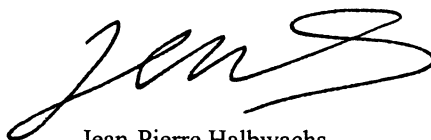


FOREWORD

The context in which the United Nations operates is one of change and reorientation: change in the political climate, resulting in changes in the tasks the organisation is called upon to undertake; reorientation of the organisation's internal structures and procedures in response to these changes. The principal goals and objectives of the United Nations have recently been reassessed. This reassessment – highlighted in the Reform Agenda of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and during the Millennium Summit – has led to a reaffirmation by the 189 Member States of their belief in the organisation. New forms of consensus and co-operation are developing regarding what the United Nations should be striving to achieve and how best it should be organised to improve its operations.

Dr. Joachim Müller presents a detailed review of the reform initiatives undertaken during the period from 1996 to 2000, which was of such importance for the evolution of the United Nations. A wealth of information from primary sources is provided, together with an informative analysis of the history of reform within the United Nations since its creation.

What becomes immediately apparent from Dr. Müller's study is that reform is a work in progress and that the search for excellence builds upon ideas generated from an extremely wide variety of sources. It is also evident from numerous proposals for reform, irrespective of whether these have been advanced by the organisation's critics or supporters, that the United Nations remains intensely relevant. Today, the United Nations is being repositioned for the twenty-first century and past arrangements, approaches and structures based on the realities of the Cold War are being replaced. The organisation is striving to become more effective and efficient through the introduction of new management systems and by working with a multitude of new partners, including civil society and the business community. Perhaps most importantly, the United Nations has itself embraced the spirit of renewal.



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