



Strengthening Multilateral Cooperation: The United Nations at 70

Group of 78 ANNUAL POLICY CONFERENCE Ottawa, September 25-27, 2015



Paul Heinbecker **Presentation Panel 3 “Canada and the UN: renewing our multilateral commitments”** **Speaking notes**

Assume a changed government (otherwise why meet?)

Assume a constructive posture on the UN by our new government

But also assume there will not be a simple return to the status quo ante because

1. The Harper government has done enormous damage to the Canada brand generally and nowhere more so than in the context of the UN and specifically at UN headquarters;
2. Recouping what has been lost will take time and money; to regain others' confidence we will need to do more than talk a good game; we will have to live it
3. Different challenges in different times; the UN needs to be in a state of continuous reform.
4. Not everything was fine before the Conservatives assumed office

What could we do to show that Canada is “back” and willing to assume our fair share of the burden of global governance?

In addition to treating the Conservative interlude as a bad dream, we need to get active ASAP

The following is one possible package of a dozen things we could do to get back in the game.

1. The new Prime Minister should make an early visit to the UN (in the context of a call on the Economic Club of New York or the Americas Society or the Foreign Policy Association)
2. We should declare our candidacy for the 2022 Security Council election (against Switzerland) or 2020 (against Ireland and Norway) or 2018 against Belgium, Germany and Israel

3. We should declare our candidacy for the UN Human Rights Council
4. We should declare our support for reforms in/of the UN Security Council—e.g., extended and successive terms for elected members—and we should play into the Council from outside on major issues , notably military issues
5. We should contribute ideas to reform the selection process of the Secretary General; push for greater UNGA participation in vetting prospective SGs
6. We should declare our willingness to contribute to peacekeeping, especially force multipliers, force commanders (Ramos Horta report)
7. We should signal changes in our position in the lead-up to the Climate Change conference in Paris and join the consensus that emerges (more likely as consequence of agreement today between the Americans and Chinese; PM to attend to underline our commitment
8. We should push for reform of WHO and a more operational, less political mandate
9. We should push for a global conference on refugee issues, to reach agreement on burden sharing in resettling refugees, updating refugee definitions, mandatory funding (like the UN), merge R2P and protection of refugees including prevention measures,
10. We should push for more senior Canadians to join the UN secretariat and also encourage younger Canadians to join the UN cadres.
11. We should use the G20 to work for UN reform
12. We should recognize that the UN is necessary but not sufficient to cope with today's and tomorrow's problems; we need to help to innovate new forms of cooperative governance, including mini-lateralism, multi-stakeholder governance, regional leadership, coalitions of the policy willing and where necessary of the military willing

Such a package would renew our multilateral commitments and signal that Canada is back.