



Gouvernance mondiale 2002  
global governance 2002  
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**Global Governance 2002:**  
**Civil Society and the Democratization of Global Governance,**  
**Montreal, 13-16 October 2002**

**Overview**

Hosted by the Montreal International Forum (FIM), the international conference Global Governance (G02), held in Montreal on 13-16 October 2002, brought together participants from diverse spheres within civil society and global multilateral institutions, national and local governments, as well as parliamentarians (including opposition parties) and businesspeople. G02 offered an opportunity to discuss their experiences, to learn more about what democratic global governance means and to brainstorm about action strategies for how civil society can most effectively help increase democracy and accountability in global governance.

The result of a two-year preparation process, G02 brought together 450 participants from over 70 countries to discuss and debate “Civil Society and the Democratization of Global Governance.” FIM, which is a global think tank aiming to improve the relationships between civil society and the multilateral sphere, convened this conference to help bridge the deficit in democratic global governance.

Democratization, as a process of making institutions more representative and responsive to the concerns and needs of peoples they claim to represent, was a key focus of G02. The conference addressed the democratization of global governance, and brought to the forefront the need for transparency and accountability in the identification and allocation of resources required to solve global problems and to achieve a commitment to the rule of law internationally. G02 focused on fostering a greater respect for the will of the majority, accountability to the people, due process and a just and fair distribution of resources.

Through its innovative design, involving interactive plenary sessions featuring keynote speakers, nine thematic programme tracks, and over 40 workshops, participants explored specific problem areas and developed action strategies relating to the democratic deficit in global governance.

G02 attempted to address pressing questions about the role of civil society in the democratization of global governance. It examined whether the accountability mechanisms of global economic institutions reflect standard requirements for democratically-based controls and also debated whether civil society itself is sufficiently accountable to its constituents. G02 also discussed how to align trade agreements with human rights and environmental obligations.

## **G02 Objectives**

1. To raise awareness and deepen understanding of democratic global governance.
2. To bring together practitioners and thinkers for sharing, bridge-building and learning across sectors: civil society (CS), the United Nations (UN), International Financial Institutions (IFIs), governments, parliamentarians, the global corporate community, academia and the media.
3. To explore cutting-edge, innovative and constructive policy options on how to build more democratic global governance.
4. To develop action strategies by CS actors.
5. To identify innovative proposals which will strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration in support of democratization.

Conference track reports include one recommendation for each of the last three objectives listed above.

The G02 event was innovative in its approach, providing for maximum participation of participants. All conference tracks involved interactive sessions. Although experts were invited to play visible roles, each track session and workshop enabled all participants to bring their own experience to the table. G02 was a unique and important event in that its goal was not only to bring together different groups for debate, but to actively begin contemplating solutions and proposals on how CS can contribute to further democratize global governance structures.

## **Common Emerging Themes From G02**

### ***I. Theme of Global Governance***

#### **1) The priority of human rights and environmental agreements over economic trade pacts.**

- This was a recurring theme. Numerous participants expressed concern that the current international financial mechanisms of multilateral institutions are not consistent with UN human rights and environmental obligations. There was mention that financial considerations as well as security concerns in a post September 11<sup>th</sup> world have lessened concerns about human rights and the environment.
- Discussion of how current international financial agreements exacerbate inequality, non-accountability and can increase economic and political volatility and insecurity for many, while denying them of their economic, social and cultural rights. This concern was key to many tracks including those on the UN, Human Rights, Trade and Financial Flows.

- As well, there were widespread discussions about CS's role in bringing about the proper implementation of human rights and environmental agreements.

## **2) The increasing weakening of State autonomy and governmental credibility resulting from new and emerging global governance mechanisms.**

- Emerging actors such as CS (national and transnational), transnational corporations (TNCs) and international financial institutions are having an increasing impact on national governments. It is crucial to examine how these new players affect national governments, their accountability to their populations, and their ability to govern according to the will of the majority.
- CS also has to examine its accountability to its constituents and not attempt to overstep the authority of elected governments.
- Transnational corporations should be regulated so they may not circumvent state power.
- International financial institutions and the international financial markets often bind the hands of state governments and adversely affect state autonomy.
- This was a key concern in several tracks, including the ones on Parliamentarians, Local Government, Financial Flows and Trade.

Other topics also discussed in more than one track included:

- 1) The political and economic instability resulting from existing international trade policies
- 2) The use of the Millennium Development Goals by CS as "development levers"
- 3) The need to regulate TNCs
- 4) The necessity for a greater accountability of the UN towards Southern constituents.

## ***II. Theme of International Civil Society***

### **1) Increased cross-sectoral collaboration (i.e. between CS and the UN, parliamentarians, etc.).**

- There was a recurring concern that CS should engage in increased collaboration with an expanding number of actors in order to impact the multilateral agenda and reform multilateral institutions.
- This issue surfaced in the discussions of the Transnational Civil Society, Parliamentarians and Trade tracks.

## 2) The need for greater consensus-building among CS.

- There was much discussion that CS should organize more representative meeting to build collaborative responses and build networks throughout CS.
- Building alliances in order to counter American unilateralism.
- Use the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a model of CS collaborative efforts.
- Increase accountability towards affected constituents through more consultation.
- Building transnational alliances with CS and develop advocacy efforts which include consultation with affected populations
- These ideas were particularly raised in the Trade, Transnational Civil Society and the UN tracks of the G02 conference.
- Other topics included the need for a greater effort by CS to urge parliaments to develop greater accountability and to develop further collaboration with CS entities.

### Summary of Track Discussions

#### United Nations: A More Democratic...and Stronger UN!

The UN is in need of reform in order to make room for the multitude of voices it claims to represent. At the same time, the UN's integrity must be defended, particularly through strengthening the implementation of UN human rights and environmental agreements. This is a delicate balance that CS needs to address.

**Interactive Workshop Discussion:** Participants identified a need to prioritize international and national human rights and environmental obligations, making them the ultimate authority over all other agreements, including international economic agreements.

*Civil Society, the UN and Democratizing Global Governance: Overcoming the Forces Undermining UN Authority* : Discussion of the "asymmetrical and unequal" governance of both the IMF and World Bank and the lack of enforcement mechanisms to ensure implementation of human rights obligations, as compared to the penalties faced by those who default on their loans from IFIs.

Recommendations included: to increase the voting rights of developing countries in IFIs, and to commit major new financial resources to fund economic and social programmes in order to reach Millennium Development Goals.

*Bridging the Implementation Gap: Civil Society and the Potential of the Millennium Goals :*

- Debate over the adequacy of Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction, while the 1995 Copenhagen Summit aimed at “eradicating” poverty.
- Agreement that CS should provide its best efforts to make these Goals become better known worldwide and should use these Goals to link their local efforts with international policies.

*Democratization from the Bottom-Up: Perspectives on Making the UN more Relevant in the Development Process :* Examination of experience of working with the UN from the national and regional levels, drawing on successful participatory models.

*Civil Society and UN Reform: Core Institutions and Promising Proposals in Democratization :*

- No consensus on creating a UN Global People’s Assembly.
- Discussion of the Coalition of the ICC as a successful model for CS and multilateral democratization.

*Democratizing Economic Global Governance: What role for the UN and Civil Society vis-à-vis the IFIs :*

- CS could assume a role in democratizing the International Financial Institutions (IFIs).
- Need for further communication and collaboration between the UN, CS and IFIs in order to overcome CS’s mistrust of these institutions and to push more efficiently for reform.

Five challenges emerged from the final plenary discussion of this Track:

1. The challenge of ‘thinking globally and acting globally
2. The challenge of building inclusiveness and democratic representation within CS
3. The challenge of deepening ‘vertical integration’
4. The challenge of bridging ‘sectoral silos’
5. The challenge of “learning to learn” from each other.

• **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

1. Macro “Policy” nexus: Gain clear recognition of the pre-eminence of environment and human rights law.
2. Action “Strategy”: Build on past successes (i.e. the ICC Biosafety Protocol): the Coalition for the ICC could be used as an example of successful efforts of civil society to bring about global change and accountability.
3. Develop collaborative responses to corporate challenges to democracy.

## Human Rights and Global Governance

In the context of the war on terror, there has been a return to a regressive notion of security. It is CS's duty to help keep a broader definition of human and social security, and to ensure that the fulfillment of human rights obligations remain paramount.

### • **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

1. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) will commit to work cooperatively amongst themselves and with like-minded States to ensure that Human Rights and Democracy constitutes the core of the definition and plan of action of global governance.
2. CSOs should mobilize energy and resources to build a Global Coalition, proactively involving across sectors, genders, ages, races, religions and regions, to develop a comprehensive, expansive and internationally-recognized definition of terrorism.
3. CSOs should ensure that the international trade regime and its rules are brought in conformity with international human rights regime and its corresponding conventions.
4. Civil society should ensure universal ratification of the Rome Statute and encourage compliance by all States.

## Parliamentarians

In a globalizing world, civil society and other entities, such as IFIs and Global corporations, are gaining influence and, thus, are affecting parliamentarians' ability to adequately represent their populations.

### • **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

1. Civil society should foster respectful (but not complacent) cooperation with Parliament;
2. The establishment of an international parliamentary forum. This could be an e-parliament, inter-parliamentary congress, or through developing supranational parliaments;
3. Civil society should help parliaments to adapt to new realities by:
  - Properly informing parliaments of their roles (legislating, controlling, deliberating, interceding, enforcing) and means (laws, commissions, motions, interventions);
  - Requiring parliaments to represent the various components of societies
  - Emphasizing the importance of voting for the best candidates, according to their qualities, competence and electoral programmes, rather than based on their image or party
  - Encouraging a separation of the Legislative and Executive powers, and ensuring civil society's independence from these two branches;
  - Taking part in the work of parliamentary committees;
  - Encouraging the participation of the elected officials in the activities and debates of civil society;

- Encouraging the participation of Members of Parliaments in key international debates.
- Formulating a proposal to reinforce trans-sectoral collaboration in support of democratization.

### **FishBowl (Special Session): What can Civil Society do to Prevent War in Iraq?**

This engaging and timely session consisted of a public debate presented by: Colin Ball, *The Commonwealth Foundation, London*, Lynn Muthoni Wanyeki, *African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Kenya*. Kumi Naidoo, *Secretary General and CEO, CIVICUS* and Rajesh Tandon, *FIM / Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India*. Nigel Martin facilitated the debate.

### **Trade, Equity and Democratic Governance**

International and regional economic trade agreements are now governing international trade policy. These policies are all too often inconsistent with the fundamental rights of populations to basic human security.

- **Interactive Workshop Discussion:**

*Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization:* - Trade agreements undermine attempts of national governments to build democracy by prompting reactions that range from street protests to fundamentalism, terrorism and war.

*WTO and the UN System: Are They "Mutually Supportive" or Competing Jurisdictions:* Jurisdictional conflicts exist between the World Trade Organization (WTO), which is essentially an exclusive organization aiming to promote the rights of capital, and the UN, which is relatively open, transparent, and committed to the rights of people.

*Trade Agreements and State Sovereignty: Are Rights and Responsibilities Properly Allocated?* : Discussion of the relationship between trade policy and its marginalizing effects on local communities.

*Fair Trade: Is There a Role for the WTO?* : Contemporary trade practices are not in fact competitive, especially in relation to commodities markets. The possibility of a campaign for a "Commodities Stewardship Council", in which all stakeholders in commodity production would be represented, was introduced.

*Regional Agreements: Does a mandate for "Cooperation Instead of Competition" make a Difference?* : Participants analyzed existing regional trade agreements (i.e. APEC, Cotonou, MERCOSUR) which are all based on WTO rules and primarily benefit TNCs. In each of these agreements, the poorer countries have little voice.

*Cultural Diversity and Democracy: How Can Local Communities and Jurisdictions Exercise their Sovereignty?* : Participants reviewed how local communities have organized themselves to resist encroachments of corporate and state powers and abuses.

- **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

1. The need to create a system for establishing standards for fairly traded commodities, for labelling fairly-traded products and to set up new lines of exchange outside of the WTO framework
2. The need to document violations of the full spectrum of human rights international law by corporations (as framed by the UN)
3. The need to convene local and regional gatherings with a full spectrum of representatives of civil society, in order to propose trade policies that would be fully consistent with human rights frameworks.

<b>Global Corporations</b>
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TNCs are key players in dictating the global agenda and the international economy. TNCs have increasing impact on social, economic and cultural rights.

- **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

1. CSOs should disseminate information on the scale, scope and nature of global corporations among local bodies and community activists.
2. NGOs should monitor the non-respect of global standards on labour, environment, sourcing, disclosure and marketing, by global corporations across countries of both the North and South.
3. To promote North-South coalitions of shareholders, consumers, workers and community leaders, in order to influence global corporations and their local subsidiaries to follow regulations and policies of national governments and international agencies.

<b>Local Government</b>
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- **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

1. To bring citizens and their government closer by achieving a responsible decentralization of authority in favour of local governments
2. CSOs should recognize and reinforce democratic and participatory management at local government levels and thus contribute to sustainable development
3. To encourage the essential participation of women in local government and that it be supported by all involved participants and CSOs. Similarly, civil society needs to collaborate with local government to develop strategies for increasing women's participation in local government (i.e. motivation campaigns, or quotas of local leaders such as in India).
4. Greater decentralization of local powers (i.e. taxation, recognition of the status of cities and towns in the national constitutions).
5. Need for elected, rather than appointed, local officials.

## Transnational Civil Society

Civil society needs to reflect on the impact of its increasing influence on global governance as well as its own accountability.

### First among Equals:

- Importance of democratization of transnational organizations to try to balance the North–South asymmetries of power.
- Need to enhance transnational civil society (TCS) links with grassroots groups and to reinforce their communication with transnational organizations and the UN.

Whose Voice is it Anyway? : Increase accountability of TCS to clearly defined constituencies and improve their consultation with them. TCS must also work to strengthen democratic governance.

Organizing Across Borders : Difficulty of organizing across national boundaries and managing and accepting the inevitable differences between organisations.

Building Bridges and Common Visions : An introduction to multistakeholder dialogue methodology should be developed to build partnerships between civil society with the government and private sectors for seeking social change.

Grassroots Globalization and Global Governance : Examination of organizations that have engaged international institutions, of their strategies and impact.

Taking Stock: The Impact of TCS on Global Governance : Identification of certain needs: 1) reverse “transnationalism” with international groups working with progressive CSOs in the United States in order to challenge US unilateralism; 2) challenge the corporate tendency to appropriate CSO language and do nothing to change the status quo; 3) build participatory forms of governance in the local communities that are the most adversely affected by specific global and national policies.

Alternate Visions: Exploration of alternative models of global governance (i.e. the model of a Global Parliament).

Who Really Rules the World? : Discussion on the threat of TNCs to democracy, placing the issues of global governance within a human rights framework, and through understanding other perspectives as well.

### • **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

1. Develop a policy campaign based on a framework that transcends across many citizens’ movements and issues.
2. Transnational advocacy on global issues based on thorough consultation with affected constituencies.
3. Build alliances with all forces that are opposed to unilateralism, in order to strengthen multilateralism and the rule of law.

## Non-Dominant Groups

The increasing dominance of the English language internationally has a strong, often adverse impact on local cultures and language. CS must ask whether one can be an effective player in the multilateral system without speaking English.

- **Conclusions and Recommendations**

1. The importance of recognizing the political power of language.
2. Recognition of the dominance of the use of English in the international arena and the need to openly challenge this reality through maintaining the integrity and promoting respect for peoples' primary languages.

## Financial Flows

Nowhere is the balance between national sovereignty and political equity at the global level more distorted than in the context of international financial markets and sovereign states. There is a need for reorganization and regulation of the international capital markets in order to preserve democracy and maintain the autonomy of states.

- **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

1. The introduction of capital controls, and related domestic financial regulation.
2. The introduction of an international bankruptcy framework for sovereign governments, which would discipline reckless lenders and borrowers.
3. The introduction of the Tobin Tax, which would limit and discipline financial speculation.

## Workshops

Highlights from the list of 30 workshops included topics such as: governance outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit (WSSD); youth engagement in global governance; women and local governance; reforming international institutions; civil society and the G8 in France; and a discussion about citizenship education and the role of IFIs in regards to human rights.

## Keynote Sessions

- **Mr. Nitin Desai, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs** emphasized three key changes in the new international context:
  1. The emergence of transnational organizations
  2. The growing importance of networks of activist groups and a growing international civil society.
  3. The emergence of shared values, such as human rights, and a sense of a "global conscience."

- CSOs must focus their energies on attaining effective implementation of human rights agreements such as environmental, children's and women's rights
- A challenge for the international civil society is to increase its own accountability and expand its ability to work with various actors, *including* TNCs.
  
- Following Mr. Desai's presentation, panelists and participants brought up issues of corporate accountability and the need to make trade rules consistent with the UN mandate.
- Discussion of difficulties of including TNCs in the dialogue between civil society and multilateral institutions due to the power imbalances between them.
  
- **The Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bill Graham** emphasized the changing relationship between parliamentarians and civil society and the need to build on past civil society successes.
  
- Civil society must not attempt to replace the role of elected officials and must strive for universal suffrage: increased collaboration between parliamentarians and civil society remains crucial.
- Civil society must work to assess the impact of the increasing influence of TNCs as well as CSOs on the ability of governments to represent their populations.