

Global Agenda Council on Institutional Governance Systems 2012-2014



Understanding/Context

International organizations are essential yet polarizing actors in today's multidimensional and multistakeholder world. Their missions range from improving global health and defining trade policies to preventing wars and rebuilding societies. They are called on to solve some of the world's most entrenched issues – what Kofi Annan has called “problems without passports”. Throughout their history, international organizations have been criticized for being ineffective and slow to react and lacking in power. There is some merit to the criticisms, but much of the problem stems from the lack of transparency regarding their strategies, the impact of their work and their methods for self-evaluation. Without sufficient accountability, international organizations risk coming under increased criticism and scrutiny. They could find themselves spending more time defending their existence than focusing on their mission.

Shaping the Agenda

The Global Agenda Council on Institutional Governance Systems seeks to open up the discussion on accountability and raise its profile among international organizations. It is working on a “state of accountability” index covering leading international organizations, which would highlight their current accountability status. The Council will also produce a report addressing the importance of institutional and practical accountability, including the accountability of an organization's leader.

The Council has been working with external researchers to gather the information needed to produce the index and the report, and to build a solid methodological base for this work. Once the work has been finalized, the Council intends to conduct workshops with international organizations to gain

their feedback and support. The focus will be on highlighting some innovations in the governance of international organizations as well as in multistakeholder partnerships globally.

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Ideally, the Council will encourage a larger public debate on the topic and persuade international organizations to support and encourage greater transparency in their functioning and leadership.

Contact Information

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