

2020's Global Governance Architecture

2020 CONCEPT

This product, a response to the direct challenge by the Chair of the G-20 Finance Ministers, will be a report compiling the visions of 10 of the most reputable research teams or think tanks presently working on global governance. The approach is to for Joe Stiglitz and Gordon Smith to convene 10 groups from around the world (half would be from the South) to a Meeting this August 30-31. Each would provide a narrative on their current research and provide their vision of a practicable and desirable 2020 architecture. The result will be a compendium of visions which will be fed directly to Stakeholder Dialogues organized by State of the World Forum and to the G-20, G-8 and the UN High Level Meeting on Financing for Development. The published product will feature the reaction of the Stakeholder Dialogues. G-20, G-8 and UN officials will attend the August meeting as observers. The competitive dynamic at such a meeting will ensure a high quality product.

There is a large range of mental maps, competing and inconsistent interests, and complex issues involved in questions of the design and reform of global institutions. The apparent current gridlock is therefore not surprising. A large number of individuals and research efforts are focused on reform of the multilateral institutions. Any pragmatic effort at pushing the envelope of feasible organizational reform involves a process of evolution or gradual change. Reform efforts should be based on an explicit or implicit premise of an "optimal" desired end product of organizational evolution over the next 20 years. For example, Royal Dutch Shell, in one of their scenarios, envisions 6 primary multilateral economic institutions: an International Monetary and Financial Council; a World Environment Organization; a Global Competition Council; an International Court of Arbitration; a General Agreement of Fair Taxation; and an International Standards Organization.

The proposal is to produce an Inventory of Alternative 2020 Structures of International Institutions, with a description of their mandates and the arrangements for their interaction. A meeting would be held August 30-31, in Victoria, Canada, inviting a cross section of researchers and institutions working on global governance issues. Each would be invited to provide a narrative of their current research and a specification of their desired 2020 outcome, describing the future shape of multilateral institutions that they would (optimistically) believe feasible. Such an inventory of developed or even indicative options would be of great interest to governments, the current leadership of international institutions, international corporations and civil society. It would provide a useful departure point for any dialogue on institutional reform and global governance more generally.

The departure point will be an April document produced by Joe Stiglitz and Gordon Smith, with the assistance of Ged Davis, of Shell's Scenario group. This precursor document will lay out the governance challenges or hurdles that may face the World in 2020. These challenges will include factors like population, the state of the world economy and environment, the degree of economic interdependence, current principles and mores on acceptable norms of national behavior, Civil Society demands for democratization, transparency and accountability. To preempt ingenuous conjectures, it will be made clear that the US Congress will still be in business. The invitees will each be required to submit an outline by June 15, to which Stiglitz and Smith will react. This will ensure a common understanding of the terms of reference.