**Seven Questions To Be Considered As Debate-Opening Remarks**

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## I - Reform or Refoundation ?

Reforming international institutions was a Loch Ness Monster for years: talked about a lot but never seen. Only recently has it gained momentum. Why is now becoming a real subject?

A world unification is under way under the auspices of trade and financial deregulation on one hand and transport and communications revolutions on the other. We did not plan it, it came as the result of convergent evolutions, each with its own momentum. But it is a deep underlying trend.

In many respects this change is comparable to the industrial revolution. And as the industrial revolution ultimately brought changes in governance models (representative democracies replacing traditional monarchies) we feel the new world order needs new institutions. So do the so-called antiglobalization protesters who in fact demand a world regulation more than they oppose the world unification.

So the **first question** is : how much does the system need to be modified ? Is the present world evolution so important that fully new structures are needed ? Or do existing institutions only need a facelift ? Are we talking reform or refoundation ?

## II - An Architecture?

Identifying such a trend is one thing. Deciding what to do with it is another. Most people fear today that globalization and world unification are processes we can only watch unfold but not master nor control.

But we are not gathered here to guess what the world will look like in 2020 (an educated weather report on social trends). The very word of "architecture" in our seminar title implies something more voluntary, a mission to help create mechanisms, rules or structures to organise the evolution of the global society.

So the **second question** is the purpose assigned to such man-made governance structures. Should they simply help organise an inevitable evolution and smoothen the ride ? or should they empower the human society to take (or keep ?) control of its destiny ?

## III - How Global ?

Some "exclusive" intergovernmental structures can be limited to certain countries by design. Depending on their purpose, it is well accepted or not. The European Union for instance is

recognised as a regional grouping accepting no members from Latin America or Asia and dealing with these regions through special co-operation agreements. But the closed nature of the G8 is criticised when it is perceived as playing the role of a world directorate.

Other institutions are "inclusive", universal by vocation, like the United Nations system. But we must remember they were not born universal. The permanent members of the Security council are a testimony to the origins of the UN in the ruins of W.W.II and Communist China had to wait before being accepted, just like today in the WTO.

So the **third question** is about universality : is it a goal or a prerequisite ? In other terms : should reforms be drafted and adopted by consensus or be based on core principles shared by founding members with a principle of non-exclusion and adhesion rules for all others ?

## IV - A Critical Mass ?

Like any endeavour, building a coalition around global principles requires two precautions :

- avoid excluding the "indispensables"; like it or not, some players cannot be kept out if their influence or endorsement is needed; this was a strong lesson from the Society of Nations
- reach a "critical mass" where the number of representative players involved is enough to make the project viable, without creating a group of opponents strong enough to derail it

In the present case, this probably translates into : no new global architecture can be designed without most developed countries, particularly the members of the G8; but representatives from other regions with various country sizes and economic development levels are also needed. The selection of developing countries representatives in the DOT Force process was a typical attempt at reaching such a critical mass on the specific subject of the Digital Divide.

So the **fourth question** is about weight. What is the minimum critical mass of countries necessary to draft and give birth to a new global architecture ?

## V - Only Governments ?

Until recently, international relations were exactly that : relations between nations. Hence global institutions being mostly intergovernmental organisations. But today, global corporations have turnovers bigger than most countries GNP and a global civil society emerges.

Some technical institutions in the UN system, like the ITU, have associated private sector representatives for many years. And almost all intergovernmental organisations now claim they want a closer dialogue with NGOs and civil society - the Seattle-Genoa effect. Any debate on a global architecture has to take into account the growing importance of such economic and social actors. All the more so because most global issues involve the three categories of stakeholders.

So the **fifth question** is about legitimacy. Should governments be considered the only legitimate actors in the global debate, or should the private and associative sectors be granted or recognised a new and equal status ? If the latter, how can these new players designate legitimate representatives, especially for civil society ? And in what type of forums ?

## VI - Global Government or Governance Mechanisms?

The very idea of a global government raises fears as much as hope. Already at the nation-state level, a centralised government seems ill-adapted to solve everyday's life problems and fears of undue control of citizens brings a desire to reinforce local authorities, considered closer to the population. Within the European Union, federalists and nationalists clash over the issue of "subsidiarity" with no clear definition of the term. Repartition of power between different levels seems difficult from a theoretical point of view.

On the other hand, some technical subjects are more and more frequently handled by specialised agencies : health and food security, telecom regulation, antitrust and competition... Furthermore, international co-operation between such bodies increases and seems more and more necessary.

As a matter of fact, most global issues are both implying multiple disciplines or actors and defining specific sectors of their own. Sometimes regulations can be implemented for one specific industry (for instance the wood and paper industry) more easily than in comprehensive approaches and treaties.

So the **sixth question** is about the nature of the global architecture we are talking about. What blend if any between generic structures (a global government) and specific ones (dedicated governance mechanisms) ? Can a global architecture be built progressively, subject by subject ? And what would be the first fields to initiate such a process ?

## VII - What Role for Technology?

The digital revolution accelerates the globalization process. Without computers and networks, no unified financial markets, no supply-chain systems and no outsourcing of manufacturing in lower wage countries.

Similarly, steam engines and transportation (railroads in particular) were key factors in the industrial revolution. But they also were instrumental in the coming of age of parliamentary democracy. Thanks to new means of transportation, deputies could come back to their provinces in days instead of weeks and keep contact with their constituents through quick and regular postal mail.

The same could happen with IT. We see Internet as a technological and economical revolution. We only begin to understand how big a social change it brings and its potential impact on policy-making. The web requests more transparency from politicians. The anti-globalization movement would not be able to organise and co-ordinate without the web and mobile phones. Some recent international structures (the World Wide Web consortium in particular or ICANN) are experimenting new decision-making processes based on IT and many companies explore it everyday.

Such interactive and ubiquitous technologies will allow new types of interaction, participation and representation: documents on the positions of various actors become available any time and anywhere; online forums allow consultation of all interested parties in new ways; webcast conferences or debates improve transparency and reach a global audience without the constraints

of teleconferencing or television.

So the **seventh question** is about digital democracy. What new participative governance mechanisms become possible through an innovative use of IT? Could they sometimes - and when should they - complement or replace today's democratic system based on representatives and majority votes ? Given the fact that any part of the world is now one day away from any other by plane, what combination of physical presence (summits and other conferences) and online participation?

## Conclusion

Discussions in various fora beyond ours address the issue of a Global Architecture. All adopt of course the perspective of their respective members. But no one has the full legitimacy to treat it alone. The European Union is facing the same dilemma in trying to draft a Constitution. If the lessons from the "European Declaration of Rights" are any indication, a wide preliminary debate is a minimum condition for legitimacy but no formula for representation of all interested parties has yet been broadly accepted.

So, whatever the answers to the points above are in our group, here lies **the last and probably core question**. Where will the mandate for drafting new institutions come from? How can it be indisputable and how can it handle the question of a fair and legitimate representation of the numerous stakeholders from public, private and associative sectors?

In this respect, the coming World Summit on the Information Society, organised in December 2003 in Geneva under the auspices of the ITU will be a first and interesting test case for new criterias of representation.