Towards a Coherent Regional Institutional Landscape in the United Nations? Implications for Europe

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About the Author

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Kennedy Graham was educated at the Universities of Auckland (B.Com.) and Victoria (B.A., Ph.D.) in New Zealand as well as at the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy (M.A.) in Boston, US, subsequently studying in the Global Security Programme, Cambridge University, UK, as a Quartercentenary Fellow. He served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand for many years, where he held various positions related to the United Nations, Asia, development assistance, human rights and disarmament, including postings in Canada, Thailand and Switzerland. He was subsequently Secretary-General of Parliamentarians for Global Action in New York, Director of Planning and Coordination in the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in Stockholm, Sweden, and Director of the UN University's Leadership Academy in Amman, Jordan. From 2003 to 2007, he served as a Senior Consultant to the UN's Department of Political Affairs and UNDP.

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Abstract

This paper explores the recent attempt of the international community to develop greater consistency and coherence in the United Nations (UN) system, and the implications this may hold for the European integration movement. The paper identifies the postulated standards of policy coherence currently employed for international organisations, the delineation of regions (as these are informally understood in the UN), and the current locations of UN global and regional offices. The scope for reconfiguration of the UN regional institutional setting is explored. Prescriptively, the paper asks whether the delineation of 'region' is adequate for the current times, and whether a standardised definition of 'region' can feasibly be developed. Concluding that this is possible, the paper then explores the possible scenario for new regional hubs, including the co-location of regional offices that would meet the required reform in consistency and policy coherence for the UN. Within that context the paper considers the implications such changes might carry for Europe – for the region, for its various regional organisations, and for their relationship with the UN. The paper concludes by identifying the political and diplomatic process by which such institutional reform might be pursued.

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List of Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CTBTO	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation
CEB	Chief Executive Board (UN)
COE	Council of Europe
COMSEC	Commonwealth Secretariat
CPLP	Community of Portuguese Language Countries
CSTO	Collective Security treaty Organisation
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLA	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSC	Economic Coal and Steel and Community
EEG	Eastern Europe Group
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
ESCAP	Economic Commission for Europe
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
Habitat	UN Human Settlement Programme
HLP	High-level Panel
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGAD	Inter-governmental Authority for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
INSTRAW	Institute for Research on the Advancement of Women
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
Interpol	International Criminal Police Organisation
LAS	League of Arab States
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OIF	Organisation internationale de la francophonie
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
RO	Regional Organisation(s)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SCRTR	UN Secretariat
SRO	Sub-regional Organisation(s)
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	UN AIDS Programme
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFPA	UN Fund for Population and Development
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNESCO	UN Education, Social and Cultural Organisation
UNESOB	UN Economic and Social Office in Beirut
UNHCR	UN High Commission for Refugees

UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNICRI	UN Inter-regional Crime and Justice Research Institute
UNIDIR	UN Institute for Disarmament Research
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organisation
UNIFEM	UN Development Fund for Women
UNITAR	UN Institute for Advanced Research
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOG	UN Office in Geneva
UNON	UN Office in Nairobi
UNOPS	UN Office for Project Services
UNRISD	UN Research Institute for Social Development
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNU	UN University
UNU-CRIS	UNU Comparative Regional Integration Studies programme
UNV	UN Volunteers
VUB	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
WEOG	West European and Others Group
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organisation
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1. Introduction: Objective and Structure of the Paper

The aim of this Paper is two-fold: to explore the implications of the recommendations in the Report of the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence (HLP report) insofar as they relate to regional structures, both UN and non-UN;[1] and to assess the implications of these recommendations for Europe as a 'region'. The analytical and prescriptive content addresses both substantive issues (the nature of the shortcomings and recommendations advanced in the HLP report) and structural issues (the breadth of the institutions potentially affected, with special reference to Europe as a 'region'). The Paper argues that, with due regard to the political sensitivities of the challenge, it is possible to engage in reform of the UN whereby greater consistency and coherence can be attained to streamline the operational partnership between the UN and regional organisations. To that end it proposes that a standardised definition of 'region' be agreed, and that a series of regions (and their sub-regions) be identified based on the definition. The Paper proposes also that consideration be given to identifying certain natural 'regional capitals' in Africa, the Arab world, Europe, Asia-Pacific and the Americas. It focuses on the five themes derived from the Report's recommendations, assessing their merit and exploring how they might be implemented. The principal themes explored are:

- regional hubs;
- roles of regional commissions;
- reconfiguration of UN regional setting;
- standardisation of the definition of 'region'; and
- co-location of UN regional offices.

In an institutional sense, regionalism is of two broad dimensions: on the one hand, those entities that are part of the UN system itself and operate within its overall purview; and on the other hand, those entities that are exogenous to the UN system, created beyond its purview and which operate autonomously, but which were foreseen in the UN Charter as part of a collaborative institutional network pursuing the common ends of the international community, identified generically in Chapter VIII of the Charter.[2]

Within the UN system itself, a further distinction needs to be drawn. Regional institutions may be of three kinds:

- there are UN programmes or funds established by the General Assembly or by ECOSOC under their respective powers to create 'conditions of stability and well-being' through economic and social development under Chapters IX and X of the Charter;[3]
- there are specialised agencies, established by intergovernmental agreement, with mandates in economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields, which are 'brought into relationship' with the UN, identified generically under Chapter IX of the Charter;[4] and
- there are UN commissions dealing with economic and social issues, established by ECOSOC under Chapter XI of the Charter.[5]

The basic distinction between the internal UN system and the external UN partnerships underpins the structure of this Paper, both its analytical and prescriptive parts. The two basic institution types are referred to henceforth as 'UN system bodies' (Chapters IX and X entities) and 'exogenous bodies' (Chapter VIII entities). The substantive issues explored in this Paper

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[1]   *Delivering as One: Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance, and the Environment*, United Nations, New York (advance, unedited version, 9 November 2006, not depicted by symbol as at June 2007).
[2]   UN Charter, Articles 52-54.
[3]   UN Charter, Article 55.
[4]   UN Charter, Article 57.
[5]   UN Charter, Article 68.

are thus applied to two institutional levels, namely: the UN system (Chapters IX and X entities); and the broader UN partnership network (Chapter VIII entities).

The analysis and prescription for Chapter VIII entities is strictly beyond the scope of the HLP Report and the ongoing deliberations at the United Nations. No decisions can be made within that context by the General Assembly or ECOSOC pertaining to Chapter VIII agencies which are, themselves, autonomous international organisations or arrangements. Because the goal of consistency and coherence is common to both internal and external aspects of UN functioning, however, and because the international community has an interest in achieving it across all aspects of international activity, it is important that the external aspects be addressed as well. It would be self-defeating to structure a consistent and coherent institutional architecture for the UN system that bore no rational relationship to the nature of the broader UN partnership network. The constituent memberships, moreover, are common to both – it is the nation-states themselves that make decisions in both internal UN and exogenous regional organisational settings. So it is open to them to make decisions pertaining to the former within the UN system, as well as recommendations pertaining to the latter, which could then be made binding in the institutional context of Chapter VIII regional organisations. Having regard to these considerations, this Paper is structured as follows:

- Section 2 reviews the HLP Report and explores the postulated standards of consistency and coherence within the UN system.
- The analytical section 3 examines the current regional institutional architecture of the UN system as well as the exogenous regional entities associated with the UN under the Charter.
- The prescriptive section 4 considers how the 'regional recommendations' of the HLP Report might be achieved. In this respect, the Paper encompasses four of the five recommendations by proposing three institutional changes for the consideration of UN Member States: reconfiguration of the UN regional setting in a general sense; standardisation of the definition of 'region' and identification of specific regions for all UN purposes; and identification of cities as 'regional hubs' and co-location of all UN regional offices.
- Section 5 applies the insights contained in the Panel's recommendations to the special case of Europe, exploring the implications these may have for its future development as a 'united region' – not simply in the immediate post-Cold War world but as the 21st century unfolds. This section considers, on the one hand, Europe's many well-developed and geographically overlapping regional structures and, on the other hand, at least one regional actor that has the ambition to be a 'global player' (the EU). This in turn throws light on the challenges such an aspiration poses for the larger debate over UN – regional organisation collaboration.
- The final section 6 explores the political and diplomatic process through which a 'coherent regional institutional landscape' might be achieved.

2. The High-level Report on UN System-wide Coherence

The United Nations system is global, vast and complex. It comprises 17 specialised agencies and related organisations, 14 funds and programmes, 17 departments and offices within the Secretariat, 5 regional commissions, 5 research and training institutes and a plethora of regional and country-level structures. Its constituent members are the 192 sovereign Member States. Its preamble opens in the name of "We the peoples" – effectively the whole human family. Its stated purposes – the preservation of peace, the promotion of human rights, and economic and social development – are effectively the core responsibilities of global governance. There is no greater global challenge than to ensure that the UN system can function effectively and efficiently. Partly because of the magnitude of the undertaking, partly because of resource constraints, the UN system is imperfect in structure, method and coordination. As such it is an easy target for criticism, much of it justified, some of it unfair.

UN System-wide Coherence: The High-level Panel Process

At their 2005 Summit, world leaders agreed on the need for stronger 'system-wide coherence' of the United Nations system.[6] A series of ten measures were envisaged to this end in policy, operational activities, humanitarian assistance and environmental activities. Three objectives in particular were identified by world leaders:

- to strengthen linkages between the normative work of the UN system and its operational activities;
- to ensure that horizontal policy themes (sustainable development, human rights, and gender issues) are taken into account in UN decision-making; and
- to ensure a 'more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better-performing' UN country presence, with appropriate authority and common management.

Accordingly world leaders invited the Secretary-General to 'launch work to further strengthen the management and coordination of UN operational activities … including proposals … for more tightly managed entities in the fields of development, humanitarian activities and environment'. In February 2006 the Secretary-General established a High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in these three areas. The Panel's Report was submitted to the Secretary-General in November 2006.

The case for reform, as set out in the HLP Report, rests on the need for efficiency. The multilateral institutions of the 1940s remain with us today, but a new set of challenges are faced in the 21st century – interdependence with inequality. The United Nations, having played a crucial role in articulating the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, needed now to take action in helping achieve them. Without ambitious and far-reaching reform, the UN would be unable to deliver on its promises and remain at the heart of the multilateral system. The UN's work in development and environment was often fragmented and weak. Inefficient and ineffective governance and unpredictable funding had contributed to 'policy incoherence, duplication and operational ineffectiveness' across the system. Cooperation between organisations had been hindered by competition for funding, mission creep and outdated business practices. To rectify these shortcomings, the Report advanced a series of recommendations, based on four main strategic directions:[7]

- coherence and consolidation of UN activities, based on the principle of country ownership at all levels (country, regional, headquarters);
- appropriate governance, managerial and funding mechanisms;
- overhaul of business practices in the UN system to ensure proper focus on outcomes; and
- consolidation and delivery of 'One UN' through an in-depth review.

The essence of the Panel's vision was for the UN to 'deliver as one' in development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. The UN's normative and analytical expertise, operational and coordination activities, and advocacy role would be more effectively brought together at the national, regional and global levels.[8] The principal recommendation was the establishment of 'One UN' at country level, 'with one leader, one programme, one budget, and where appropriate, one office'. The Panel also recommended an independent task force to further eliminate duplication within the UN system, and consolidate UN entities where necessary. A number of 'pilot countries' are now being identified to test the new measures.[9]

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[6]   UNGA Resolution 1, adopted 16 September 2005.

[7]   A fifth recommendation calls for urgency in the implementation of these four directions.

[8]   HLP Report, p. 2.

[9]   The first eight 'pilot countries' are Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Vietnam.

Implications for Regionalism: *"A Coherent Regional Institutional Landscape"*

The Panel's analysis of regional level activities of the UN system was frank: "Signs of fragmentation are also apparent at the regional level. Regional offices of different UN agencies are scattered in different locations, and definitions of regions can differ from one agency to another. In some regions, strong regional and sub-regional institutions either exist or are rapidly evolving while others have strayed from their original mandates. This calls for a review of the UN's regional roles and settings, including the Regional Commissions, to address regional needs, avoid duplication and overlapping functions and seek a coherent regional institutional landscape."[10]

"The regional economic commissions were established to promote economic and social development in their regions. And UN funds, programmes and agencies have developed regional mechanisms to provide technical and management support to their country offices. The result: a broad regional presence for the UN, providing a vast potential of assets and expertise, but increasing duplication, fragmentation and incoherence. Over time, certain regional commissions have continued to meet regional needs while others have lost focus in applying their comparative strength in conducting regional analysis, developing policy frameworks and norms and supporting regional integration efforts and activities – instead of devoting attention to operational activities at the country level. Strong institutional arrangements are now needed to ensure complementarities and build a genuine culture of cooperation among all UN organisations active in each region, as well as between the UN and non-UN regional entities."[11]

To achieve this vision, the Panel advanced the following recommendations:

Governance:

- The important regional work of the UN must be streamlined by establishing regional hubs to support UN country-teams and clarifying the roles of regional commissions.[12]
- Review the functioning and continuing relevance of existing regional structures in addressing regional needs, taking into account the different needs of regions and the emergence of strong regional and sub-regional institutions. The review should also consider options for streamlining and consolidation.[13]

Regional Structures and Coordination:

- UN entities at the regional level should be reconfigured and the UN regional setting should be reorganised around two inter-related sets of functions: first, focusing on analytical and normative work, as well as activities of a trans-boundary nature. The regional commissions would act as a catalyst for these functions, using, *inter alia*, their convening power at both the inter-governmental and secretariat levels; second, focusing on coordinating the servicing of inter-country teams. Being responsible for managing the Resident Coordinator system, UNDP would act as the catalyst for these functions.
- Regional offices of UN entities should be co-located and the definition of regions among all UN entities should be standardised to ensure consistency and coherence in the work of the UN at the regional level.

These 'regional recommendations' of the High-level Panel's Report form the substance of this Paper's analysis and prescription. The first requirement is to clarify what standards are expected in attaining 'consistency and coherence' in the UN system.

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10   HLP Report., p. 10.
11   Ibid., paras 66 and 67, p. 34.
12   Ibid., para 54, p. 28.
13   Ibid., para 56, p. 29.

Postulated Standards: 'Consistency' and 'Coherence' within the UN System

The goal of 'consistency and coherence' has become a standard-cry of the UN / Bretton Woods system and the broader international community for some years now. The UN General Assembly stresses the need for 'efficiency, consistency and coherence in the unification and harmonisation of international trade law'.[14] The International Conference for Financing for Development stresses the need to enhance the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems, in order to support the MDG goals. A senior FAO official (2004) talks of 'policy coherence for agriculture and development'.[15] The Chair of the UN Commission on Global Migration appeals for 'policy coherence' to ease the suffering that is currently endemic to migration – defining it as 'consistency of laws across nations of origin, transit and destination'.[16] An Amnesty International expert urges the EU to achieve 'coherence and consistency in support of human rights amongst EU institutions and Member States.'[17]

The dictionary meaning of 'consistent' is 'conforming to a regular pattern'. The call for consistency throughout the UN system thus means, *prima facie*, that all UN institutions around the planet should conform to a regular pattern. 'Coherent' carries three meanings:

- a logical and consistent argument;
- the ability to speak clearly and logically; and
- holding together to form a whole.

The call for the UN to be coherent thus means that it should hold together institutionally to form a recognisable whole, and that its 'voice' (i.e. policy formulation and articulation) and its 'action' (i.e. operational activities) should be clear, logical and consistent. Having regard to these meanings, there would thus appear to be two dimensions to consistency and coherence: institutional and policy. The two concepts of 'policy consistency and coherence' and 'institutional consistency and coherence' are thus employed in this Paper for analytical and prescriptive purposes. 'Policy coherence for development' is defined in the OECD-DAC as 'the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the defined objectives'.[18] An expert team has identified four dimensions to policy coherence, namely:

- internal consistency (within a donor's ODA programme);
- governmental consistency (between a donor's ODA and other policies);
- harmonisation (between ODA/non-ODA policies across all donors); and
- alignment (between donor policy and recipient country strategy).[19]

Institutional coherence may be seen as a facilitator of policy coherence. It has attracted the most attention in UN reform efforts over the years. It is no accident that the HLP report devotes most of its analysis and prescription to the institutional dimension of the UN system. In addressing the regional dimension of the HLP report, this Paper uses the concept of 'consistency and coherence' in the above manner.

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[14]   UNGA Resolution, 161, para. 6 (a), adopted 16 December 1996.
[15]   Fresco, Louise O., 'Policy Coherence for agriculture and development', *Spotlight*, FAO, 2004, www.fao.org/AG/magazine/0406sp.htm.
[16]   Wright, Sarah, 'Migration policy coherence needed, U.N. official says', *MIT Tech Talk*, vol. 49, no. 6, 2004, p. 6.
[17]   Oosting, Dick, 'Putting Human Rights into Practice', *Challenge Europe*, European Policy Centre, issue 3, www.epc.eu/en/ce.asp?TYP=CE&LV=177&see=y&t=42&PG=CE/EN/detail&l=13&AI=101.
[18]   OECD, 'Policy Coherence: Vital for Global Development', *Policy Brief*, July 2003, p. 2, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/35/20202515.pdf.
[19]   Picciotto, Rorbert *et al.*, *Striking a New Balance: Donor Policy Coherence and Development Cooperation in Difficult Environments*, Background paper commissioned by the Learning and Advisory Process on Difficult Partnerships of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, London, Department for International Development, 2005, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/31/62/34252747.pdf.

3. Analysis: Regional Structures of the Contemporary International System

An analysis of the current regional structures of the international system involves two dimensions, namely: the current delineations of the various 'regions'; and the current locations of the offices of the organisations that serve the 'regions'.

3.1. Current Delineations of 'Regions'

To date the international community has not developed any definition of a 'region' for either structural or operational purposes. The structure of 'regions' as they currently exist is the result of practical decisions usually taken in the local areas that respond more to national interests and logic than to any overall global 'coherence'. Section 1 drew the distinction between the internal UN system and the broader external UN partnership. This basic distinction structures the analysis in this section.

Regions within the UN System

The UN has used the concept of regionalism in two fundamental ways: electoral and operational. As the evidence below illustrates, the 'regions' employed for these purposes are substantially different. The question warrants exploration whether it is feasible, and whether there is merit, in rationalising the use of the concept of 'region' for all, or some, of the above purposes. The electoral groups are an informal mechanism agreed by General Assembly resolution solely for the purpose of elections to UN bodies. They have experienced an evolutionary development from an informal beginning. Their origin lies in the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1946 for the election to the 1st General Assembly Session, replicated over the following three years.[20]

Although the groupings were informally developed for electoral purposes only, their functions, having thus been formalised since in UNGA resolutions, have expanded. The grouping has in fact assumed two functions – electoral and 'caucusing'. The latter function presumes a minimum degree of political concord within a group; in some cases a group will not undertake caucusing or a State may be a member of a group for electoral purposes only and not participate in a caucus function. Thus, Australia and New Zealand found it inappropriate, in the past, to be a member of their geographical group (Asia-Pacific) and joined the Western Europe group. Canada has no geographical group, the Americas being confined simply to Latin America-Caribbean. Today, Australia and New Zealand are politically closer to the Asia-Pacific region, and there is some prospect of a change in due course.[21] Table 1 illustrates the electoral groupings of the UN Member States under current arrangements. The following may be inferred:

- The electoral groups for Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin-America reflect predominantly geographical consideration, while 'Europe' reflects predominantly political considerations. In the latter respect, 'Europe' shows retention of the Cold War division between western and eastern Europe, nearly two decades after the end of the political-strategic era that justified such a division; and inclusion of two Pacific and one North American country.
- The self-exclusion of two countries from any electoral grouping – the USA and Kiribati. The US declines to be a member of any regional group – yet attends the WEOG for electoral purposes, and also remains in it for caucusing.

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[20]   Daws, Sam, 'The Origins and Development of UN Electoral Groups', in Ramesh Thakur (ed.), *What Is Equitable Geographical Representation in the Twenty-First Century*, Tokyo, United Nations University, 1999, p. 11.

[21]   "Australia has also long argued that the UN electoral system needs to be updated to reflect changes in the international system. In particular, the old divide between East and West Europe should be adapted to reflect the new converging European reality. The Panel's proposals for a distribution of Council seats between four new major regional electoral groups – with Australia to join the Asia Pacific group – is a good start and one that we strongly support." Address by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, 19 January 2005, www.foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/2005/050119_reforming_un.html.

Table 1: UN Electoral Groupings

Africa	'Europe' (EU Member States identified in bold)			Asia		Latin America-Caribbean
	WEOG		EEG	Asia	Pacific	
	WE	Other				
Algeria	Andorra		Albania	Afghanistan		Antigua-Barb
Angola		Australia	Armenia	Bahrain		Argentina
Benin	**Austria**		Azerbaijan	Bangladesh		Bahamas
Botswana	**Belgium**		Belarus	Bhutan		Barbados
Burkina Faso		Canada	Bosnia-Herz	Brunei		Belize
Burundi	**Denmark**		**Bulgaria**	Cambodia		Bolivia
Cameroon	**Finland**		Croatia	China		Brazil
Cape Verde	**France**		**Czech Rep**	**Cyprus**		Chile
CAR	**Germany**		**Estonia**	DPR Korea		Colombia
Chad	**Greece**		Georgia		Fiji	Costa Rica
Comoros	Iceland		**Hungary**	India		Cuba
Côte d'Ivoire	**Ireland**		**Latvia**	Indonesia		Dominica
DR Congo	Israel (NY)		**Lithuania**	Iran		Dominican Rep
Congo Rep	**Italy**		**Poland**	Iraq		Ecuador
Djibouti	Liechtenstein		FYR Macedon	Japan		El Salvador
Egypt	**Luxembourg**		Montenegro	Jordan		Grenada
Eq. Guinea	**Malta**		Moldova	Kazakhstan		Guatemala
Eritrea	Monaco		**Romania**	Kuwait		Guyana
Ethiopia	**Netherlands**		Russia	Kyrgyzstan		Haiti
Gabon		New Zealand	Serbia	Laos		Honduras
Gambia	Norway		**Slovakia**	Lebanon		Jamaica
Ghana	**Portugal**		**Slovenia**	Malaysia		Mexico
Guinea	San Marino		Ukraine	Maldives		Nicaragua
Guinea-Biss	**Spain**				Marshall Is	Panama
Kenya	**Sweden**				Micronesia	Paraguay
Lesotho	Switzerland			Mongolia		Peru
Liberia	Turkey			Myanmar		St Kitts Nevis
Libya	**UK**				Nauru	St Lucia
Madagascar				Nepal		St Vincent Gr
Malawi				Oman		Suriname
Mali				Pakistan		Trinidad Tob
Mauritania					Palau	Uruguay
Mauritius					PNG	Venezuela
Morocco				Philippines		
Mozambique				Qatar		
Namibia				Rep. Korea		
Niger					Samoa	
Nigeria				Saudi Arabia		
Rwanda				Singapore		
Sao Tome Pr					Solomon Is	
Senegal				Sri Lanka		
Seychelles				Syria		
Sierra Leone				Tajikistan		
Somalia				Thailand		
South Africa				Timor Leste		
Sudan					Tonga	
Swaziland				Turkmenistan		
Tanzania					Tuvalu	
Togo				UAE		
Tunisia				Uzbekistan		
Uganda					Vanuatu	
Zambia				Vietnam		
Zimbabwe				Yemen		
53	28		23	53		33
Unattached						
	USA			Kiribati*		

* Kiribati considers itself to be part of the Asian group, but this has not yet been formalised.[22]

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[22]   Correspondence with Kiribati Foreign Ministry official (June 2007).

As noted, the UN maintains in its operational work a variety of institutions: regional commissions, programmes and funds, and specialised agencies. These interact closely, albeit not with a high degree of consistency and coherence. It is instructive, in the context of the Panel's recommendations, to undertake an analytical summary of the current 'regions' employed by each of these three types of entity. The regional economic commissions are perhaps the clearest example of regionalism within the UN system. While they were conceived as instruments of socio-economic promotion under the Charter itself, the relevant provision did not expressly stipulate that these had to be based on geographical considerations.[23] Yet the first move to establish such commissions reflected a perhaps instinctual preference for a regional approach. It derived from the recognition of the need to resuscitate economic activity and social stability in the 'areas' devastated by World War II (as with the Covenant of the League of Nations after World War I).[24] In July 1946 the Temporary Sub-Commission on the Economic Reconstruction of Devastated Areas recommended to ECOSOC the establishment of an Economic Commission for Europe. In December the General Assembly asked ECOSOC to establish an Economic Commission for Europe and, separately, one for 'Asia and the Far East'. ECOSOC duly did so in March 1947.[25]

Other regional bodies were always envisaged. In July 1947, ECOSOC requested the Economic and Employment Commission to study the 'general problems' connected with the establishment of 'regional commissions' as a means of promoting the purposes and principles of the UN. ECOSOC concurrently established a committee to study the factors involved in such a commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and established the commission in February 1948 (ECLA). A name-change followed over three decades later to include the Caribbean as a separate sub-regional entity.[26] In September 1951 ECOSOC, noting the valuable work completed by ECE, ECAFE and ECLA over the preceding five years, resolved to continue them,[27] and this was endorsed by the General Assembly.[28] The same year an expert group under the Secretary-General recommended that an economic commission for Africa be established.[29] It took another seven years, however, for ECOSOC to establish ECA.[30]

The commission for West Asia had a more difficult gestation. In October 1947 the General Assembly had invited ECOSOC to study the factors bearing upon the establishment of an economic commission for the 'Middle East',[31] and in December 1948 it had recommended

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[23]   UN Charter, Article 68.

[24]   No definition of a 'region' was advanced at Versailles. Indeed, the Euro-centric focus of post-war planning a century ago is shown by the sole reference to 'region' in the Covenant – that the special necessities of the 'regions devastated during the war of 1914-18' shall be borne in mind in re-building post-war commerce (League of Nations Covenant (1919), Article 23). It is notable that the Covenant used the term 'regions' while the UN Charter referred to 'areas' (see footnote below).

[25]   UNGA resolution 46 (I) of 11 December 1946 and ECOSOC resolutions 36 (IV) & 37 (IV) of 28 March 1947, establishing ECAFE and ECE respectively. The additional phrase 'Far East', in contra-distinction to 'Asia', originated in the use by the British Empire of the division between its imperial possessions (the 'Near East' encompassed the lands of the Ottoman Empire; the 'Middle East' encompassed North Africa/Southwest Asia; 'Asia' covered South Asia; and the 'Far East' denoted what is now known as East Asia and Southeast Asia. The phrase was in continued use during World War II (British Far East Command; US Far East Air Force) and during immediate post-war planning (the International Military Tribunal for the Far East dealt with the Japanese war crimes trials). It then entered early UN terminology until its quintessential Euro-centricism was repudiated and ECAFE (Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East) changed to ESCAP (Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific) in 1974.

[26]   ECOSOC resolutions 106 (VI) of 25 February 1948, and 1984/67 of 27 July 1984 respectively.

[27]   ECOSOC resolution 414 (XIII) of 20 September 1951.

[28]   UNGA resolution 526 (VI) of 26 January 1952.

[29]   *Measures for the Economic Development of Under-Developed Countries*, UN Publications, Sales No. 1951.II.B.2, p. 95.

[30]   ECOSOC resolution 671 A (XXV) of 1958, on the recommendation of the General Assembly, UNGA resolution 1155 (XII) of 26 November 1957.

[31]   UNGA resolution 120 (II) of 31 October 1947.

that ECOSOC 'expedite consideration' of the issue.[32] No progress was achieved, however. The creation of ECA resulted in the inclusion of those countries of North Africa that formed a part of the 'Middle East'. The UN Economic and Social Office in Beirut (UNESOB) was subsequently established. UNESOB was regarded as a *de facto* economic commission and was finally transformed into ESCWA in 1973.[33]

Table 2 shows the conceptualisation of 'regions' as observed for functional and operational purposes by the principal entities within the UN system – the Secretariat, the regional economic commissions, the major UN programmes & funds, the major specialised agencies and other related UN organisations. The following may be observed:

- There is a basic underlying pattern of regionalism observed by the major UN entities, corresponding to the four main continents – Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas.
- That continental delineation, however, is by no means precise, most particularly the trilateral conjunction of Africa, Europe and Asia. There is significant 'cross-lapping' at these regional boundaries – this affects especially the position of the Arab States and the CIS States.
- A few entities have no compunction in utilising the political-cultural term 'Arab States'. A majority employ a geographical term (North Africa-West Asia, Eastern Mediterranean), while a few others are content to use a post-colonial term (Middle East, Near East).
- While the regional economic commissions hew studiously to geographical terminology, the UN Secretariat itself, surprisingly, retains the Euro-centric term 'Middle East'.

Table 2: UN System – Commissions and Programmes: Major Regional Groupings

UN Secre-tariat	Regional Econ. Comm.	UN Progammes & Funds				UN Specialised Agencies			
		UNICEF	UNFPA	UNDP	UNEP	IBRD	ILO	WHO	FAO
Africa	Africa	West & Central Africa / Sthn & Eastern Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Africa	Africa	Africa	Africa	Africa	Africa
Middle East	West Asia	N. Africa & Middle East	N. Africa & Middle East	Arab States	West Asia	N. Africa & Middle East	Arab States	East Medit.	Near East & Europe
West. Europe	Europe	Central & Eastern Europe & CIS	Eastern Europe & Central Asia	Europe & CIS	Europe	Europe & Central Asia	Europe	Europe	
Eastern Europe									
Asia-Pacific	Asia-Pacific	E. Asia-Pacific	Asia-Pacific	Asia-Pacific	Asia-Pacific	South Asia / S.E. Asia	Asia-Pacific	S.E. Asia / West. Pacific	Asia-Pacific
N. America-Carib.	Carib.-Latin America	Carib.-Latin America	Carib.-Latin America	Carib.-Latin America	Carib.-Latin America	Carib.-Latin America	Carib.-Latin America	Americas	Carib.-Latin America
Latin America									

'Regions' Outside the UN System

As noted earlier, the Chapter VIII entities were envisaged by the framers of the UN Charter as regional bodies that would cooperate with the United Nations. The Charter refers to 'regional

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[32]   UNGA resolution 199 (III) of 4 December 1948.
[33]   ECOSOC resolution 1818 (LV) of 1973.

arrangements and agencies'.[34] Such bodies may become involved in international peace and security issues 'as are appropriate for regional action'. But they and their activities must be consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. By definition, these bodies are regional in nature and scope.

At the time of the Charter's conclusion, few such regional arrangements or agencies existed. The Pan-American Union had existed since 1910 (with its antecedents in 1890), and the League of Arab States was created in March 1945, just three months before the Charter was concluded. A number of regional bodies were created in Europe during the late 1940s and the 1950s – the Council of Europe (COE), the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), Euratom and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, the forerunner to the present European Union (EU). As the decolonisation movement proceeded, regional bodies were created in Africa (the Organisation of African Unity, forerunner to the present African Union (AU)), and the Pacific (the South Pacific Forum, forerunner to the present Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)). In addition, a plethora of regional and sub-regional trade blocs have emerged over the past sixty years.

In the immediate post-Cold War environment of the early 1990s, with the failure of the international community to support the United Nations adequately to fulfill all its missions throughout the world, the realisation grew that a greater reliance on regional organisations would be necessary. Since 1994 a series of high-level meetings have been convened with regional organisations, chaired by the UN Secretary-General. And since 2003, four thematic debates have been held by the Security Council with regional organisations in attendance. However, serious problems exist with respect to clarity of the UN regional partnership. Specifically:

- The UN Secretariat has made no effort to define a 'regional arrangement or agency' – the terminology in common usage is 'regional organisation' – nor has it made public any criteria it might use for inviting entities to attend the high-level meetings convened by the UN Secretary-General. The result is a large and uncoordinated group of organisations attending – up to 25, some of which are demonstrably not regional or sub-regional organisations.
- Attendance at the relevant Security Council debates is consequent upon selective invitations issued by whichever Member State holds the Council presidency for that month, and is thus open to differing national perceptions and interests.

Of the organisations which have attended the Secretary-General's high-level meetings, some 14 might be regional or sub-regional bodies that could conceivably be seen as 'Chapter VIII organisations'. These bodies, with their memberships, are set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Chapter VIII Entities: Regionalism Outside the UN System

Africa		Arab States		Europe		Asia-Pacific		America	
RO	SRO	RO	SRO	RO	SRO	RO	SRO	RO	SRO
AU	ECOWAS	LAS	GCC	COE	EU	CIS	ASEAN	OAS	CARICOM
	IGAD					PIF			
	CEMAC								
	SADC								
1	4	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Other organisations attending:									
Cross-regional organisations: OSCE*, NATO, CSTO, SCO **4**									
Trans-national organisations: COMSEC, OIC, IOF, CPLP **4**									
Functional global agencies: Interpol, OPCW **2**									

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[34] "Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action, provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations." UN Charter, Article 52.1.

* The OSCE declared itself to be a 'regional organisation' for the purposes of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, and this was 'welcomed' by the UN General Assembly (A/RES/47/10, 28 October 1992). If, however, strict criteria of membership and territorial jurisdiction are applied, it should be regarded as a cross-regional organisation. See Graham, Kennedy and Felício, Tânia, *Regional Security and Global Governance*, Brussels, VUB Press, 2006, pp. 133-146.

3.2. Current Locations of UN Global and Regional Offices

Closely related to the delineation of 'regions' is the decision of where to site a regional office. As with section 3.1, the analysis of current locations is shown in the context of both the internal UN system and the external UN partnership network.

UN System

The location of UN offices can take the forms of a global UN office headquarter or of a regional UN office.

Table 4 illustrates the sites of the principal UN entities (global offices) in the world. Some 16 cities host its 5 principal organs,[35] 4 offices, 11 programmes and funds, 5 institutes, 5 other UN entities, 15 specialised agencies, and 5 related organisations. That comprises 50 different UN bodies in 16 cities. The global bodies are sited in a particular city for certain political reasons – essentially the resistance to any notion that a global or even regional 'capital' is emerging, and a strong push from one country to host a UN body, usually for purposes of political prestige and income generation. The outcome of choice thus has little to do with regionalism *per se*. The site of a regional economic commission, however, reflects a conscious decision pertaining to regionalism. In effect, it denotes a 'regional capital'. Table 4 (last column) shows the location of the five UN regional economic commissions. This adds an additional four host cities, resulting in a bewildering array of 20 cities in all that host the 55 major UN bodies. The following features of UN institutional locations may be noted from the table:

- The dominance of the North: 13 of the 20 cities are located in North America or Europe (Europe accounts for half of the 20 cities).
- Setting aside the five regional commissions, only four host cities out of 15 are located in the South (one in Latin America, three in Africa).

There are no doubt historical reasons for this – the creation of most UN entities in the 1940s and 1950s before the decolonalisation movement was complete, along with the North's capacity to construct and maintain adequate buildings and to host sophisticated conferences and events in greater style and with greater ease. Those facts, however, are largely historical relics and today the 'Northern skew' of UN locations exacerbates the notion of political and cultural preference, undermining the global legitimacy of the UN system. Today, some 83% of humanity resides in the South (Asia comprises 60%, Africa 14% and Latin America / Caribbean 9%). One of the challenges facing the 'system-wide' rationalisation of the United Nations will be to reduce this 'Northern skew' for greater legitimacy of the organisation.

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[35] The sixth principal organ, the Trusteeship Council, no longer functions, having completed its mandate in 1994.

Table 4: UN System: Location of Global and Regional Offices

Region	Global							Regional
	Principal UN organs	UN offices	Special. agencies	Related organis.	UN progr. & funds	UN institutes	Other UN entities	Regional Econ. Comm.
North America								
New York	UNGA UNSC ECOSOC SECRTR	HQ			UNICEF UNDP UNIFEM UNFPA	UNITAR	UNOPS	
Washington			IMF IBRD					
Montreal			ICAO					
Europe								
Geneva		UNOG	ILO WHO ITU WMO WIPO	WTO	UNCTAD UNHCR	UNRISD UNIDIR	UNHRC UNAIDS	ECE
Bern			UPU					
Vienna		UNOV	UNIDO	IAEA	UNODC			
The Hague	ICJ			ICC OPCW CTBTO				
Paris			UNESCO					
London			IMO					
Madrid			UNWTO					
Rome			FAO IFAD		WFP			
Turin						UNICRI	UNSC	
Bonn					UNV			
Africa								
Nairobi		UNON			UNEP HABITAT			
Addis Ababa								ECA
Arabia								
Beirut								ESCWA
Asia								
Bangkok								ESCAP
Tokyo							UNU	
Latin America								
Santo Domingo						INSTRAW		
Santiago								ECLA

Table 5 below shows the 'site spread' of both headquarters and regional offices of the 25 principal entities of the UN system plus the Secretariat. The following may be inferred:

- Irrespective of which city sites its headquarters, a UN entity almost always has a regional office in a city of each region (in addition to many country offices). There is thus a modest difference only in terms of the 'global spread' of all UN entities, irrespective of where the headquarter is located. The result is less 'regional skew' than is implied solely by the location of the headquarter.
- New York is the natural headquarter of the UN itself, accounting for the Secretariat and half of its programmes and funds. The other half, however, are located elsewhere (two offices in Europe and two in Africa). This inevitably works against 'UN consistency and coherence'.
- The specialised agencies and related organisations are all located outside New York – the large majority in Europe (9 out of 12) and the remainder in North America. Not one headquarter of a specialised agency or related organisation is sited in the South. The

reasons for this need to be explored in more depth than that accorded by the HLP (see below).

- In some cases a Member State sites UN entities in more cities than simply its capital. This would seem to take the principle of 'geographical spread' to near-dysfunctional lengths.
- The 'intra-regional spread' of cities is marked: with 16 in the Americas, 14 in Africa, 14 in Asia and 10 in Europe (4 in the Arab area). This reinforces the supposition that political rivalry results in a current disbursal of 'UN cities' across a region, at the cost of UN consistency and coherence.
- Notwithstanding such an 'intra-regional spread', some natural patterns of UN-siting may be discerned. The natural 'regional capitals' would seem to be the following (excluding New York as the 'global capital'):

Africa:	Nairobi, Dakar, Addis Ababa
Arab world:	Cairo, Amman
Europe:	Geneva, Bratislava
Asia-Pacific:	Bangkok
Americas:	Washington, Mexico City, Santiago

The above conclusions are entirely 'clinical' observations based on statistics. They have the weakness but also the strength of disregarding the political complexities that force diplomatic decisions on where a UN entity is to site its headquarter and regional offices. The question inevitably arises: to what extent are political considerations (national prestige and rivalry, local income-generation) a legitimate factor to take into account within the context of promoting UN consistency and coherence? How many Member States that trenchantly critique the coordination and efficiency weaknesses of the UN system would rile at the suggested response that they should surrender their capital city as a UN host-site in favour of a neighbouring country?

Table 5: UN System: Headquarters and Regional Office Locations*

	Africa	Arab States	Europe	Asia-Pacific	Americas
UN Secretariat	Nairobi		Geneva Vienna		*New York*
UN Reg. Econ. Commissions	*Addis*	*Amman*	*Geneva*	*Bangkok*	*Santiago*
UN Programmes - UNICEF	Nairobi Dakar	Amman	Geneva	Bangkok Kathmandu	*New York*
- UNDP			Bratislava	Bangkok Colombo Suva	*New York*
- UNIFEM	Nairobi Kigali Abuja Dakar Johannesburg		Bratislava	Bangkok Almaty New Delhi Suva	*New York* Quito Chch (Barbados) Mexico City Brasilia
- UNFPA	Addis Dakar Harare	Amman	Bratislava	Bangkok Kathmandu Suva	*New York* Mexico City
- UNHCR	Dakar Kinshasha Lusaka Pretoria	Cairo	*Geneva* Stockholm Brussels Vienna Moscow	Beijing Tokyo Jakarta Canberra	Washington Mexico City Caracas Buenos Aires
- WFP	Dakar Kampala Johannesburg	Cairo	*Rome*	Bangkok	Panama City
- UNEP	*Nairobi* Nairobi	Manama	Geneva	Bangkok	Washington Mexico City
- HABITAT	*Nairobi* Nairobi			Fukuoka	Rio de Janeiro
Specialised Agencies - IMF					*Washington*
- IBRD	Johannesburg			Almaty Hong Kong	*Washington*
- ICAO	Dakar Nairobi	Cairo	Paris	Bangkok	*Montreal* Lima Mexico City
- UPU	Harare	Cairo	*Berne* Bratislava	Bangkok	San Jose
- ITU	Addis	Cairo	*Geneva* Moscow	Bangkok	Brasilia
- ILO	Addis	Beirut	*Geneva* Geneva	Bangkok	Lima
- WHO	Brazzaville	Cairo	*Geneva* Copenhagen	New Delhi Manila	Washington
- WMO	Lagos Nairobi	Manama	*Geneva*	Apia	San Jose Asuncion
- WIPO			*Geneva*		
- FAO	Accra	Cairo	*Rome*	Bangkok	Santiago
Related Organisations - WTO			*Geneva*		
- IAEA			*Vienna* Geneva		New York, Toronto

Total Sites	Addis Ababa	4	Cairo	7	Stockholm	1	Almaty	2	Montreal	1
	Dakar	6	Beirut	1	Copenhagen	1	Kathmandu	2	Toronto	1
	Accra	1	Amman	3	Brussels	1	New Delhi	2	New York	6
	Abuja	1	Manama	2	Paris	1	Colombo	1	Washington	5
	Lagos	1			Berne	1	Bangkok	12	Mexico City	5
	Nairobi	9			Geneva	13	Jakarta	1	San José	2
	Brazzaville	1			Rome	2	Manila	1	Panama C.	1
	Kinshasha	1			Vienna	3	Tokyo	1	Brigetown	2
	Kampala	1			Bratislava	4	Fukuoka	1	Quito	1
	Kigali	1			Moscow	2	Beijing	1	Lima	2
	Lusaka	1					Hong Kong	1	Santiago	2
	Harare	2					Suva	2	Caracas	1
	Pretoria	1					Apia	1	Brasilia	1
	Johannesburg	2					Canberra	1	Rio Janeiro	1
									Asuncion	1
									Buenos Aires	1

* Cities in **bold italics** are the headquarters of each organisation, commission or programme.

Office Locations outside the UN System

The host cities of the regional organisations that meet under 'Chapter VIII' auspices reveal some interesting facts. The comparison between the host cities for Chapter VIII regional organisations and 'Chapter X' UN regional commissions is illustrated in Table 6. Except for Africa, there is no consistency.

Table 6: Regional Host Cities: 'Chapter VIII' and 'Chapter X' Institutions

Regional Organisation (Chapter VIII)		UN Regional Commission (Chapter X)	
Institution	Host city	Institution	Host city
African Union (AU)	*Addis Ababa*	ECA	*Addis Ababa*
Arab League (LAS)	*Cairo*	ECWA	*Amman*
Council of Europe (COE)	*Strasbourg*	ECE	*Geneva*
European Union (EU)	*Brussels*		
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	*Minsk*		
South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)	*Kathmandu*	ESCAP	*Bangkok*
Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	*Jakarta*		
Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)	*Suva*		
Organisation of American States (OAS)	*Washington*	ECLA	*Santiago*

As can be seen from the table above, there is almost no consistency in choice between the 'UN system cities' and the regional 'exogenous body cities'.

4. Prescription: A 'Coherent Regional Institutional Landscape'

The High-level Panel has called for measures that will result in a 'coherent regional institutional landscape' for the UN system. For this to occur there will be, it is submitted, a requirement for a reconfiguration of the 'regional setting' of the UN's activities, agreement on a standardised definition of a 'region' and identification of specific regions, and agreement on one city within each region to act as a regional hub where UN regional offices can be located. These prescriptive measures are explored in this section.

4.1. Reconfiguration of the UN Regional Setting

From the views expressed by world leaders at the 2005 Summit and by others in the course of the Panel's consultations, it is clear that fundamental change is required and expected of the UN system. With respect to the regional dimension of the issue, three questions are to be addressed:

- whether the concept of 'region' can be clarified and agreement reached sufficiently for a coherent group of regions to act as a common structure for all of the UN's activities;
- if so, whether that coherent, reconfigured 'UN regional setting' might apply not only to socio-economic (developmental, humanitarian and environmental) aspects of the UN's operations but also to security aspects (conflict prevention/resolution and peace enforcement) and human rights – the other two 'pillars' of the United Nations; and
- if so, whether that regional coherence can embrace both the UN system and the exogenous regional institutional architecture identified in section 3.1.

In addressing these questions, much depends on what stakeholder interests are served in each purpose. As noted earlier, there are two functions performed through regionalism within the international community – electoral and operational. The latter may be further identified as of two purposes – socio-economic and security operations. Each of these provides the contextual setting for the fundamental values required in determining the most appropriate form of regionalism. In UN terms, the two most fundamental values that the international community is striving to promote in its regional and global institutional architecture are legitimacy and effectiveness. It is possible, it seems, to prescribe the most appropriate form of regionalism, for each purpose, according to the relative weight to be applied for each value. This prescriptive schema, employing both purposes and values as the criteria for determining the best regional architectural structure, and assessing their relative weight, is depicted in Table 7.

Table 7: UN Regionalism: Purposes and Values

Purpose		Values	
		Legitimacy	**Effectiveness**
Electoral		*High*	*Medium*
Operational	Socio-economic	*Medium*	*High*
	Security	*High*	*High*

Application of these criteria generates a further level of analysis. Legitimacy is most critical for representational purposes, while effectiveness is dependent primarily on efficiency – through consistency and coherence. Thus, while 'optimal representation' is critical for the purposes of electoral groupings in the UN system, 'optimal efficiency' is most critical for the purposes of operational effectiveness – in both socio-economic and security functions. This is not to imply that the other value is unimportant in each case[36] – but rather to identify the relative priority for each, as the *sine qua non* for the international community's acceptance of the UN and related institutions (and thus the readiness of Member States to extend support – financial, political and human).

The judgements to be made in this respect require a degree of subtlety. The electoral groupings, for example, were, as noted, originally devised for the purposes of distributing seats on UN bodies. Over the years they have acquired two associated functions. First, the electoral dimension has come to imply a 'representational element' – but it is left unclear to what extent a Member State duly elected to a UN body is expected to 'represent' all other members of that group. And is that 'representation-ness' more easily achieved in less sensitive areas than others – such as most socio-economic functions compared with security? Much depends on the body to which a Member State is being elected.

If, for example, Australia, Canada and New Zealand were to re-locate into their geographical rather than their current political groups, what might this mean for their representation abilities and that of their new colleagues? Might Australia be credibly expected to 'represent' Indonesia in the Security Council? Might Venezuela duly act on behalf of Canada in global aid, trade and investment bodies such as UNDP or the World Bank? Having regard to these considerations, what might be the definition of a 'region' that

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36   Both legitimacy and effectiveness, in fact, can be improved by increased consistency and coherence.

could satisfy all purposes and meet all values postulated for consistency and coherence within the UN system and its broader partnership network?

4.2. A Standardised Definition of 'Region'

The lack of a standardised definition of 'region', continues to seriously hamper both the development of an effective collaborative 'global-regional' partnership between the United Nations and regional entities and the achievement of 'consistency and coherence' within the UN system itself. It is instructive, therefore, to consider the history of the efforts to date by the international community to develop the concept of 'region' in a political and legal sense, before considering what might be done to reach a standardised definition.

Approaching the Concept of 'Region': A Brief Review

In 1919 the architects of the League of Nations had perhaps a clearer, if more rudimentary, concept of a 'region' than their mid-century successors. For them, a region was, at least for the purposes of international security, Europe or America. Most of Asia, Africa and the Pacific remained colonised. The security structures in place in the 19th century for Europe and the Americas naturally lent themselves to security planning at the global level. Nonetheless, there was no definition of a 'region' offered at Versailles. Indeed, the Euro-centric focus of post-war planning a century ago is shown by the sole reference to 'region' in the Covenant – that the special necessities of the 'regions devastated during the war of 1914-18' shall be borne in mind in re-building post-war commerce.[37] In the mid-20th century, the architects of the UN had to confront a more comprehensive notion of 'region' and adopt a more focused concept of regional security. During the planning period for the United Nations (1942-45), the debate was vigorously pursued between underpinning international security with a centralised authority structure (the UN Security Council) or with a network of regional security councils (one each for Europe, America and Asia).

That debate was evenly balanced and at the San Francisco Conference a majority of delegations in fact favoured a decentralised regional structure. The strong preference of the United States for a centralised global body prevailed but the concerns of the Latin American and Arab countries resulted in a compromise arrangement. The largely nascent regional organisations of 1945 were acknowledged as having a role in security but 'mildly dis-couraged' from being too assertive in that role. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter accords regional organisations the freedom of initiative in pacific settlement but keeps them clearly subordinate to, and constrained by, the Security Council on enforcement action.[38] During this formative time, however, the concept of a 'region' that could be universally applicable around the world was never agreed upon. At San Francisco, a definition was advanced by Egypt and considered by delegates:

"There shall be considered, as regional arrangements, organisations of a permanent nature grouping in a given geographical area several countries which, by reason of their proximity, community of interests or cultural, linguistic, historical or spiritual affinities make themselves jointly responsible for the peaceful settlement of any disputes which may arise … as well as for the safeguarding of their interests and the development of their economic and cultural relations."[39]

Thus three key criteria are advanced for the definition of a 'region' under the UN Charter, namely: geographical proximity; community of interest; and common affinities. Neither this nor any other definition of a 'region' has been officially agreed at the UN. While this leaves

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[37]   League of Nations Covenant (1919), Article 23.

[38]   UN Charter, Articles 52 and 53. See Graham, Kennedy and Felício, Tânia, *Regional Security and Global Governance*, Brussels, VUB Press, 2006, chapter 2, for a detailed analysis of the negotiating history for the League of Nations and the United Nations.

[39]   UNCIO XII, pp. 850, 857, 8 June 1945, in Simma, Bruno, *The United Nations Charter: A Commentary*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 688-689. Also Russett, Bruce, *International Regions and International System: Study in Political Ecology*, Chicago, Rand McNally & Co., 1967, p. 4.

scope for diplomatic flexibility, it does nothing to enhance clarity in law or policy. Although never adopted, the 1945 draft definition serves today as good a definition of a 'region' as any. It is therefore proposed in this Paper that the definition of a 'region' and its three supporting criteria, considered at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, be reintroduced onto the agenda of the General Assembly as part of the forthcoming deliberations of the Panel's report on UN system-wide coherence. Having regard to the considerations identified above, and employing the 1945 definition of a 'region, it is, in the author's assessment, possible to determine the importance of each criterion for each UN purpose. This is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: 1945 Definition: Relative Weighting of Criteria

	UN System		Regional Organisation
Function	Electoral	Operational	
		Socio-economic	Security
Principal Value	Legitimacy	Efficiency	Legitimacy & Efficiency
Geographical proximity	desirable	necessary	necessary
Community of interest	necessary	desirable	necessary
Common affinities	necessary	desirable	necessary

This table illustrates the following:

- for legitimacy to be guaranteed in electoral groupings, there must be a high level of community of interest and common affinities among all Member States within a group;
- for efficiency to be genuinely achieved in socio-economic operations within the UN system, a high degree of geographical proximity is required, over and above common interests and affinities;[40] and
- for the UN and exogenous Chapter VIII regional organisations to be both legitimate and efficient, a high degree must exist in all three criteria – proximity, interest and affinity.

Contemporary Approaches to 'Region': Prospects of Consensus

Achieving clarity over the concept of 'region' for the purposes of a regional-global security system should not be beyond the reach of the international community. Considerable effort has recently been invested in clarifying the concept of 'region' and applying it in a practical way to the current institutional architecture of global and regional bodies. Three reports, in particular, are notable in this respect: the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel; the UNU's 1999 seminar on 'Equitable Geographical Representation'; and the UNU-CRIS/VUB research project on a 'Global-Regional Security Mechanism'. A recent high-level panel reporting to the Secretary-General identified, for the purpose of possible future Security Council composition, the obvious four 'regions': Africa, America, Asia and Europe.[41]

That broad-brush approach, however, suffers from two shortcomings: first, it disregards the complicating factor of two other 'regions' whose notions of separate linguistic, cultural or spiritual affinities have taken institutionalised form, namely the Arab world (that is, North Africa – West Asia, which could be termed 'Arabia') and the Pacific.[42] Second, it overlooks the fact

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[40]   Experience has shown that common interest and affinities alone do not necessarily make for efficiency. Some countries that possess these characteristics are not among the most efficient in economic terms, and the same might be asserted for regions. Obversely, proximity acts as a positive factor in promoting efficiency – a negative correlation obtains between distance and efficiency.

[41]   *A More Secure World – Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, New York, United Nations, A/59/565; 29 November 2004. The Panel offered two alternative options for an enlarged Security Council of 24 States, both models reflecting that regional division.

[42]   The shortcoming of this approach is the overlap of 'Arabia' with Africa (i.e. North Africa) and Asia (West Asia). Here geographical precision cedes to the political imperative of the cultural-spiritual affinities of a 'region'.

that 'Asia' is so vast and, apart from the south-east, has no institutionalised embodiment of security organisation.

In March 1999 the UNU convened a seminar in New York, entitled 'What is Equitable Geographic Representation in the Twenty-first Century?'. In the course of that discussion a new regional configuration to suit contemporary realities was advanced which identifies nine regions for the purposes of UN electoral groups.[43] This is set out in Table 9.

Table 9: Proposed Electoral Groupings: A Nine-Region Approach

Eurasia (21)	Asia-Pacific (25)	Mediterranean-Gulf (19)
Afghanistan	Australia	Algeria
North Europe (19)	**South Europe (20)**	**North Africa (23)**
Belgium	Albania	Benin
Southern Africa (23)	**Americas (19)**	**Caribbean (16)**
Angola	Argentina	Antigua/Barbuda

In 2006 the UNU's Comparative Regional Integration Studies programme produced a book reflecting the research work undertaken in its 'regional security and global governance' project. Taking as its cue the Secretary-General's call for the construction of a 'regional-global security partnership', the project explored a set of 'security regions' that could partner with the UN under Chapter VIII of the Charter. A series of nine 'security regions' was envisaged, comprised of sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, Arabia, Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and the Americas. In six of the nine regions, a 'regional organisation' already exists for collaborating with the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, namely, the African Union (AU), League of Arab States (LAS), Council of Europe (COE), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and the Organisation of American States (OAS).

Clearly, the global overview of regionalism is not perfect or even complete. In Asia, three regions either lack an associated organisation (East Asia) or the organisation is weak (CIS in Central Asia) or not mandated for a security function (SAARC in South Asia). The case of Europe is complex: the COE is pan-European but undertakes a 'soft security' function only (pacific settlement). By contrast, the EU is sub-regional (with 27 out of 45 European States), and it engages in 'hard security' (through enforcement action) outside Europe. Strictly, this disqualifies the EU as a 'regional agency' under the Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Having regard, however, to the various studies undertaken, it would appear that a structure of nine regions, as set out in Table 10, is the most appropriate and feasible arrangement.

Table 10: Proposed Security Regions: A Nine-Region Approach

Sub-Saharan Africa	Arab Region	Europe
Central Asia	South Asia	East Asia
Southeast Asia	Pacific	Americas

Whatever number of 'regions' is decided, the interests of the major stakeholders must be met in seeking a common regional structure: UN electoral groupings, UN socio-economic operations and UN security operations. It needs to be considered whether the various considerations behind each of the these three stakeholder interests warrant a different regional structure or whether a common regional structure can be applied to all. This requires determining what criteria are important to each of the three.

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[43]   O'Brien, Terrence, 'Electoral Group Reconfiguration and Present Day Realities', in Ramesh Thakur (ed.), *What is Equitable Geographic Representation in the Twenty-first Century?*, Tokyo, UNU Press, 1999, pp. 30-39.

4.3. Identification of Regional Hubs and Co-Location of Regional Offices

Identifying regional hubs and co-locating regional offices will carry major implications for both the structural and operational dimensions of the international institutional architecture. Achieving consistency and coherence requires that any changes made reflect a set of principles or criteria that are transparent and applicable across-the-board. The identification of regional hubs and location of regional offices is dependent on the prior identification of regions themselves; agreeing on regional capitals cannot be achieved without agreement on the region they will be serving. This is not an easy task. The only way to reach agreement on the world's 'regions' for the purpose of the United Nations would seem to be to develop a set of principles for the purpose. Criteria for deciding a 'region' should, in the author's view, be those advanced in the 1945 definition: geographical proximity; community of interest; and common affinity.

Applying these criteria produces the following challenges:

- Africa is a geographically intact region with natural boundaries whose only requirement is agreement that its north-east extremity is Egypt with the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. But do the common affinities and community of interests require that North Africa, with the Arab states, form a separate region? If it did, there is no natural geographical boundary between these two 'regions', and the separation factor becomes the political fiction of the nation-state.
- Asia, comprising 60% of humankind, is such a vast and heterogeneous area that it would seem to qualify as several regions – West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. Is this distinction based on geographical or political differences? Would West Asia join with fellow Arab States as an 'Arab region' comprising 'North Africa / West Asia' as the World Bank group does? What are the qualifying 'common affinities' – historical, cultural and religious?[44] With what degree of transparency and formality might they be proclaimed?
- How is Europe and Asia to be separately delineated? Where are Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia – in Europe or (Central) Asia?
- Should the Pacific be regarded as a separate 'region', given its relatively small size, or should it be simply a sub-region of Southeast Asia?

Agreement would need to be reached on these issues. To some extent they are already answered in a *de facto* way, through autonomous decisions made over the years with regard to Chapter VIII regional organisations. Yet these decisions have not, hitherto, been formalised in any way and have borne no relationship to decisions made within the UN system pertaining to regional structures. Principles used to assist decision-making in this regard might be the following:

- agreement on the identification of 'regions' within the UN system for Chapter IX and X entities;
- recommendation to the broader UN cooperative network that the same structure of regions be adopted by Chapter VIII entities;
- identification of one capital city in each region, to act as regional hub and location of the UN Regional Office;
- agreement, where appropriate, of sub-regions within a region; and
- identification of one capital city for each sub-region, to act as sub-regional hub and location of the UN Sub-regional Office.

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[44] The Vienna Declaration on Human Rights could perhaps be constructively applied to this purpose. "All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms." *World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna Declaration & Programme of Action,* June 1993, para. 5.

Application of the above criteria would suggest the following regions and UN regional and sub-regional offices, as depicted in Table 11.

Table 11: A Possible Schema of Regions and Regional Offices

Region	Sub-region	Regional Office	Sub-regional Office
Sub-Saharan Africa		*Addis Ababa*	
	West Africa		*Abuja*
	East Africa		*Nairobi*
	Central Africa		*Kinshasha*
	Southern Africa		*Pretoria*
'Arabia'		*Cairo*	
	Maghreb		*Tunis*
	Mashreq		*Amman*
	Gulf		*Doha*
Europe		*Geneva*	
	Northern Europe		*Stockholm*
	Western Europe		*Brussels*
	Central Europe		*Vienna*
	Eastern Europe		*Bratislava*
Central Asia		*Astana*	
South Asia		*New Delhi*	
Northeast Asia		*Ulaan Baatar*	
Southeast Asia		*Bangkok*	
Pacific		*Suva*	
	Micronesia		*Palikir*
	Melanesia		*Port Vila*
	Polynesia		*Apia*
America		*San José*	
	North America		*Washington*
	Caribbean		*Kingston*
	Central America		*Managua*
	Andes		*Quito*
	Southern Cone		*Buenos Aires*

The above schema is fraught with political hazard – not dissimilar to the regional rivalry that attends the issue of UN Security Council permanent membership. Where does it leave Algiers, Paris, Islamabad, Jakarta, Tokyo, Canberra and Brasilia?

The Sensitivity of 'Capital Cities'

One of the problems of achieving consistency and coherence in the internal / external UN institutional network concerns the sensitivity of using the term 'capital' in reference to cities hosting UN offices. New York is often described, not least by its inhabitants, as the 'world's capital'. While this may be partially acceptable because of the unique status of that particular city (it is not the capital of the host country); the host country is the world's superpower; there is a certain bravado to the city style that gives it a passing licence over self-image, this is not the case elsewhere. The notion of regional 'capitals' carries a sensitivity that is highly political and can act as an obstacle to reaching agreement on the question of hosting. As Table 7 illustrated, of the nine cases of potential comparison between 'Chapter VIII' regional organisations and 'Chapter X' UN regional commissions, there is consistency in choice of host cities in only one case.

Whether this reflects a conscious syndrome on the part of each 'region' to spread the prestige and burden or whether it is simply an historical anomaly is perhaps the subject of a separate study. It does, however, give rise to difficulties and challenges in promoting consistency in the regional institutional architecture of global politics in the 21st century. Some way would need to be found of accommodating this. One way would be to simply recognise the distinction between the UN system (Chapter X) and the broader UN network (Chapter VIII) and leave the matter untouched.

Chapter VIII and Chapter X Purposes

It needs to be considered whether the aims of the Chapter VIII and Chapter X entities are sufficiently common to warrant consideration of 'broad consistency and coherence' between them. The purposes of the African Union,[45] for example, and that of the Economic Commission for Africa[46] are closely comparable – even though those of the AU are considerably broader than those of the ECA. It would seem that part of the future work in strengthening consistency and coherence within the UN system could usefully extend to ensuring operational compatibility between the broader aims of Chapter VIII organisations and the more sectorally-focused economic and social aims of the UN regional commissions.

5. The Specific Case of Europe

Somewhat paradoxically, Europe presents an especially complex case for attaining UN system-wide coherence. As noted before, the continents of Africa, Australia and America are geographically separate and clearly delineated. Regional delineation, however, becomes more opaque when the question is addressed of the border between the two other major continents – Europe and Asia. In addition, the age-old rivalries and sensitivities between leading European cities, accustomed as they have been to self-perceptions of traditional global leadership, heightens the difficulty of achieving consensus over any co-location of UN offices or the identification of any 'regional capital'. Finally, the relative wealth and power of Europe and its historical role as a leading donor rather than recipient within the global political framework results in a lesser focus on European issues in the UN system. For these reasons, application of the recommendations of the Panel's report in the case of Europe may prove to be more problematic than elsewhere.

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[45] The objectives of the Union shall be (AU Constitutive Act 2000, Article 3):

(a)   achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;

(b)   defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;

(c)   accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;

(d)   promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;

(e)   encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

(f)   promote peace, security and stability on the continent;

(g)   promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;

(h)   promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;

(i)   establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international organisations;

(j)   promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;

(k)   promote cooperation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;

(l)   coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;

(m)   advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology;

(n)   work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.

[46]   ECA's first Term of Reference is the participation "in measures for facilitating concerted action for the economic development of Africa, including its social aspects, with a view to raising the level of economic activity and standards of living in Africa and for maintaining and strengthening the economic relations of countries and territories in Africa". ECOSOC Resolution 671 (XXV), 29 April 1958.

Europe as a 'Region'

Europe as a 'region' is not easy to define. De Gaulle's depiction of Europe 'from the Atlantic to the Urals' reflects the standard concept but it fails to trace the geo-political border further south which is where the difficulties arise:

- The 1st century Greek geographer, Strabo, identified Europe's south-eastern boundary to be the River Don (then the Tanais), flowing south from Ukraine and Russia into the Sea of Azov (east of the Crimean Peninsula) and thus the Black Sea. This would encompass Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus.
- Swedish geographer von Strahlenberg, in the 17th century, placed the boundary even further east, following the Urals south but thereafter tracing the Eurasian boundary along the Emba River which flows southeast through Kazakhstan into the Caspian Sea. Thus Europe would encompass Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan as well.
- Modern geographers are generally agreed over the final disputable boundary – the Bosporus – that is, the part of Turkey to the west (Rumelia) is part of Europe and that to the east (Anatolia) is part of Asia.

Thus the most plausible geographic boundary of Europe – the north-south peaks of the Urals, the southward flow of the River Don, the eastern seaboard of the Azov and Black Seas, the Bosporus Strait, the eastern seaboard of the Marmara Sea and the Dardanelles – splits two strategically vital nation-states – Russia and Turkey, with Turkey being a candidate for EU membership. A final complication is the geographical status of several Mediterranean islands – whether they are in Europe, Asia or Africa:

- Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, Malta[47] and Crete would seem to be a natural geographical part of Europe.
- Cyprus, however, is situated close to the southern coast of Anatolia – the Asian part of Turkey – and to the coast of Lebanon in West Asia. Its inclusion in Europe derives simply from its dominant Greek population and thus its European cultural character. Yet, in the UN Cyprus is a member of the Asian electoral group.

The most credible premise on which to develop any agreed geo-strategic position is to recognise a geographical definition of 'Europe' along the above lines, while leaving it to diplomatic statecraft to determine the, variable, political definition of 'Europe' at any one time. In effect, this is what the principal regional and cross-regional organisations have been doing over the past half-century. But this approach never provides a durable solution since the political framework is subject to continuous flux.

The Regional Organisations

The two principal organisations of Europe are the Council of Europe and the European Union. The COE, with 47 Member States, is genuinely pan-European, including Russia and Turkey as full and active members. The political complication is that the COE also includes the Caucasian States, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The EU, with 27 Member States, is clearly not pan-European, excluding Iceland and Norway, Switzerland and most of the Balkan states that are clearly within the 'region' of Europe and are members of the COE.

With regard to membership the COE thus clearly qualifies more genuinely as a regional European organisation. It has virtually all the European countries – Belarus remains the only country without membership and this will be rectified once its human rights issues are

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[47]   Malta is 93 km from Sicily and 288 km from Libya, and would clearly qualify geographically as part of Europe.

resolved. With Russia included, the 'European population' comprises 800 million.[48] Without Russia and the three Caucasian states, the population is still nearly 650 million. In contrast, the enlarged EU has 455 million, comprising not much more than half (27 out of 47) of the countries of Europe. Although it often speaks informally for associated states (potential applicants and others), the EU cannot be seen formally as a genuinely pan-European organisation. Rather it must be seen strictly as a sub-regional organisation. Some 20 UN Member States from Europe are not represented in the EU and do not necessarily see the EU as expressing their national views.[49]

A further complication is purely political – the EU's stated aspiration to develop into an effective 'global actor' in which it enjoys a global reach and undertakes global 'responsibilities'.[50] The UN, constitutionally predicated as it is on the nation-state in all its sovereign equality, is unused to acknowledging an instrumental role by any regional organisation acting on its behalf. It is easier under the UN Charter for a major Member State – the US or Russia – to act globally on behalf of the UN than it is for the EU.[51] When such 'global actorness' extends to the use of armed force, potential difficulties arise as regards the true 'regional character' of such an organisation. While the EU-UN partnership in the area of security as well as the more traditional area of humanitarian and development aid is emerging as a major potential for good, the constitutional relationship between the UN and the EU as a 'regional organisation' has yet to be settled. The Lisbon Treaty is going some way to contributing to such a settlement, but if the EU emerges as a full 'global actor' on the world stage, this will have far-reaching repercussions for other regional, cross-regional and trans-national organisations[52] and for the broader UN-regional partnership in general.

The UN Network in Europe

For a 'coherent regional institutional landscape' to be shaped in Europe, a number of daunting challenges will need to be overcome. Reflecting the conceptual framework outline in this Paper, these challenges pertain to electoral groupings for national representation at the UN, the UN's 'operational regions' and the location of UN regional offices. Is it possible,

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[48]   Russia has a large Asian population. In any event, this study suggests that Russia and the three Caucasian states be 'passive' members in the European 'security region', and act in a separate 'security region' – Central Asia-Caucasus. The issue is finely balanced: Russia is active and influential within the COE. Yet the legacy of the past permeates the present. With its expansion from 15 to 27 through the addition of many former Soviet republics and Warsaw Pact states, the EU comprises a potential majority voting bloc within the COE. There is an increasing tendency for decisions within the COE to be taken by consensus, a trend encouraged not least by Russia.

[49]   Member States are now emphasising the scope for co-operation between the two organisations, the EU and the COE. See, for example, former Norwegian Foreign Minister: "The COE and the EU are based on the same fundamental values – respect for the principles of human rights and the rule of law. They both focus on democratic and economic development as means of promoting stability. The Member States of the enlarged EU make up the majority of the COE's members, and together have the potential to exert significant influence on the way the COE works. With the new Constitutional Treaty of Europe, we may also be looking at a new institutional relationship with the EU as such. We should take full advantage of the opportunities for closer co-operation this situation presents, taking into account both the increasingly overlapping membership, and the wider geographical scope of the COE". Jan Petersen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, NUPI Seminar, Oslo, 6 September 2004.

[50]   European Security Strategy, December 2003.

[51]   Chapter VIII of the Charter (Articles 52 to 54) acknowledges the existence 'regional arrangements or agencies' as exogenous bodies, potentially cooperating with the UN, and accords discretion to them to take initiatives in pacific settlement. But initiatives in enforcement actions may only be undertaken under the authorisation of the Security Council which may choose not to utilise such a regional organisation. Regional initiatives undertaken in this respect without prior Council approval (ECOWAS, CIS, perhaps PIF) have raised some concern in recent decades.

[52]   For details of the classification of sub-regional, regional, cross-regional and transnational organisations and their relationship to the UN, see *Regional Security and Global Governance*, Graham, Kennedy and Felício, Tânia, *Regional Security and Global Governance*, Brussels, VUB Press, 2006, chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 9.

and it is feasible, to iron out the historical vagaries that have produced the complicated contemporary mix among these three areas?

The present UN electoral arrangement pertaining to Europe is imperfect to the point of being dysfunctional. Europe, two decades after the end of the Cold War that so deeply divided the continent, remains bifurcated electorally into two groupings.[53] One of these groupings includes countries from the other side of the planet – Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ) – and allows the superpower from the American region as well as an 'outlier' from Asia (Israel) to participate.[54] In the immediate post-Cold War years, some thought was given to merging the two groups (WEOG, EEG) into one, to represent Europe. Arguments against doing so, which prevailed, were two-fold. The first was the 'political-cultural' argument – the CANZ sub-group felt more politically attuned to Europe than to Asia-Pacific or the Latin American hemisphere. The second was purely opportunistic – retaining two smaller groups in lieu of one larger group resulted in proportionately greater representation per country, compared with other regions.

The cultural argument is a weak one and reveals the privileged position which the Western countries have always enjoyed within the United Nations. The Asia-Pacific group, for example, includes countries as culturally diverse as Morocco and Myanmar, or Iran and China. And, by way of direct refutation of such an argument (advanced by Australia and New Zealand), Cyprus, which is a member of both the COE and the EU, is a proud member of the Asia-Pacific electoral group. Clearly, the 'cultural argument' for retaining the 'two-Europe' electoral group arrangement at the UN is insufficient.

For its part, the 'electoral opportunism' argument is factually unassailable but politically indefensible. The combined total of the two European electoral groupings is 51 States (28 WEO States, 23 East European States). This is smaller than both the African group (53 States) and the Asia-Pacific group (also 53). With Cyprus in a European group and the five exogenous States elsewhere, Europe would have 47 States, and Asia-Pacific would have 55. A renamed 'American' grouping would have 35 (instead of the current 33). The resulting regional spread would thus be more equitable across regions.

The conclusion is that a merger of the present two European electoral groupings into one and the relocation of the five exogenous countries to their geographical regions would contribute to a coherent regional institutional landscape. The political feasibility of such a change is reasonable. There is no prohibitive reason for Canada and the US to remain outside an American electoral grouping, any more than they should remain outside the OAS. Equally, Australia and New Zealand participate in the PIF, frequently expressing their regional identity as Pacific – at least to a Pacific audience. The sole political problem remains Israel, which would, under current political circumstances, still be refused admission to any electoral grouping that included the Arab States. Either, therefore, Israel would need to continue the present fiction within the European grouping or stand alone outside any electoral group with special formula for its occasional participation in UN bodies.

As can be discerned from Table 2, the UN system takes an immensely inconsistent approach to Europe in its own operational activities. The UN Secretariat has two divisions – one for Eastern Europe and one for Western Europe. This may once have reflected a certain political logic and perhaps an associated economic logic during the Cold War, but these considerations no longer obtain and are refuted by the embrace of East European countries with the EU – whose *raison d'être* is not only cooperation but indeed integration in full recognition of contemporary socio-economic disparity.

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[53]   Strictly, three groupings, with Cyprus in the Asian Group.

[54]   Israel has never been a member of the UN Security Council. Until 2000 it was the only UN Member State not to be a member of any regional group and was therefore ineligible. That year it was granted temporary membership of WEOG and in 2004 this was extended indefinitely. It is politically unlikely, however, that Israel could mount a successful candidature for the Council, even if it received WEOG support.

Having regard to other Secretariat divisions, if Asia (with, for example, Afghanistan) and the Pacific (with Tuvalu) can be seen as sufficiently politically aligned for the UN Secretariat to treat them within one bureaucratic division, or if the same obtains for North America (with USA) and the Caribbean (with Barbados), then the same unified incorporation can obtain for Western Europe (with Iceland) and Eastern Europe (with Ukraine). Indeed, as a general principle, the same political logic that speaks to the UN's electoral groupings prescribed above would surely apply to the UN's divisional structure.

It would be a challenging exercise, however, to achieve a pure consistency across all other UN bodies. While the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) is quintessentially European, other UN bodies are not. Some UN developmental programmes and funds and specialised agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA, IBRD) have no operational focus on Western Europe, yet others do (UNDP, UNEP, ILO, WHO, FAO). No doubt West European countries are well represented on the governing boards of these bodies as potential donors; but it is an increasingly open question whether UN developmental activities should apply across all Europe in the 21st century – however lightly the expenditure pattern might fall on the western part of the region.

The most politically sensitive issue of all is perhaps the location of UN offices. As Tables 4 and 5 reveal, there is a complex skein of UN offices spread across Europe. Geneva is, of course, the UN's 'second capital', with the magnificent *Palais des Nations* serving as its technical headquarters (as New York serves as the UN's political headquarters). Geneva also hosts the headquarters of the WTO, five specialised agencies, and six UN programmes and other operations. Yet Vienna rivals it in providing headquarters to four other such bodies, Rome hosts three, and The Hague hosts the two judicial bodies and two disarmament bodies, while London, Madrid, Turin, Bonn and Berne all host one. It would take political courage to the point of suicide to seek relocation of all 30 relevant UN entities within the one city – leaving aside the financial burden and administrative upheaval that would be involved. At what price, it has to be asked, does UN regional institutional coherence come?

That being said, there may exist scope for undertaking some judicious measures of reform towards UN institutional coherence for Europe. It is, for example, well recognised that Geneva is the technical operational hub of the UN. If 'efficiency and effectiveness' are taken as the two criteria for judging the operational and administrative coherence of the UN within a region, then there is a forceful argument that all UN developmental entities should be headquartered in Geneva. This would suggest that, over time – say a period of two decades – the UN developmental agencies currently sited in Berne, Turin, Bonn, Vienna, London, Madrid and Rome could relocate to Geneva. This would leave The Hague to continue to host the judicial bodies and Paris to continue to host UNESCO. The disarmament bodies in Vienna (IAEA) and The Hague (OPCW, CTBTO) would relocate in Geneva, where the CD and UNIDIR already reside.

Clearly these are intensely difficult issues, and they would need to be handled with care. The first step would perhaps be to establish a UN expert panel to explore the issues relevant to such relocations, not only in Europe but separate panels for each region. Such work would have the status only of background reports. It would be many years and many difficult negotiating sessions before any kind of political consensus could emerge on these issues.

6. Conclusions: Towards a 'Coherent Regional Institutional Landscape'

If the prescriptive measures outlined above are to be discussed and agreed upon, what process might be followed by the international community? To some extent that process is already underway. In transmitting the HLP report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General saw the recommendations as opening the way to a 'decisive realignment of the UN system'.[55] In March 2007, a Regional High-Level Consultation on UN system-wide coherence was convened in Jakarta. In April the Secretary-General submitted his own report on the

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[55] SG/SM/10724 & GA/10530, 9 November 2006.

Panel's Report to the General Assembly.[56] In his view, the UN needed more coherence and synergy so that it could 'perform as one and be more than the sum of its parts'. The vision of a more coherent UN was predicated on overcoming fragmentation and uniting the system's assets to enable it to 'deliver as one at all levels' but particularly at the country level in line with the principle of country ownership. The proposals themselves should be pursued as 'an integrated and coherent whole' since many were inter-connected.

In April 2007, the General Assembly discussed, during its 61st Session, the reports of the High-level Panel and the Secretary-General. In May, the Assembly's President appointed two UN ambassadors (Barbados, Luxembourg) to co-chair the inter-governmental consultations on the reports of the High-level Panel and the Secretary-General. In June, the Assembly convened its first informal meeting to consider the High-level Panel's Report. In the Jakarta conference co-hosted by Norway and Indonesia in March 2007, agreement was reached on four points:

- predictable funding for all national programmes;
- simplification of the administrative process of programme delivery;
- alignment of UN programmes with national programmes; and
- national ownership of the UN programmes at the country level.[57]

In the April debate, a number of points were made. In the summation of the General Assembly President, there was broad agreement that the UN system had a critical role to play in development; that the UN must remain at the heart of the multilateral development process; that the UN system's development activities must be strengthened; and that the UN can develop more and better development activities.[58]

Below this level of generality, however, some disagreement is discernible:

- The G-77 plus China did not support the introduction of any 'new conditionality' through the reform process. UNGA resolution 59/250 remained the intergovern-mentally-agreed policy framework for UN development work.
- The EU believed that the UN's expertise in normative, analytical and operational work needed to be improved for the sake of UN effectiveness. The 'unified programme, leader, budget and (where appropriate) office' was a good starting-point.
- Three pilot countries (Rwanda, Cape Verde and Tanzania) called for, *inter alia*, strengthened international environmental governance, and better coordination between the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions.
- India criticised the delays in the overall process – five months after the report's release, the UN Secretariat continued to struggle with operationalising the recommendations.
- Solomon Islands thought that the Panel had 'oversold' the regional aspects of the issue, and this needed to be redressed in the inter-governmental debate.
- Norway, announcing an additional grant of US$25 million for the system-wide coherence project, thought that the 'four ones' should be supported by 'more coherent governance and management arrangements at the regional and head-quarters levels'. Norway identified four areas where swift progress was necessary: gender equality; 'One UN' pilots; regional coherence; and business practices. Concerning regional coherence, all UN entities should be reconfigured so that there were more 'regional hubs' that could serve the country programmes.

To facilitate progress in strengthening UN system-wide coherence, I suggest that the recent deliberations should be followed by another resolution submitted to the UN General Assembly proposing the establishment of a task force to develop the 'regional recommendations' of the Panel's report. The mandate of such a task force could be to develop a standardised definition of a 'region' for the purposes of UN operations; to identify specific regions derived from the definition; and co-located regional offices.

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[56]   A/61/836, 3 April 2007.
[57]   CEB Briefing Note, p. 6.
[58]   Ibid., p. 1.

This task would be a politically-sensitive and diplomatically-arduous one. It would, if it were to be implemented, take considerable time – perhaps five to ten years. But it is not impossible, and it is directly in line with the original conceptualisation of the need for greater consistency and coherence in the UN system and with the greater thrust of the High-level Panel. Independent of such further initiatives at the UN, it would be advisable for the two main European regional bodies, the COE and the EU, to undertake a joint study of the relationship between the UN and Europe as a 'region' for the purpose of clarifying the UN-European relationship.

Such a study would address the constitutional relationship between the UN and these two regional bodies under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter (and its other provisions) as well as the relationship between the two bodies themselves. And it could be undertaken within the context of the High-level Panel's recommendations for system-wide coherence within the UN in order to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in the operation of the UN within Europe and, in turn, greater clarity for Europe's role within the UN system.