



S-0039-0001-054-00100

Expanded Number **S-0039-0001-054-00100**

External ID

Title

Item-in-KAA: EOSG 2001 Executive Office of the Secretary General

Date Created	Date Registered	Date Closed
16/11/2006 at 11:04 AM	17/11/2006	

Primary Contact

Home Location **S-0039-0001-054 (In Container)**
Assignee **In Container 'S-0039-0001-054 (Marvin Cordova)' since 21/11/2006 at 11:28 /**

Priority

Local-container

Owner Location **Archives and Records Management Section**

Record Type **Archival Item**

Date Published

Document Details
Container **S-0039-0001: EOSG - General**

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#21-05289

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NOTE TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Review of the year 2000

I attach a summary of EOSG responses on major achievements and setbacks for 2000.

1. Achievements

Role of the Secretary-General: The enhanced credibility of the UN and the Secretary-General personally (the man and the message) exemplified by the Time magazine cover and now the Nobel nomination; getting the international community to recognize the UN as "the indispensable institution".

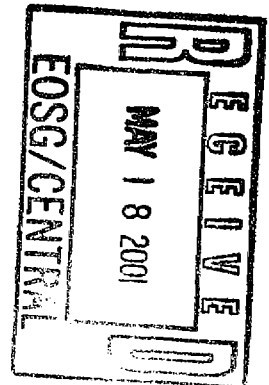
Millennium Summit: The Summit was well planned, had a high profile, and was backed by a solid report focused on clear goals and priorities. The Millennium Declaration will serve as a valuable advocacy tool as the Secretary-General seeks to galvanize action towards achieving the targets set. The Summit itself went flawlessly and was regarded by the media and Member States as a resounding success. It has helped shape the global agenda and focused the world's priorities. It also emphasized the importance of international legal norm setting through increased signatures and ratifications of UN Treaties. The Summit level Security Council meeting helped refocus attention on how to improve UN peacekeeping in Africa.

Brahimi Report: The Report focused attention on the need to strengthen the UN Secretariat and received endorsement at the highest level at the Summit. While there is still resistance by some Member States to the implementation of all its recommendations, it has resulted in additional resources/staff for DPKO.

Middle East: The Secretary-General brought his good offices to bear in an area from which the UN has been excluded for too long. The Secretary-General's personal diplomacy and peacemaking skills, both with the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, and the peace process generally, have been widely praised. The Secretary-General's support for Israel's entry into WEOG was widely regarded as a positive move, although the Arab press has portrayed the Secretary-General as too close to Israel. The personal stature of the Secretary-General as an honest broker remains high in the region.

Kosovo and East Timor: Real progress in co-ordination, improved administrative performance, and improved relationship with and transfer of power to local administrations. Lessons learned exercise good but needs to result in further concrete management improvements.

Africa: Greater system-wide management with Africa. Tireless efforts by the Secretary-General in DRC, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, etc. recognized.



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Secretary-General's encouragement of constructive policy changes on the part of African leadership well-received in the region.

Eritrea/Ethiopia: Peace agreement a major UN achievement. Peacekeeping operation on the road to success with a good UN appointee. Good co-operation with OAU.

Horn of Africa: Through his appointment of Bertini as Special Representative, the Secretary-General mobilized international assistance and a major famine was averted.

Development: UN advocacy for the poorest given prominence in 2000, giving "voices to the voiceless" in areas like debt relief and trade. Improved relationship with the World Bank at Headquarters and field level, but this remains to be seen whether sustainable. The appointment of a group of eminent persons on development finances positively received.

US-UN: Improved relations with the US under Secretary-General's leadership, culminating in a new scale of assessments and proposed payment of Helms/Biden funds.

Smart Sanctions: Secretary-General's promotion of "smart sanctions" as an alternative to current open-ended sanctions regimes is gaining support.

2. Mixed Reviews

Global Compact: The compact has been developed into a far-reaching and standard-setting instrument for corporate social responsibility. Relations with the private sector have improved. There are prospects for a long-term partnership with the private sector which will make a major contribution to the fight against poverty. The Compact has also attracted vocal criticism from both moderate and radical NGOs that the Secretary-General and the UN have been getting into bed with 'evil' corporations. The Compact may also face problems of management in 2001.

Relations with Civil Society: The Secretary-General has extended outreach into civil society – to business and civic leaders, the academic community, religious and spiritual leaders, and Goodwill Ambassadors, from the worlds of sports, cinema and music. However the Millennium Report fell short on actions related to civil society, now a pressing issue. Restrictions on NGO access to headquarters, and to the Optical Disk System for UN documentation have raised concerns among the NGO community, as has the growing relationship of the UN to business. NGOs want to see more substance behind the rhetoric of the UN opening up to civil society.

HIV/AIDS: Increased political attention, including from the Security Council. The Secretary-General has been instrumental in securing reduced pricing for anti-HIV/AIDS drugs from pharmaceutical companies for Africa. However some felt the UN system has failed to address the issue of HIV/AIDS in a timely manner. We tackled the problem “bureaucratically” for far too long instead of it being dealt with at the political level. Holbrooke’s charge that peacekeepers spread AIDS was inaccurate and harmful to the UN, but his spearheading of the issue through the Security Council was valuable. (The efforts led by the Secretary-General and DSG in 2001 are beyond the scope of this summary.)

Religious Summit: The Summit helped build bridges with religious and spiritual leaders. However the impression was given that the Secretary-General had pressured the Organization to exclude the Dalai Lama.

Staff security: Finally addressed by the Millennium Summit. Financing remains principal problem.

Misc. Peacemaking: Consistent support for a mixed court to try the Khmer Rouge wins respect, as do the continuing efforts in Cyprus and Western Sahara, but no clear progress yet. Making the DRC work is a significant future challenge. Iraq dossier a continuing challenge. Predicament regarding the humanitarian situation in Iraq and the “no-fly zones” remains.

3. Setbacks/Missed Opportunities

Human Resources Reform: While some respondents noted the positive progress that has been achieved this year on Human Resources reform in recruitment, placement, accountability, results based budgeting, and PAS, others singled this area out as the central reform problem now facing the organization. The inflexible and archaic personnel system meant that it was impossible to reward real talent or to get rid of deadwood. This causes many gifted and idealistic young professionals to leave the organization. Human Resources was seen as the weakest link in a UN which in other respects is more coherent and effective than ever. The lack of transparency in senior appointments, notably UNHCR, was seen as a missed opportunity.

Fifth Committee: Obstacles arose in gaining agreement of representatives on the Fifth Committee to reform proposals in the areas of peacekeeping, human resources management, and security coordination. Apparent disconnect between country representatives in the 5th Committee and their counterparts in capitals.

Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL was poorly led, which reflected badly on the Secretary-General. It got worse with over 500 UN hostages taken.

Better World for All Report: Poor presentation of joint report with the World Bank, IMF and OECD, reflected badly on UN.

Information Sharing: Staff in general are not aware of main political issues. USGs don't adequately communicate SMG or other discussions; staff relations strained because of the above.

Information Technology: Slow progress to plan for improved capacity in UN Secretariat.

UN Budget: No transparency in the preparatory process.

ECPS and ECES: Mostly talking shops; little pro-active thinking, few results in policy guidance.



Shashi Tharoor
22 March 2001