

FUTURES BEYOND THREATS

John W. Foster, Principal Researcher-Civil Society
The North-South Institute, Ottawa, Canada

G02 Track: The UN, Civil Society and Global Governance (October 3, 2002)

- G02 / UN Track - - background paper for discussion and debate -

1. INTRODUCTION

Today the United Nations is confronted with profound threats. The challenge of global security, the menace of unilateralism, the drums of the war-makers, the arrogance of pre-emptive strikes, the terror of terror. The promise of the UN Charter, in terms of the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts, is cast aside by the presumptions of power.

This paper addresses democratic issues related to multilateral structures and economic, environmental and social elements of common security. An entire other paper would be required to deal with the military and peace-ensuring parts of the UN mandate.

What is clear is that the democratic impulse which motivates this paper and the proposals in it is even more relevant. Measures now, to ensure that the voices of the world's peoples are more evident and more clearly heard in multilateral organizations, are especially urgent as the human family is menaced by terror and war.

* * *

This paper is for discussion and debate. It is designed to provoke and be a resource for debates in the UN Track at G02. But it could just as easily be used in the Trade, Global Corporations, Parliamentary, Human Rights tracks or for a number of workshops.

It brings together some of the current proposals for reform of the UN, the UN system and the democratization of multilateral institutions. It is a sketch, an entry point, not a comprehensive encyclopedia.

It recognizes the civil society organizations engaging with global governance face urgent challenges: global survival, human security, how they govern themselves in collaboration as well as less elegant items: greed, irresponsible exercise of power, militarism and intolerance.

This paper is reinforced by the issuance of the Human Development Report 2002, Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World. This paper will be more useful if readers refer, particularly, to Chapter V: Deepening Democracy at a Global Level.

Consider the HDR 2002 as a platform which brings together and summarizes a great deal of the state of play to date.

The challenge, however, is not to repeat what has been so well done, but to take up proposals, consider priorities, and develop plans for action, reform and institutions of global governance which will serve the people.

Thus, we present a selection of key proposals “in the rough”. It’s up to you, participants in G02, to fashion initiatives and plans, to make an agenda for the coming years your own.

G02 coincides with the launching of a new report by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change (9 September, 2002). This report includes examination of the challenges and necessities of improving the “partnership” relations of the United Nations, focusing on civil society and on the private sector and foundations. The report notes the “explosive growth” of civil society organizations and expansion in their diversity. It details some of the stresses and strains in the relationship. It recognizes that CSOs themselves have “come together to offer collective views” on questions of policy, representation and accountability. The Secretary-General proposes to “take stock” of the relationship and recommend improvements.

2.1 THE GOVERNANCE GAP, THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

“Advancing human development requires governance that is democratic in both form and substance – for the people and by the people. ...Global interdependence...calls for more participation and accountability in global decision-making.”

Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World.

We face simultaneous challenges:

- Seldom if ever before has the need to address global needs, environmental threats and the preservation of peace on a world level, through collaborative institutions been so urgent.
- Globalization “has vastly expanded the demands on global institutions, it has also heightened a crisis of legitimacy and effectiveness. Large parts of the public no longer believe that their interests are represented in institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, UN Security Council and WTO – or that the institutions are adequately accountable for what they do.” (HDR)
- Although civil society organizations have grown enormously, and international networks and alliances among them have taken leaps forward unimaginable before the advent of electronic links, global civil society continues to “emerge”. It has not exercised its influence for good in anything like its potential. It too gets caught in disorganization, ritualistic forms and un-collaborative patterns.

2.2 THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY / KEY THREATS AND, PERHAPS, OPPORTUNITIES.

There are many landmarks along the global road to democratization, for example:

- Birmingham, 1998, civil society Jubilee 2000 advocates surround the G-7 Summit, debt relief moves up the official agenda.
- Seattle 1999, “civil society” made it onto the front pages of North America, of the world. Globalization was challenged. One of its lead agencies, the WTO brought to a halt.
- Doha, 2001, the WTO is embarrassed into making a political declaration on the issue of access to essential medicines for HIV/AIDS, admitting its intellectual property regime needs “interpretation”.

The Human Development Report 2002 (HDR) makes ample reference to the importance of CSOs and CSO campaigns in changing global policy.

- Elimination of landmines and the Landmine Treaty

- Jubilee 2000 and debt relief
- Rape as an act of genocide and a crime against humanity
- The World Bank Inspection panel
- Improved access to HIV/AIDS medicines
- World Commission on Dams
- Moves toward Corporate Social Responsibility

We might add the defeat of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, and the successes – jurisdiction by jurisdiction - in banning smoking in public venues and tobacco control in general or the ban on genetically modified food in certain regions.

At the same time, CSOs could list a multitude of failures and continued efforts, not least those to change the dominant economic policy paradigm, the so-called Washington consensus (with or without a sombrero).

One might also take account of increasing unease with the retreat from multilateralism by the “hyper” or “super” power, the United States, including negation of the Kyoto protocol, the International Criminal Court, unilateral exercise of aggressive military force and a variety of other issues. President Bush’s National Security statement of September 17, 2002 – what might be called a “Bush Doctrine” – ignoring the US commitments to the UN Charter, develops a “rationale” for unilateral pre-emptive strikes against any country defined as an enemy or harbouring enemies, enemies in the view of the US itself.

There is growing concern for the survival of the positive aspects of the multilateral system. Are we simply marking time in terms of global governance and reform, or are we, in fact, sliding backwards?

While civil society gives voice, there is doubt to what extent the messages are heard and taken on board.

The multilateral terrain is not static. Ten years ago there was no World Trade Organization, no Trade Related Intellectual Property regime regulating accessibility of pharmaceuticals. Just as the eighties and nineties were pre-occupied with the creep of Bank/Fund administered structural adjustment policies (SAPS) into almost every area of domestic life in the south, the current decade is increasingly focused on the power exercised by a few rich nations and their transnational corporations to orchestrate the shape and the benefits of globalization using the WTO, the NAFTA and other instruments.

2.3 RIGHTS AND NORMS OF AND FOR THE MANY VS PROTECTION AND PRIVILEGES FOR THE FEW

CSOs, through events like the Vienna, Beijing, Rio, Cairo and Copenhagen conferences built on the normative work of fifty years of life in the UN, whether in women’s rights, the rights and expectations of the poor, the right to clean water and environmental survival, rights to participation and frameworks of accountability. It could be said that CSO’s rejected what Charles Abugre, in a paper prepared for FIM, has called the “cult of impotence” and set about to “reassert the redistributive norms and aspirations of the UN system.” But this attempt ran into stiff headwinds from those organizing on behalf of private property and the power of the wealthy.

International law as expressed in human rights treaties and covenants, in environmental agreements and protocols are being constantly challenged by corporate power and by those who believe that virtually every global decision must be measured against its impact on trade and the exercise of trade laws and private property rights.

- The right of millions in Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and elsewhere to health and access to affordable drugs in the HIV/AIDS pandemic is constantly limited by the exercise of patent protection on behalf of huge and high-profit pharmaceutical firms.
- Privatization itself a multilaterally-encouraged policy is being challenged in the streets of Bolivia, Ghana and Canada. Water, grain, coffee fall increasingly under the control of a few multinational firms. The choice of what people eat or drink, what they pay for it, what the producers receive, increasingly falls under the sway of those firms.
- The negotiations on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) involve turning almost every element of public services – from playgrounds to garbage disposal – into a tradeable commodity, a subject for private profit.

The historic role of the United Nations in crafting international law, universal standards and guarantees of rights is being undermined by the “hard law” advocates of the WTO, the mandatory and enforceable nature of its decisions and the coincidence between its policies and those urged by the IMF and the World Bank on relatively powerless governments.

As a leading civil society spokesperson wrote from the midst of the WSSD in August, 2002 “civil society organizations here...are astonished and deeply disappointed that a few wealth countries are able to hold the world to ransom at a time when global solidarity is critically needed to ensure that we put people at the centre.”

3. WHAT ARE PEOPLE PROPOSING?

“...the mind-set of an institution is inevitably linked to whom it is directly accountable. Voting rights matter, and who has a seat at the table – even with limited voting rights – matters. It determines whose voices get heard.”

Joseph Stiglitz, Globalization and its Discontents.

“The UN leadership and heads of government must recognize that there is a big gap between the rhetoric stating the importance of civil society and the actual translation of that into practice. The UN, for a vast majority of civil society organizations, is a more acceptable manifestation of the global governance system, as compared to the WTO, the IMF or the World Bank. But this does not detract from the reality that the UN too is still stuck in a time warp. While embracing the language of democracy, it still has a long way to go before it can reflect this in its governance structures.”

Kumi Naidoo, Secretary-General, CIVICUS 30 August, 2002 (See appendix 1 for the full text)

“The Internet is increasing the pressure for all systems to be available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, worldwide. E-government is expanding. ...self-selection and self-organization of volunteers around the world via Internet Web sites is a new strategy for civil society to increase transparency of public issues and participate in decision processes.”

Jerome C. Glenn and Theodore J. Gordon, 2002 State of the Future.

The Human Development Report 2002 plays homage to the role of NGOs and CSOs in general:

- in reshaping global politics through campaign pressure on politicians and other decision-makers. “Any group or individual”, they point out, “is entitled to a voice. This is a legitimate part of democratic pluralism.”
- In direct involvement in global negotiations. This role is distinctly different, involves more responsibility. “This suggests,” the report states, “a need to give some formal structure to their role in decision-making.”

The focus of the following section is on the second of these areas of engagement and on areas of structural reform which must address issues of global survival of central concern to civil society organizations and to citizens.

4. KEY THEATRES FOR CHANGE

Civil society organizations, global commissions of eminent people, academics and UN bodies themselves have initiated a number of proposals. Some have to do primarily with the relationship of the UN system of NGOs and CSOs more broadly. However a number go to the core of the multilateral system itself, to global governance and its democratization.

Many of these propositions remain only at the “talking” stage. They require concerted civil society pressure to take form and life.

4.A) Widening the UN’s representative base

- **A people’s parliament or Global Assembly.** The vision is direct democratic representation at a global level. It has been advanced for a number of years. The Commission on Global Governance, examined it, suggested moving first, but only “when the time comes”, to an assembly of parliamentarians (nationally-elected MPs) which might act as a “constituent assembly” for a more popular, directly-elected body. But the Commission argued a revitalized General Assembly and an ongoing forum for civil society should come first. (OGN p. 258)

Richard Falk and Andrew Strauss, distinguished legal experts from the US, have taken a more proactive approach, inspired by the European Parliament. Because many governments resist full democracy at home, let alone internationally, Falk and Strauss suggest that 20-30 pioneering countries, economically and geographically diverse, could launch a global parliamentary assembly, purely advisory in capacity, but the core of what would grow to be a universal representative assembly, a GPA, Global Parliamentary Assembly. They conjure with a global republican vision, with such Assembly as a lower house, and the current General Assembly as an upper chamber. (Falk/Strauss, 7/16/2002)

- **A Global Civil Society Forum.** Many groups, including the Commission on Global Governance and the Millennium NGO Forum, have proposed a Civil Society Forum at the United Nations. The Commission suggested a body composed of groups accredited to the General Assembly itself, on a model expanded from that operating in the ECOSOC. The means of selection for annual Forums would be something “that civil society itself should canvas”. (OGN 259) The Millennium NGO Forum at the UN was a trial run at such an institution. The review of the Millennium Declaration and Goals in 2005 would seem a viable target for the organization of an ongoing CS Forum at the UN.

4.B) Renewing the UN’s role in global socio-economic governance

“It was, and it remains, entirely appropriate to envisage the global strategies for the work of the IM – and an International Trade Organization – being negotiated and agreed at the United Nations. That this original intention was blocked early on does not discredit its validity.”

Erskine Childers and Brian Urquhart, Renewing the United Nations System.

- **An Economic [Environmental] and Social Security Council at the UN.** The Human Development Report for 1994, the Commission on Global Governance and the Zedillo High-Level Panel on

Financing for Development all proposed a global economic and social security council. As the Commission pointed out economic, social, environmental and security issues are linked and increasingly blurred. The world lacks a satisfactory way to consider these global challenges “in the round”...”Political structure that can articulate a sense of common interest and mediate differences are not keeping pace...at a global level.”

The Zedillo report suggested a membership which would on the one hand comprise the current G-8 and other large economies, and on the other be broad enough to balance regions and engage some smaller states. Christian Aid (UK) sponsored a thorough-going examination of such a new UN organ, and the French President Chirac spoke about its usefulness at the Monterrey Financing For Development Conference.

The Zedillo group suggested that the United Nations convene a Global Economic Governance Summit which might develop a design or become the first instance of such a body.

- **Human Rights on first:** A variety of NGOs and commentators have suggested other steps which would renew and extend the democratization of international economic governance utilizing the United Nations. The International NGO Committee for Human Rights in Trade and Investment (INCHRITI), and other human rights organizations, have pressed for a clear recognition of the primacy of human rights agreements under the UN Charter, strengthening measures for their enforcement, and bringing the policies of the WTO and other key economic bodies within their norms and values.
- **Bring the WTO inside the global tent:** Civil society organizations addressing the 2002 Commonwealth Finance Ministers’ Meeting, called for the WTO to be brought within “the framework, values and norms of the United Nations”.
- **UN Norms should guide the International Financial Institutions::** Similarly, there are many who feel that a strengthened economic, social and environmental role for the UN would mean that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund would be brought under more adequate supervision by the more representative and comprehensive UN. This does not obviate the need for further internal reform in terms of representative governance and improved civil society consultative structures at a global as well as a regional level. But it has much to do with the need to ensure that financial and economic decision-making does not undermine globally-agreed environmental and rights protections. Powerful state voices oppose any talk of amendments to the charters of these organizations. Similarly there is resistance to the idea of an Economic and Social Security Council.

In a study Governing Globalization: Issues and Institutions, Deepak Nayyar and Julius Court argue for such an Economic and Social Council with formal business and CSO links. There is opposition, they admit, “but the existence of practical and political obstacles is no reason to bury the idea, whose realization could bring great benefit to the global public good.”

More practically, the current practice of high level ECOSOC-IFI meetings could be expanded to provide more adequate review if not supervision and revision of Bank/Fund policies.

4.C) Promoting democratic principles throughout the multilateral system

“Their indispensable contribution is widely recognized. That is why, in the Millennium Declaration, Member States resolved to give greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society, in general to contribute to the realization of the Organization’s goals and programmes.”

Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change. Report of the Secretary General, September 9, 2002.

A pre-requisite for more effective democratic practice throughout multilateral bodies is “reform...to make their decision-making systems equitable.” In part, as High-Level Advisory Group called together by the G-77 to examine the impact of globalization on developing countries pointed out, this require differential treatment, not one size fits all. There must be “recognition of the different circumstances and levels of capacity and development of different players”, and “special consideration in favor of the weak and less developed.”

The HDR makes clear that democratic practices are limited in observance in many parts of global governance institutions. Among issues of concern:

- Gender equity remains a distant goal in virtually every deliberative and decision-making body in the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO.
- Within the United Nations, the General Assembly has not yet established an ongoing system for relationships with CSOs, whether on a basis of enhanced ECOSOC processes or some other means. The International NGO Task Group on Legal and Institutional Matters (INTGLIM) is leading a campaign for NGO consultative status with the General Assembly. The Conference of NGOs (CONGO) has promoted a General Assembly resolution to this end.
- the Security Council remains challenged in terms of representivity, the use and abuse of the veto and a clear ongoing structured relationship with civil society organizations. The NGO Working Group on the Security Council has been working for more than seven years on issues of reform.

The WTO, while having taken some initiatives in terms of transparency and consultation remains dominated by a small group of developed countries – the “Quad”, has many members who lack adequate representation and technical resource, and has not yet developed an adequate ongoing structure for relations with non-governmental organizations.

The World Bank, with the effective demise of the NGO Committee, lacks an effective NGO consultative body at the global level.

4.D) Procedural Upgrading

Both diplomatic and NGO participants testify repeatedly to the need for innovation in UN and multilateral procedures for negotiation. A number of countries, south as well as north, have included NGO representatives in their official delegations. There is an expanding richness of experience and evaluative comment on modalities and on matters as simple as the choice of chair or facilitator.

One of the most innovative UN instances was the process which brought forth the Biodiversity Protocol. This has been highlighted in the Human Development Report, 2002, and a brief description is found in Chapter V. Among the innovations which contributed to success were breaking up the usual regional groupings of countries, and instead grouping them by interest, like-mindedness; more adequate representation of numbers in spokespersons; focusing negotiations among spokespersons but in a

transparent fashion with all countries present; encouraging NGO participation, and in the Montreal sessions, allowing all observers, including media, to sit in the plenary sessions.

Occasions for engaging civil society, diplomatic, staff and business representatives in evaluating and recommending procedural reforms are an important ingredient in making the other suggestions in this report effective.

5. NATIONAL-LEVEL SUPPORT

Most of the reforms suggested require a will on the part of member-states to pursue institutional change, a will which has not been much in evidence. They also imply a more coherent or more integrated approach from governments across ministries and representatives. Further, they imply significant investment, perhaps more of energy than of money, but both.

It is clear that national representatives, with encouragement, can make extremely important use of official roles in the regular functioning of the United Nations. The Finnish Chair of the General Assembly, for example, initiated the development of a survey of practice throughout the system in terms of the participation of civil society, cataloguing the precedents and the agreements. Chairs and group leaders in conference negotiations have undertaken a number of moves to break through set-piece approaches and ritualistic rehearsal of fixed positions.

6. CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATION: PROCEDURES AND PARTICIPATION

“Voice one: our Government has just signed an Accord, a statement of principles for its relationship with civil society. It’s path-breaking, even if very general. The Prime Minister himself has signed it. Voice two: who signed for civil society?”

The United Nations, since its formation in 1945 has developed a model (more recently models) of accreditation for consultative status for non-governmental organizations, with the ECOSOC, with special sessions of the General Assembly and World Conferences and with a variety of other instances. The Organization of American States among others have made use of the UN system in pioneering their own approaches to formal relations with non-state actors.

More recently “Guidelines” have been developed by the Secretary-General for cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Community. Further the development of “stakeholder” roundtables, civil society and private sector “hearings” and a variety of other engagements has both given evidence of a healthy will to experimentation but also of some confusion or unclarity.

The continued occurrence of World Conferences has done much to expand the geographic range and social diversity of civil society actors engaged in UN processes. The number of organizations seeking accreditation with the ECOSOC continues to grow. The expansion of numbers presents significant organizational challenges and presses up against the logistical limitations of UN facilities and conference sites around the world.

The Secretary-General’s Strengthening of the United Nations report notes the following factors facing the UN and civil society organizations:

- Explosive growth means facilities and resources are stressed.

- A great variety of accreditation processes for conferences and meetings, uneven standards and confusing procedures.
- Many Member States are wary of the pressure for more room for NGOs in deliberations.
- Great imbalance between numbers of NGOs from industrialized and developing countries.
- A number of CS actors don't consider themselves NGOs, parliamentarians and private sector groups for example. Modalities for their participation are not very clear.
- Responsibility for engaging with NGOs is spread across several units in the UN Secretariat.

There are those who feel that all this is par for the course, that the very voluntaristic character of CSOs or NGOs simply means that a measure of anarchy, a diversity and cacophony of voices, albeit with occasionally more-focused "swarmings" of organizations at conferences or key decision points is all that is possible. Each World Conference occasioned a parallel NGO forum (most recently the Global Forum in Monterrey (FFD) and the NGO initiatives at Johannesburg (WSSD).) These were enormously important in network building and mutual education, and in stimulating visions which often reached far beyond what the official conferences were able to attain.

There are others – the World Civil Society Conference (Montreal, 1999), the Global People's Assembly Movement (various instances including Samoa, 2000), the World Civil Society Forum (Geneva, July, 2002) – who have attempted to organize large confluences of civil society organizations committed to participation, to engagement with and democratization of the United Nations and the multilateral system. Further, the Millennium NGO Forum (New York, 2000) brought together, under the wing of the United Nations itself, a diverse and large assembly of representatives interested in many of the same objectives.

Important for its size, its challenging content and its momentum is the independent World Social Forum movement, which has sponsored two dynamic events in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and looks forward to a third in late January, 2003. Any fresh UN initiative toward a more adequate relationship with CSOs should involve a reaching out to the organizations, forces and interests represented in the WSF.

The desire of a number of UN instances to engage civil society organizations in formal processes of consultation, conference preparation and negotiations presents interested CSOs with significant challenges. As the World Bank's William Reuben wrote recently, "A lack of clarity on the issue of representation of civil society organizations is affecting their ability to influence public policy and have a stronger role in development."

NGO bodies like the Conference of NGOs, CONGO, have a rich history of engagement with the United Nations. Organizations like the Stanley Foundation, FIM, the North-South Institute and events like G02 have taken initiatives aimed at deepening reflection on how the engagement between CSOs and the multilateral system can be made more effective.

Examinations among activists and academics of experiences in UNAIDS, the World Bank, the Commission on Sustainable Development, etc. continue, and additional occasions for evaluation and reflection are necessary. However, it may also be necessary to advance practical applications and experiments in institutionalizing these relations in a more adequate fashion.

Charles Abugre argues that a number of the challenges CSOs face in this terrain are not ideological but managerial. He urges us to review and evaluate lessons emerging from long-term as well as short-term attempts to develop "institutional mechanisms for managing transnational coalitions." "...are there way's", he asks, "in which longer-lasting institutional frameworks can function, as is the case of the Social Watch?". Abugre holds that CSOs still have a good deal of work to do on legitimacy, particularly through greater inclusiveness and addressing the tensions that can arise in South/North/South collaboration. There is, he argues, a convergence of values and agendas. Forces like the feminist

movement have helped to bridge the gaps among dimensions of powerlessness. How, the current circumstances, can forces for peace reinforce the gender and economic/environmental justice movements?

Occasions like the Monterrey FFD Conference and the WSSD are recent examples of the practical challenges of making these relations more formal. In the case of FDD, the UN undertook both civil society and private sector hearings, early in the process. These offered an opportunity to move beyond the NGO 'laundry-list' of ideas, into thoroughly presented proposals for reform and institutional development, resulting in a book of proposals. The UN then proposed a series of roundtables at the Conference itself, in which government leaders, multilateral officials, business representatives and NGO spokespeople would wrestle with the broad themes emerging from Financing for Development. How would the NGO spokespeople be chosen?

In this specific case reference was made to an International NGO Support Committee which had been chosen by NGOs present at the New York sessions of the Preparatory Committee for FFD, which was working with Mexican NGOs in organizing the Global NGO FFD Forum. That body, operating by e-mail, and with a couple of sub-committee gatherings, circulated the international NGO community, sought nominations, developed criteria and applied them, selecting more than 80 participants for the three days of roundtables in Monterrey. The process was without precedent, without budget and with extremely limited staff resources. It was also without adequate time. An important follow-up occasion, in which the same network was used but no time or resource was allowed for truly global consultation was the choosing of four NGO participants in the post-Monterrey High-Level ECOSOC-Bretton Woods Institutions meeting, a first for NGO and business participation.

This sort of experiment, which was not unique, should be encouraged, and cross-UN evaluation, in full consultation with NGO actors, should be undertaken. Further, this sort of experiment may offer ways forward in terms of the criteria and procedures which could be developed to facilitate a global annual or continuing NGO Forum at the UN, as various bodies, from the Commission on Global Governance to the Millennium NGO Forum have proposed. Additionally, the engagement from the beginning of electronic forms of communication and consultation is essential, but not only electronic forms. The preparation of proposals based on these experiences, taken to an initial UN NGO Global Civil Society Forum, might be a way to proceed.

Clearly such advances cannot occur without broad communication and consultation, without research or without the investment of staff energies. There is an important opportunity and a role, not only for governments and UN resources but for foundations and large NGOs in supporting such a way forward.

7. WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

The actions outlined very briefly below flow from some fundamental assumptions:

- Some form of comprehensive (in the sense of bringing strands/sectors together) global governance is essential to the survival of the planet and life thereon.
- Current inter-governmental forms are inadequate in terms of democracy, transparency and representivity. International CSO/NGO processes are inadequate as well.
- A new generation of institutional development is urgently required, the first step is the encouragement and funding of experimental forms and more systematic evaluation thereof.
- Economic policy and decision-making must serve social and environmental objectives.
- Peace is a pre-requisite of progress

8. AND HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

This is perhaps the most important question. A variety of occasions, not least of which is the World Social Forum, have been initiated to provide opportunities for civil society members and organizations to consider what they want and how to achieve it.

In terms of international structural reform, a further variety of initiatives have been undertaken, a number of which are represented at G02. In particular one might mention the call for reform of international institutions and the campaign launched by UBUNTU, based on Barcelona, Spain. Further, the ongoing work of the FIM itself has provided important learnings which are available in a variety of conference reports and brief essays.

Two reservations to keep in mind:

R.1

Reform at the global level will be inadequate and ineffective unless it is hand in hand with democratic **reform at the national and community level**. In their useful examination Reviving Democracy: Citizens at the Heart of Governance, Barry Knight, Hope Chigudu and Rajesh Tandon note that among citizens and citizens groups they found not only a vital sense of the importance of a strong civil society, but also of strong states, accountable to the democratic will. A number of multilateral policies have acted to reduce the capacities and resources of governments and to weaken the state and its ability to serve the democratic will. This process must be reversed. The prominence of municipal and regional experiments in participator budgeting and governmental accountability are a highlight of the World Social Forum, held in Porto Alegre a large city which has pioneered these democratic innovations.

R. 2

Diversity and appropriateness. In his useful examination, "After Neoliberalism, What?", Dani Rodrik of Harvard University, says that international institutions need to enable "poor countries to experiment with institutional arrangements and ...to devise their own, possibly divergent solutions to the developmental bottlenecks that they face. " The international institutional context needs to support countries "not from the perspective of integration ("what do countries need to do to integrate?") but from the perspective of development ("what do countries need to do to achieve broad-based, equitable economic growth?"). International arrangements in his view would then not be about "harmonization" but would manage "the interface between different national practices and institutions."

9. INSTITUTION-BUILDING: A NEW GENERATION

The inter-state world, still in its colonial phase, which gave birth to the United Nations has passed. Multilateral institutions – even those founded recently, like the WTO – are inter-state in constitution and make-up. The ILO remains a rather unique, if long-living, exception, which reminds us that molds can be broken or modified.

However, the inter-state character of multilateral institutions has already been modified and must be transformed. Are these some ways forward?

A STRONG WORLD BODY

- founded on the UN charter
- strengthened by direct parliamentary and popular (civil society) advisory/consultative bodies (OGN 1995)
- informed by/influenced by a whole series of consultative processes (moving forward from roundtables, stakeholder forums, etc.)
- undertaking new initiatives, such as an ongoing global cso policy forum { building on the NGO and business hearings for FFD, for example}
- developing electronic information and consultative -- e-parliament --) mechanisms.

AN ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SECURITY COUNCIL

- A new principal organ of the United Nations
- Could bring the G-8 into the global tent
- Modified and expanded membership with an eye to global population
- Consultative input from civil society building on roundtable, high-level ECOSOC/BWI meetings and other precedents.
- For international institutions, including the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO and other UN specialized agencies, the directions of the EESSC would be mandatory.
- Takes up the task of mandating, reviewing, bringing coherence to and applying/defending the normative and “legislative” functions of bodies reporting to the ECOSOC (whether something like an ECOSOC might still be necessary as a contributing ongoing working body is debatable).
- The Bank, the IMF, the WTO and other key bodies to report, review on a regular basis.
- Requires inter-ministerial cooperation at the national level, in order to select/mandate ministers to attend, mandate for negotiation, decision.

A GLOBAL PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY

- Living embodiment of the UN Charter’s “We the peoples...”
- Could be initiated by a one-time meeting of a parliament of parliaments to develop its constitution and modalities
- Advisory to the General Assembly, comprehensive and synthetic in its scope
- Composed of directly elected members from all countries willing to undertake electoral processes.

ONGOING REPRESENTATIVE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM(S)

- An annual global CSO forum
- Input from an ongoing civil society policy forum
- Carrying on consultative/advisory functions to the General Assembly, the Security Council, the new Economic, Environmental and Social Security Council together with,
- Enhanced electronic information and feed-back mechanisms on a regularized and ongoing basis.
- A system of decision-making based on consultative status, representivity (sector, geography, membership, etc.), general and/or specific competence as related to the agenda.

NOW (IMMEDIATE STEPS)

A PERIOD OF EXPERIMENTATION AND EVALUATION with forms and procedures of civil society engagement in governance structures, in each part of the UN System, with reporting to and response from both a CSO forum and electronic means.

EXPERIMENTATION AND COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION of global ngo/cso representative processes:

- building on the roundtable selection process for Monterrey
- the CSO hearings for FFD
- CSO processes for UNGASS, WSSD and other major UN events

NORMATIVE LEADERSHIP: ENHANCING AND DEFENDING VALUES

- An immediate programme of action, with targets and dates, mandated by the ECOSOC and the GA, regarding the full recognition of gender equity in structures of global governance
- Clear recognition of the legal priority of human rights and environmental treaties and agreements.
- An international court of appeal for normative disputes:
 - above WTO and other international economic institutions,
 - would settle competing claims from trade, environmental and rights agreements.
 - would have competence in these fields
 - would enable third-party representation (by civil society, other interested groups)

10. SYSTEM-WIDE ENGAGEMENT

“The wariness that governments and others have of NGO involvement might be reduced if baseline standards defined the rights and responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental entities in a clear and consistent manner.”

Barbara Gemmill and Abimbola Bamidele-Izu, “The Role of NGOs and Civil Society in Global Environmental Governance”

We recognize that full engagement with civil society is quite uneven across the UN system, in the multilateral economic institutions and regional bodies. Some variation in approach is probably appropriate given different mandates and functions. Further experimentation, at this point in history, should be encouraged, along with monitoring and evaluation. However, a general move forward and some general guidelines and leadership would be extremely important.

Making each part of the UN system, as well as the international economic institutions (World Bank, IMF, WTO and others), fully main-stream in terms of civil society participation.

General standards and guidelines established for the whole system, with the leadership of the office of the Secretary-General and utilizing the accumulated experience of relevant bodies: ECOSOC, ILO, NGLS, UNAIDS, etc.

Elements to be addressed by each organization or agency might include (*):

- a. Clear articulation of rules, rights, and commitments to consultation with civil society beyond time-limited NGO fora.
- b. Clearly delineated selection criteria for NGO participation in consultations and advisory groups, placing an emphasis on diversity.
- c. Establishments of guidelines for the process of NGO contributions
- d. Commitment to respectful treatment of NGO documents
- e. Support for publication and dissemination of NGO submissions to delegates at relevant international meetings
- f. Formalized submission process for NGO recommendations and comments to intergovernmental bodies
- g. Provision for feedback and response to NGO submissions by intergovernmental bodies and/or national governments
- h. Mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of these components.

(*) Barbara Gemmill and Abimbola Bamidele-Izu, "The Role of NGOs and Civil Society in Global Environmental Governance", in Daniel C. Esty and Maria H. Ivanova, eds, Global Environmental Governance: Options & Opportunities, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, 2002.

Accountability

A legislated process for public and participatory review of state and multilateral compliance with major agreements

- a. Part of the work of the new economic, environmental and social security council
- b. Must involve the ongoing CSO and legislative assemblies or forums
- c. Must involve information/consultation/participation of CSOs in affected states
- d. Might involve the development of economic or non-economic sanctions and/or positive incentives for compliance

Financial

- Investment of resources for civil society participation and legislator participation, from governments, multilateral bodies, foundations, NGOs.
- Provision of resources to and within the UN system to facilitate and respond to the information, planning, logistical, participation, reporting and research needs for enhancing civil society and legislator participation.

11. IN CONCLUSION

"The UN Charter forms the basis of much national and international law. But dealing with a different world and the institutional mess of global governance demands an overhaul.

The question is, what is missing? The answer? "It's democracy, stupid.' Already many people are upsetting the quiet collusion between governments and institutions to change the course of the global economy."

'It's democracy, Stupid', New Economics Foundation

PRINT AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius and Mary Kaldor, eds, Global Civil Society 2001, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001

Eskine Childers with Brian Urquhart, Renewing the United Nations System, Uppsala, Sweden, Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, 1994.

Civil Society Statement to the 2002 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting (September 24-26, 2002)
www.commonwealthfoundation.com

Commission on Global Governance, Our Global Neighborhood, Oxford, New York, etc., Oxford University Press, 1995.

Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO) www.congo.org

Sam Daws and Frances Stewart, Global Challenges: An economic and social security council at the United Nations, A report sponsored by Christian Aid.
<http://christianaid.org.uk/indepth/ooo6unec/unecon2.htm>

e-CIVICUS, a weekly civil society electronic newsletter, from www.civicus.org

Richard Falk and Andrew Strauss "Not a Parliament of Dreams" Worldlink: The magazine of the World Economic Forum. 7/16/2002 www.worldlink.co.uk/

FIM – a variety of resources. www.fimcivilsociety.org

John W. Foster with Anita Anand, Whose World Is It Anyway? Civil Society, the United Nations and the Multilateral Future, Ottawa, UNAC, 1999.

Barbara Gemmill and Abimbola Bamidele-Izu, "The Role of NGOs and Civil Society in Global Environmental Governance", in Daniel C. Esty and Maria H. Ivanova, eds, Global Environmental Governance: Options & Opportunities, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, 2002.

G-77, Report of the Meeting of the High-Level Advisory Group of Eminent Personalities and Intellectuals on Globalization and its Impact on Developing Countries, Geneva, 19th September, 2001.

Jerome C. Glenn and Theodore J. Gordon, 2002 State of the Future.
The Millennium Project, American Council for the United Nations University, Washington, D.C., 2002.
<http://www.stateofthefuture.org>

Guidelines: Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Community, 17 July, 2000.
<http://www.un.org/partners/business/guide.htm>

International NGO Committee for Human Rights in Trade and Investment
www.inchriti.org

INTGLIM – The International NGO Task Group on Legal and Institutional Matters
www.worldfederalist.org/intqlim/index.html

Barry Knight, Hope Chigudu & Rajesh Tandon, Reviving Democracy: Citizens at the Heart of Governance, London & Sterling, VA, Earthscan, 2002.

Our Global Neighborhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance, Oxford, New York, etc. Oxford University Press, 1995.

Reference Document on the Participation of Civil Society In United Nations Conferences and Special Sessions of the General Assembly During the 1990s, New York, August, 2001
<http://www.un.org/ga/president/55/speech/civilsociety1.htm>

William Reuben, The World Bank, Tell me: Who are those guys? To whom are they accountable? Dilemmas for Representation and Accountability, Ithica, Cornell University Workshop on Transnational Contention, Working Paper # 2002-01

Volker Rittberger (ed), Global governance and the United Nations system, Tokyo, New York, Paris, United Nations University Press, 2001. in particular Diana Tussie and Maria Pia Riggiozzi "Pressing ahead with new procedures for old machinery: Global governance and civil society".

Dani Rodrik, After Neoliberalism, What? paper presented to the Alternatives to Neoliberalism conference, Washington, D.C. May 23, 2002. www.new-rules.org/Conference/conference.html

Michael G. Schechter, ed. United Nations-sponsored World Conferences: Focus on Impact and Follow-up, Tokyo, New York, Paris, United Nations University Press, 2001.

Andrew Simms, Tom Bigg and Nick Robins, 'It's Democracy, Stupid', London, New Economics Foundation, World Vision, Charter 99, 2000. www.neweconomics.org

UBUNTU: World Forum of Civil Society Networks
www.ubuntu.apc.es

United Nations, General Assembly, Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change. Report of the Secretary General 9 September 2002. (A/57/387)

United Nations, Non-Governmental Liaison Service. A variety of printed and e-documents, guidelines and news, including the NGLS Handbook, the regular Go-Between and Round-up.
www.unsystem.org/ngls/

VOICES: a series of studies of CSO relations with major multinationals

Currently Available, at www.nsi-ins.ca

- Paul J. Nelson, Access and Influence: Tensions and Ambiguities in the World Bank's Expanding Relationship with Civil Society Organizations, Ottawa, NSI, April 2002.
- Jan Aart Scholte, Civil Society Voices and the International Monetary Fund, Ottawa, NSI, May, 2002.

Upcoming, watch the website:

- Annette Desmarais on the WTO and Via Campesina
- John W. Foster on Innovation and Resistance: the UN FFD Conference
- Yasmine Shamsie on the Inter-American system

We the Peoples...: A call to Action for the UN Millennium Declaration, New York, WFUNA, September, 2002
www.wfuna.org

World Social Forum. The next (third) WSF will be held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, January 23-28, 2002.

APPENDIX 1.

Message from the Secretary- General, Kumi Naidoo

(Edition 177 of e-CIVICUS - Connecting civil society worldwide! 30 August - 5 September 2002

Civil society organisations present here in Johannesburg, as well as those that are observing the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) from afar, are astonished and deeply disappointed that a few wealthy countries are able to hold the world to ransom at a time when global solidarity is critically needed to ensure that we put people at the centre. We need to do this in a way that we protect our planet for future generations and ensure equitable prosperity for all. As we used to say during the struggle against apartheid, the destiny of the black and white community was inextricably bound together: so, too, we say that the destiny of the poor and the rich on this planet are likewise bound together. We will be able to succeed in implementing the UN's Millennium Summit goals and those of this Summit only if certain fundamental changes are made to our global governance institutions.

The UN leadership and heads of government must recognise that there is a big gap between the rhetoric stating the importance of civil society and the actual translation of that into practice. The UN, for a vast majority of civil society organisations, is a more acceptable manifestation of the global governance system, as compared to the WTO, the IMF or the World Bank. But this does not detract from the reality that the UN too is still stuck in a time warp. While embracing the language of democracy, it still has a long way to go before it can reflect this in its governance structures. When the UN was formed in 1945, the world was a very different place. Most of the globe was in colonial bondage, and those nations that dominated the formation of the UN were primarily those that were victors in the Second World War, and those that possessed nuclear weaponry. Close to sixty years after the formation of the UN it still operates under broadly the same rules of engagement, even though the world has changed so fundamentally. This is troubling since the reality of globalisation has increasingly placed enormous power at the hands of these global institutions, ironically, at a time when many countries, including the host of the WSSD, South Africa, were beginning to attain democracy for the first time at the national level.

It is worth reminding ourselves that the founding charter of the UN does not say, "We the nation states of the UN," but rather says explicitly, "We the peoples of the United Nations". Notwithstanding positive statements about civil society's role in policy-making, the notion of governance that dominates is still one in which people are seen as passive spectators in an enterprise in which they actually should be actively engaged. It is also troubling that some governments question the right of civil society organisations to participate in national and global policy-making. We appeal to our colleagues in government with humility and with urgency that they should not understand a victory at the ballot box as carte blanche to rule, without reference to their citizenry. Increasingly, we find that having elections does not necessarily translate into democracy. In a growing number of countries it is only the rich, the very rich and the obscenely rich, who have a realistic chance of seeking and securing political power through the ballot box. Political parties, the bedrock of electoral democracies, are today increasingly inaccessible and alienated from ordinary citizens.

It is against this backdrop that we want to believe that the overwhelming majority of citizens of the USA, as represented by several US civil society organisations present here, are way ahead of the positions taken by their government at the WSSD. And it is therefore inappropriate for us to always assume that governments, especially ones elected by a slim and contestable majority, hold the monopoly on what constitutes wisdom, compassion and what can contribute to ending global apartheid and foster true economic and social justice for all. Today civil society recognises that they have to think both globally and locally, and act both locally and globally, since many of the concerns we share cannot be addressed effectively other than at the global level. We thus want to see a fundamental restructuring of all global governance institutions, which we believe are currently ill-equipped to deal with the responsibilities they carry. The principles underpinning such reform should include these that internalise democracy and not economic power, one that embraces justice and not military power, and recognises that civil society can be effective partners in governance.

I would like to close with the words of the indigenous people of New Zealand. When asked what the most important thing in the world is, the Maori answered: it is people, it is people, it is people.

*Warm regards,
Kumi Naidoo*