

: Programme

International sef: Expert Workshop The Essential World Organisation Reinvigorating the UN at 75

03/04 September 2019

University of Duisburg-Essen, Duisburg - Gerhard Mercator House

Conference language

English

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THE TOPIC

In 2020, the United Nations will celebrate its 75th anniversary, looking back on a turbulent history. 75 years after the end of WWII and 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the multilateral system with the UN at its heart is under pressure once again. An obvious example is the Trump Administration's current "America first" policy, which focuses on bilateral "deals" and is the model for similar moves by a number of middle powers. The continuing trend towards ever new fora and formats outside the UN and controversies over its role also threaten to lessen its significance.

Nevertheless, the current transition to a new world order also offers opportunities to reinvigorate the UN. As varied as the concepts for a future world order might be, apart from those advanced by hard core unilateralists, they all see a role for a world organisation. But this role might look very different. At present, it is not clear what kind of global order countries such as China, India, Brazil, South Africa and many emerging middle powers are striving for. The International sef: Expert Workshop 2019 aims to gain a clearer picture of the general framework in which the UN operates today and in the near future, and to identify new strategies and alliances needed to empower the UN to live up to its Charter.

The workshop begins with a debate about the kind of global architecture that might replace the post-Cold War liberal order. Assuming that the UN continues to have a central role to play, the question is what exactly its role should be in the future and how its structure has to change if it is to be accepted as a truly universal institution. Which actors and coalitions are willing and able to support the UN in carrying out its tasks? The workshop will also explore how the UN will have to adapt its working methods to be able to live up to its future tasks and increase its impact. How can it improve its legitimacy, transparency and inclusiveness and, at the same time, develop strategies for the efficient implementation of its norms and objectives?

The International sef: Expert Workshop 2019 will bring together around 30 international experts from academia, civil society, international organisations and national administrations to discuss these questions.

: Tuesday, 03 September 2019

- 12.30 hrs Registration and light refreshments
- 13.00 hrs Welcome
Ludger Siemes
Director General European and International Affairs
State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia
- Introduction
Dr Michèle Roth
Executive Director
Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn
Dr Cornelia Ulbert
Executive Director
Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), University of Duisburg-Essen

SESSION I

THE UN – WHERE IT COMES FROM AND WHERE IT IS HEADING

Keynote: The UN – a history of challenges

Throughout its history, the UN has always been faced with challenges and radical changes in world politics, affecting its ability to act. As a consequence, the UN has reinvented itself several times. What were the most crucial steps in the organisation's development? How did it manage to adapt to new circumstances? What was the impact on the various sectoral fields in which the UN works?

- 13.30 hrs **Professor Thomas G. Weiss**
Presidential Professor of Political Science
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

Roundtable debate: The end of the liberal world order – and of the United Nations?

The “golden age” of the liberal world order based on multilateral governance with the UN at its centre seems to be over – if it ever existed. What does the retrogression of multilateralism in many policy fields mean for global cooperation and its underlying norms? Will global cooperation be replaced by bilateral and plurilateral agreements, or will we see new forms of global cooperation? What will the underlying norms look like?

- 14.15 hrs **H.E. Neelam Deo**
Director
Gateway House. Indian Council on Global Relations, Mumbai
Professor Thomas G. Weiss
Professor Jinghan Zeng
Professor of China and International Studies
Lancaster University

15.00 hrs Plenary debate

Chair
Dr Cornelia Ulbert

15.30 hrs Coffee break

SESSION II

THE UNITED NATIONS OF THE FUTURE – INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN AND KEY TASKS

Since its foundation, the UN has been accustomed to being the authority when it comes to negotiating and setting global norms and goals, particularly in fields such as peace and security, sustainable development and health. It has also been active in implementing its decisions, e.g. through peacebuilding missions and development programmes. With a new world order looming on the horizon, the UN will have to adapt its institutional design as well as its role. Considering different models of a future world order, what should the UN's role be? And how should its core bodies be redesigned to be able to fulfil these tasks?

16.00 hrs Roundtable discussion

Dr Georgios Kostakos
Executive Director
Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS), Brussels

Professor Alanna O'Malley
Chair of United Nations Studies in Peace and Justice
Leiden University

Dr Shahr-yar Sharei
President and Executive Director
Center for United Nations Constitutional Research (CUNCR), Brussels

16.45 hrs Plenary debate

Chair
Dr Silke Weinlich
Senior Researcher
DIE - German Development Institute, Bonn

17.30 hrs Short break

SESSION III**NEW ALLIANCES FOR COOPERATIVE POLICY-MAKING**

The current decline of “liberal” multilateralism is mainly explained by the fact that “the West” and in particular the United States have said goodbye to it. Many international relations commentators predict an era that will be shaped by the geopolitical interests of China and the US. But is this picture too simple in today’s complex world? Does “post-Western” automatically mean “post-multilateral”? What role might new alliances of middle powers play within the UN if the old East-West/North-South fronts become less important? And what about the potential of non-governmental or regional and local actors to claim and uphold a cooperative order based on universally agreed norms and rules?

17.45 hrs	Roundtable discussion Louise Riis Andersen Senior Researcher Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen Helga Barth Director for Human Rights, International Development and Social Affairs Federal Foreign Office, Berlin Fergus Watt Coordinator of the UN2020 Initiative, Executive Director of World Federalist Movement – Canada, Ottawa
18.15-19.00 hrs	Plenary debate Chair Dr Marianne Beisheim Senior Associate, Research Division “Global Issues” Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Berlin Chair of the Advisory Board of the Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)
19.30 hrs	Informal Dinner

: Wednesday, 04 September 2019

9.15 hrs

Welcome coffee

SESSION IV

GAINING AGENCY: JOINING FORCES FOR A HIGHER IMPACT

Since the 1990s, the world has seen a proliferation of formal and informal institutions and agreements dealing with inter- and transnational issues. The UN itself has taken over many new tasks. But more often than not, states as well as private or local actors turn to other fora than the UN in the hope of securing greater influence or more effectiveness. It is therefore essential for the UN and its agencies not only to (re-)gain the support of its member states but also to increase its impact on the ground. Consequently, more and more international and regional organisations are teaming up strategically around common objectives (like the Sustainable Development Goals) and trying to focus their programmes of work on clear visions. But how can inter-organisational rivalries be overcome? Can the UN successfully fill the role of an “orchestrator” between different global fora as well as regional organisations?

09.30 hrs

Input

Natalie Samarasinghe

Incoming Deputy to the Special Adviser on the Preparations for the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, New York

10.00 hrs

Plenary debate

Chair

Professor Math Noortmann

Professor of Transnational Law and Non-State Actors

Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University

Executive Director of the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS)

SPOTLIGHT

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE UN OVER THE DECADES - WHAT TO LEARN FROM POPULAR LEGITIMACY?

11.00 hrs

Dr Lisa Dellmuth

Associate Professor of International Relations

Stockholm University

11.15 hrs

Break with light lunch

PART V

WORKING METHODS FOR A POLYCENTRIC WORLD

The way in which global politics is shaped beyond a tight diplomatic circle has changed fundamentally over the decades – and digitalisation is accelerating these changes. The variety of actors has increased substantially, and with it the number of competing interests that have to be accommodated. How can the UN adapt its way of working in order to be perceived and accepted as a credible and capable actor in a politically polarised world? How can it show entrepreneurial and intellectual leadership? How can its structures and procedures be made transparent and fair and, at the same time, more efficient? How can inclusiveness succeed, not only regarding states but also civil society at large? What role does the UN play in managing multi-stakeholder governance democratically and inclusively?

- 11.45 hrs Roundtable discussion
- Dr Maryam Zarnegar Deloffre**
Research Fellow
Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research, University of Duisburg-Essen
Associate Professor of International Affairs, The George Washington University
- Professor Klaus Dingwerth**
Professor of Political Science with a special focus on the Political Theory of the Globalizing and Digital Society, University of St. Gallen
- Dr Harris Gleckman**
Senior fellow at the Center on Governance and Sustainability
University of Massachusetts, Boston
- 12.30 hrs Plenary debate
- Chair
- Jens Martens**
Director, Global Policy Forum, Bonn/New York
Member of the Advisory Board, Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn
- 13.00 hrs Closing words by the organisers