world's leaders to look beyond their pressing daily concerns and consider what kind of United Nations they can envision and will support in the new century.

3. To facilitate those deliberations, I propose to submit a report to the Millennium Assembly, suggesting to Member States a set of workable objectives and institutional means for the United Nations to meet the challenges of human solidarity in the years ahead. The report will draw on several reviews of recent United Nations conferences scheduled between now and then. It will also benefit from the diverse views and aspirations expressed at a series of global and regional hearings and seminars that I propose to con-

vene—global town meetings, in effect—and which many individual Governments, civil society actors and other groups are also holding.

4. The "quiet revolution" of institutional reforms that I initiated last year was intended to revitalize an organizational machinery that in some respects had been made sluggish and creaky by the effects of the cold war and the North-South confrontation, and to better position it for the highly complex, increasingly interconnected and far more fluid context of the new era. I can say with some satisfaction that the United Nations family today acts with greater unity of purpose and coherence of effort than it did a year ago. The new teamwork is most pronounced within the Secretariat and in its relations with the programmes and funds.

5. The work programme has been organized in four core areas: peace and security, development cooperation, international economic and social affairs, and humanitarian affairs; a fifth, human rights, is designated a cross-cutting issue. In each cluster, an Executive Committee now manages common, cross-cutting and overlapping policy concerns.

6. To integrate the work of the Executive Committees and address matters affecting the Organization as a whole, a cabinet-style Senior Management Group, comprising the leadership from the various United Nations headquarters, has been established. It meets weekly, with members in Geneva, Vienna, Nairobi and Rome participating through teleconferencing. A Strategic Planning Unit has been established to enable the Group to consider individual questions on its agenda within broader and longer-term frames of reference. Member States approved my recommendation to create the post of Deputy Secretary-General; in the few short months that Louise Frechette of Canada has occupied this