



Royal University of Law and Economics

Final Report on

The Role of Multilateralism in Global Governance in the

21st Century: An Analysis of Efficacy and Inefficacy of

Multilateralism

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ABSTRACT

The idea of a multilateral system was first created to prevent the outbreak of another world war after the Second World War. It was partly effective since the multilateral structure has governed the world for several decades and has been a key contributor to the containment of the Cold War. Looking at its legacy, multilateralism has done a pretty decent job in helping averted many global issues and maintain rule and order in some parts of the world.

Nonetheless, new issues have grown throughout this period, forcing the multilateral system to generate new ramifications to deal with these obstacles, resulting in a complex architecture with multiple notable inconsistencies and shortcomings.

The issue like the major power rivalry, the ongoing invasion of Ukraine, and the covid-19 pandemic is now acting like a magnifier, showing the incompetency of multilateral institutions. Those issues have generated a multifaceted catastrophe with serious consequences for all countries' health, social, economic, political, security, and cultural aspects.

This is a make-or-break time for more international cooperation, and it will almost certainly be an important juncture in creating the emerging new global order.

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List of Abbreviation

AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ATIGA	ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRIC	group acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, and China
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EFTA	European Free Trade Agreement
EU	European Union
G7	Group of Seven
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GEIP	General Education Improvement Project
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Criminal Court
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGOs	Inter-Governmental Organisations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MFN	Most Favored Nation
MNCs	Multi-National Corporations
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFTA	North America Free Trade Agreement

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNHR	United Nations Human Rights
UNOCT	United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
US	United States
USMCA	United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

The world has become increasingly more globalized, creating several new challenges while maintaining the importance of multilateralism by enlisting the collaboration of multiple nations to solve these newly created global issues. It appears that multilateral institutions and collaboration are considered as being crucial to international relations and global governance. Multilateralism has a long history, but after World War II and the Cold War, when the League of Nations shifted to the United Nations to work for global peace and stability, the revolutionized multilateralism was quietly revived.

Multilateral collaboration flourished tremendously in the post-Cold War era. Nations used multilateral systems to manage and address actual shared global challenges with exceptional success. It is evident in the development of various multilateral organizations both regional and international, such as the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN), and some that specifically focus on security like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as the emergence of economic multilateralism such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank (WB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In a world where power dynamics are rapidly shifting, particularly in the setting of the twenty-first century, multilateralism has been a stimulant for thriving and gathering all nations around the world to join together. The world has faced a variety of concerns in terms of global health issues, climate change, global warming, as well as global security (food, poverty, threat, or economic crisis), and new emerging technology advancement.

Therefore, the main focus of this research paper will be focusing mainly on the role of multilateralism in global governance through an examination of its positive and negative attributes in the twenty-first century. In particular, the viewpoint/foreign policy of other

countries toward multilateralism and the function of multilateralism itself during the change in the global order. And the investigation into whether the difficulties might have an impact on multilateralism's future.

Research Problem

In line with the world situation to the present, there is either a gap or a loophole in multilateral cooperation and the weakness of a multipolar world as there is a significant change in the new world order, particularly with the ongoing global issues such as Russia-Ukraine war, the raising of superpower and their unlimited competition, and climate changes just to name a few. That would be so much pressure on the international organizations, which stand as the form of multilateralism where all nations around the globe come together in order to address problems and find the same common goals, when there is a lack of coordination among member states and a limitation on authority.

Research Question

The changing of the world order in the 21st century has questioned the practices of multilateralism, this research paper's main purpose is the find to answer the following question:

What are the efficacies and limitations of multilateralism towards global governance as the world is rolling into the new era in the 21st century?

The paper will answer the question by addressing a variety of points of view, with many actual case studies, that illustrate the effectiveness of practicing multilateralism in the 21 century and at the same time provide the cons of the idea.

Research Objective

The main purpose of this research is to comprehensively research on the role of multilateralism by examining its effectiveness, particularly, how multilateralism promotes world order, providing security, peace, and prosperous cooperation among nations. The next

objective is to raise multilateralism weaknesses, which perhaps include the matter of superpower influences. As the world geopolitical system has been shifting so fast, this could be a problem for the small states with weak power to find the balance and follow through on a common goal, which could somehow confuse people on what exactly the role of multilateralism played in governing the global. Therefore, this paper will also briefly introduce the background of multilateralism. Addressing international multilateralism such as the UN, which is going to mention a lot in the paper, about its achieving such great milestones to robust global economics, maintaining peace by adopting the legal instrument to enforce human rights, promoting democracy, and fighting with others new challenges. Despite that, the paper will further analyze the dilemma of those organizations in their decision-making and, most importantly, how effective they are in implementing the law and the practice of existing laws and instruments, following up with a future scenario and recommendation.

Scope and Limitation

This paper will mainly focus on the idea of multilateralism in the 21st century, particularly the scope will be after the end of the cold war. In terms of global governance, multilateralism would extend well beyond the level of the nation-state. This research paper will also concentrate on some of the present key worldwide multilateralism, namely the UN and WTO, as well as regional multilateralism, including ASEAN, the EU, and NATO. Moreover, it will also focus on the evolution of multilateralism and global governance as well as the perspective of some key countries on multilateralism as part of their foreign policy coupled with the strengths and weaknesses of multilateral cooperation in the field of geo-economics, politics, and security, and the global pandemic crisis.

Research Methodology

This research topic is going to be essential in line with current global concerns, the role of multilateralism has been discussed a lot throughout the 21st century. Most of the research in this thesis is based on secondary sources from plenty of reliable sources that could be found in books, articles, journals, official statements, news, and a variety of other publications that mainly cover the role of multilateralism in global governance. Strong supporting evidence via origin websites such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the report from many international organizations, and the U.S. Department of State. To make our thesis paper even stronger, we try to collect reliable data and the latest updates on the current situation and the perspectives of scholars and well-known authors.

Structure of Research

This research paper will be divided into 6 chapters. The first part consists of a brief introduction to the topic, research problem, research question, research objective, scope and limitation, research methodology, and literature review. The second part or the first chapter is an overview of the transformation of multilateralism and global governance from its historical beginning to its modern-day form. This part will also focus on the perspective of key countries on multilateralism. The second chapter, we will illustrate the efficacy of multilateralism on the national and global stage by interpreting its success in expanding economics, promoting global order through building peace and creating legal or instrumental instruments, conflict resolution, and strengthening cooperation to deal with global challenges in the new era. Chapter 3 addresses the inefficacy of multilateralism among the superpowers, the pressure on decision-making, the inconsistency in implementation, as well as some other issues. The 4th chapter will give an analysis of future studies of multilateralism along with some key recommendations. Last but not least, the final part will be the conclusion of this research paper.

Literature Review

In a book title “Does the UN Model Still Work? Challenges and Prospects for the Future of Multilateralism”, written by Professors Kim Fontaine-Skronski, Valériane Thool, and Norbert Eschborn, elaborate on the importance of multilateralism, in particular the United Nations and the challenges that threaten to undermine the organization.¹ The authors have stated the following ideas about multilateralism:

“Since the start of the 21st century, the system has been accused of being fragmented, unrepresentative and ineffective, and this dwindling confidence has had an impact on global governance, democracy, trade and investment, the environment, human rights and many other areas.”²

The book also talks about the current issues that multilateralism faces. The development of the UN's multilateralism policy, the shifting global order, geopolitics, non-state actors, and the operation of the UN system as a whole. Topics like resource exploitation, climate change, nuclear waste, and military buildup are some of the issues that the UN and multilateral institution need to address.

Mr. Mario Telò, scientific director of the Foundation for European Progressive studies, also a research report on “Reforming Multilateralism in Post-Covid-19 time” mentions that a new agenda for the new multilateralism reform is needed for multilateral cooperation to be more effective.³ In the book, the author states that despite what multilateralism has archived since its beginning, the role of multilateralism in global order is in a critical phase.⁴ In addition, it also raises some recommendations for multilateral reformat.

¹ “Does the UN Model Still Work? Challenges an Prospects for the Future of Multilateralism,” November 28, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004516489_004. Last access July 17, 2023.

² Ibid.

³ “For A More Regionalized, Binding and Legitimate United Nations Reforming Multilateralism in Post-Covid Times,” 2020, <https://feps-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Reforming-Multilateralism-in-Post-COVID-times-.pdf>. Last access July 17, 2023.

⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER I: THE EMERGENCE OF MULTILATERALISM IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The United Nations defines multilateralism as “opposition to bilateralism⁵ and unilateralism⁶. Strictly speaking, it denotes a form of collaboration involving at least three states.”⁷ Nonetheless, this definition only scratches the surface of what multilateralism entails. It is not simply a matter of practice or the number of actors involved. According to the United Nations, multilateralism is “both a method of cooperation and a form of organization of the international system.”⁸

Multilateralism is an essential framework for international relations and cooperation in which multiple countries collaborate to achieve common objectives.⁹ It is founded on shared norms, values, and principles like consultation, inclusion, and solidarity.¹⁰ The multilateral approach is based on the belief that global challenges necessitate collective action and adherence to a shared set of rules, ensuring effective and long-term cooperation among nations.¹¹ This section will provide a comprehensive overview of multilateralism's history, from its earliest days to its current role in shaping the global landscape.

1.1 The Evolution of Multilateralism

Since its inception following World War I, multilateralism has undergone significant changes. This section aims to provide a comprehensive and insightful overview of

⁵ Bilateralism refer to trade or diplomatic relations between two countries. For further reading <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/bilateralism>, last access June 7, 2023

⁶ Unilateralism refer to the process or fact of deciding a policy or action without involving another group or country. For further reading <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/unilateralism>, last access June 7, 2023

⁷ International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace,” United Nations, n.d., <https://www.un.org/en/observances/Multilateralism-for-Peace-day>. Last access May 22, 2023.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ulrika Modeer and Tsegaye Lemma, “The Value of Strong Multilateral Cooperation in a Fractured World,” UNDP, April 20, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/blog/value-strong-multilateral-cooperation-fractured-world>. Last access May 22, 2023.

¹¹ United Nation, “Today’s Challenges Require More Effective and Inclusive Global Cooperation, Secretary-General Tells Security Council Debate on Multilateralism,” press.un.org, December 14, 2022, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15140.doc.htm>. Last access May 22, 2023.

multilateralism's evolution, highlighting the differences from what it once was to modern multilateralism.

1.1.1 Multilateralism during the Post World War I

The concept of multilateralism seems to be a fairly new notion that has been popularized with the rise of globalization.¹² However, the beginning of this multilateralism can be traced back to the 19th century with the "**Concert of Europe**".¹³ It is an informal system of consultation designed to restore order in Europe following the chaos that the Napoleonic Wars caused. However, it has significant limitations because it was never institutionalized and was based on the major actor's voluntary collaboration. Small powers were occasionally consulted, but they rarely, if ever, took part in the discussion. Despite these constraints, it paved the way for major international congresses.¹⁴ This cooperation is the action that gave rise to the term "**multilateralism**". Nonetheless, this term has yet to catch on.

The first sign of contemporary multilateralism that most people are familiar with can be found in the introduction of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Paris in 1919.¹⁵ A year after the Red Cross was founded in 1863, 12 governments signed the First Geneva Convention, which established a "**multilateral**" milestone in human history.¹⁶

The seeds of multilateralism were sowed with the establishment of the League of Nations, the predecessor to the United Nations, in 1920.¹⁷ The formation of the League of

¹² The United Nation, "Globalization and Development," n.d., https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/2726/S2002903_en.pdf%3Bsessionid%3D29368DCA38C18D84A23864EC62BACB3A%3Fsequence%3D2. Last access May 22, 2023.

¹³ United Nation Library & Archive Geneva, "Research Guides: Multilateralism: About History of Multilateralism," 2019, <https://libraryresources.unog.ch/multilateralism/history>. Last access May 22, 2023.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Our History and Archives," IFRC, n.d., <https://www.ifrc.org/who-we-are/about-ifrc/our-history-and-archives>. Last access May 22, 2023.

¹⁶ "Geneva Convention," History, A&E Television Networks, August 21, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/geneva-convention>. Last access May 22, 2023.

¹⁷ United Nation, "The League of Nations," UN GENEVA, n.d., <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/overview#:~:text=The%20League%20of%20Nations%20officially>. Last access May 22, 2023.

Nations had marked a watershed moment in the development of multilateralism. Modern multilateralism truly took shape and was institutionalized with the establishment of the first organization established to maintain peace and foster international cooperation. However, it ultimately fell short due to a lack of participation from major powers and its inability to avert World War II.

1.1.2 The Golden Age of Multilateralism

Following WWII, there was an explosion of multilateral cooperation. With the rise of globalization, the redistribution of power after the war, both economic and military, the emergence of new actors, and evolving global phenomena such as climate change, natural disasters, urbanization, migration, and terrorism, every nation faces a new set of challenges. Multilateral institutions must evolve in order to remain relevant. Furthermore, Nations used multilateral structures to manage and reduce real shared global problems with unprecedented success.

The United Nations, as the most representative international organization and the pinnacle of multilateralism, is the primary tool for addressing multifaceted and complex global challenges through collective action. Following World War II's devastation, the UN was established in 1945 with a single central mission: **to maintain international peace and security**.¹⁸ The UN Charter reaffirms the commitment to peaceful conflict resolution and emphasizes the importance of multilateralism in achieving international cooperation and sustainable development.

Multilateralism has seen noteworthy transformations throughout its evolution over several decades. The UNs' membership count had surged from a modest number of just 51

¹⁸ "United Nations," History, August 21, 2018, <https://www.history.com/topics/stories/united-nations>. Last access May 22, 2023.

nations at its inception in 1945 to an impressive figure of 193 states today.¹⁹ Expansions haven't just been numerical; the multilateral framework has expanded to involve more than just government-to-government relations. It has evolved into a more comprehensive framework that combines multiple actors, including non-governmental groups (NGOs), corporate entities, and global agencies, to work towards common goals effectively. This practice has already shown great outcomes across several sectors, e.g., tackling smallpox outbreaks in the field of healthcare or promoting human rights worldwide.

Another multilateral agreement and institution that is important to the rise of the golden age of multilateralism is the creation of the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**. To safeguard the economic and security interests of the world, GATT, established in 1947, laid the foundation for the modern-day World Trade Organization (WTO).²⁰ Its goal was to lower trade barriers and encourage economic cooperation across borders. From 1948 to 1994, the GATT set the rules for much of global trade and presided over some of the most rapid growth rates in trade worldwide. It seemed well-established, but throughout those 47 years, it was a provisional agreement and organization. The GATT played a crucial role in shaping the multilateral trading system and laid the foundation for the development of the WTO. GATT evolved into the WTO in 1995, reflecting the growing complexity of global trade relations.²¹

Based on the GATT, the establishment of the WTO on 1st January 1995, marked the most significant reform of international trade since the end of World War II.²² Whereas the GATT, which was primarily concerned with trade in goods, the WTO and its agreements also

¹⁹ Supra note 12.

²⁰ Christina Majaski, "General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)," Investopedia, April 30, 2023, [https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gatt.asp#:~:text=The%20General%20Agreement%20on%20Tariffs%20and%20Trade%20\(GATT\)%20was%20signed](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gatt.asp#:~:text=The%20General%20Agreement%20on%20Tariffs%20and%20Trade%20(GATT)%20was%20signed). Last access May 22, 2023.

²¹ WTO, "The History of Multilateral Trading System," Wto.org, 2015, https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/history_e/history_e.htm. Last access May 22, 2023.

²² Supra note 20.

address trade in services and intellectual property.²³ The birth of the WTO also created new procedures for the settlement of disputes. The establishment of the WTO marked a significant milestone in the evolution of multilateralism and further strengthened the international trading system.

Focusing on the security sector of global governance, especially in the West, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949 and emerged as a military alliance in response to the perceived threat of Soviet expansion during the Cold War.²⁴ Today, it continues to play a significant role in international security and defense cooperation.

As seen from three prime examples that multilateralism has changed drastically, from the lack of participation in the League of Nations to universal acceptance of multilateralism institutions such as the UN, WTO, and NATO. With all of those multilateral institutions, a new global norm and rule have been established. As a result, the principle of a "**rule-based**" international order became ingrained in multilateralism practice. This is especially beneficial for all of the small state actors. Another notable shift is the institutionalization of multilateral agreements into multilateral organizations.

1.1.3 Multilateralism in the 21st Century amidst the Major Power Struggle

As the world transitions into a new era of geopolitical competition, the multilateral order is struggling to adapt. Both governments and the institutions which support them recognize that times are changing and that multilateral cooperation must adapt as well. However, many scholars and practitioners are calling the credibility and capacity to deal with international issues, especially with the ongoing covid pandemic and Russia and Ukraine war.

²³ "World Trade Organization," Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d., <https://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/organisations/wto/Pages/the-world-trade-organization>. Last access May 22, 2023.

²⁴ "A Short History of NATO," NATO, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_139339.htm. Last access May 22, 2023.

The fall of the West's dominance, as well as the rise of Asia, especially China, have eroded the liberal values that underpin the multilateral system. While major powers previously paid symbolic attention to the multilateral agenda, some leaders are openly opposing or contesting it, as revealed by the former US president Donald Trump's policy during his administration which is **America first**²⁵, and the withdrawal of British from the European Union known as **Brexit**²⁶.

While the major Western power seems to isolate itself from the rest of the world, China seems to gain more and more interest in multilateral cooperation compared to before, using it as a tool to shape multilateralism in its favor. It is visible in megaprojects such as the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**²⁷ and the launch of **BRIC**²⁸.

Not only that, the United Nations and its various agencies have been criticized for their inefficiency. The WTO has failed to complete the **Doha Agenda** negotiations, as bilateralism and protectionism resurface around the world, and its conflict resolution system has become dysfunctional.²⁹ The dismantling of the Iran nuclear deal threatens the arms control system that was established at the end of the cold war. Multilateral efforts to combat climate change have made only symbolic progress. The internet governance framework is abandoning its original goal of creating a borderless knowledge society as private companies secretly amass massive

²⁵ America first refer to the former President Trump's foreign policy of seeks a pathway to protect American interests before all else. For further reading <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-united-nations-general-assembly-outlining-america-first-foreign-policy/>, last access June 8, 2023.

²⁶ Also known as Brexit refers to the withdrawal process of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU). For further reading [https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/brexit/AboutBrexit/Paginas/index.aspx#:~:text=Brexit%20is%20an%20abbreviation%20of,the%20European%20Union%20\(EU\)](https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/brexit/AboutBrexit/Paginas/index.aspx#:~:text=Brexit%20is%20an%20abbreviation%20of,the%20European%20Union%20(EU),), last access June 8, 2023.

²⁷ Belt and Road Initiative refer to China-led infrastructure project that develop two new trade routes connecting China with the rest of the world. For further reading <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>, last access last access June 8, 2023.

²⁸ BRIC refer to an acronym of the economic bloc of developing countries of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. For further reading <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/bric.asp>, last access last access June 8, 2023.

²⁹ Simon Lester, "Is the Doha Round Over? The WTO's Negotiating Agenda for 2016 and Beyond," Cato Institute, <https://www.cato.org/free-trade-bulletin/doha-round-over-wtos-negotiating-agenda-2016-beyond>. Last access last access June 8, 2023.

amounts of data in exchange for benefits, and authoritarian states abuse it as a tool to spy and repress their own citizen.

Since WWI, the evolution of multilateralism has been marked by significant accomplishments and challenges. However, as the world moves further into the twenty-first century, it becomes more and more tricky to use the existing framework to address the complexities of modern-day problems. As the world faces new and evolving obstacles, the future of multilateralism will be dependent on countries, organizations, and individuals continuing to uphold its core principles and values.

1.2 From International Governance to Global Governance

The transition from international to global governance has been a significant development in politics and diplomacy.³⁰ This transition reflects the rise of globalization and the need for a more comprehensive approach to addressing complex challenges as time progress.

1.2.1 The Concept of Governance

Governance is a system that provides a framework for organizational management. It identifies who has the authority to act on behalf of the organization and who is accountable for how an organization and its people behave and perform.³¹

1.2.2 International Governance

The term **International Governance** was defined as the output of a non-hierarchical network of interlocking international, mostly but not exclusively, governmental institutions which regulate the behavior of states and other international actors in different issue areas of

³⁰ Jinseop Jang, Jason McSparren, and Yuliya Rashchupkina, "Global Governance: Present and Future," Palgrave Communications 2, no. 1 (January 19, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2015.45>. Last access May 17, 2023.

³¹ "What Is Governance?" Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland, 2021, <https://www.cgi.org.uk/professional-development/discover-governance/looking-to-start-a-career-in-governance/what-is-governance>. Last access May 17, 2023.

world politics.³² So to put it in simple terms, international governance is the relationship between state and state through treaties and agreements to establish rules and institutions to govern their interaction on a global scale, especially when dealing with shared issues. This form of governance is formed on the principle of sovereignty, mutual respect, and non-interference, with each country seeking its own interest and influence.

However, there are some challenges that international governance faces that the international governance system is unable to fix. Those challenges include the increased complexity of global issues, the rise of non-state actors and globalization, and the shift in international anarchy.

a. The Increased Complexity of Global Issues

The international governance system seems to have failed in dealing with and solving the emergence of many new issues. Furthermore, as many new actors such as multinational corporations (MNCs), civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academies, think tanks, etc., have entered the world stage, the superpower can no longer monitor all of the difficulties on their own. Some of the prime examples are technological advancement and climate change. The technological revolution and climate change have created a slew of new challenges for global leaders.³³ The first thing is about the technological revolution, especially in the field of information and communication technology, which not only made globalization more feasible but also made it accessible to citizens and non-governmental organizations to take part in international politics. While this may seem like a positive step to many, it can be really harmful. Dissemination and lack of information can be lethal in international relations, especially for individuals who like to voice

³² Tanja Brü and Volker Rittberger, "From International to Global Governance: Actors, Collective Decision-Making, and the United Nations in the World of the Twenty- First Century," n.d., <https://archive.unu.edu/unupress/sample-chapters/GlobalGov.pdf>.

³³ Viona Rashica, "The Benefits and Risks of Digital Diplomacy," *SEEU Review* 13, no. 1 (December 1, 2018): 75–89, <https://doi.org/10.2478/seeur-2018-0008>.

their opinion without fact-checking first. With the rise of the internet, many other issues like spying, identity theft, and impersonation seem to be common.³⁴ Moreover, the internet can be a dangerous tool if it is utilized by criminal or terrorist groups. This requires all state efforts to establish and regulate the internet.

The cause of climate change is also one of the most common problems that need all those states' contributions around the globe to keep an eye on. Since it is about all lives in the world, it requires all nations to form together (at the global level). All these extensions have gathered all parties to be one in order to meet common goals and achieve common interests.

These new complex issues are driving all actors in the international arena to push international governance to be more transformative and challenge traditional governance structures.

b. The Rise of Non-State Actors and Globalization

The rise of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has challenged the international governance structure, which is more focused on the role of the nation. Other non-state actors like think tanks and private cooperation are trying to integrate themselves into the decision-making process along with the state member. Some even set out a guideline or goal for the state, which is a shift from the principle of the state-centric paradigm³⁵ of international governance.³⁶

Globalization has posed several challenges to international governance. First, it widens the gap between rich and poor, indicating that international governance systems fail to achieve one of the primary goals of governance, namely, to provide for social welfare.³⁷ Second, due to

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ State-centric paradigm refer to the theory that state decisions and behavior shapes world politics. For further reading https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308170045_Critically_discuss_state-centric_development, last access June 8, 2023.

³⁶ Supra, note 32.

³⁷ "What Is Global Governance?" The Global Challenges Foundation, n.d., <https://globalchallenges.org/global-governance/#:~:text=The%20goal%20of%20global%20governance>. Last access June 8, 2023.

deregulation and privatization, transnational market forces are increasingly involved in international affairs.³⁸ As a result, the balance between business actors and states has shifted and must be re-adjusted. Third, civil society actors respond to this failure of international governance and the shift in the triad's balance by banding together and protesting this and other unwelcome consequences of globalization.³⁹

c. Shift in International Anarchy

With the end of the cold war, the international system's structure began to shift. This transformation posed several challenges to international governance systems. Most importantly, bipolarity⁴⁰ no longer limited the scope of international organizations' actions, allowing them to gain greater prominence in world politics. Smaller states and less powerful actors are frequently marginalized as powerful states wield significant influence over global governance processes and outcomes. For instance, in the past, the veto of either one or both of the two superpowers would prevent international institutions like the UN system from operating. International organizations inside the UN system, like the WTO, have been given more authority and are being put to the test by their own success in terms of their capacities.

1.2.3 Global Governance

Existing international governance systems are incapable of dealing adequately with these new problems and aspirations of new actors. As a result, there is a growing demand for more effective and responsive governance systems. International governance is evolving in response to this need.

Global governance is defined as “the output of a non-hierarchical network of international and transnational institutions, not only IGOs and international regimes but also

³⁸ Supra, note 32.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Bipolarity refer to a system which competing states hold the major power on economic, military and influence. For further reading <https://www.e-ir.info/2022/03/27/introducing-bipolarity-tripolarity-unipolarity-multipolarity-and-multiplexity-in-international-relations/>, last access June 8, 2023.

transnational regimes regulating actors' behavior."⁴¹ So in simple terms, it refers to processes, norms, and institutions through which various actors like states and other non-state actors work together to address global challenges.

So the term international governance and global governance is not that much different. The only difference between those two terms is that in global governance, there are more actors such as non-governmental organizations, multinational cooperation, and expert groups involved, and the scope is a bit broader compared to international governance.

The transition from international to global governance shows a significant shift in our understanding of how the world is governed. Global governance has the ability to address the complex, transnational challenges that international governance struggle to deal with by broadening the scope of governance and incorporating a diverse range of actors.

1.3. Key Country's Perspective toward Multilateralism

1.3.1. The United States of America

As of 2023, the US is a party to more than 600 multilateral conventions and organizations.⁴² However, historically the US tended to present itself as an exception and superior to the rest of the world and saw little need for multilateral or even bilateral forms of cooperation. It was only after WWII that the United States appeared to be interested in multi-cooperation. During this time, the US played a major role in catapulting the multilateralism institution to its popularity with many international organizations like the UN, IMF, and NATO. During Donald Trump's presidency, the former US president pushed forward the "**America First**" policy. Trump's speech stated as follows

⁴¹ Supra, note 32.

⁴² Charles Morrison, "Tradition, Trump, and the Future of US Participation in Multilateralism," n.d., https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=08951b69-3ec6-d611-eef1-2f0fcf56a023&groupId=288143. Last access June 8, 2023.

*“It’s time to shake the rust off America’s foreign policy. ... My foreign policy will always put the interests of the American people and American security above all else. It has to be first. Has to be.”*⁴³

It can be said that, during Trump’s administration, the government saw multilateralism as an obstacle to American interests. Moreover, in the same speech, the former president also criticized and cited the lack of contribution from other countries as part of its decision to push forward this policy.⁴⁴

Compared to Trump’s administration, the current president's approach seems to be more lenient toward multilateralism. In his speech, President Biden mentioned:

*“We’re going to start off making sure Americans are taken care of first, but we’re then going to try to help the rest of the world.”*⁴⁵

This is so that while the US is more willing to lend a hand to the rest of the world, it is only after making sure that America is good first.

1.3.2. People’s Republic of China

With the end of the Mao era, Chinese governments gradually embraced multilateralism to achieve their fundamental foreign policy goals of maintaining a peaceful international environment and enhancing China's international status and influence in global governance.⁴⁶ China is a signatory to over 600 international conventions and amendments and

⁴³ Ryan Beckwith, “Read Trump’s ‘America First’ Foreign Policy Speech,” Time, 2016, <https://time.com/4309786/read-donald-trumps-america-first-foreign-policy-speech/>. , Last access May 13, 2023.

⁴⁴ National Security Council, “President Trump on China: Putting America First – the White House,” trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov, 2020, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/president-trump-china-putting-america-first/>. Last access May 13, 2023.

⁴⁵ Anthony Dworkin, “Americans before Allies: Biden’s Limited Multilateralism,” European Council on Foreign Relations, June 9, 2021, <https://ecfr.eu/article/americans-before-allies-bidens-limited-multilateralism/>. Last access May 13, 2023.

⁴⁶ Council on Foreign Relations, “China’s Approach to Global Governance,” 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/china-global-governance/>. Last access May 13, 2023.

is a member of nearly all universal inter-governmental organizations such as the UN, G7, and WTO.⁴⁷

With its rise to power, China present become more and more prominent in many multilateral institutions and cooperation. This can be seen in the case of the UN; China is one of the only five veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council.⁴⁸ China is increasingly filling the void left by the United States. In the health sector, China collaborates with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other organizations and has increased health-related aid to developing countries over the last decade. China is at the forefront of the global effort to eradicate malaria in eastern Africa. During the 2014 Ebola outbreak in Western Africa, China launched its largest-ever international humanitarian response, contributing \$123 million.⁴⁹

China always mentions its support for multilateralism in many of its official representative speeches. One example can be found in China's foreign minister, Mr. Wang Yi's speech, in which he stated,

“China will continue to hold high the banner of multilateralism, thoroughly implement the major initiatives announced by President Xi Jinping at the high-level events marking the 75th anniversary of the UN last year, and continue to support the UN-centered multilateral mechanism with concrete actions. We stand ready to work with all parties to bring multilateralism and the UN forward from a new starting point and jointly build a community with a shared future for mankind.”⁵⁰

While it can be seen that China has voiced its support and contributed a lot to multilateralism, many doubt its sincerity. It can be seen that China is working to align

⁴⁷ “Position Paper on China’s Cooperation with the United Nations,” https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt_665385/wjzcs/202110/t20211022_9609380.html#:~:text=As%20a%20member%20of%20nearly. Last access May 13, 2023.

⁴⁸ “The UN Security Council,” Council on Foreign Relations, February 28, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/background/un-security-council#:~:text=The%20Security%20Council%20has%20five>. Last access May 13, 2023.

⁴⁹ Supra, note 47.

⁵⁰ Wang Yi, “Let Us Unite and Put True Multilateralism into Practice,” https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/202105/t20210508_9170544.html. Last access May 13, 2023

multilateral architectures with its authoritarian norms, which is not in the interests of nations around the world. China is establishing parallel governance structures such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), BRIC, in order to sway the multilateral system in its favor. While those cooperation mentioned are multilateral cooperation, it can be said that the structure or the system of those institutes or agreements are heavily favoring China's interest while binding their partner into what most people call “ **the China debt trap**”.

1.3.3 Russia Federation

Russia's multilateral strategy has been largely influenced by considerations of power, status, and entanglement.⁵¹ Nonetheless, Russia's official position on Western multilateralism is not straightforward. Russia, as a communist country, is not widely open to the multilateral world, and in fact, they do not truly or fully believe in the concept of multilateralism in global governance either. As such with the UN, even though they are one of the permanent members of the UN, they often criticize that the unilateral actions by the US and its allies involving could cause imbalance as well as harm global security.⁵² On the other hand, whether wanted or not, due to domestic interests, Russia involves itself in multi-cooperation to ensure peace around their region and to ensure the state's dominance and influence. Russia has been an ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) dialogue partner and is moving towards a strategic partnership for mutual benefit.⁵³ The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and ASEAN are connected through integrated trade and value chains in the study. According to the government of Russia, Moscow has stated that this relation provides mutual benefit for all parties involved

⁵¹ Mikhail Troitskiy, “Power, Status, and Entanglement: Russia’s Evolving Approach to Multilateral Institutions,” *Russian Politics and Law* 54 (April 2017): 415–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10611940.2016.1296300>.

⁵² UN Press, “Confrontation, Unilateral Action, Interference in States’ Internal Affairs Must Yield to Dialogue, Cooperation,” n.d., <https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12451.doc.htm>. Last access May 13, 2023.

⁵³ “ASEAN’s Trade Relations with Russia,” *ASEAN Business News*, September 6, 2022, <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/aseans-trade-relations-with-russia/>. Last access May 13, 2023.

as states can share practices, experience, and expertise for discussing issues with mutual interest.⁵⁴

1.3.4 The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom (UK) has consistently expressed its unwavering support for multilateral cooperation with other countries. The United Kingdom has continued to actively contribute to addressing global challenges. According to Ambassador Barbara Woodward's statement at the UNSC, "*the UK has long supported and remains deeply committed to multilateralism.*"⁵⁵ Furthermore, the UK is taking a serious role in enhancing and supporting the rule-based international order in order to avoid any potential bad situation or relapse to the old order. In relation to current security, the UK issued a statement on the Ukraine-Russia conflict, stating that "Russia illegally invaded Ukraine and violated the UN charter."⁵⁶ With so many challenges, the UN and multilateralism system plays a critical role, and as a member state, they will work together to ensure that the UN and multilateralism system form as a whole to respond to the complex challenges of today's world.

1.3.5 The Kingdom of Cambodia

After many years of turbulence, Cambodia has achieved peace, stability, and economic development and has become, to some extent, a democracy with pluralism.⁵⁷ A strong civil society has emerged since the **Paris Peace Agreement**⁵⁸. Due to its history, Cambodia, as a

⁵⁴ ASEAN Briefing, "The ASEAN-Russia Trade and Investment Cooperation Roadmap," ASEAN Business News, October 5, 2021, <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/the-asean-russia-trade-and-investment-cooperation-roadmap/>. Last access May 13, 2023

⁵⁵ "We Take Seriously Our Role in Strengthening the Multilateral System: UK Statement at the Security Council," GOV.UK, December 14, 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/we-take-seriously-our-role-in-strengthening-the-multilateral-system-uk-statement-at-the-security-council#:~:text=The%20UK%20has%20long%2Dsupported.> Last access May 13, 2023.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs And International Cooperation, "CAMBODIA Stability and Development First," 2018, <https://www.mfaic.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/4T2-Stability-12-February-2018.pdf>. Last access May 13, 2023.

⁵⁸ Peace Agreement refer to the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement that marked the end of Cambodia and Vietnam War. For further reading <https://peacemaker.un.org/cambodiaparisagreement91>, last access June 9, 2023.

small state, has always been the most enthusiastic in announcing its support for any type of multilateral cooperation and institutions as long as it doesn't affect Cambodia's sovereignty.⁵⁹

This sentiment is seen in “**Cambodia’s Foreign Policy Direction**” as one of the main tasks is to **continue to support and strengthen multilateralism**. The task stated that Cambodia would actively contribute to participating in the UN mission, adhere to international law and continue to build and maintain good relations and welcome any initiative that is mutually beneficial and complementary.⁶⁰

The current Prime Minister to the Kingdom of Cambodia also expressed his thought regarding multilateralism in his speech during a High-Level Meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations,

*“Cambodia recognizes the central role of multilateralism in addressing complex global challenges we face today.”*⁶¹

This show that Cambodia as a country sees and supports multilateralism as an important tool for global governance.

⁵⁹ MFAIC, “Cambodia’s Foreign Policy Direction,” mfaic.gov, n.d.<https://www.mfaic.gov.kh/Page/2021-02-08-Cambodia-s-Foreign-Policy-Direction>. Last access May 13, 2023.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Sen Hun, “Cambodia Emphasizes Key Role of Multilateralism,” <https://pressocm.gov.kh/en/archives/67368>. Last access May 13, 2023.

CHAPTER II: THE EFFICACY OF MULTILATERALISM IN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS

The distinctive features of multilateralism provide a chance to unite many nations to tackle universal problems of concern, exchange knowledge, and experience, share instruments of policy and regulation, and come to an agreement on decisions. Governments and non-state actors must work together to address complex and pressing worldwide issues in contemporary society in an efficient and timely manner. Enhancing economic prosperity, fostering global order, preserving the environment, and advocating for technological advancement are just a few of what multilateral organization has achieved.

2.1. The Advancement and Expansion of the Economy

Multilateralism has been a critical contributor to the world's tremendous economic successes over the last half-century.⁶² As the global economy continues to face turbulences caused by the continued emergence of regional and global challenges, multilateral financing institution has done their job admirably in helping and supporting economic growth around the world, especially in developing countries.⁶³

First, multilateral agreements ensure a level of equality for all the signatories.⁶⁴ No country can offer better trade deals to one country than another. This equalizes the playing field for all the states involved. It is especially important for developing countries since many of them are smaller in size, they are less competitive. Case in point: the WTO has established a clause called “**The Most Favored Nation Status (MFN)**”, which is the idea that countries are

⁶² Anne Krueger, “An Enduring Need: The Importance of Multilateralism in the 21st Century,” IMF, September 2006, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/28/04/53/sp091906a>. Last access June 13, 2023.

⁶³ United Nations, “World Leaders Lay Foundation for Reforming International Financial Architecture, Expediting Socioeconomic Progress, as Financing for Development Forum Concludes,” in UN Press, 2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/ecosoc7121.doc.htm>. Last access June 14, 2023.

⁶⁴ WTO, “Principles of the Trading System,” World Trade Organization, 2021, https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/fact2_e.htm. Last access June 14, 2023.

all equal and there should not be any special treatment for one particular trading partner.⁶⁵ The MFN confers the best possible trading terms from a trading partner. This trading status benefits developing countries the most.⁶⁶ In comparison, bilateral agreements tend to favor countries with a more powerful economy.⁶⁷ This has a negative impact on the weaker country. Multilateral cooperation helps strengthen emerging markets by ensuring that they get a fair deal without being taken advantage of by the superpower countries and helps develop their economies over time. As those emerging markets develop, their middle-class population grows.⁶⁸ This generates new wealthy customers for everyone.

Multilateralism also helps facilitate trade for its signatories. Multilateral institutions like the WTO facilitate and promote increased trade among their members.⁶⁹ The WTO, through its various provisions, helps lower trade barriers. Furthermore, membership ensures access to other members' markets via the guaranteed application of MFN tariff rates.⁷⁰ It also helps increase competitiveness by eliminating unfair trade practices between trading partners. So compared to developed economies, small developing economies show a greater reliance on international trade. In terms of both quantity and quality, trade plays a crucial role in both production and consumption.⁷¹ Therefore, trading capacity, which functions as the volume of inflows of foreign currency, is extremely important to economic growth.

⁶⁵ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Most-Favored-Nation Treatment," in Encyclopedia Britannica, March 21, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/most-favored-nation-treatment>. Last access June 13, 2023.

⁶⁶ "The Most-Favored-Nation Clause," American Journal of International Law 3, no. 2 (April 1909): 395–422, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2186129>.

⁶⁷ Kimberly Amadeo, "Pros and Cons of Multilateral Trade Agreements," The Balance, April 21, 2022, <https://www.thebalancemoney.com/multilateral-trade-agreements-pros-cons-and-examples-3305949>. Last access June 14, 2023.

⁶⁸ Claudia Canals, "The Emergence of the Middle Class: An Emerging-Country Phenomenon," CaixaBank Research, September 16, 2019, <https://www.caixabankresearch.com/en/economics-markets/labour-market-demographics/emergence-middle-class-emerging-country-phenomenon>.

⁶⁹ WTO, "Trade Facilitation," WTO, 2019, https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/brief_tradeafa_e.htm. Last access June 13, 2023.

⁷⁰ WTO, "General Most-Favored-Nation Treatment," n.d., https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/ai17_e/gatt1994_art1_gatt47.pdf.

⁷¹ The World Bank, "Stronger Open Trade Policies Enable Economic Growth for All," The World Bank, April 3, 2018, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2018/04/03/stronger-open-trade-policies-enables-economic-growth-for-all>.

Additionally, multilateral institutions or agreements set standardized regulations for all partners. Having a global framework for conducting international trade and resolving disputes is important for all nations, especially small developing economies because they cannot afford to ignore the various trade negotiations given the significance of trade, their vulnerability, and the ever-expanding scope of trade agreements.⁷² Having a standard regulation allows small states to increase their limited leverage in dealing with injustices through consensus decision-making and the use of strategic alliances.⁷³

Smaller nations are able to counter the dominating power of larger nations through multilateral negotiations. Due to their size of the market, proportion of global trade, and political influence, large countries, especially those highly developed such as the US, China, the European Union, Brazil, and India, exert a near-dominant influence on the trading market.⁷⁴ A powerful nation's mere threat of trade sanctions can destabilize international markets, restrict access to markets, and stifle investment and production. Multilateral trade rules can prevent unjust government behavior and guarantee predictability in trade relations by establishing clear rules that apply to all participating states.⁷⁵ Additionally, it prevents potential abuse between nations with vastly different sizes, levels of development, and levels of power. By taking part in multilateral institutions like the WTO, IMF, and World Bank, small states' rights are most likely to be shielded from the hegemony and pressure that powerful and/or large nations can impose.⁷⁶

⁷² Richard Bernal, "Trade Preferences and Developing Countries: Dealing with Inequities," n.d., http://ctrc.sice.oas.org/geograph/caribbean/CFM_Bernal.pdf.

⁷³ Supra note 72.

⁷⁴ Michael Mussa, "Factors Driving Global Economic Integration," IMF, August 25, 2000, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/28/04/53/sp082500>. Last access June 17, 2023

⁷⁵ Supra note 72.

⁷⁶ Marc Auboin, "Fulfilling the MARRAKESH Mandate on Coherence: Ten Years of Cooperation between the WTO, IMF and World Bank," WTO Discussion Paper 13 (2007), https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/discussion_papers13_e.pdf.

Multilateralism also provides more incentives for countries to trade through tariff reductions. The tariff reduction has been especially well received by the public because it affects a wide variety of daily necessities, including food, home appliances, clothing, and cosmetics. People will pay less when purchasing these products thanks to lower tariff rates. Additionally, a lower tariff will encourage people to purchase imported goods domestically rather than abroad, increasing domestic consumption rather than overseas consumption.⁷⁷ Furthermore, with the tariff reductions, the cost of living for people will be lower. One of the prime examples is the WTO. Through negotiation, the global WTO system lowers trade barriers and upholds the non-discrimination principle. Because imports used in production are less expensive, this lowers production costs, lowers the cost of finished goods and services, and ultimately lowers the cost of living.⁷⁸ When the EU's internal trade barriers were removed to create its single market, telecommunications equipment costs decreased by an average of 7% over a ten-year period. In some cases, lower trade barriers for goods also indirectly lower the costs of services.⁷⁹

2.1.1. The Increasing of the Free Trade Zones

The **European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA)** is an intergovernmental trading and economic organization that was set up by its four member states such as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.⁸⁰ The EFTA's main accomplishment is bringing the EFTA member states and the EU together to establish an internal market for the region known as the European

⁷⁷ Brent Radcliffe, "The Basics of Tariffs and Trade Barriers," Investopedia, 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/economics/08/tariff-trade-barrier-basics.asp>. Last access June 18, 2023.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ WTO, "10 Benefits of the WTO Trading System," n.d., <https://depts.washington.edu/wtohist/Research/documents/10benefits.pdf>. Last access June 18, 2023

⁸⁰ "The European Free Trade Association," European Free Trade Association, 2016, <https://www.efta.int/about-efta/european-free-trade-association>. Last access June 20, 2023.

Single Market.⁸¹ The single market has increased trade competition, generated employment for participating states, broken down many trade barriers, and remove market restrictions.⁸²

On the other hand, The **ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA)** was created to achieve the free flow of goods in ASEAN.⁸³ Similar to the EFTA, the ATIGA act as a mean for a production base for economic integration in the region and to establish a single market for good and service.⁸⁴

*“Through ATIGA, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand have eliminated intra-ASEAN import duties on 99.65 percent of their tariff lines. Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam have reduced their import duties to 0-5 percent on 98.86 percent of their tariff lines.”*⁸⁵

Along with the EFTA and the ATIGA, there is another important free trade agreement known as the **United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)**. This agreement was created as a substitute for the **North America Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA**⁸⁶. Like the two agreements mentions above, USMCA's main objective as stated in the preamble of the provision, aims to lower trade barriers between the member states, encourage and increase competition and investment, protect intellectual property rights, handle disputes that arise, and most importantly promote regional and multilateral cooperation between the North American growing economy and Americans.⁸⁷

⁸¹ European Union, “European Free Trade Association,” European Union, n.d., <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/european-free-trade-association-efta.html>. Last access June 20, 2023

⁸² Peter Hoeller and Marie-Odile Louppe, “The EC’s Internal Market: Implementation and Economic Effects,” Last accessed May 19, 2023, <https://www.oecd.org/eu/33765116.pdf>.

⁸³ ASEAN Secretariat, “ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA),” accessed June 17, 2023, <https://investasean.asean.org/files/upload/Doc%20202%20-%20ATIGA.pdf>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Timor-Leste Customs Authority, “What Is the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA)?” n.d., <https://customs.gov.tl/enquiry-point-single/what-is-the-asean-trade-in-goods-agreement-atiga/>. Last accessed June 17, 2023,

⁸⁶ NAFTA refer to an agreement created in 1994 to create a free trade zone for Mexico, Canada and the United States. For further reading [https://www.trade.gov/north-american-free-trade-agreement-nafta#:~:text=The%20North%20American%20Free%20Trade%20Agreement%20\(NAFTA\)%2C%20which%20was,U.S.%20DMexico%20bilateral%20commercial%20relationship.](https://www.trade.gov/north-american-free-trade-agreement-nafta#:~:text=The%20North%20American%20Free%20Trade%20Agreement%20(NAFTA)%2C%20which%20was,U.S.%20DMexico%20bilateral%20commercial%20relationship.) Last access June 25, 2023.

⁸⁷ “Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada Text,” United States Trade Representative, 2018, <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/united-states-mexico-canada-agreement/agreement-between>.

USMCA has played an important role in helping North America countries trade during the Covid-19 pandemic. Under this agreement, there is a 6% increase in trade across the region from 2019 to 2021.⁸⁸ Furthermore, in 2022 alone, the regional trade reached \$642.6 billion in the first quarter of the year, a 23% increase from 2021.⁸⁹

2.1.2 Boost Economic Growth and Worldwide Participation via the Global Framework

Through a multilateral global framework, the signatory countries can improve their economies and their chances of voicing their issues and opinion on the global stage. Multilateral financing institutions play a crucial role by providing both financial and technical support for their member countries. With their expertise and reach, those institutions can help nations build resilient economies and reduce poverty.

Through global framework, the smaller nations will also feel more inclined to participate in the international forum since it ensures that they will be heard and respected. This gives the developing states a chance to raise their concern and objective on international platforms such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which in turn will accelerate their economic growth and reduce their poverty.

To aid in the reduction of poverty in developing nations, the World Bank provided \$46.9 billion for 303 projects in those nations in 2009.⁹⁰ Currently, the bank is working on more than 1,800 projects across almost all developing nations and industries.⁹¹ When the food and fuel crises were getting worse as a result of the recent global financial crisis, the World Bank raised

⁸⁸ MIC Customs Solutions, "Two Years of the USMCA - How Has It Affected Trade in North America?" August 30, 2022, <https://www.mic-cust.com/insights/posts/detail/ad/two-years-of-the-usmca-how-has-it-affected-trade-in-north-america/>. Last access June 25, 2023.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ "Reading: What Is the Role of the IMF and the World Bank?" Lumenlearning, 2011, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-internationalbusiness/chapter/6-2-what-is-the-role-of-the-imf-and-the-world-bank/>. Last access June 25, 2023.

⁹¹ Ibid.

over \$200 billion in financial commitments to help developing nations.⁹² The World Bank's **Joint Capital Markets Initiative** was introduced in 2022. The objective is to support liquid, diverse, long-term financing, and tightly monitored local capital markets, it aids in the development of capital markets in developing nations. With the help of this new initiative, nations will be given complete analytical, advisory, and financial support for growing their markets.⁹³ The World Bank also set its 2030 agenda with two main goals. The first is to end severe poverty by bringing the number of people living on less than \$1.90 a day down to 3%.⁹⁴ The second is to advance collective prosperity by accelerating the income growth of the bottom 40% of the global population in all countries.⁹⁵

Meanwhile, the IMF also has contributed a lot to the economic development of its member states. One of the most important achievements of the IMF is stabilizing the foreign exchange rate. The rates of exchange have not fluctuated as much as they once did after the IMF was established.⁹⁶ The IMF also works to support the movement of multinational trade among its member nations and maintain exchange rate stability. The IMF removes exchange restrictions to enhance the growth of trade.⁹⁷ The IMF is urging its members to make their private sectors more transparent in order to decrease financial misconduct, such as money

⁹² Mohamed Muhumed and Sayid Gaas, "The World Bank and IMF in Developing Countries: Helping or Hindering?" International Journal of African and Asian Studies Wwww.iiste.org ISSN 28 (2016), <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234690231.pdf>.

⁹³ "Our Work," World Bank, n.d., <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/annual-report/our-work#:~:text=The%20World%20Bank%20supports%20investments>.

⁹⁴ The World Bank, "Sustainable Development Goals and Targets," The Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals 2020, 2020, <https://datatopics.worldbank.org/sdgoalatlas/targets/>. Last access June 20, 2023.

⁹⁵ United Nation, "World Bank Group: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform," sustainable development, n.d., <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=800&menu=3170>. Last access June 20, 2023

⁹⁶ "Exchange Rate Regimes in an Increasingly Integrated World Economy," IMF Issues Brief, June 2000, <https://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2000/062600.htm>. Last access June 17, 2023

⁹⁷ Sanket Suman, "15 Major Achievements of International Monetary Fund," Economics Discussion, October 20, 2015, <https://www.economicsdiscussion.net/international-monetary-fund/achievements-international-monetary-fund/15-major-achievements-of-international-monetary-fund/13183>. Last access June 17, 2023

laundering and fraudulent activity, and make sure that all investors have an equal chance to succeed.⁹⁸

Besides those multilateral institutions, there are also many other multilateral organizations and cooperation that help boost economic growth one of which is the Belt and Road Initiative. The BRI is an infrastructure project that was created by China in 2013 to improve trade and cooperation between its signatories.⁹⁹ According to the World Bank, once successful the BRI project is estimated to expand international trade by around 2.7% to 9.7%. It will also increase income by up to 3.4% and help 7.6 million people escape extreme poverty.¹⁰⁰

2.1.3 The Increasing Prevalence of Bilateral Agreements

Multilateralism is known to foster cooperation on a large scale between multiple countries at the same time. Through multilateral cooperation, states begin to increase their interaction and improve their relationship with one another. And through multilateral negotiation, many bilateral partnerships arise from it. Multilateralism has connected states that are far from each other and never had historical interaction together. During the multilateral meeting, all the world leaders were given a chance to come together and discuss the global affair and their countries' interests. Countries with similar interests will form an alliance or partnership on the sideline.

As Cambodia hosted the 40th and 41st ASEAN summit and related meetings, Prime Minister Hun Sen also took a chance to host various bilateral sideline meetings with many other

⁹⁸ “The Fight against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing,” IMF, n.d., <https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2023/Fight-against-money-laundering-and-terrorism-financing>. Last access June 17, 2023.

⁹⁹ World Bank, “Belt and Road Economics: Opportunities and Risks of Transport Corridors,” World Bank, June 18, 2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/publication/belt-and-road-economics-opportunities-and-risks-of-transport-corridors>.

¹⁰⁰ “Belt and Road Initiative,” World Bank, n.d., <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative#:~:text=If%20completed%2C%20BRI%20transport%20projects>.

world leaders to further foster the relations and cooperation between the countries.¹⁰¹ Those meetings include countries within and outside of the region such as Brunei, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, India, China, and the United States.¹⁰² The meeting with Brunei resulted in a signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on “**Culture and Fine Arts Cooperation**” that

“Establish a framework for deepening bilateral relations and broadening cooperation between two countries.”¹⁰³

2.1.4 Economic Growth through Financial Assistance

The multilateral organization is important for the economic growth of the country. One of the factors that is really impactful to economic development is financial assistance. When one nation plays an active role in multilateral cooperation, it also gets back the benefit from those multilateral institutions as they are inclined to provide it member assistance, most importantly financial loans for countries to develop their economy and infrastructure.

The World Bank Group has approved a \$200 million international development association credit to help Cambodia post-covid-19 recovery.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the World Bank also supports the **General Education Improvement Project (GEIP)** which will fund and improve Cambodia's education system. This project fund is estimated to be around \$69.25

¹⁰¹ “Chairman’s Statement of the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits,” Association of Southeast Asian Nations, <https://asean.org/chairmans-statement-of-the-40th-and-41st-asean-summits/>. Last accessed June 26, 2023.

¹⁰² Lay Samean and Ry Sochan, “A Recap of Bilateral Meetings on Sidelines of ASEAN Summit Hosted by Cambodia,” phnompenhpost.com, November 14, 2022, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national-politics/recap-bilateral-meetings-sidelines-asean-summit-hosted-cambodia>. Last access June 26, 2023.

¹⁰³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, “Joint Statement between the Kingdom of Cambodia and Brunei Darussalam on the Occasion of the State Visit of His Majesty Sultan to the Kingdom of Cambodia. - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,” mfaic.gov.kh, November 14, 2022, <https://mfaic.gov.kh/posts/2022-11-14-Press-Release-Joint-Statement-between-the-Kingdom-of-Cambodia-and-Brunei-Darussalam-on-the-Occasion-of-the-State-V-14-00-03>. Last accessed June 26, 2023.

¹⁰⁴ “New \$200 Million World Bank Project to Support COVID-19 Relief, Build Resilience against Future Economic Shocks in Cambodia,” World Bank, June 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/06/24/new-200-million-world-bank-project-to-support-covid-19-relief-build-resilience-against-future-economic-shocks-in-cambodi>.

million.¹⁰⁵ Besides Cambodia, the World Bank Group also committed around \$125 billion in response to the crisis created by the pandemic.¹⁰⁶

IMF in cooperation with the World Bank launched an initiative called the **Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)** which helps make sure that poor countries are not overwhelmed by unmanageable debt burdens. Through this project around 37 participating countries have been provided with more than 100 billion dollars of debt relief.¹⁰⁷

While in comparison, countries like the North Korea which is considered to be an isolationist and reclusive country continue to struggle with their fragile economic growth and deterioration of food security, with only its close alliance, China to provide support.¹⁰⁸

2.2. Promoting Global Order

Maintaining peace and security has become a top priority for all international players over the world, which is getting more and more complex in the current landscape.¹⁰⁹ Due to this, individual actors are increasingly struggling to achieve their objectives for peace and security on their own as they don't have enough capacity to address the issue. Multilateral cooperation has been demonstrated to be more effective and efficient in addressing conflict resolution and achieving global goals on peace and security by encouraging joint operations, regulation, and cooperation among nations.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ "World Bank Financing Will Strengthen Learning, Access to Education in Cambodia," World Bank, January 18, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/01/18/world-bank-financing-will-strengthen-learning-access-to-education-in-cambodia>.

¹⁰⁶ Supra note 104.

¹⁰⁷ "Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative," World Bank, 2018, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/brief/hipc>. Last access June 20, 2023.

¹⁰⁸ "Is North Korea Fighting a Food Crisis?" Aljazeera, March 3, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/3/is-north-korea-fighting-a-food-crisis>. Last access June 20, 2023.

¹⁰⁹ "Security Council Issues Presidential Statement Underscoring Key Role of Peacekeeping in Promoting, Maintaining International Peace," MINURSO, May 8, 2019, <https://minurso.unmissions.org/security-council-issues-presidential-statement-underscoring-key-role-peacekeeping-promoting>. Last accessed June 17, 2023.

¹¹⁰ "Amid Strained Multilateral System, States Must Recommit to United Nations Charter Obligations, Prioritize Human Rights, Secretary-General Tells Security Council," United Nation, April 24, 2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15263.doc.htm>. Last accessed June 17, 2023.

Multilateralism has played a valuable role in engaging its signatories in relevant negotiations and meetings regarding maintaining global peace and security. The international community came together to show that multilateralism is the most effective way to regulate global affairs and deal with issues that are important to the entire human race. And that multilateral institutions, with the UN as the golden standard, aim to deliver to all people in all parts of the world.¹¹¹

2.2.1. Peace and Security Cooperation

Even with a flawed system of collective security, United Nations has done its best it can by preventing millions of deaths by assisting in the resolution of conflicts. Peace and security have always been the UN's utmost priority as was stated first and foremost in the first article of the UN charter itself:

“To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.”¹¹²

The UN has until now fulfilled its original promise of preventing another world war from happening. Furthermore, the UN and its many subsidiaries have contributed a lot to maintaining peace and security in the ever-changing global order. The UN as of today has helped 80 former colonies countries gain back their independence.¹¹³ The UN

¹¹¹ “Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace,” European Union, April 22, 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/multilateralism-and-diplomacy-peace-1_en. Last accessed June 17, 2023.

¹¹² “United Nations Charter,” United Nations, 1945, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.

¹¹³ United Nations, “Decolonization,” United Nations, n.d., <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/decolonization#:~:text=Since%20the%20creation%20of%20the>. Last access June 14, 2023.

through either direct or indirect means has ended many conflicts in countries like El Salvador, Cambodia, Namibia, and Mozambique just to name a few.¹¹⁴

Overall, according to the UN, there has been a 40 percent decline in conflict since the 1990s due to the attribution in large part of UN peace and security activities.¹¹⁵ Other subsidiaries like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have continued to emphasize and monitor the use and creation of any weapon of mass destruction. The IAEA continued to keep a close eye on Iran's nuclear-related commitments.¹¹⁶ The IAEA has been a key factor in safeguarding and preventing nuclear terrorism by providing many regulations such as the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty which cease the nuclear arms race in the world, the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, and many other additional protocol.¹¹⁷

2.2.2. Conflict Resolutions

Since the end of the Cold War, collaborative prevention of conflicts has been advocated. From the middle of the 1990s onward, the world came to the sobering realization that there is a clear need to reevaluate the role of the UN and other multilateral institution in conflict prevention and conflict management.¹¹⁸ This was prompted by the devastating experiences in Somalia, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia. To prevent the spread of deadly conflicts, this multilateralism needs states, non-state organizations, and international and regional organizations alike to work together. In

¹¹⁴ United Nations, "Peace and Security," United Nations, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/peace-and-security>. Last access June 14, 2023.

¹¹⁵ General Assembly of the United Nations, "The Importance of Multilateralism and the Role of the UN General Assembly in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security," United Nation, January 23, 2019, <https://www.un.org/pga/73/2019/01/23/the-importance-of-multilateralism-and-the-role-of-the-un-general-assembly-in-the-maintenance-of-international-peace-and-security/>. Last access June 14, 2023.

¹¹⁶ Vladimir Tarakanov and Zhu Liu, "IAEA Highlights and Achievements in 2021 – a Year in Review," IAEA, December 30, 2021, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/iaea-highlights-and-achievements-in-2021-a-year-in-review#:~:text=The%20results%20of%20the%20IAEA>. Last access June 14, 2023.

¹¹⁷ U.S Department of State, "The International Atomic Energy Agency," United States Department of State, n.d., <https://www.state.gov/iaea/>. Last access June 14, 2023.

¹¹⁸ Fred Tanner, "Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution: Limits of Multilateralism - ICRC," International Review of the Red Cross, September 30, 2000, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/57jqj2.htm>.

other words, all parties involved must agree to a set of rules that adheres to a shared understanding of conflict resolution.¹¹⁹

Regional multilateral institutes play a crucial role in this case. External parties who decide to get involved in that particular area after the conflict has broken out cannot instantly acquire their knowledge of local society and culture or the local reputation they have established. So the local multilateral institute needs to be the main mediator in helping to ease the tension. As shown by the conflict in Myanmar. While the UN and other international organization have tried their best, there is still a limitation to what they can do.¹²⁰ On the other hand, a regional multilateral institution like ASEAN has done a better job of involving and negotiating with the Myanmar military junta.¹²¹

2.2.3. Enhancing Democracy and International Law

The multilateral agreement is one of the main sources of international law.¹²² As more and more agreements are enforced more norms and customary laws are being followed and created. All of these agreements have set a universal legal standard for all countries across the globe. Multilateralism has undoubtedly created the current rule base of global governance as people know it today as mentioned in the previous chapter. Multilateral institutions not only govern the relationship between all states actor and also other aspects like economics, trade, human rights, and the environmental sector as well.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Rebecca Barber, "Can ASEAN Forge a Political Solution in Myanmar?" Lowy Institute, March 22, 2023, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/can-asean-forge-political-solution-myanmar>. Last access June 14, 2023.

¹²¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, "Report of the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar to the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits," MFAIC, November 17, 2022, <https://www.mfaic.gov.kh/posts/2022-11-17-Press-Release-Report-of-the-Special-Envoy-of-the-ASEAN-Chair-on-Myanmar-to-the-40th-and-41st-ASEAN--Summits--17-51-09>. Last access June 14, 2023.

¹²² United Nations, "Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties," *The American Journal of International Law* 63, no. 4 (October 1969): 875, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2199522>.

¹²³ "Global Multilateralism Defining the Kingdom of the Netherlands' Position in a Changing Multilateral Global Order," accessed June 17, 2023, <https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documenten/publications/2023/06/08/policy-framework-global-multilaterism/Policy+Framework+Global+Multilateralism.pdf>.

Additionally, multilateral organizations like the UN also advocate democracy to its member states as well. Since the UN Charter was adopted, the UN has taken the lead among all international organizations in promoting democracy. The UN supports civil society in strengthening democratic institutions and accountability, encourages good governance, supervises elections, ensures self-determination in former colonies, and aids in the drafting of new constitutions in post-conflict countries.¹²⁴ While claiming to not advocate for a specific model of government, most of the democratic values are showcased in the UN treaties and resolutions. **The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** provides even more clarity by outlining the legal foundation for democratic principles like the right of self-determination, freedom of expression, the right of peaceful assembly, and the right to freedom of association with others.¹²⁵

Moreover, the UN and its subsidiaries body also push forward many collaboration projects with the local government and other actors to support the nation's transition into a democratic country. One case that perfectly showcases this point is the **United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)**¹²⁶ present in Cambodia. While intellectuals, scholars, and policy researchers are still debating whether UNTAC considers a success or familiar, the organization has undeniably restored the groundwork of Cambodia's civil society and helped conduct and administer its first national election.¹²⁷ This election set a foundation for many Cambodia elections

¹²⁴ Carina Barbosa Gouvêa and Pedro H Villas, "The Role of the UN in the Consolidation of Democracy and the Constitution-Making," UN Interventions and Democratization, January 1, 2023, 53–77, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32715-5_4.

¹²⁵ United Nations, "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," OHCHR, United Nations, December 16, 1966, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>.

¹²⁶ UNTAC refer to the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Cambodia during 1992-1993. For further reading <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/past/untacbackgr1.html>. Last Access June 19, 2023.

¹²⁷ Sam Seun, "Was UNTAC's Mission in Cambodia a Success or a Failure?" Khmer Times, October 21, 2021, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50956684/was-untacs-mission-in-cambodia-a-success-or-a-failure/>. Last Access June 19, 2023.

to come and push Cambodia toward the road of democracy. As a result, Cambodia citizens live in a free and stable situation till present.

2.2.4. The Increasing of Legal Instruments and Mechanisms Related to Human Rights

Wars have damaging consequences on global security and can wipe out many people in a blink of an eye. With such a heavy effect, multilateralism plays an important role in protecting people by adopting legal regulations and instruments to protect people from suffering. New norms, regulations, and accountability mechanisms was created to strengthen the multilateral system in areas where gaps have emerged to protect millions of lives.

Multilateral institutions, especially the UN, are playing a crucial role, acting as a convening power and the main driving force in the adoption of specific multilateral treaties in a variety of areas, such as human rights, international humanitarian law, international criminal law, and maritime law.¹²⁸

The United Nations' most noticeable accomplishment regarding human right is the creation of the **United Nations Human Rights (UNHR)** which outline the rights and freedom of humankind.¹²⁹ While the document itself does not have a binding effect, it provides support for all human rights monitoring mechanisms in the UN system and is set as a foundation for the other UN framework regarding human rights conventions or regulations.¹³⁰ Two of the main legally binding convention that comes from the UNHR are the **International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights** and the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**.¹³¹

¹²⁸ “UN at 75: Effective Multilateralism and International Law Chair’s Summary,” accessed June 17, 2023, https://legal.un.org/ola/media/recent_dev/mss/2020/10.UN75/2020-10-09-Summary-conference.pdf.

¹²⁹ United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” United Nations, 1948, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

¹³⁰ “Declaration on Human Rights Defenders,” OHCHR, n.d., <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-human-rights-defenders/declaration-human-rights-defenders#:~:text=The%20Declaration%20is%20not%2C%20in>.

¹³¹ “Human Rights,” United Nations, n.d., <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/human-rights#:~:text=The%20Human%20Rights%20Council%2C%20established>.

Currently, there are seven fundamental international human rights treaties.¹³² The purpose is to oversee how signatories' parties are carrying out its provisions, each of these agreements also has established an expert committee to help the monitoring process.¹³³ A few of the treaties have optional protocols that address particular issues. In addition to the human rights treaty, the UN also establish 10 human rights bodies which are composed of committees of impartial experts as well.¹³⁴ According to the UN website

*“As a whole, the United Nations provides 91.4 million people with food and assistance in 83 countries in the world. The United Nations helps and protects 71.4 million people fleeing war, famine, and persecution. In 2023, 1 in every 45 people on the planet will need humanitarian assistance, and the majority of that assistance will be coordinated through the United Nations. The United Nations provides vaccines to nearly half of the world's children, or 45%, helping to save 3 million lives every year.”*¹³⁵

2.3. The Effort in Improving Environment over Climate Change and Global Warming

Multilateralism remains an important player, in dealing with environmental crises such as climate change and increasing global temperature. Since environmental issues not just result in local damage to boundaries but are affecting globally, thus multilateralism is essential by enabling countries to take into account the well-being of persons living outside their boundaries. Yet the global environment is very complex, pushing the global community to move forward together in order to address the environmental crisis. Multilateralism has shown a notable achievement in environmental problems. For example, the **Montreal Protocol** to phase out ozone-depleting substances adopted in 1987, is currently signed by 197 countries. It is the first

¹³² “Core International Human Rights Instruments,” United Nations Population Fund, n.d., <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/core-international-human-rights-instruments#:~:text=There%20are%20seven%20core%20international>.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ “Instruments & Mechanisms,” OHCHR, n.d., <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-and-mechanisms#:~:text=The%20ten%20human%20rights%20Treaty>.

¹³⁵ “What It Takes,” United Nations, accessed June 21, 2023, <https://www.un.org/en/campaigns/what-it-takes#:~:text=DID%20YOU%20KNOW%3F>.

treaty in the history of the United Nations to achieve universal ratification – and is considered by many the most successful environmental global action protection from the rise of global warming. In 1995, the United Nations named September 16 the international day for the protection of the ozone layer.¹³⁶

Environmental crises become a well-known common risk so the practice of multilateralism in this problem will also inspire and influence other international organizations, non-international organizations, states, and individuals from various sectors to take into their account and join together to take action, such as the 17 **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** of UN that is a universal call for action by all countries (including developed and developing) and global partnership. Most importantly the 17 SDGs also highlight environmental sustainability. Another example is the Paris Agreement, which was established as a second, legally binding international agreement on climate change, was approved by 196 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on December 12, 2015, and it became effective on November 4, 2016.¹³⁷

Additionally, the EU recently adopted a new strategy called “**The European Green Deal**” Another initiation in regard to the environmental problem is the “**ASEAN Green Deal**” which is initiated by Cambodia, during its chairmanship in 2022. The EU Green Deal framework aims to deliver a pollution-free environment by 2050 and achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions (a reduction of at least 55%) within the EU.¹³⁸ So as stated by Patricia Espinosa, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary, multilateralism remains “the world’s vehicle for addressing climate change”.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ US EPA, “International Actions - the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer” US EPA, October 2018, <https://www.epa.gov/ozone-layer-protection/international-actions-montreal-protocol-substances-deplete-ozone-layer>.

¹³⁷ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, “The Paris Agreement,” UNFCCC, 2015, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>.

¹³⁸ “EU Green Deal,” EU-ASEAN, <https://euinasean.eu/eu-green-deal/>. accessed June 19, 2023.

¹³⁹ UNFCCC, “Multilateralism Key to Achieving Climate Goals,” 2022, <https://unfccc.int/news/multilateralism-key-to-achieving-climate-goals>. Last accessed June 19, 2023.

2.4. Strengthen the Collaboration on Other Challenges

Collective action is essential in striving for solutions to address new challenges in the twenty-first century, including technological advancement to global health issues and poverty reduction. Many causes of instabilities happened in the last couple of years, which triggered the world to advocate to have better and even stronger cooperation in order to deal with and prepare to face such consequences, and to respond to these new era risks that will be emphasized in below:

2.4.1. Technology advancement:

Multilateral cooperation like the **Digital Silk Road**¹⁴⁰ has helped developing countries improve their usage of technology and the internet. This project has provided the small countries a chance to catch up with the world, while also brings benefits for China's economy as well.

a. Addressing Cyberspace and Cybersecurity

The world is now constantly shifting into a new era of digitalization. The developments in 5G network technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), information and communication technologies (ICT), and the use of various social media platforms, are considered to face with security risks (Cybersecurity). The covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technology which forces people to adapt and influence heavily on people's daily lives. Furthermore, people also rely heavily on technology in order to keep them connected between countries and continents. At the same time, with those developments they will have an impact as an example for online platforms, they don't have actual limitations or guarantees to be secure on user data or privacy yet.

¹⁴⁰ Digital Silk Road is a part of China's Belt and Road Initiative consisting of technology, telecommunications networks and other high-tech areas. For Further reading, <https://www.cfr.org/china-digital-silk-road/>

Since most people deeply depend on those platforms and plus those platforms allow people to have free access most of the time they did not think about cyber threats or attacks. Especially, the official governments, countries have to work online because of the lockdown and social distancing during the pandemic that is why every confidential document is also sent through email or other method which has a high risk of leaking the information.

To counter this problem multilateral institutions are beginning to host meetings with other players to discuss and draft regulations to govern the issue while minimizing the impact on states' interests. The risk of cybersecurity was also recognized as the top global risk landscape, during the World Economic Forum.¹⁴¹ One of the first frameworks is the **Global Counter-Terrorism Programmed on Cybersecurity and New Technologies**, adopted by the UN in April 2020. By providing capacity-building support to member states, and international and regional organizations upon their request, within the new challenges, for developing and implementing effective resolution in order to respond to challenges and opportunities from any consequences of the internet and other information and communications technologies.

While multilateralism had put forward a regulation regarding technological development, it also has pushed for innovation, and the advancement of technology as well.

2.4.2. Pandemic Combating: Vaccine Cooperation

Most countries around the world have been suffering badly from fighting the covid-19 pandemic, putting global health into emergency and turning the global economic upside down. As covid-19 suddenly became a complex global pandemic, only one country or one region alone, cannot be dealt with on its own. The global suffering would have been worse, without international cooperation to take action timely. In 2020, the world was hit hard due to the strong

¹⁴¹ "The Power of Transformative Technology – IMF F&D," IMF, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2021/03/shifting-to-a-hyperconnected-world-tourpe.htm>. accessed June 20, 2023.

spread of the virus, most countries are far from receiving the vaccine thus the UN's contribution to give support is very notable. The head of the WHO is actively gathering global coordination: spreading awareness on how to protect themselves from the spread of viruses, providing protective equipment to health workers, and working closely to tackle the root cause of the spread of the virus and fostering the research on vaccines. With this awareness, people around the world start to follow the guidance from the WHO, by wearing masks, staying hygienic, and keeping social distance for such a while long periods.

In this regard, **COVAX**, this initiative is a fundamental global collaboration “to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines for every country worldwide.”¹⁴² As of 15 November 2022, COVAX has delivered 1.8 billion vaccines to 146 countries, according to UNICEF which is a key delivery partner. And Cambodia is among those countries that received vaccine support from COVAX. Last but not least, there was another strategy to shorten the end of the pandemic, named **Strategy to Achieve Global Covid-19 Vaccination by mid-2022**, under the WHO. The strategy aims to achieve 70% of the world's population to get Covid-19 vaccinated by mid-2022.¹⁴³

2.4.3 Countering Terrorism

Terrorism has become a major global issue. The UN, as a form of multilateralism, plays a very significant role in defending and countering terrorism, as the terrorist threat is constantly developing. Therefore, there is the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), which has coordinated with the UN’s approaches, especially the four pillars of the UN Global Counter-terrorism strategy to defend terrorism and scale up their support to all member states, achieving a world free from terrorism and through promoting multilateral cooperation. The

¹⁴² WHO, “COVAX: Working for Global Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines,” World Health Organization, 2020, <https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator/covax>.

¹⁴³ “Strategy to Achieve Global Covid-19 Vaccination by Mid-2022,” June 20, 2023, https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/immunization/covid-19/strategy-to-achieve-global-covid-19-vaccination-by-mid-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=5a68433c_5.

UNOCT has achieved great counter-terrorism. Likewise, in the 21st century, there is another complex challenge with the use of technologies by the terrorist group.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ United Nations, "Office of Counter-Terrorism," www.un.org, 2023, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/>.

CHAPTER III: ADDRESSING THE INEFFICACY OF MULTILATERALISM

In promoting and addressing common global challenges, multilateral institutions and cooperation have been instrumental. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, multilateralism has done a great job of boosting the world economy and preserving the established order on a global scale. While it has done amazingly based on its accomplishments, multilateralism is still a flawed system. Many started to doubt the legitimacy and effectiveness of multilateral institutions as a result of the sudden pandemic outbreak, the ongoing conflict in Myanmar, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the rising tension between China and the United States, particularly with regard to the recognition of Taiwan and its sovereignty.¹⁴⁵ Can multilateral organizations handle today's conflict-related issues? Will it be resilient enough to withstand the superpower's pressure? Or will it devolve into a mere shell of what it once was?

3.1 Superpower Pressure in the Decision-Making Process

The multilateral institution has without a doubt given a platform for the small and developing nation a chance to voice their concerns and opinions to shape the direction of the solution that will be used globally.¹⁴⁶ However, the superpowers, due to their enormous economic, military, and political power have the power to exert considerable pressure on multilateral organizations. And by doing so the goals and priorities of these organizations are mostly focused on what is beneficial to their agendas and interest. The effectiveness and credibility of multilateralism can be hampered by the pressure of superpowers in the action and decision-making process. Countries like the United States, China, Russia, France, and the

¹⁴⁵ International crisis group, "Ten Challenges for the UN in 2022-2023," www.crisisgroup.org, September 14, 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/b8-united-states/ten-challenges-un-2022-2023>. Last Access July 2, 2023.

¹⁴⁶ "Multilateral Development Banks and WHO Launch New Investment Platform to Strengthen Primary Health Care Services," World Health Organization, June 23, 2023, <https://www.who.int/news/item/23-06-2023-multilateral-development-banks-and-who-launch-new-investment-platform-to-strengthen-primary-health-care-services>.

United Kingdom could advocate their interest, especially since most of the time they have veto power (the power to influence various decision-making internationally).

a. Veto Power in the UN Security Council

The UNSC is one of the main bodies of the United Nations.¹⁴⁷ It consists of five permanent members, also known as the P5, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, France, and China.¹⁴⁸ They were considered "**the board of directors of the world**" by Roosevelt.¹⁴⁹ Under Article 23 of the UN Charter, the UNSC is the only body with permanent members.¹⁵⁰ Article 24 of the charter also granted exceptional authority and power to the P5, allowing it to act on behalf of the member states.¹⁵¹ This is a contradiction to the UN Principle that all states are equal.

According to Article 27, "Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members, including the concurring votes of the permanent members".¹⁵²

This means that while a majority vote is required for the UNSC decision, the P5 member has the power to veto that decision. It also implies that they can hinder any decisions that they disagree with or that will affect their interests.

The P5 members, as they have shown time and time again, have used their veto power to alter the decision-making in the UNSC. A case in point is the stagnation of the situation in Ukraine. A day after the invasion began, the council held a meeting and proposed a draft

¹⁴⁷ United Nations, "Main Bodies," United Nations, n.d., <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/main-bodies#:~:text=The%20main%20bodies%20of%20the>.

¹⁴⁸ Supra note 147.

¹⁴⁹ Karl Limbert Limbert and Alexander Ramsbotham, "The P5 and the Slow Pace of Security Council Reform," archive.globalpolicy.org, 2000, <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/un-reform/un-reform-topics/reform-of-the-security-council-9-16/41307.html?intemid=916>. Last Access June 30, 2023.

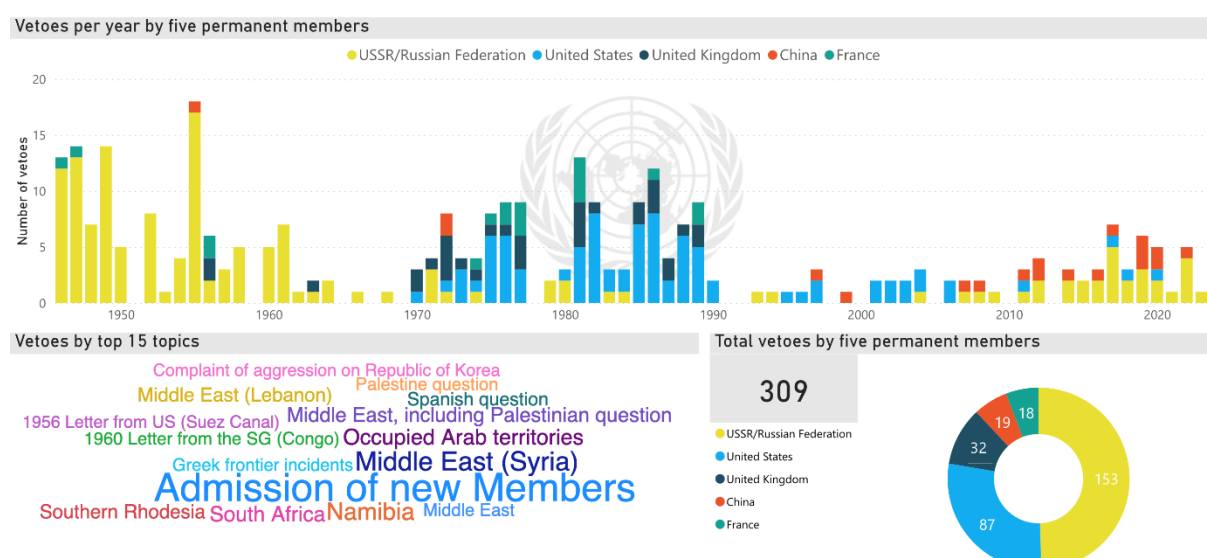
¹⁵⁰ "United Nations Charter," United Nations, 1945, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

resolution ordering Russia to cease its action and pull its troops back immediately.¹⁵³ This draft resulted in 11 votes and 3 abstentions; however, it still failed due to a veto from Russia itself.¹⁵⁴ Including this resolution, Russia has vetoed twice on any action regarding Ukraine.¹⁵⁵

Besides Russia, the United States has historically often exercised its veto power and, sometimes, even gone as far as to bypass the UN to attack other sovereign nations without the UNSC's authorization. The shining example is the US actions regarding Iraq and their disregard for **UNSC Resolution 1441**.¹⁵⁶ According to the UN as of 2022, Among the five permanent members, Russia and the former Soviet Union made use of their veto power 152 times, followed by 87 for the US, 32 for Britain, 19 for China, and 18 for France.¹⁵⁷



Source: Security Council Data - Vetoes since 1946

¹⁵³ European Union, “UN General Assembly Demands Russian Federation Withdraw All Military Forces from the Territory of Ukraine,” European Union, March 2, 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/un-general-assembly-demands-russian-federation-withdraw-all-military-forces-territory-ukraine_en.

¹⁵⁴ The United Nation, “Hours before Ukraine Conflict Enters Second Year, General Assembly Adopts Resolution Demanding Russian Federation Withdraw Military Forces, Adjourning Emergency Session,” UN press, n.d., <https://press.un.org/en/2023/ga12492.doc.htm>.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations, “Research Guides: Security Council - Quick Links: Vetoes,” 2019, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick>. Last access July 4, 2023.

¹⁵⁶ United Nation, “Security Council Holds First Debate on Iraq since Start of Military Action; Speakers Call for Halt to Aggression, Immediate Withdrawal,” UN Press, March 26, 2003, <https://press.un.org/en/2003/sc7705.doc.htm>.

¹⁵⁷ United Nation, “Security Council Data - Vetoes since 1946,” Peace Security Data Hub, July 3, 2023, <https://psdata.un.org/dataset/DPPA-SCVETOES>. Last Access July 4, 2023.

One can argue that the veto system makes it impossible for the UNSC to act quickly, which eventually results in serious crises. It also fails to ensure that major powers make coordinated efforts to contain armed conflicts.

Superpower countries typically have high demands on multilateral organizations, especially in areas where those interests coincide with their own. They might demand favorable laws, special treatment, or more power in decision-making. For multilateral organizations, striking a balance between these demands and the values of equality and inclusivity can be challenging.

b. World Trade Organization

In some international organizations, a few selective countries hold so much power to the point that it can even cripple the function of the organization. In the past, the aims and direction of the World Trade Organization are shaped according to the West economic interest. Big players like the U.S. enjoy this status quo. Furthermore, in 2019 the US also threaten to freeze the WTO budget and funding.¹⁵⁸ This action led the other members to accuse the US of holding the WTO system hostage for its own benefit.

In the WTO, the US also hold power to veto the appointment of appellate judges. During the Trump administration, the now-former president threatened to withdraw the US from the WTO. Mr. Trump stated that "We lose the lawsuits, almost all the lawsuits in the WTO".¹⁵⁹ Unsatisfied with the ruling of the World Trade Organization dispute settlement body, the Trump administration crippled the WTO's Appellate Body, which acts as the appeal court for rulings made by the dispute settlement body. The US has blocked any attempt to appoint new judges,

¹⁵⁸ Tommaso Soave, "EJIL: Talk! – Who Controls WTO Dispute Settlement? Reflections on the Appellate Body's Crisis from a Socio-Professional Perspective," 2020, <https://www.ejiltalk.org/who-controls-wto-dispute-settlement-reflections-on-the-appellate-bodys-crisis-from-a-socio-professional-perspective/>.

¹⁵⁹ "Trump Threatens to Pull US out of World Trade Organization," BBC News, August 31, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45364150>. Last access July 8, 2023.

citing an unfair judicial ruling against its sovereignty.¹⁶⁰ Due to this, the appellate body is currently unable to conduct its work as the term for the last sitting appellate body member expires on November 20, 2020, and there has been no new judge appointed since then.¹⁶¹ The oversight has raised questions about the WTO's ability to uphold multilateral trade regulations and demonstrated the influence that nations like the United States have over the multilateral organization to the point that it can demolish one of the WTO's primary bodies just because it was split with the decision.

Moreover, contrary to what the former president has said, some analysis has shown that the US prevailed on 91% of adjudicated issues that it raised to the WTO.¹⁶² Furthermore, many of the WTO members show dissatisfaction with the US action. One of the ambassadors' states:

*“The actions of one member will deprive other members of their right to a binding and two-step dispute settlement system, even though this right is specifically envisaged in the WTO contract”*¹⁶³

c. World Bank

Since it was founded until now, the World Bank has been dominated by the US and its alliances. Time and time again, many have criticized the World Bank, saying that it is a tool for American influence. As stated on the World Bank's official website:

¹⁶⁰ Keith Rockwell, “Recent WTO Ruling against the United States Highlights Challenges in Dispute Resolution,” Wilson Center, December 15, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/recent-wto-ruling-against-united-states-highlights-challenges-dispute-resolution>. Last access July 9, 2023.

¹⁶¹ World Trade Organization, “Dispute Settlement - Appellate Body,” accessed July 9, 2023, https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/appellate_body_e.htm#:~:text=Currently%2C%20the%20Appellate%20Body%20is. Last access July 8, 2023.

¹⁶² Dan Ikenson, “US Trade Laws and the Sovereignty Canard,” Forbes, March 9, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danikenson/2017/03/09/u-s-trade-laws-and-the-sovereignty-canard/?sh=46577283203f>.

¹⁶³ “U.S. Seals Demise of WTO Appeals Bench - Trade Officials,” Reuters, December 9, 2019, sec. Industry, Materials and Utilities, <https://www.reuters.com/article/trade-wto/u-s-seals-demise-of-wto-appeals-bench-trade-officials-idUSL8N28J3L6>. Last access July 8, 2023.

“As the only World Bank Group shareholder that retains veto power over certain changes in the Bank’s structure, the United States plays a unique role in influencing and shaping global development priorities.”¹⁶⁴

As a matter of fact, except for the interim president in 2019, all of the WB presidents have always been US citizens.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, voting power in these institutions is disproportionately skewed in favor of wealthy nations, especially the US and its alliance. According to the World Bank, all of its member countries are shareholders.¹⁶⁶ However, in the institution, all the members are not equally represented, specifically in terms of voting. Unlike most other international organizations, which favor the one nation, one vote system, the World Bank uses a weighted voting system. This means that the power to vote depends on the contribution to the bank.¹⁶⁷

The US controls well over half of the voting power, together with the other members of the G7 and the EU, giving it de facto veto power over all important decisions. While the population of middle- and low-income countries, which make up 85% of the global population, has a minority share.¹⁶⁸ Due to this system, it can be safe to assume that the bank is under the control of the US since it has the largest percentage of the vote. The World Bank also requires an 85% supermajority to pass any resolution,¹⁶⁹ which makes it extremely difficult, if not nearly impossible, to pass a motion without the United States' agreement and support.

¹⁶⁴ “Overview,” World Bank, 2017, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/usa/overview>. Last access July 10, 2023

¹⁶⁵ Vanya Gautam, “Explained: Why All of World Bank’s Presidents Have Been from the US,” IndiaTimes, February 27, 2023, <https://www.indiatimes.com/worth/news/why-us-has-dominated-list-of-world-bank-presidents-594352.html>. Last access July 10, 2023.

¹⁶⁶ “Organization,” World Bank, n.d., <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership#:~:text=The%20World%20Bank%20is%20like>. Last access July 10, 2023

¹⁶⁷ William Gianaris, “Weighted Voting in the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank,” Fordham International Law Journal 14, no. 4 (1990),

<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1291&context=ilj>.

¹⁶⁸ “Top 8 Countries Voting Power,” World Bank Group Finances, n.d., <https://finances.worldbank.org/Shareholder-Equity/Top-8-countries-voting-power/udm3-vzz9>. Last access July 10, 2023.

¹⁶⁹ “World Bank Document,” World Bank, n.d., <https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/694761468142485381/pdf/323810v2.pdf>.

Furthermore, the World Bank's administration cites that their loan distribution is supported by economic justification according to the procedure and rules that have been set. But in actuality, the US government's interference in the bank's operations is primarily motivated by political goals and its own interests. One of the prime examples of this issue is the case in Chile. Chile's copper companies were nationalized by President Salvador Allende in 1970,¹⁷⁰ resulting in financial losses for American investors. The United States sought retaliatory measures, including the suspension of World Bank loans to Chile. This demonstrates the close relationship between the United States and the World Bank, as well as the American business sector. Following Allende's assassination in 1973, World Bank funding resumed in Chile, lending credence to the claim that the US seized control of the bank and used it to bolster its economic concerns.¹⁷¹

3.2. The Self-Interest of Individual State

One of the good things about multilateralism is its number. However, aligning those individual state interests is hard. Multilateral organizations consist of member states with diverse priorities, interests, and levels of development.¹⁷² Finding common ground and coming to a consensus can be a difficult and time-consuming process. Conflicting national interests may interfere with collective action and hinder progress on critical issues. States can choose not to be obligated to support bills that will not be beneficial to them, even if collectively speaking they are for the good of the world. No matter what national interest, it always comes first on the global stage.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Carlos Fortin, "Compensating the Multinationals: Chile and the United States Copper Companies," *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin* 7, no. 1 (May 22, 2009): 23–29, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.1975.mp7001005.x>.

¹⁷¹ Eric Toussaint, "World Bank and IMF Support to Dictatorships," CADTM, April 2020, https://www.cadtm.org/spip.php?page=imprimer&id_article=2204. Last access July 10, 2023.

¹⁷² "Multilateral Organizations," Open Government Partnership, n.d., <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/multilateral-organizations/>.

¹⁷³ M Cox, "Introduction to International Relations," 2016, <https://we.hse.ru/data/2018/06/05/1150097170/program-2109677112-zFMKGsZz4i.pdf>.

For instance, environmental conventions like the Paris Agreement. Developing nations argue that developed countries like the U.S., China, and the EU are hugely responsible for causing environmental issues like climate change and global warming.¹⁷⁴ These developed countries have already exploited most of their non-renewable natural resources, including oil, gas, minerals, and timber, to help accelerate their development since the industrial revolution. However, now with the rising issue of natural disasters, all of those developed countries are calling for multilateral cooperation to address those issues, including some small countries that have yet to have the technology to extract their natural resources. This causes discontent among the smaller nations across Africa and Asia since they feel like the developed countries should be responsible regarding this issue.¹⁷⁵ Iran's resistance to ratification is largely due to its reliance on oil, which has been made more difficult by the failure of the nuclear agreement reached in July 2015 between Tehran and other major powers, led by Washington.¹⁷⁶

The UN climate change conference, or '**Conference of the Parties (COP) 27**' held in Egypt showed once again that despite important efforts by some of the delegates to tackle the issue however individual interest is still an obstacle to achieving a united solution regarding climate change, and the negotiation process disintegrates entirely.¹⁷⁷ The conference resulted in developing countries receiving compensation for all the losses and damage caused by climate change. However, there is still no mention of which countries will provide those funds or how much money it will be.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Simon Evans, "Analysis: Which Countries Are Historically Responsible for Climate Change?" Carbon Brief, October 5, 2021, <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-which-countries-are-historically-responsible-for-climate-change/>.

¹⁷⁵ William James, Richard Valdmanis, and Dominic Evans, "COP27: Polluters Must Pay for Climate Change, Poor Nations Tell Rich," Reuters, November 8, 2022, sec. COP27, <https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/cop27-small-island-nations-want-big-oil-pay-up-climate-damage-2022-11-08/>.

¹⁷⁶ Soila Apparicio and Natalie Sauer, "Which Countries Have Not Ratified the Paris Climate Agreement?" Climate Home News, August 13, 2020, <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/08/13/countries-yet-ratify-paris-agreement/>.

¹⁷⁷ UN Climate Change, "Five Key Takeaways from COP27," UNFCCC, 2023, https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/sharm-el-sheikh-climate-change-conference-november-2022/five-key-takeaways-from-cop27?gclid=EAAIaIQobChMI78fbtcj0_wIVp5lmAh0Ddw5pEAAYASAAEgJ6mfD_BwE.

¹⁷⁸ "Opinion: COP27 Will Be Remembered as a Failure – Here's What Went Wrong," UCL News, November 21, 2022, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2022/nov/opinion-cop27-will-be-remembered-failure-heres-what-went-wrong>.

3.3. Geopolitics and geostrategic rivalry

Geopolitics is defined as the interplay between geography, power, and international relations. It has significantly influenced the functioning of multilateral organizations. The pursuit of national interests, territorial disputes, and strategic alliances often shape the decision-making processes within these institutions. Geopolitical rivalries can hinder effective multilateral cooperation, as conflicting interests and power struggles undermine consensus-building efforts. Not to mention that multilateralism, while based on international cooperation, does not eliminate or override international competition and rivalry.

This is evident in the efforts to fight the covid pandemic. As the pandemic hit, many powerful nations rushed to work on producing vaccines to combat the virus. States were competing against one another to be the first to successfully create an effective vaccine. This vaccine competition is especially intense between the US and China. Both countries use their vaccines as a tool to spread their influence and agenda to the receiving state and were favoring their alliances and bilateral deals over providing this support to WHO to ensure an equitable distribution of vaccines worldwide.¹⁷⁹

Furthermore, not only does the geo-rivalry between superpower influences exist in the same multilateral institution, but this competition has led to the fragmentation of multilateral organizations. Superpower countries have begun to establish their own rival multilateral institutes to counter each other's influence on the already existing organization. A case in point is the creation of the SCO and AIIB by China. China created those institutions of financial cooperation to counter the influence and power of the West in the World Bank and IMF.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Dechun Zhang and Ahmed Bux Jamali, "China's 'Weaponized' Vaccine: Intertwining between International and Domestic Politics," East Asia, January 21, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-021-09382-x>.

¹⁸⁰ Adam Behsudi, "The 'Rift Is There': China vs. the World on Global Debt," POLITICO, November 4, 2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/04/11/china-lending-imf-world-bank-00090588>. Last access July 10, 2023.

3.4. The Limitation of Complying with International Legal Instruments and Decisions

States' failure to uphold their international obligations, along with the selective compliance and exploitation of already-existing frameworks and mechanisms, threatened to undermine the rule of law principle's application on a global scale.¹⁸¹ International rules are rarely enforced, but they are frequently followed. Although it is a great set of guidelines for how states should behave, the general consensus is that the enforcement mechanisms of international law are sometimes used inconsistently. International law can only be truly enforced, at least in the case of permanent Security Council members, if the state agrees to it. This is because international law is created with the idea of state sovereignty at its core.

For instance, the United States created a negative precedent under George W. Bush when it disregarded the international court following its illegal invasion of Iraq. In the past, when Western powers broke international law, they weren't punished with economic sanctions like most of the other countries who violated international law have experienced. Russia has broken numerous international laws in the invasion of Ukraine. There has been a lot of suffering as a result of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. It is to blame for countless accidents, fatalities, and property damage.¹⁸² Additionally, it has forced millions of refugees from the war to relocate. However, many multilateral institutions can't seem to enforce their rule and fulfill their promises of maintaining peace and punishing those who threaten global security.

Moreover, the US, the country that prides itself in being the human rights champion has till the time of the writing yet to ratify some of the important human rights documents proposed by the UN.¹⁸³ While at the same time, under the banner of humanitarian intervention,

¹⁸¹ "States Not Adhering to International Obligations Undermine Rule of Law, Sixth Committee Delegates Say, as Debate on Principle Concludes," UN Press, n.d., <https://press.un.org/en/2019/gal3597.doc.htm>. Last access July 10, 2023.

¹⁸² Michael Ovaska, "Russia's Invasion Causes Damage across Ukraine," Reuters, September 12, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/UKRAINE-CRISIS/DAMAGE/lbpgnqnljvq/>. Last access July 10, 2023.

¹⁸³ "Treaty Ratification," American Civil Liberties Union, n.d., <https://www.aclu.org/issues/human-rights/treaty-ratification#:~:text=Despite%20its%20ostensible%20position%20as>. Last access July 10, 2023.

invaded many countries and use this same excuse to sanction and punish the government that is not aligned with its ideology. This hypocrisy and double standard is chipping away at the legitimacy of multilateralism.

3.5. Power Imbalance

There is always a question that arises about whether the small state fully has a voice over the major powers on the international stage or within the existence of international organizations whose collective multilateral cooperation can be shaped by the major power, and in turn, does the major power truly follow those existing norms and laws? In any circumstance, there is a huge gap between the small countries that lack power and the major power countries that have the ability to influence others. In contrast to the new challenge scenarios, such as the security threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorist groups, which can probably be dealt with by the international organizations themselves, most of the time the major power is not restrained by the rules or laws that are adopted by those internationally organized. Thus, this might have an effect on other states and whether they should continue to respect those regulations. Obviously, during this world's current situation, those collective challenges (environmental issues, security threats, or pandemics) forced countries around the globe and multilateral corporations to join together in order to tackle the issues and find solutions on time. However, as the problems occurred, people could clearly see how weak multilateralism is toward the great power countries. In line with the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the UN took action against the Russia-Ukraine conflict by putting many sanctions in place, despite the fact that Russia, as one of the major power countries, does not respect the warning at all. Meanwhile, the UN is trying to promote and protect human rights through the creation of an international criminal court (ICC), but the United States, Russia, and China, as the great powers, are not

members of the ICC.¹⁸⁴ Those collective challenges have put the institution of multilateralism under pressure from a power imbalance, which causes small countries, especially, to hardly avoid taking sides when China and the US, as the world's superpowers, become competitive with each other.

3.6. The Intervention of Superpower in Weaker Nations (National Sovereignty Vs Responsibility to Protect)

Although the United Nations has long emphasized the value of respecting sovereignty after the conflicts of the 1990s, academics, and diplomats reexamined this position. The **Responsibility to Protect (R2P)** doctrine, which was adopted in 2005, asserts that nations have a fundamental sovereign obligation to safeguard their citizens.¹⁸⁵ If they fail, the UN system may intervene to protect those who are most in need, potentially at the expense of another country's sovereignty. The R2P doctrine was put to the test in the civil war in Libya in 2011, sparking discussion about the fine line between upholding sovereignty and defending human rights. In the debate on the responsibility to protect hosted by the UN general assembly, one of the representatives remarked:

“Developing countries have strong reasons to fear that laudable motives can end up being misused, once more, to justify arbitrary and selective interventions against the weakest States [...] do the rules apply in principle, and is it likely that the principle would be applied only by the strong against the weak? [...] What is more, the operation of the veto assures that the doctrine cannot be applied to the permanent members of the

¹⁸⁴ “The States Parties to the Rome Statute,” International Criminal Court, 2023, <https://asp.icc-cpi.int/states-parties>.

¹⁸⁵ “United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect,” United Nation, n.d., <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml#:~:text=Paragraphs%20on%20the%20Responsibility%20to%20Protect&text=Each%20individual%20State%20has%20the>.

Security Council. No system of justice can be legitimate that, by design, allows principles of justice to be applied differentially.”¹⁸⁶

a. Case of Iraq

The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a huge foreign policy disaster, with humanitarian intervention serving as one of its justifications.¹⁸⁷ The US initially claimed to be protecting Iraq from Saddam Hussein's mistreatment and torture. However, due to weak intelligence, the West was unable to establish proof of Hussein's nuclear or weapons of mass destruction possession. The Bush administration shifted its focus to pushing humanitarian action as a credible cause for the war.¹⁸⁸ The fundamental goal of the invasion was to control Iraq's oil riches, eliminate a rival, and defend Israel. When an armed insurgency was started against them, US-led coalition forces slaughtered hundreds of Iraqis indiscriminately, tortured innocent Iraqis, and turned against civilians they claimed to be protecting.

b. Case of Libya

On February 26, 2011, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1970, which specifically mentioned the R2P, in response to the Libyan regime's widespread and systematic attacks against the civilian population and Muammar Gaddafi's rhetorical allusions to the Rwandan genocide.¹⁸⁹ The council gave member states the go-ahead to take the necessary precautions to defend people who are in danger of attack. As soon as NATO jets started attacking Gaddafi's soldiers, their conduct during the airstrikes came under scrutiny. Between 2,000 and 30,000 civilian casualties who were supposed to be protected were reported over the

¹⁸⁶ “Assembly President Warns on Doctrine to Intervene on War Crimes, Atrocities,” UN News, July 23, 2009, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2009/07/307582>. Last access July 10, 2023.

¹⁸⁷ Council on Foreign Relations, “The Iraq War,” Council on Foreign Relations, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/iraq-war>. Last access July 10, 2023.

¹⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch, “War in Iraq: Not a Humanitarian Intervention,” Human Rights Watch, January 25, 2004, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/01/25/war-iraq-not-humanitarian-intervention>.

¹⁸⁹ “S/RES/1970 (2011),” United Nations Security Council, 2011, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/s/res/1970-%282011%29>.

course of the seven-month aerial campaign.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, many intellectuals remark that the coalition of Western forces' true objective for the intervention was regime change.¹⁹¹ Under the guise of R2P, US-NATO made the removal of Qaddafi, who had an opposition stance against the West ideology, appear to be a respectable and honorable act in the eyes of the rest of the world.

3.7. Security Threat

In the present time, multilateralism is in crisis and facing a lot more challenges with a bunch of new emergent problems compared to the early 21st century, especially within the problem of a security threat. The UN, as a global actor, and other international organizations as facilitators of multilateralism stressed the need to maintain global security as there have been many conflicts between countries and countries themselves. Just like the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which caused the oil and gas prices to increasingly rise and made the global oil markets insatiable. While the UN Security Council seems to fail to maintain peace between these two countries, even though they also have multilateralism to take action in terms of helping to settle the conflict, the tensions are still getting worse. By cutting off-market trade and putting economic sanctions on Russia, all member states of the UN were called by the UN general assembly to take immediate action against Russia, and Cambodia as a member state also joined the UN resolution on Russia on October 12, 2022, by voting against Russia and also becoming a co-sponsoring country among the other 35 countries.¹⁹² Besides that, there is an internal conflict that is still ongoing in Myanmar, even if this could not harm global security but regional security would be affected, especially in ASEAN, where they sent a special envoy

¹⁹⁰ Adam Abass, "R2P and US-NATO's Humanitarian Intervention," Paradigm Shift, March 3, 2023, <https://www.paradigmshift.com.pk/r2p-humanitarian-intervention/>.

¹⁹¹ Michael Emerson, "The Responsibility to Protect and Regime Change," accessed July 10, 2023, https://aei.pitt.edu/33004/1/Dec_ME_on_R2P.pdf.

¹⁹² "With 143 Votes in Favour, 5 Against, General Assembly Adopts Resolution Condemning Russian Federation's Annexation of Four Eastern Ukraine Regions," press.un.org, accessed July 3, 2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12458.doc.htm>. Last access July 10, 2023.

as a representative to Myanmar multiple times but still cannot bring ASEAN back into 10. This means that regional multilateralism is also under threat and should be strengthened even stronger to tackle this issue timely. Furthermore, the case of North Korea's action, which is considered old and still a growing threat to global peace as they rapidly keep launching missile tests despite the warning from the UN, could affect the national security of neighboring countries.

CHAPTER IV: FUTURE PREDICTION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR MULTILATERALISM

While multilateralism is a system that is still functional, cracks started to appear as the world continued to expand. Multilateralism needs to evolve in order to meet the mounting issues that it promises to address. This chapter will discuss possible futures for multilateralism and offer some suggestions for improving multilateral institutions that play a role in global governance.

4.1. Future Scenarios of Multilateralism

Multilateralism is still fundamental to addressing and dealing with a variety of global issues and maintaining peace for future prosperity. At the same time, the future of multilateralism's scenarios in both economic and political multilateralism will be faced with deeper challenges due to the lack of current multilateral corporations and the increase of new common globalized problems, such as climate change, technological advancement, the changing of world orders, and so on. There has been a call for reforming multilateralism several times. During the open debate on a new orientation for reformed multilateralism of the Security Council, for instance, secretary-general António Guterres said "*Today's Challenges Require More Effective and Inclusive Global Cooperation*".¹⁹³ Even though those multilateral institutions as well as their member countries tried their best to contribute together in order to tackle those issues, actively but many situations keep pushing pressure again and again.

The future of economic multilateralism is now under threat due to the instability of the current world situation caused by some outstanding situations, including the covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war. This would be a long-term delay in restoring the economy back to

¹⁹³ "Today's Challenges Require More Effective and Inclusive Global Cooperation, Secretary-General Tells Security Council Debate on Multilateralism," UN Press, accessed July 12, 2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15140.doc.htm>.

normal. Following the pandemic, the global economy went into crisis, causing the WTO, and World Bank, as major actors in forming multilateral corporations to slow down their implementation of the global future plan strategy as well as for countries to recover their economies. Since countries got affected heavily, most are likely to think of building back their own economies for their domestic interests instead of looking for multilateral cooperation, while others are still suffering from the health crises and dealing with their economic downfall. When the world has been fighting the economic crisis that covid left, suddenly another issue also occurs. As mentioned above, the Russia-Ukraine conflict would be another long run for multilateralism and future economic growth. There is no one who can predict when this conflict will be ended. This war has resulted in the global oil price constantly rising and falling to support global demand. According to the WTO, the effects of the situation in Russia and Ukraine have delivered another severe challenge to the global economy as it create problem like energy and food shortage and inflation.¹⁹⁴ Such challenges are still a great reason for pushing multilateralism forward, and multilateral corporations can be seen as more crucial for building interest in the future. Despite that, responding to many new challenges or adapting to the "**new normal**" (the operation of the digital economy) requires international financial institutions and Organisations to begin to cooperate together, forcing them to set up new mechanisms for the future generation of the global economy as well.

Political multilateralism is more complex compared with economic multilateralism and can be a risk to the future of economic growth as well. There is a linkage between political tension and multilateral economic growth. This is quite hard to find balance in political terms, while the China-US rivalry creates new challenges and tensions for other countries and other international institutions. While others might predict whether China could surpass and develop

¹⁹⁴ "One Year of War in Ukraine: Assessing the Impact on Global Trade and Development," WTO, accessed July 12, 2023, https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/oneyukr_e.htm.

itself as a major power in the future, maybe this would become a consequence for the US as they are also a great power and become a difficulty for global security. Despite this, the UN represented as the standard for the multilateral actor, seem to have lost its effectiveness in global governing and responding to practical challenges. In addition to the present perspective, the UN's scenario is likely, not great, especially in regard to Russia invading Ukraine, as state members and other countries lose trust and see how this international organization has limitations over the decision-making within the issue related to those great powers. Multilateral organizations on both regional and international levels, have to be more cautious in every step they take and strengthen their solidarity even more. They will become more and more lack of freedom in the rights of political independence. World security started to have a high risk as the political changes start, which put more pressure on international security organizations like the UN and NATO to maintain peace and future prosperity. Therefore, that gap and the fragility in political cooperation make them hard to possibly find peace and common ground in the future of political multilateralism.

4.2. Recommendation

- **Accountability and Transparency:**
 - Multilateral institutions must increase their transparency and accountability in order to increase their legitimacy. This can be accomplished by improving supervision procedures, boosting information accessibility, and encouraging more coordination between national and international authorities, as well as civil society organizations.
 - Reliable information and enhanced transparency can also significantly contribute to multilateral action. Accurate data and information can help identify and address emergent risks, enabling better planning and investment.

Monitoring, data processing, and modeling advancements can empower communities, governments, and businesses to make informed decisions. Additionally, data and transparency can facilitate trust-building among nations and foster cooperation in addressing global challenges.

- **Enhancing cooperation and coordination:**

- Inclusivity broadens the base of knowledge and perspectives, leading to better policy outcomes, and is one of the key recommendations for strengthening international cooperation. By taking into account the interests and perspectives of various groups, policies can gain credibility, unity of purpose, and political trust. This inclusivity applies not only between communities but also between states.
- Nations of all sizes ought to participate in discussions that have an impact on them. It should be possible for participants from beyond the spheres of diplomacy and government to contribute significantly to international dialogues. Rebuilding trust, creating a new social contract, and engaging in productive negotiation among many players are all necessary for ensuring inclusivity.

- **Adapt to the new global dynamic:**

- Multilateral organizations must adjust to the shifting geopolitical environment as the world keeps changing. Addressing new dangers like cyberwarfare, the development of authoritarianism, and the possible instability of the global order are part of this. Institutions of global governance must be adaptable and agile in order to take advantage of emerging opportunities and deal with new problems.

- **Leverage technology and innovation:**
 - Social media and technology can help multilateralism better understand its constituents' demands and interact with its stakeholders. Institutions will be able to respond and adapt to new challenges better as a result.
 - Another opportunity is to leverage technology and innovation to enhance global governance processes. Along with leveraging the creation of new instruments and procedures for monitoring and evaluating any violations of those international rules or standards.

- **Promoting regional integration and cooperation:**
 - Promoting regional integration and cooperation is one way to strengthen multilateralism. Countries can pool resources, exchange knowledge, and create more efficient solutions to common problems by cooperating on a regional scale. Additionally, the disparity between the countries is less pronounced on a regional scale. Due to the regional similarity, the regional multilateral institutions can more easily coordinate and prioritize the interests and difficulties through supporting regional cooperation.

- **Enhancing diversity and inclusivity**
 - Advocate for effective national representation by both developed and developing countries so that representatives in international forums are not only officials from the Foreign Service and finance and trade ministries, but also experts from other sectors, sub-national officials, and other stakeholders. This will help to strengthen national priorities in the global arena.

- **Bridging the gap between National and International:**
 - Recognizing the growing overlap between national and global concerns, national and international governance gaps must be filled in order for national and global policy coherence to effectively support the global order and development. Each nation may take into account suitable systems, supported by sufficient funds and political sway.

- **Ensuring coherency**
 - There is a need to strengthen ties between all the multilateral institutes, especially the ones that are acting as international governance like the UN, World Bank, IMF, etc.
 - International financial institutions and the UN General Assembly need to be more actively engaging with each other, in order to better align the activities of the WB and the IMF with UN programs, particularly the SDGs. The UN and the IEA should work together more closely to develop energy policies and phase out fossil fuel subsidies. The WHO should also work more closely with other UN humanitarian system actors to respond to medical emergencies. At the same time, better inter-agency coordination of global efforts should be encouraged in a number of the different issue areas.
 - The UN should establish additional platforms for regular global dialogue, such as global platforms that could encourage annual meetings for information sharing, identification of complementarities, and strategic alignment of actions, in order to prevent the risk of fragmentation in global governance. State and non-state actors such as regional organizations, ad hoc groups, and members of civil society would be brought together with UN representatives on these platforms,

including the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, and the Directors-General of pertinent UN agencies to discuss various issue areas and make sure that all of the law and implementation regarding those issues are not contradictory to each other and make the implementation complicated.

- **Increasing attention to the developing countries**

- Because of the magnitude of influence that the superpowers wield in the multilateral organization, most of the concerns that have been addressed have centered on the problems of high-income countries. As a change, international organizations ought to draw attention to the issues that poor and middle-income countries experience, as they face numerous distinctive challenges that high-income countries do not. International organizations can offer a debate platform to address these issues, design a new and equitable policy and standard for all countries to follow, and provide financial or technical assistance to developing countries. International organizations should strongly emphasize their focus on developing countries.

- **Limit the influences of the superpower**

- UNSC Reform
 - Two of the most sensible Changes that need to be made in order for the UNSC to be more effective are to expand the council and to limit the P5 members of their veto power.
 - Expanding the council: UNSC as one of the most important global decision-making bodies should be more diverse with its permanent members. Countries in Africa and Asia are not at all represented in the

top decision-making process, even though it is some of the largest and most populated continents.

- The G4 Proposal: countries such as Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan have called for a change to the permanent seats at the council and nominated themselves as a candidate to become the new add-on permanent member.¹⁹⁵
- Limit the P5 veto power: The P5 members should not be given the right to veto an issue that they are directly involved in. Especially in the case of atrocious acts listed under the Rome stature, the five permanent members should be restricted from using veto rights. Another suggestion is that in order to stop any resolution from being adopted, it requires at least two permanent members to cast their veto power.

¹⁹⁵ Ramesh Thakur, “United Nations Security Council Reform,” *African Security Review* 13, no. 3 (January 2004): 66–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2004.9627305>.

Conclusion

In the time of the multipolar world, multilateral cooperation as many know has changed. The geopolitical tension between the West and the East, the ongoing Ukraine war, and the aftermath of the pandemic are putting a stain on the existing architects. Today's world is witnessing the emergence of numerous new and diverse global powers that can have an impact on both global markets and global governance. Even though multilateralism is more complicated than ever, it has never been as vital.

Multilateralism cannot "solve" the unsettling revival of great-power rivalry. It also will not take society back to the blissful era of peace after the Cold War. The efforts to keep the system as it is, which aims to unite the world around common transnational difficulties and remove political rivalries from these issues, may have been a legitimate goal once, but right now seem like a feverish dream. The current multilateral system is not enough to deal with modern-day issues.

However, flawed as it is, multilateralism is not ineffectual. The history of multilateralism is a testament to the power of collective action and the importance of shared norms, values, and principles in addressing global challenges. Beginning with its early beginnings in trade and foreign policy and continuing with its role in shaping the global order and the international trading system, multilateralism has made a significant contribution to fostering peace, prosperity, and sustainable development for all nations across the globe. The future of the efficacy of multilateralism will be dependent on state-actor, non-state-actor, and other individual entities to continue to uphold its fundamental principles and values as the world faces new and evolving challenges. As the world moves further into the 21st century, it is imperative to rethink and adapt the existing framework of multilateralism to better address the complexities of the modern world.

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