

International Journal of Humanity and Social Sciences

**The United Nations (UN) at Crossroads in 2022: An
(IJHSS) Assessment of 'Geopolitical Tensions' in International
Relations (IR)**



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The United Nations (UN) at Crossroads in 2022: An Assessment of 'Geopolitical Tensions' in International Relations (IR)

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Accepted: 24th Feb 2024 Received in Revised Form: 24th Mar 2024 Published: 24th Apr 2024

Abstract

Purpose: This paper is an alarming assessment of the keynote address and remarks at the opening of the 77th General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (UN) by the Secretary-General to world leaders. The alarm is that the world, from small to big, powerful to the less powerful are “gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction,” and are not ready or willing to tackle the challenges that threaten humanity’s future – and the planet’s. “Our world is in peril – and paralyzed,” the Secretary-General Antonio Gutiérrez laments. Do these remarks collaborate with the daily multiplying effects of the Russia-Ukrainian war; the climate emergencies and devastating weather conditions around the world; the dire financial situation amidst poverty in developing countries and the setbacks in the UN Sustainable goals for 2030?

Methodology: The basic problem facing research today and to anyone who tries to understand contemporary world politics is that there is so much material to look at; such as, which things matter and which do not. For instance, where on earth would you start if you wanted to explain the most important political processes: How, for example, would you explain the recent failure of climate change negotiations at the UN, amidst Africa’s position? How will one theorize ‘Brexit’ from the EU or the ‘gridlock in ‘colossal global dysfunction’, where nations meeting at the United Nations cannot agree on challenges threatening humanity’s future? This research employs a qualitative approach involving the collection and analysing of primary and secondary documents; as well as non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences of plenaries of the UN; particularly, why this particular one - (the 77th Session) was alarming.

Findings: For the first time in UN’s history, the international communities are undermining the work of the UN Security Council; of international law, peoples trust in democratic institutions, and most forms of international cooperation. There is ample evidence from the research findings that there is “a divergence between developed and developing countries; between North and South; between the privileged and that, the world becoming more dangerous by the day. In short, the world “is at the root of geopolitical tensions and the increasing lack of trust among countries, which is poisoning every area of global cooperation from vaccines to rid communicable diseases; sanctions to stop wars around the world; measures to reduce global temperature, and the need to reduce trade barriers for the benefit of particularly, developing countries in Africa.

Unique contribution to theory, policy and practice: In IR theory, all nations work to increase their own power and not their opponents’. The nations that are able to manage and horde power most efficiently thrive; as they can easily eclipse the achievements of less powerful nations. In policy and practice, the UN is torn apart by gridlock within the plenary of the UN, as well as the Security Council, international institutions with powers to resolve international conflicts and misunderstandings are either paralyzed by division or have become undemocratic. The UN must therefore reform or be paralyzed by these colossal dysfunctions.

Keywords: *Geopolitical tensions; United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Gutiérrez; world-at-gridlock; IR; United Nations at Crossroads.*

1.0 Introduction

Just like the ensuing war between Russian against Ukraine, the UN is under intense pressure from the world ‘public of countries’ and the press to find collective solutions to the world’s myriad of problems on the international scene. In 1944 and towards the end of World War II, representatives met at Dumbarton oaks in Washington DC, to prepare a blueprint for an international organization that will put an end to or stop a repeat of another world war. The UN was conceived at the end of the Second World War, which started when 50 countries gathered in San Francisco in America between April and June to deliberate and fine-tune the text that would today lay the foundations for the UN. The UN was formed under a Charter on 26th June, 1945 with only 50 countries. Poland was yet to be considered the 51st member – because it was willing to join the new organization, but was still engulfed in the war. The UN in the 21st century, with the addition of South Sudan in 2011, has a membership of 193, representing almost all the world’s sovereign states in the world (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/07/381552>). With the powers vested in its founding Charter and its unique international order, the United Nations Organization can take action on a wide range of issues, and provide a forum for its Member States to express their views – lamentations, harassments, intimidations, new discoveries, appeal for world assistance, and ensuring bilateral and multilateralism in international relations

2.1. The Purpose of the UN

The UN has four (4) main purposes as its mandate in international relations: (i) to keep peace throughout the world; (ii) to develop friendly relations among nations; (iii) to help nations work together to improve the lives of poor people, to conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other’s rights and freedoms; and (iv) to be a center for the harmonization of the actions of nations to achieve these goals (<https://ask.un.org/faq/176175>). There are six principal organs of the UN: the General Assembly (UNGA), the Security Council (UNSC); the Economic and Social Council (UNESCO); the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the main Secretariat. But there are other 15 agencies, programs and bodies associated with the work of the UN family (Ibid). The UNGA meets under its president or the UN Secretary-General in annual sessions at the General Assembly Building within the UN headquarters in New York City in the United States of America. Its first session was convened on January 10, 1946 in the Methodist Central Hall in London and included representatives of the 51 founding nations before consensus on which country was to be selected the host country for its permanent Secretariat was finalized. (www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-five-permanent-memembers-of-the-un)

2.2. The UN General Assembly (UNGA)

The annual meetings of the UN, usually takes place from September of the current year to parts of January, the ensuing year - until all issues are addressed – which is often before the next session starts. This year’s theme for UNGA is: “*A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges.*” According to the UN, the choice for year’s theme “stems from the recognition that the world is at a critical moment...due to complex and interconnected crises.” (

[https://state.gov/77th session](https://state.gov/77th_session)). Underlying sentiments from the UNGA theme, the UN Secretary-General highlighted his view and what most of us believe is an astounding reminder of what is going on in the world under his purview. The Secretary-General lamented to the gathering at the UNGA that in 2022, - more than any time in his lifetime - the world is “blighted by war, battered by climate chaos, scarred by hate, and shamed by poverty, hunger and inequality” (Ibid). This year’s session is taking place for the first time after two years (since March (2020) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic, where participants were only allowed to submit video statements. But this year’s session is critical; in that disagreements on how to tackle world problems and catastrophic weather conditions is creating ‘political tensions and divisions’ between the ‘east’ and ‘west,’ the marginalization of the African continent in food security; and the inability of members of the African Union to speak with one voice – a pledge made by member countries of the African Union to always stick together in international fora. For the first time, the international communities are undermining the work of the UN Security Council, the Secretary-General laments; of international law, peoples trust in democratic institutions, and most forms of international cooperation. According to the Secretary General, “the divergence between developed and developing countries; between North and South; between the privileged and the rest is becoming more dangerous by the day.”(www.state.gov/77th). The SG further lamented that the world “is at the root of the geopolitical tensions and lack of trust that poisons every area of global cooperation from vaccines to sanctions to trade.”

2.3. Significance of the 77th UNGA

Unlike the UNGA meetings in the 1980’s, where “North-South dialogue” were usually deliberated on a range of international matters to increase peace and cooperation in the world; the UNGA since 1945 has quadrupled to 193, of which two thirds are developing to middle-income countries. And because of their numbers, developing countries (using their coordinating Groups of seventy-seven Alliance - G77), often determine the agenda of the UNGA. Indeed, the UNGA has been the source of much of their diplomatic influence and the principal outlet for their foreign relations initiatives and policy outcomes. As one of the six (6) principal organs of the UN, the UNGA serves as the main policymaking, deliberative, as well as its representative organ of the UN with its functions, powers, composition and procedures set out in chapter four (4) of the UN Charter. The UNGA is also responsible for the appointments of non-permanent members within its ranks to the Security Council (SC), the appointment of the UN Secretary-General, receiving reports from other parts of the UN system, responsible for the UN budget and implementing programs through resolutions. Besides these functions, the UNGA operates through many subsidiary organs to assist and advance its work. The UNGA runs from September until all issues on the agenda are exhausted – which is often before the next session begins; as well as the only UN organ wherein all member states have equal representation. The UNGA can reconvene for special and emergency special sessions and voting within the UNGA is done in matters that are important such as on peace and security, on budgetary issues and elections, admissions, suspensions or expulsions of members – in which there must be a two-thirds voting in the majority of those present and voting at the time besides the above; including the adoption of a

scale of assessments and other UNGA resolutions that are not binding on members, but recommendations within their scope. Reflecting on this paper's main agenda; the premise is to assess or examine, why the 77th General Assembly meeting of world leaders in 2022 is taking place under the shadow of so many geopolitical tensions in international relations: that is, the first Europe's major war since World War II –the conflict between Russia and Ukraine; disagreements over how to tackle climate crises and devastation around the world; the impacts of the Russian-Ukrainian war stemming from the serious food insecurity in the world and particularly, Africa; and why global decision-making (in the words of the Secretary-general) is plagued by gridlock.

3.0. Framework of the Study

The UNGA since 1945 is the main policy making organ of the UN. The UNGA is the entity that has the opportunity to welcome leaders of the world to address the most pressing global challenges of our time and deep into the future. This year's UNGA 77 opened on September 13, 2022, with the *high-level week* taking place between *September 19-23 in New York* (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/events/2022>). The UN provides a vital platform that can help address some of the most pressing and shared challenges that affect all of us from global food security; human security to global health crises. But the countries of the world must be committed in maintaining the zeal to work with each other and through the United Nations' system to find solutions to these challenges. In the current moment of heightened geopolitical tensions, the UN has a role to play in helping shape the future and deliver on its mandate and remain a central and effective problem-solving institution. Hence the Secretary-General's welcome speech to leaders from the world's 193 countries about the current 'pulse of global trends.' According to Antonio Gutierrez, the world is in dire straits and at a defining moment in international relations: where "global decision making is plagued by gridlock – and a fundamental paradox lies at the heart of it"; he alludes to the lack of consensus by global leaders to wake up to the realization that we are being threatened by still, (i) COVID-19 pandemic; Ebola again in Uganda, (ii) global warming; flash floods in Asian and Latin America; and violent winds and fire storms that affect even wealthy countries and are destroying homes and livelihoods and creating new vicious cycles of poverty in countries like Pakistan. (iii) climate change: for example, recurring droughts in East and Southern Africa and (iv) geopolitical gridlocks between the 'east' and 'west,' over Ukrainian war (v) harassed by rain and flooding across the world, (vi) 'coup de tats' across the African continent, (vii) maintaining peace and security. More so, according to the Secretary-General, the world is "witnessing the unequal distribution of vaccines; a global economic system rigged against the poor; the utterly inadequate response to the climate crisis; the indiscriminate launch of digital technology such as robotics and artificial intelligence (AIs) and a media landscape that profits from division; as well as the growing unrest and conflict around the world (<https://www.un.org/sg/en/contents/sg/speeches/2022>).

3.1 What is happening to the 'purpose' of the UN?

Echoing the grave situation from the current Secretary-General in the world about the precarious weather and other related conditions in the world, Professor Eagleton alluded some time back

that, “the weakness of the UN’s ability to come together to tackle global issues lies not so much in its UN Charter, but in the lack of support by its members” (Eagleton, 1950; Pg. 133-135). Eagleton added that the calls for change of the UN Charter are not as important as the change is about the attitude of UN members to improve world conditions. Therefore, to develop a broader “sense of community” so that national barriers can gradually be lowered to facilitate the solution of international problems should be the way of the UNGA going forward. Boggled by gridlock in the UNGA, with divergent views from countries that are protecting themselves; can the world agree on the diagnoses of these common symptoms affecting the world? If so, why is the UNGA unable to effectively treat them? After reviewing the relevant literature (next) of this paper, we draw several fundamental flaws in the critical assessment of this paper before we conclude. First, in the study of international relations, foreign policy usually becomes a project of a country’s ‘internal politics’; where the perceived national interests easily triumph over the larger global good. This impulse is understandable, even if it is wrong-headed in instances where solidarity is in a country’s self-interest. Secondly, many of today’s global institutions or frameworks are outdated or simply weak and the necessary reforms required are impeded by geo-political divides. More so, international institutions with more powers are either paralyzed by division or undemocratic – like the Security Council of the UNGA – and many of our international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As such global governance is failing the UNGA at precisely the moment when the world should be coming together to solve global problems; hence the geopolitical tensions around the world.

4.0. Review of Relevant Literature

The focus of this review is on the functions and responsibilities of the UNGA – and in particular – the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The UNSC is the most powerful organ of the UN. It has five permanent members: China, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France and Russia. These five permanent members, who by ‘capabilities and might’ can inflict harm to the rest of the world because of their nuclear and military capabilities - have each one vote. Their objection or vote against an item brought before the UNSC relegates the urgency and importance of that issue. Besides, there are ten (10) non-permanent members who hold two-year terms. All UN members world-wide must comply with Security Council decisions, and the council sends peace-keeping forces to areas that are threatened with war, clashes or intimidation, with the purpose of restoring order. The Council imposes sanctions or an arms embargo to pressure countries that do not comply - if sanctions and embargoes do not end the issue - the UN entire membership can take military action against that country. But the UN is not a government and has no right to make binding laws. Instead the UN uses the power of persuasion and reflects the prevailing values and goals of the majority of its members. From the 193 current members of the UN, the United States recognizes an additional two (2). The two that are not members of the UN are Kosovo and the Holy See. Kosovo, which seceded from Serbia; does not have support from enough member countries since it’s still not recognized by some as an independent nation. The Holy See has not applied for membership, although it has “permanent observer” status. Notably, Palestine is a “non-member” state, even though United States considers it as part of

Israel. So is China, which replaced Taiwan and considers it as one of its province. All peace-seeking countries that are willing and able to carry out their obligation under the UN Charter can join the UN. However, nine of the fifteen members of the UNSC must approve without any of the five permanent members objecting to the approval of the country's membership. Two-thirds of the General Assembly must also approve the membership.

4.1 The world-wide mandate of the UN

The UN has its world headquarters in New York, but maintains a significant presence in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Nairobi (Kenya) in Africa; Beirut (Lebanon) in the Middle East, Vienna (Austria) in Europe and Santiago (Chile) in South America and field offices all over the world. The UN is best known for peacekeeping, peacebuilding, conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance. There are many other ways that the UN and its system (specialized agencies and programs) affect the lives of people and make the world a better place. These roles include the promotion of democracy around the world; human rights, gender equality and the advancement of women, governance, economic and social development; international health, and expanding food production and more. The UN has 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), which are a shared vision, principles, values and goals that it believes can alleviate humanity and give the planet's people hope through strong global cooperation, inclusiveness and partnerships. Indeed, the UN traces its roots to seventy-seven years ago when its first president, General Carlos P. Romulo, vowed to make the UNGA floor, "the world's last armed-battle will ensue; and to determine in the hall of the UN, whether humanity will survive or be wiped out in another holocaust" (<https://www.upvanguard.org/hall-hall.of-fame-general-carlosp-romulo>). Since that time the world has chosen survival, co-existence, collaboration and solidarity. The world has also chosen cooperation and peace. But all these accolades have now been thrown out and asunder; beginning from questions of the world collaboration before, during and after the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). Where has *world peace and solidarity* vanished to? In 2022, it appears history once again is calling on the world to make choices – a confrontation by tectonic shifts, which informs the ebb and flow of the coming century or for the UNGA to remain the hope for the world at the moment when the world itself is at crossroads in international relations. Without the UN, can we have the continued survival of the world's global community?

5.0. UNGA at Crossroads in 2022

5.1 The struggle for power and security

First and foremost, the theory of realism in international relations generally assumes that the international system is inherently disorderly and relations are anarchic because primary actors are perpetually locked against the struggle for power and security. From the Secretary-General's address to the UNGA'22, there is no world supranational authority or police that can restrict or stop the conduct of states like North Korea; Iran, Russia, Israel, Myanmar, etc; or multinational corporations, and other entities from polluting the atmosphere, which disrupt climatic conditions and/or creating geopolitical tensions in the world. Because the conduct and behaviors of these states are directed towards the promotion of their self-interest. More so, these states desire power

to ensure self-preservation nonetheless. Both realism and liberalism theories consider states or other actors as inherently egoists, whose identities and interests have already been in place prior to interaction with other actors. On the occasion of the 77th anniversary of the UNGA, it is worthwhile to assess the comments and warnings by the Secretary-General of the trends, possibilities and geopolitical tension stemming from global inequalities and nexus. As John Foster Dulles, a former Foreign Secretary of the United States once said: “the UN Charter represents man’s most determined and promising effort to save humanity from the scourge of war and to establish justice between the nations.”

<https://history.state.gov/department.history/people/dules-john-foster>). In earnest, the UN Charter, at its adoption carried ardent hopes of the world; however, the high hopes born in the past have evaporated. It begun in 2020 at the heat of the Coronavirus and has been exacerbated in 2022.

Today, and in the words of the Secretary-General of the UN: “the world is gridlocked in colossal global dysfunction,” and no country is willing to hear what the other (s) has (have) to say at the UNGA. The world is blanketed by divisions and countries; whether small or big “aren’t ready or willing to tackle the challenges that threatens humanity’s future – and the planet’s (www.um.or/sg/en/content//sg/speeches/2022). As such, “Our world is in peril – and paralyzed;” as accurately placed by the Secretary-General of the UN (Ibid). These comments and lamentations can be categorized in several ways: First is that many people tend to expect too much from the United Nations than it is actually capable of doing. Analyzing the tensions arising from the behaviors and actions of the members of the UN involves interactions between different international actors or the corresponding phenomena emerging from the decisions and actions of these actors. Therefore, in spite of the existence of numerous international agreements and institutions to facilitate the smooth relations among the nearly 200 countries in the world, the UN is still unable to manage the world. In short, even though people have fought each other for centuries, extreme weather conditions have existed for years, the causes and consequences of political violence are still unknown; for example, why states go to war or start wars, revolutions or commit acts of terrorism; or how to identify both immediate and long-term threats still baffles political scientists and serious research areas in political science.

5.2 Gridlock amidst complex interdependence

Secondly, today’s gridlock among nations at the UNGA is about (i) climate change and Global warming (ii) Food crisis in Africa and around the world in view of the Russian-Ukraine war; (iii) the total disregard for human lives in the war between Russia and Ukraine; (iv) the world-wide flooding and extreme climatic conditions threatening the world. As such, the UN is faced with great difficulties and the authority and effectiveness, with which member nations can come together to arrest the described tension around the world. The world is infinitely complex, and by necessity we all rely on various beliefs or theories about “how the world works,” to try to make sense of it all. But globalization – the rapid rise in communications technology, and the increase in international trade – informs states that they can no longer rely on simple power politics to decide matters. Instead, international cooperation is what is in the interest of every state; and that

military power is usually, not the only form of power - as Russia is witnessing in the war against Ukraine - but economic and social power matters a great deal too. And that, exercising economic power is more effective; especially (through the assistance by NATO and allies to Ukraine); than exercising military power; since different states often have different primary interests. Therefore, the UNGA can only meet to thoroughly diagnose geopolitical tensions around the world, but cannot arrest it; since international rules and organizations can only help foster cooperation, trust, and perhaps, the prosperity that the Secretary-General is lamenting about.

5.3 What has happened to Cooperation and Dialogue at the UN?

Thirdly, the theory of liberalism in international relations directly contradicts the theory of realism. Let's be reminded that realism is about the individuality of states while liberalism is about the necessity of interdependence and cooperation. What has happened to the UN Charter that was eagerly ratified by the initial 51 nations and the U.S Congress and pledges perpetual peace in the world? In the Secretary-General's disappointments, the world is inclined neither to look backward to the old order, nor to seek radical new solutions to global problems. But with what is going on many world leader speaking at the 77th General Assembly articulated the sentiments raised in 1949 by Professor Clyde Eagleton (Eagleton, 1950), when he said: "some critics of UN tend to fall back on nationalism, or regionalism, or collective self-defense; whereas others in increasing numbers, are moving in the opposite direction toward world government. In the current tensions in the world between the 'east' - Russia, Iran, North Korea, China, Myanmar, and a few 'pariah' states against the 'west' - United States, and the European bloc of countries in NATO, their motivation or gridlock is perhaps shaped by the interactions with other states and actors - whose assumptions probably, would have been the acceptance of the UN as unthinkable.

Fourthly, in yet another application of the English School to the contemporary theory of international relations to provide a lens for the analysis of this paper, we remain with the same principles of realism and liberalism once more. The theories can answer the following questions: how do one understand international relations by incorporating the cooperative aspect of liberalism into the realist conception of the conflicted nature of the international system? Central to the argument of the English School is that there are three distinct spheres at work in international politics. These are (i) an international system that is characterized by the power politics among state actors, (ii) an international society characterized by the institutionalization of shared interest and identity amongst states; and (iii) a world society characterized by the creation of global societal identities and arrangements based on the participation of individuals, non-state actors, and ultimately the global population as a whole. In the assessment of speakers at the General Assembly, there seem to be four well-defined extremities: one proposal is to terminate the annual assembly as an unsuccessful and possibly unnecessary meeting or at least, for some countries to withdraw their participation. At another end are proposals to convert the UN into a tightly knit military alliance, obviously by expelling Russia (thanks to the 'split-vote' of the African bloc; even though the decision was inconclusive (<https://www.africanews.com/202203/un>)). At the extreme third end of the spectrum are proposals

to transform the UN into some kind of ‘super-state.’ The fourth extreme is for those, who for varying reasons wish the status to remain absolutely “quo;” especially, those who see the annual General Assembly as a ‘review conference’- at best for merely reporting the ‘state of the world.’ The world is indeed infinitely complex; and by necessity we all rely on various believes or theories about “how the world works” to try to make sense of world politics. And because many theories tend to provide lenses for analysis, the combination of the principles of realism and liberalism answers the following question: which is, how do we understand international relations by incorporating the cooperative aspect of liberalism into the realist conception of the conflicted nature of the international system? We should be reminded that central to the argument of the English School are three distinct spheres at work in international politics: first, is that the international system is characterized by the power politics among state actors, that the UN General Secretary is talking about; (ii) second, that the world society is also characterized by the institutionalization of shared interest and identity amongst the states; and (iii) third, that the world society is characterized by the creation of global society identities and arrangements based on the participation of individuals, non-state actors, and ultimately, the global population as a whole; hence the gridlock, the lack of unanimity and consensus on many action items placed before the UNGA for implementation to reverse climate warming, end the Russian-Ukraine war, reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere and the myriad of human-caused disasters around the world.

5.5. Where then is the solidarity (maturity) in Global governance?

At 77 years old in 2022, the UN is an “old-man or old-woman;” tired and dazzled with false ‘*powers of persuasion.*’ As with all old-folks, health issues and problems have arisen and must be expected. It is important to examine this ‘grumbling person in the midst of the world’s most fundamental issues with the continuous use of this ‘persuasion abilities.’ For instance, are weaknesses that exist in the UN, so inherent in the Charter, where important global issues of climate, extreme weather disruptions and conditions, carbon emissions and the lack of any ‘world police,’ can be deliberated and solutions found? Or are such ‘wielding powers’ by the five (5) UN permanent members of the Security Council an expression of reality? Or can there be “supplementary agreements on the use of veto power? Fundamentally, the UN has three major inter-related purposes in international relations. The first is the maintenance of “international peace and security as set forth in Article I of the Charter; Secondly, the attainment of peaceful change as set forth in Article 14; and thirdly, the promotion of “conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations” as set forth in in article 55. Lessons from the short life-span and ineffectiveness of the League of Nations has given effect to inclusion within the UN Charter, guiding principles - muscles and bigger scope - to fit the changing world. With what is going on at the 77th UNGA, the following observations deals with the most fundamental issues that will have to be catered for by the Secretary-General of the UN, if he intends to improve the standing and purpose of the UN.

5.6 Where is the promised of perpetual peace?

The UN Charter provides for the maintenance of international peace and security and the prevention of war. It also provides for the machinery to implement those provisions. It is obvious, therefore, that the Charter is now standing in the way of the maintenance of peace. On the contrary, it is the failure of certain nations, notably Russia and a few bloc of nations to do their part in implementing those provisions and living up to their obligations under the Charter which has weakened and paralyzed the UN. According to the Charter (Article 24), the Security Council is supposed to exercise “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.” However, it is important to take a critical look at the United nations in the total setting of present international relations. While recognizing that international organization has never been stronger, one must also recognize that the UN operates in a world in which the nation-state is ‘king’. As alluded to previously, the theory of international relations is a set of ideas that explains how the international system works. Unlike an ideology a theory of international relations is (at last in principle) backed up with concrete evidence; besides, most theories of international relations are based on the idea that states always act in accordance with their national interest, or the interests of that particular state. State interests often include self-preservation, military surety, economic prosperity, and influence over other states. In spite of all these imperfections the UN has provided means for economic and social developments which have benefited a large part of the human race. With all these in mind, there should be a better way of organizing the work of the UN and the specialized agencies to avoid duplication, confusion, lack of control and what might be called the “organizational exacerbation of tension?”

5.7 Any setbacks in the UN Sustainable Goals (2030)?

Since its inception, the UN has devoted its attention and resources to promote living standards and human skills and potential throughout the world. The UN took a bold step to consolidate all its gains by 2000 to be guided by certain standards set for the entire world to achieve - the UN Millennium Development Goals by 2030 (SDGs – 2030). To support such programs, the UN Development Program (UNDP) has offices and staff in 170 countries and supports more than 4,800 projects to reduce poverty, promote good governance, address crises and preserve the environment. More so, the UN children’s fund (UNICEF) works in more than 150 countries primarily on child protection, immunization, girls’ education and emergency aid. Besides, the UN industrial development Organization (UNIDO) serves as “soft infrastructure” for the global economy by negotiating universally accepted technical standards in such diverse areas as statistics, trade law, customs procedures, intellectual property, aviation, shipping and telecommunications - facilitating economic activity and reducing transaction costs. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) leads global efforts to defeat hunger - where people everywhere have regular access to enough high-quality food to live active and healthy lives. In all these initiatives, Africa remains a high priority for the UN. For instance, in 2001, African Heads of State adopted the continent’s own plan, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), which the General Assembly endorsed in 2002 as the main framework for channeling international support to Africa. Employing a couple of theories in international relations, this paper asserts that all nations work to increase their own power and not their opponents. The

nations that are able to manage and horde power most efficiently thrive, as they can easily eclipse the achievements of less powerful nations. But should not the world look at the liberal notion of international politics where the world's 'collective interest' should be the foremost interest rather than of a nation's 'self-preservation' in international relations (IR)?

7.0 Conclusion

The United Nations Organization (UN) Charter was ratified on October 24, 1945 (during World War II), with a strong lobby by the then President, Franklin D Roosevelt (FDR). But taking over after the death of President FDR, President Truman made sure that the U.S Congress would ratify it to enable the then Allies – the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the Peoples Republic of China - pledge their support to work together to stop the Axis (www.ipl.org/essay/world-war-II). In world history, the UN is the *second attempt* at a global peace initiative. The first, the League of Nations, initiated by US President Woodrow Wilson, witnessed disagreements and a lack of consensus and did not even have the U.S as a member. The United Nations is an international organization of 193 member-states and was founded in in 1945 to prevent another world war. The UN maintains international peace and establishes conditions to ensure treaty obligations and international law are upheld. The UN is not a government, nor can it pass binding laws, but through the *power of persuasion*, negotiations of multilateral agreements, the UN can form or apply international law in member countries. The UN promotes human rights, social progress, and equal rights for all people and nations while improving standards Yearly, every member votes in the General Assembly meeting, and contributes to the UN budget to fund UN – specific programs and finally; any country willing to obey the UN Charter can join. But the cardinal rule for joining is when nine (9) out of the fifteen (15) Security Council members vote in favor of the new country to join. The country must also be endorsed by the five (5) permanent members of the Security Council – the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Germany and Russia.

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