

The Need for a New UN Charter in a Multipolar World



Talal Abu-Ghazaleh

Dynamically advancing global nations and the shift of the balance of power is inevitably leading to the demise of Western hegemony, ushering in a multipolar world characterized by significant geopolitical, environmental, and technological transformations. As a long-time leader of various UN initiatives and a staunch advocate for multilateralism, I have witnessed firsthand the evolving landscape of global governance. It is imperative that the United Nations (UN) undergoes comprehensive reforms to remain relevant and effective in this new era.

The traditional Western-led world order has given way to a multipolar system where emerging powers, particularly from the East, are asserting their influence. This shift is not merely a geopolitical phenomenon but a natural progression as nations like China and India rise economically and politically. The UN must adapt to this reality by ensuring that its structures and processes reflect the diverse and dynamic nature of the current global order. Human-induced climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are driving fundamental changes in the world economy and governance. The global ecological crisis demands a unified and robust response from the international community. The UN must lead efforts to mitigate these challenges by fostering cooperation and implementing sustainable policies that prioritize environmental preservation.

Advancements in AI, computing, biotechnology, and geoengineering are profoundly impacting the global economy and politics. These technological disruptions present both opportunities and risks. The UN must enhance multilateral governance of technological risks and ensure universal access to vital technologies. This

will require new frameworks and institutions capable of managing the rapid pace of technological change.

The recently held ‘Summit of the Future’ at the UN addressed the need to reform international institutions to address these changes, representing a critical opportunity to reimagine global governance structures. To me, it is clear that the 2030 target to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will not be met. I wholeheartedly agree to extending them to 2050 to help align global policies and investments for sustainable development, ensuring that no nation is left behind. The principles of non-intervention and the strengthening of the UN Security Council are crucial for maintaining global peace. Nuclear disarmament must also be a priority. The UN must reinforce these principles to prevent conflicts and promote stability in an increasingly complex world.

Education is the cornerstone of sustainable development and global citizenship. The UN must prioritize education initiatives that equip future generations with the knowledge and skills needed to address global challenges. This includes promoting education for sustainable development and fostering a culture of global citizenship.

To better represent global populations and address emerging threats, the UN must undergo significant reforms. Establishing a UN Parliamentary Assembly and other subsidiary bodies will enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of the organization. Reforming the UN Security Council to reflect the current geopolitical realities is also essential. Peaceful cooperation and mutual respect among nations are fundamental to addressing global challenges. The UN must champion these values, fostering an environment where nations work together to achieve common goals.

The imminent end of Western hegemony and the rise of a multipolar world necessitate comprehensive reforms in global governance. As we navigate this transformative period, the UN must adapt to remain relevant and effective. By embracing these changes, we can build a more inclusive, sustainable, and peaceful world for future generations.