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<b>Global catastrophic risks mitigated</b>	<b>Risk multipliers managed</b>	<b>Implementation timeframe</b>
<b>Climate change</b>	<b>Institutions that lack inclusivity or accountability</b>	<b>Short</b>
<b>Eco-system collapse</b>		
<b>Pandemics and anti-microbial resistance</b>	<b>Poverty and inequality</b>	
<b>The threat from new and emerging technology</b>		

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# Strengthening the UN system: The case for a Committee of the Heads of Governing Bodies

The highest level coordination structure should involve the heads of the governing bodies of the UN system, not the senior administrators meeting as the CEB. The highest level coordination of the UN system needs to be at the intergovernmental level. Such a body, a Committee of the Heads of Governing Bodies (CHGB), would provide a platform for the UN system bodies to talk directly with each other at the political level. Direct intergovernmental dialogue and decision-making is especially necessary for contemporary global crises, which cross organizational boundaries. A CHGB could tackle UN system wide policy and financial matters that the CEB, as an administrative body, lacks the political authority to address. One such crucial issue that impacts the entire UN system is the systematic under-financing of the core obligations of the system and its component organizations.

## DETAILS

for the full text see the website of the Foundation of Global Governance and Sustainability  
<https://www.foggs.org/1830/un-chgb/>

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## WIDER IMPLICATIONS

### Alleviating poverty and inequality

At the global level, poverty and inequality cannot be handled meaningfully by any single intergovernmental body, including the General Assembly. Most intergovernmental bodies do not now have an agenda item of poverty alleviation and inequality, acting on the belief that some other UN system body, like the NY-based SDG process, will handle the 'issue'. A new forum of the heads of intergovernmental bodies and the preparation of the debate on poverty and inequality in all the intergovernmental bodies on the key annual theme of the Heads of Governing Bodies will elevate attention across the UN system and in national ministries which have not made it a formal priority

## Conversing effect of increasing conflict and political violence

No

## Enhancing inclusivity and accountability in national and global governance

N.a.

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## THEORY OF CHANGE

### Implementation strategy

How could a CHGB be put in place without requiring a modification of the UN charter or of the formal founding document of any intergovernmental body? The CEB has been established through a resolution of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and depends a lot for its authority and effectiveness on the convening power of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the "first among equals" chief executive of the UN system. Similarly, a possible route for creating the CHGB would have the President of the General Assembly extend an invitation to the Presidents or Chairs of the governing bodies of the same 31 organizations who meet at the chief executives level to share their views on how the multilateral system can best address one cross-cutting global issue per year. The annual meeting of the CHGB could take place in late January, following the end of the very busy period for the President of the UN General Assembly (September to December) or in July before the summer 'diplomatic' holidays. It could be hosted by an organization outside of New York. The staffing for a CHGB can be provided jointly by the professionals in the Office of the President of the General Assembly and their colleagues in the equivalent body for the host organization each time.

The first topic for this annual consultation could well be an urgent multi-disciplinary and multi-organizational issue such as the climate emergency. The topic for the following year could be agreed at the conclusion of the CHGB's annual meeting. The simple agenda for a three day consultation could have three parts – (1) organizational reflections on the key topic; (2) issues of importance that one organization feels should be considered by the intergovernmental machinery of other organizations; and (3) common financing requirements. Under item (1) the organizational reflection could be done by interventions by the heads of each intergovernmental body explaining what their organization has planned to do on the given topic in the next 3 to 5 years and what other organizations might do to enhance the effective implementation of these plans. Following CEB practice, most sessions will be open to senior organizational staff with one session reserved exclusively for the governing body heads.

As most chairs or presidents of intergovernmental bodies are selected based on internal organizational realities, the delegates to each intergovernmental body would probably want to have a discussion in their intergovernmental body to provide guidance to their president or chair who will be meeting with the other chairs and presidents. In addition, the governing body will probably want to have a regular agenda item to hear the recommendations of its president or chair on the outcome of the CHGB. This intergovernmental meeting or agenda item in a regular board meeting, which could take place at ministerial level in each organization, can by itself be very beneficial in focusing

the attention of the delegates at each organization on a key system-wide global crisis.

Will it be an easy ride?

One can expect opposition to this proposal. It will come from four distinct sources. First, because of the existing organizational patriotism (and, to be honest, organizational anxieties), any suggestion that 'their' governing body might be consulting with other governing bodies to determine 'their' organizational priorities will not be very welcome by individual body staffers, and possibly also delegates. Second, the senior executives of the specialized agencies, funds, programs, Bretton Woods Institutions and other related bodies will also be unhappy that 'their' highest level CEB will become appropriately the second highest level UN system body. The third source of likely opposition will be from major countries, which still share the desire to keep the UN system fragmented so that they can more effectively exert bilateral power, even if this works to the detriment of tackling global issues. And finally one can expect challenges from multinational corporations and their associations, as a more unified policy body might make efforts to constrain corporate control of globalization.

## **MITIGATING RISKS**

### **Mitigating pandemics and anti-microbial resistance**

It would move the consideration of new global health issues from 30 plus institutional silos, each of which tend to see health matters from their own institutional perspective without hearing or coordinating effectively at the intergovernmental and cross ministerial level

### **Mitigating climate change**

It would move the consideration of climate change from 30 plus institutional silos, each of which tend to see 'climate change' from their own institutional perspective without hearing or coordinating effectively at the intergovernmental and cross ministerial level

### **Mitigating eco-system collapse**

It would move the consideration of eco-system collapse from 30 plus institutional silos, most of which do not even consider this issue at the intergovernmental level and those that do tend to see eco-system collapse from their own institutional perspective without hearing or coordinating effectively at the intergovernmental and cross ministerial level

### **Mitigating the threat from new and emerging technology**

It would move the consideration of new and emerging technologies from 30 plus institutional silos, most of which do not even consider this issue at the intergovernmental level and those that do tend to see new and emerging technologies from their own institutional perspective without hearing or coordinating effectively at the intergovernmental and cross ministerial level