

Make UN Voting Fair to the People of the World  
Comments by JES

The UN rule to pass a substantive motion calls for approval by a two-thirds majority of nations present and voting. Votes in all but a few agencies are tallied by a system of "one nation - one vote," irrespective of the population, economic power or importance of the nations voting. Thus, to cite a theoretical extreme, the vote of a micro-state such as Nauru, (population roughly 10,000) is counted as equal to that of China, whose population is roughly 1.4 billion times as great. The world's 65 least populous nations (one-third the total), with a combined population of not quite 1% of the total, can block motions favored by the remaining 132 nations (99%). Conversely, the 129 least populous nations, with only 8.5% of the world's people, could command enough votes to pass motions opposed by the remaining 91.5%.

Small wonder, then, that UNGA resolutions meet with little respect and are regularly flouted. Population must be considered in weighing votes, and stipulated super-majorities would be required to make them binding, rather than mere recommendations. Further, to engage nations with large economies, the system should permit weighing votes in part by economic measures. Realistically weighted voting formulae would be worked out for each decision-making agency, and these formulae could be modified from time to time in light of experience and perceptions of fairness.