

# ICIDI

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Bonn, May 15, 1979

*ab: M.S.*

WILLY BRANDT

Chairman

His Excellency  
Dr. Kurt Waldheim  
Secretary-General of the  
United Nations

New York, N.Y. 10017 / U.S.A.

Dear Secretary-General,

I would like to thank you once again for the interesting talks we could have in Geneva a few weeks ago and where you kindly agreed to have our Report submitted to you around the turn of the year. The subsequent meeting with the Heads of UN Agencies was both stimulating and encouraging.

In the meantime, the Commission had another session and also discussed the important subject of "International Institutions and Negotiating Framework". As convened in Geneva, I send you a non-paper on these questions and I would very much appreciate your comments in a similar manner.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

**gez.: Brandt**

May 1979

Possible Elements for the Deliberations of the  
"Brandt Commission" on the Subject of  
"International Institutions and Negotiating Framework"

Secretary-General Waldheim in his introduction to last year's Annual Report clearly spelt out the general uneasiness about the system and the actual practice of international institutions and negotiating fora. He suggested to start an intensive, informal discussion in order to remedy a number of shortcomings for which member governments bear the main responsibility.

Thus, the Brandt Commission might equally underline the urgent necessity to help improve these important instruments of international cooperation that have grown without a pre-conceived pattern and have been established as a result of political circumstances.

In doing so, the Commission may largely lean on the findings of the last of several expert groups that have looked into these matters and whose recommendations have been realized only to a limited extent.<sup>1)</sup> Nor have the warnings of Dr. Prebisch already uttered in 1966 received the required response.<sup>2)</sup>

The Brandt Commission might attempt to help create a better climate of debate. For this goal, the further dismantling of distrust and sensitivity is of great importance and at the same time a precondition for agreeing on certain priorities for the international agenda. Equally, such a change of climate might facilitate the pre-negotiation of important areas - liable to a subsequent agreement - in smaller, representative groups, the composition of which may vary with the subject.

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<sup>1)</sup> I.e. Report of the Group of Experts on the Structure of the United Nations System, May 1975

<sup>2)</sup> See UN Document A/C.2./L. 908, November 30, 1966.

With more than 150 members in the UN system and countries of very different magnitudes (from countries with close to a billion people to very small island states) it seems virtually impossible to have them all fully participate at the conference table. Of course, each nation should have the possibility to take part in the final negotiations but should delegate its powers to smaller groups in the preceding phases.

Such a procedure of sizeable bodies for specified purposes and limited periods, reinforced by more flexible instructions of the participating group representatives, a clearer definition of objectives, purposeful agendas, result-oriented discussions within a reasonable time frame, might also help to bring more qualified officials from the capitals to the meetings.

It should be noted, however, that the problem of coordinating the many (and often overlapping) activities of international organizations also presupposes similar efforts within national administrations since different ministries are in charge of the specific multilateral bodies.

Goal-oriented efforts might equally foster the awareness that in many instances governments alone cannot implement the decisions and bring about the necessary changes. Therefore, ways and means might be envisaged to associate representatives of industry, trade unions, etc. more closely with the work of international organizations and conferences. There are positive signs of such an intensified consultation in recent years which should be further encouraged. This might hopefully also improve the "international language" which deters rather than attracts the ordinary reader and thus has hardly any impact on the "man in the street".

In the specific field of multilateral aid agencies, vigorous efforts are necessary to streamline and coordinate the work of the various funds, several of which are not sufficiently equipped to ensure the desired activities. While it would be advantageous if some of these agencies could be merged and some separate funds be dissolved, the feasibility of proposing a limited number of new institutions (especially in the field of energy and mineral resources) might be explored. However, the general reservations against the proliferation of international agencies have to be duly taken into account.

The main aim of any efforts should be to make the international institutions more effective, adapt them to present and future needs and - above all - help to turn them into fora of constructive dialogues. As in the national field, it is vital that the ordinary citizen can somehow associate himself with international organizations in their peace-preserving and equality-oriented functions. The notion of "Tua res agitur" should be the connecting link.