

Enhancing UN Accountability: The Role of Global Civil Society

国連アカウンタビリティの強化：
地球市民社会の役割

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Accountability is:

the obligation* (of a person, group, or organization) to explain and justify one's action (s), assuming, at the same time, liability for the results.

* on the grounds (at least from the perspective of democratic theory) of:

(1) delegation of authority

(2) support (financial, human, or others)

(3) impact

UNGA: emphasizes “the importance of strengthening accountability in the UN and of ensuring greater accountability of the SG to the Member States, *inter alia*, for the effective and efficient implementation of legislative mandates and the best use of human and financial resources.” (Res 60/260)

SG Kofi Annan: reiterated the importance of accountability by stating that “the UN can become stronger and more effective only if it is better managed and more clearly accountable.” (Annual report: 9/06-8/07)

SG Ban Ki-moon: “I am determined to breathe new life and inject renewed confidence into a strengthened UN firmly anchored in the twenty-first century, and which is effective, efficient, coherent and accountable.”

(Reform under Ban Ki-moon: A stronger UN for a Better World)

Managerial accountability* is defined, in the UN context, as accountability for the actions (or non-actions) taken in pursuance of given mandates with respect to programmes and financial, human and/or other resources, as well as for the performance/results and the manner in which the related resources are managed.

* managerial accountability is internal, politically neutral and technical in nature.

Political accountability*

focuses upon the need to account for an organizational behaviour to the constituencies and stakeholders impacted upon by its actions and decisions.

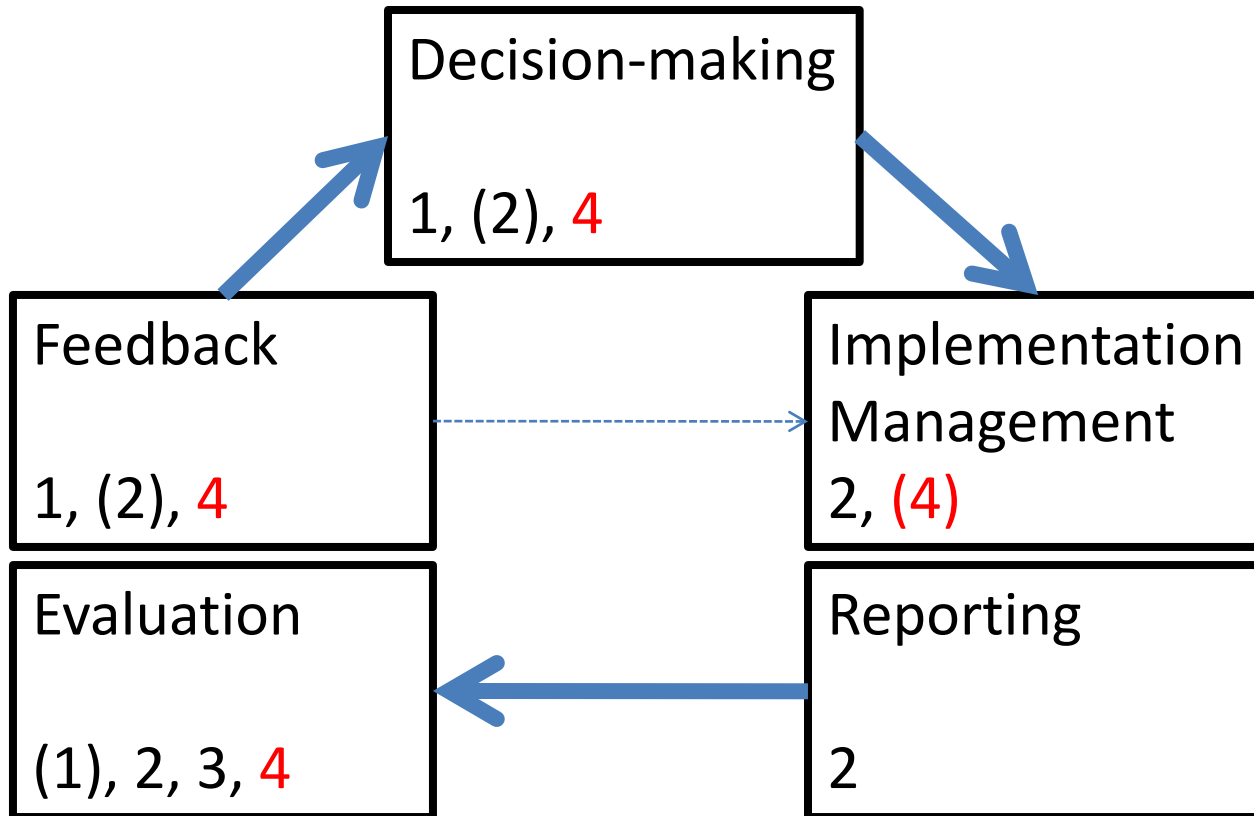
In the UN context, political accountability is the accountability of both Member States (legislative organs) and Secretariats, ultimately to “the Peoples of the UN” directly or indirectly.

* political accountability is “external” in nature.

<Main actors in practice in the functional framework
of UN activities>

<u>(stage)</u>	<u>(function)</u>	<u>(main actors)</u>	<u>(remarks)</u>
1.	Decision-making	<u>Member States</u> (legislative organs)	Drafts are prepared often by <u>Secretariat</u>
2.	Implementation, Management and Reporting on them	<u>Secretariat</u>	<u>Member States</u> are responsible for legislative oversight
3.	Evaluation	<u>Secretariat & Oversight mechanisms</u>	
4.	Feedback	<u>Member States</u> (legislative organs)	Reporting by <u>Oversight mechanisms</u> is the basis for legislative oversight [Feedback is rather weak ⁶]

<Framework involving stakeholders for enhancing UN accountability>



1. Member States (legislative organs)
2. Secretariat
3. Oversight mechanisms
4. Relevant stakeholders

Stakeholder Engagement*

* defined here as “the strategies and processes used by an organization to engage with relevant stakeholders.”

<Background>

- The world is in the midst of a fundamental transformation from a ‘Westphalian *inter-national* system’ to a global [political] system combining state, non-state, and supra state actors, since the current structures are not capable of coping with the problems and opportunities associated with global challenges that threaten all humanity.

(John E.Trent, *Modernizing the UN system: Civil society’s role in moving from international relations to global governance*)

- Actually, however, despite the global challenges and problems (which are affecting squarely global citizenry), it is a reality that global actors (such as UN) are generally disconnected from the global citizenry (peoples) and thus losing legitimacy. Unless the ways are found to ensure that “peoples” are included (participated) in decision-making processes that impact them, it would not be possible to address the challenges effectively.

- “Addressing global challenges requires a collective and concerted effort, involving all actors. Through partnerships and alliances, and by pooling comparative advantages, we increase our chance for success.”

(Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General)

- Engaging stakeholders is a must for the UN, not an option,

(Cardoso Report: Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations)

<What we expect from stakeholder engagement>

Effective and strategically aligned stakeholder engagement would contribute to, including:

- legitimize organizations' decision-making
- improve/produce better decisions (strategy, policy, programmes) in terms of relevance etc.
- build trust between an organization and its stakeholders
- allow for pooling resources (knowledge, human, financial, and technology)
- enable organizations to learn from stakeholders, resulting in a better performance
- enable management of engagement risks (e.g., conflict between participating stakeholders) etc.

Source: "Stakeholder Engagement Standard" (draft), August 2009
AccountAbility, London

<Modalities of stakeholder engagement>

Remain passive: No engagement.

Stakeholder concerns expressed through protest, media, websites,... or other advocacy efforts.

Inform: *“We’ll keep you informed” (one way to stakeholder).*
Brochures, reports, press releases, letters etc.

Consult: *“We’ll keep you informed, listen to your concerns, and provide feedback on decisions taken.”*
Hearings, surveys, workshops, advisory forums etc.

Collaborate: *“We’ll look to you for direct advice/participation in finding/implementing solutions to challenges.”*
Multi-stakeholder initiatives (joint programmes...)

Empower: Integration of stakeholders into governance structure.

<Reports* containing elements for encouraging “engagement”>

1. SG report, “Strengthening of the UN: an agenda for further change” (A/57/387, September 2002)
2. Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN-Civil Society Relations (Cardoso report)(A/58/817, June 2004)
3. SG report in response to the above (A/59/354, Sep.’04)
4. Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change entitled “A more secure world: *Our shared responsibility*” (December 2004)
5. SG report (for World Summit 2005), “in larger freedom” (March 2005), in which SG, referring to Cardoso report, proposed in para.162 that “GA should....establish mechanisms enabling it to engage fully and systematically with civil society.”

* Prepared either by the former SG (Kofi Annan) himself or under his initiatives.

<Evolution of “engagement” with non-state actors> (UN)

1. Engagement with NGOs:

(1) Consultative relationship between ECOSOC and NGOs:

- UN Charter (Article 71), ECOSOC res. 1996/31

(2) Relationship between DPI and NGOs (information outreach)

- ECOSOC res. 1297 (XLIV) (May 1968)

2. International Conferences*

* shift of interest in large number of NGO participation to recognition of the need to work with the formal intergovernmental process

- 1st visible case: Rio Summit on Environment and Dev. (1992)
- Other examples: Conf. on Financing for Dev. (1998), WSSD (2002)

3. Other mechanisms (High-level Dialogues/Hearings):

(Examples)

- SC [Arria formula] meetings (April and June 2004)
- GA Hearings (23-24 June 2005)
- GA High-level Dialogue on Financing for Dev. (16-17 March 2010)

<GA Hearings* with Civil Society and Private Sector, 23-24 June 2005>

* as a part of preparatory process towards the World Summit (September) 2005

1. Findings from survey** of participants in the Hearings:

- Hearings were generally “worthwhile” (in the areas of MDGs-poverty alleviation, gender, HIV/AIDS, Peacebuilding Commission, Human Rights, UN reform, and R2P), but poor on talks on UN-civil society relations.
- Most shared experience of the Hearings with their networks upon returning home.
- However, impact of the Hearings on the outcome of the World Summit was rather weak (See next slide), although many started working on the implementation of the Outcome Document.
- Looking to the future, a divide between those who want Hearings before every GA and those who prefer issue-specific Hearings held in tandem with GA discussions.

** The survey was conducted during the period of end Nov. and early Dec. 2005.

2. Lessons learned:

- Hearing process needs a much longer lead-time
- the process needs political support
- format/modalities of the meeting should foster more interaction with Member States;
 - co-chairmanship between GA President and civil society
 - more focused thematic agenda
 - more sessions with fewer participants in each
 - using professional facilitator to help engage participants
 - using formats other than the plenary (e.g., WGs etc.)
- place of the Hearings in the intergovernmental process should be clarified

Source: prepared based on “Informal note” by NGLS (Non Governmental Liaison Service) on GA Hearings, 23-24 June 2005

<Example of effect* of civil society on the Outcome Doc.'05>

* changes between 1st draft Outcome Document of 3 June 2005 and the next draft released on 22 July '05

Gender

- Millennium Project (para. 58b): inherit property added; only partly in the 1st version of 3 June 2005
- Reproductive health (para.58c): already in the 1st version, but the language is from Commissions on Status of Women/Population and Dev., where agreement was reached under pressure of NGOs
- Violence against women (paras. 58f,116): stronger than 1st version
- Impunity (para.58f): not in the 1st version
- Security Council resolution 1325 (para.116): not in the 1st version
- Human rights of women (paras. 116, 128): not in the 1st version

Source: “Informal note”, NGLS

<State of affairs (overview of UN organizations*)>

*illustration only

	<i>Policy**</i>	<i>Decision- making</i>	<i>Implemen- tation</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Feedback</i>
UN	0	(1)	0 (9)		
UNAIDS	0	0 (2)	0 (10)		
UNDP	0	(3)	0 (11)		
UNEP	0	(4)	0 (12)		
UNHCR	0	(5)	0 (13)		0
UNICEF	0	(6)	0 (14)		0
FAO	0		0 (15)	0 (17)	
ILO	0	0 (7)	0 (16)	0 (17)	
IAEA	0	(8)			

** Existing policies are generally considered not comprehensive enough concerning accountability architecture that addresses both organizational and stakeholder needs.

- (1) See the slide <Evolution of engagement>. As of 1 Sep. 2009, 3290 NGOs enjoy “Consultative Status” (General, Special and Roster) with ECOSOC. In addition, 1,500 NGOs are associated with DPI out of which 700 are also associated with ECOSOC.
- (2) Governing body is composed of 22 Governments, 5 NGOs, and 10 cosponsoring agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNODC, WFP, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, IBRD).
- (3) CSO Advisory Committee (composed of 14 CSOs) to the Administration (as an advocate for inclusive and participatory approaches and for community voices in decision-making) provides a mechanism for mutual agenda-setting, policy debate etc. on future directions for UNDP.
- (4) Annual Global Civil Society Forum (built through 6 regional consultation meetings) engages civil society on the Governing Council (GC) agenda and feeds into GC through regional statements.
- (5) NGOs can apply for ‘observer status’ with Executive Committee (ExCom). Prior to the annual session of ExCom, UNHCR holds consultations with NGOs on a broad range of operational issues.
- (6) Consultative Status with ECOSOC gives NGOs the opportunity to interact with Secretariat and Executive Board through statements.
- (7) Tripartite structure, with workers and employers participating as equal partners with governments in ILO’s legislative organs.
- (8) IAEA grants a ‘consultative status’ to NGOs.

(9) Implementation of MDGs and World Summit Outcome Document.

“Global Compact”(GC), which is by definition a multi-stakeholder engagement initiative, can also be mentioned here in the sense that the ‘ten principles’, as the basis of its work, have been derived from Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development etc.

(10) UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS provides the guiding framework for UNAIDS action.

(11) Engagement with external actors includes funding support arrangements involving CSOs, a number of special programmes to reinforce partnerships with CSOs, and collaboration with private sector on development projects.

(12) One of the three pillars aiming at enhancing engagement is the one at the programmatic level, to involve civil society in implementation of work programme.

(13) Through “implementing partnerships”(as one of the 2 types of partnerships with governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations), UNHCR provides financial support to NGOs to facilitate their work as reflected in project agreements (1/3-1/2 of operational budget disbursed through NGOs).

(14) CSOs are closely involved in the work of UNICEF at the country level, with various kinds of formal agreements.

(15) The extent of collaboration with civil society includes partnerships in field programmes.

(16) In addition to the tripartite involvement (workers and employers), many other CSOs are involved in the implementation of ILO activities.

(17) These organizations (FAO, ILO, WHO, ...) have a commitment to engage relevant stakeholders in undertaking evaluation.

Main sources:

1. “UN system engagement with NGOs, civil society, private sector, and other actors (A Compendium)” published in October 2005 by UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), with sponsorship by the Government of Germany.
2. “Global Accountability Report” (2006, 2007, 2008) produced by One World Trust, London

Conclusion

1. UN organizations “need to be legitimate, in the eyes of both those who established them and those whom they serve or affect”.

(Edith Brown Weiss)

2. At the same time, UN organizations must improve their relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in playing a key role especially in the context of global governance.

3. Strengthening UN accountability by addressing accountability gap (deficit) is a necessary condition for meeting the requirements in 1 and 2 above.

4. Non-state actors (Global Civil Society among others), through an effective “engagement” based on enhanced participation (in particular in decision-making process) can play an essential role in filling in the accountability gap.

Annex 1 Steps to be taken to enhance UN accountability

1. Establishing comprehensive accountability policies, procedures, and systems, on the basis of blessings by Member States;
2. Translating accountability policies/procedures/systems into practices (operationalization);
3. Embedding accountability into the culture (attitudes, behaviours, perceptions) of an organization; [This would require commitment from leadership and internal champions, as well as developing incentives to encourage staff to adopt accountability-enhancing-behaviours, including sharing good practices]
4. Highlighting accountability gap, and making efforts for narrowing them through effective reforms, which would include moving beyond 'managerial', to 'political' accountability and strengthening institutional capacity for enhancing effective "engagement".
5. Forging a common understanding of accountability at the global level, as the basis for promoting dialogue and partnership between actors in the global governance.

Annex 2

