

Part 1: Opening Plenary Sessions

Welcome

Lynn Muthoni Wanyeki

G05 Executive Committee Member and FIM Board Member; Executive Director, African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Kenya

Lynn Muthoni Wanyeki opened the plenary with a brief review of recent events that have had an impact on democracy. She described how the 1990s were the decade of multilateral agreements and post-GATT agreements. Since then, civil society's engagement has become stronger and international bodies have attempted to respond to its critiques.

While the Forum International de Montréal (FIM) was originally very sector-specific and interested primarily in participation mechanisms for civil society, over time it became more and more interested in the multilateral system as a whole. The events of 9/11 exposed weaknesses in the multilateral system, and pointed to the need to reform the United Nations.

In closing, Wanyeki suggested that the G05 Conference was meant to “provide an autonomous space to develop our vision and strategies to achieve true democracy across the board.”

Nigel Martin

G05 Executive Committee Member and President-CEO of FIM, Canada

Nigel Martin told the group that the objective of the conference is not to end with a consensus but rather to end with a vision. He outlined how the conference would unfold, with panel sessions, mini-plenaries, and workshops to identify visions and strategies.

The G05 is not an isolated event, Martin pointed out. This year, 2005, is an important year for governance, with the Millennium+5 Summit in New York and the World Trade Organization meeting in Hong Kong.

Rajesh Tandon

Chair of the G05 Executive Committee and FIM's Board of Directors; Founding President of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India ; Member of the Civil Society Advisory Committee, Commonwealth Foundation, UK

Rajesh Tandon told the group that the G05 Conference takes place at a “moment of history.” The nuclear non-proliferation treaty deliberations had ended the day before in disarray, and Europe as a governance institution and the European Constitution were the object of a referendum in France.

He explained that the social, human, and economic agenda decisions made in the 1990s have not been implemented because of ineffective enforcement mechanisms, particularly at the UN level. Most governments (particularly those in rich countries) of the world have reneged on their commitments, especially in environment and development. In addition, the proliferation of agreements and regimes has resulted in confusion and conflict between jurisdictions.

Many people around the world have been living in insecurity for a long time, but this was recognized only after 9/11. The recent discourse on human security has made the world even more insecure, which should not come as a surprise, “as unilateral efforts have never been successful in human history.”

In Tandon's opinion, “We witness political leadership at the national level, contesting elections without necessarily having a commitment to democracy.” Most citizens of the world have been treated as mere voters, and more efforts are being invested into fixing elections than in engaging citizens. National governments are often run by a few ministers and a “large coterie of unelected officials.”

Tandon reiterated the five democratic principles of global governance that emerged from the G02 Conference in 2002:

- Global institutions and agendas should be subjected to democratic political accountability.
- Democratic policy at the global level requires legitimacy of popular control through representative and direct mechanisms.
- Citizen participation in decision making at the global level requires equality of opportunity for all citizens of the world.
- Multiple spheres of governance, from local to provincial to national to regional and global, should mutually support democratization of decision making at all levels.
- Global public goods (peace and security, basic education and health, clean water and air, food, and human rights) should be equitably accessible to all citizens of the world.

He reminded the group that, more than the absence of war, peace is a way of life that includes the respect of diversity. In conclusion, he reminded participants that, throughout history, human beings have risen to the challenge of showing solidarity for strangers and fellow human beings, as shown by the global response to the tsunami a few months earlier.

Opening Panel

Facilitator; Ezra Limiri Mbogori, Reflection and Development Centre for NGOs in Eastern and Southern Africa (MWENGO), Zimbabwe

Key Visions and Questions on How to Advance Global Democracy

Significant democratic deficits limit the participation of citizens and key stakeholders, and affect the capacities of global governance institutions to address critical global issues such as peace and security, human rights, gender justice, eco-development, and ecological sustainability, said **James Riker**, Associate Director, The Democracy Collaborative, University of Maryland, USA.

Based on a policy brief he prepared for G05 entitled “Promising Visions and Strategies to Advancing Global Democracy,” Riker outlined some promising opportunities for reforming and transforming existing institutions and possibilities for creating alternative democratic global institutions. Approaches to advancing global democracy range from empowering a global democratic civil society to realizing the democratic potential of parliamentary initiatives and building democratic linkages among the local, national, regional, and global levels.

Riker described key deficits affecting the possibility for democratic participation by citizens and stakeholders at the global level. These include the following:

- **Low citizen awareness and low levels of participation in global governance processes and issues:** The goal should be to increase the quantity of democratic participation, through strategies such as public education and media engagement.
- **Ineffective institutions and processes of global governance:** The quality of participation would be improved by a strategy to deepen the knowledge, skills, and involvement of citizens and stakeholders and enhance the overall discourse and tenor of deliberations.
- **Significant inequalities and disparities in social structures:** It is vital to increase the quality of democratic participation, diversify stakeholders, and ensure access to those who have been marginalized, disenfranchised, and disempowered.
- **Lack of institutional capacity for sustained action on global governance issues:** The aim would be to increase the sustainability of democratic participation

by creating an enabling environment that removes barriers and fosters sustained participation in democratic governance, the development of partnerships across sectors, and global citizenship and solidarity.

Key deficits can be found within global governance institutions, which are limited in transparency, participation, representation, and democratic decision-making processes. Many global governance institutions have few formal provisions for citizen consultation or parliamentary oversight. There is an urgent need for a democratic mechanism for accountability and alternative participatory processes at global level, Riker said. Democratic deficits within global governance institutions include lack of responsiveness and effectiveness, government inaction on key issues, deficit of resources, and a vision deficit.

While there is no universally accepted definition of global democracy, Riker suggested that it describes economic, political, and cultural rights and influence for the majority of the world's people over the local and global issues that affect their lives. Strategies for civil society to enhance democracy include the following:

- **Democratic participation:** Citizens and key stakeholders actively engage individually and collectively in the economic, political, and cultural activities of a broad range of organizations, networks, social movements, and governance institutions. Inclusion, accessibility, broad representation, and fora for consultation are vital.
- **Democratic empowerment:** There is a need to improve equality and representation, diversity, and democratic knowledge and deliberation.
- **Democratic governance:** There is a need for open and transparent decision-making processes, equalization of power, and democratization of authority relations.

1) Empowering a Democratic Civil Society: The World Social Forum (WSF) and Other Major Civil Society Initiatives

Globalization has not come with global democracy, and in many cases has worked against democratic principles, said **Cândido Grzybowski**, Director, Instituto Brasileiro de Análises sociais e economicas (IBASE) and a member of the World Social Forum. The task for civil society is to rebuild globalization processes according to “democratic” principles. One of the positive outcomes of globalization has been that regions are more interdependent and, despite the tensions and differences, the enhanced collective energy can be harnessed to confront the negative aspects of globalization.

Grzybowski described a divide between economy and society, with politicians who impose technocratic modes of production that disregard inequities. However, the reality

is that markets are more important than the needs of the people and any other rights in the world. The 2005 Global Democracy Conference fills an important gap by bringing together a diversity of people to network, develop strategies, and transform ideas into policies and practices, he said.

For civil society and the World Social Forum, the strategic point of reference in developing a new model of globalization is the democratic principles and values that allow diversity among regions and parts of the world. Globalization processes must expand beyond the focus on production to encompass social welfare and sustainable socio-economic processes. International institutions need to be reformed to respect local autonomies, and be more democratic and accountable to principles of democratic global governance. There must be space created for convergence and the development of solutions to global problems and inequities. The challenge for civil society is to believe that it is possible to defeat the neo-liberal ideology, he concluded.

2) Democratizing the Global Economy and Global Governance: Rethinking the Roles of Multilateral Institutions, Rules, and Key Actors at the Global Level

As a starting point, it is important to define what is meant by democracy, said **Jan Aart Scholte** of the Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation at the University of Warwick. Democracy can encompass rule by the people, and principles of liberty, collectivity, equality, autonomy, choice, transparency, responsibility, and accountability. Global democracy, on the other hand, could mean democracy that exists everywhere in the world, democracy operating in relation to a global *demos*, or democratic decision making in relation to global problems. It is important to define terms such as global citizenship, global community, and global democracy.

Global democracy should not be narrowly conceived in terms of global governance institutions and their democratization, because much of the regulation and governance of global affairs and problems that affect the global *demos* actually happens outside those global governance institutions, Scholte said. He pointed to a number of global governance and regulatory institutions operating on a global scale in the private sphere, such as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, International Accounting Standards Board, and the International Securities Market Association. In this context, governance is not a public-sector jurisdiction, though it involves making rules that affect the public's lives.

Scholte described a number of democratic deficits that hamper the democratization of the governance of global affairs:

- **Citizen ignorance:** Citizen and public education are important; many civil society groups are effective in increasing public awareness but more work needs to be done at the grassroots level.

- **Institutional failures:** Decision-making processes need to be participatory, transparent, and accountable.
- **Structural inequalities:** Structural inequalities must be addressed. Global structures should give people equal opportunities to be engaged in the political process regardless of race, class, gender, faith and culture, place of residence, disability, etc.

There are different strategies for confronting these deficits, Scholte said. The conformist approach favours the status quo. The rejectionist approach is outright anti-globalization, with the desire to unravel global flows of communications, finance, etc. down to the local level. The reformist strives to work within the general social structures of Western capitalism. Finally, the transformist approach focuses on creating a new social order for global democracy.

3) Realizing the Democratic Potential of Parliamentary Initiatives: National, Regional, and Global Possibilities

The French referendum on the European Union (EU) Constitution demonstrates the difficult challenges related to transnational democracy, according to **Heidi Hautala**, Member of Parliament of Finland and former member of European Parliament. “The French are actually now realizing that their government and parliament have transferred a lot of competencies to supra-institutions such as the European Union, without actually explaining what those competencies are and how the EU is affecting their lives,” she said. “Globalization has also meant that things have become more complex and there is confusion because it’s hard to understand who is responsible, and who is guilty, for what.”

Regional blocks will play an important role in democracy. While there are dreams for a global parliament, Hautala suggested that there may be other ways to reach the same objective, such as UN reform.

Hautala discussed the proliferation of parliamentary networks. Civil society’s role is to show parliamentarians how to reclaim public policy into a democratic framework. International commissions have proposed establishing global public-policy making bodies to solve global problems that are not being addressed properly—civil society can play a role here.

Civil societies and parliaments share a common goal to monitor governments and international organizations. Introducing new rights-based approaches, especially for access to justice, would be valuable in global policy making, Hautala said. For example, the North–South divide in terms of labour rights and environmental standards must be

bridged. Parliamentarians and civil society need to work together reclaim public policy making for democratic actors, she concluded.

4) Building Democratic Linkages at the Local, National, Regional, and Global Levels: Identifying Strategic Possibilities for Responsive Democratic Governance

Lalita Ramdas, a community educator involved with Greenpeace India and PRIA, described her personal journey to make linkages between working locally on the west coast of India (the source of her inspiration) and thinking globally. She explained that she had consulted with the women in her village about their message for G05 and their issues were clear: peace, education, shelter, employment, and health. The women pointed out that lack of peace comes from lack of water and other basic needs. “How do you build a truly peaceful democratic polity when that is the situation on the ground?” Ramdas asked.

At the same time, she said, “I do not believe we have any deficit of vision at the local level—maybe at the global or regional level, but certainly not at the local level.” The framework for developing democracy is very much in place, but civil society members need to work together to identify the obstacles on the ground and overcome them. In India, for example, a massive grassroots movement has mobilized to protest against a new forest bill being presented in Indian parliament. Indigenous people who have lived all their lives in the forest have come together and descended on Delhi “This is how you begin to influence public policy,” she said.

Parallel Fora: Building Strategies to Achieve Key Civil Society Visions of Global Democracy

In one of four separate fora, participants discussed key questions designed to provoke thinking on strategies to achieve civil society visions of global democracy.

- What strategies offer the best possibilities for achieving global democracy?
- What criteria and signposts should guide civil society action in enhancing global democracy?
- What innovative strategies, processes, and practices will enable civil society to achieve the multifaceted goals that support and advance global democracy?

1) Empowering a Democratic Global Civil Society: The World Social Forum and Other Major Civil Society Initiatives

Facilitator **Thomas Ponniah**, Editor of “Another World is Possible,” Harvard University/The Carold Institute, USA/Canada, began by stressing that the objective was to have an

interactive session and reflect on strategies for creating global democracy. He asked the audience to pair up, introduce themselves, and decide on a question or comment they could present to the group. **Cândido Grzybowski** was the resource person for this forum. The discussions included the following questions and comments:

An Exchange on the World Social Forum

How does the World Social Forum reach out to people on both the local and global levels? WSF member Grzybowski described a structure of “fora within fora” that allows for simultaneous debate. But, he added, there are still gaps.

Can the fora result in specific proposals? Which of the WSF’s many recommendations have been passed on to the UN or UN agencies? If they haven’t been, why not?

Can the forum become the nucleus of a constitutional assembly of the world, and can we make up a new constitution of the world based on ethics? Grzybowski said that fora provided a space for the debates that would address that issue, but it could not become an institution that would instigate it.

Is the forum based on an assumed existence of a global culture? But does such a culture exist, and should it? In countries like Canada, it would be impossible to group all cultures together. Instead, people should be proud of their differences. Grzybowski explained that he did not want to create a global civil society: his goal was a world where diversity was cultivated.

While there is much talk about the nation-state, about thinking locally and nationally, the challenge is for individuals to reclaim their own sovereignty.

What is the relationship between the forum and the networks of members of parliament working in peace and democracy? There is a forum within the forum where parliamentarians meet. While government authorities often take a closed position, with parliamentarians, there is often a sense of complicity.

How can we promote a more balanced participation from developing countries? How can we promote more transversal communication between fora?

Within the WSF, how are we making bridges to the outside fora, such as the world economic fora? How is it having an impact on them?

How can we work together with the WSF to produce a global vote in one year?

What is the role of government in the WSF? How can it help or hinder progress? Does the WSF have any lessons on how to govern a global polity that could eventually influence governments? There are problematic issues with governments: if a government accepts the WSF, and provides funding, it is inevitable that it will get involved in the

conference. But it is important to be open to diversity. The Forum must go to Venezuela, to Arab countries, to China.

Grzybowski stressed the importance of reaching countries (such as Muslim countries, for example) in the face of many false preconceptions. The WSF must negotiate with Muslim countries. They had tried to negotiate with Morocco to see if the Forum could be held there, but negotiations had fallen through.

Civil Society and Governance

How are we defining global civil society? What relationship could be established between governments and civil society organizations at the global level? How can global civil society groups relate the grassroots with the policy sophistication of high-level global institutions such as the World Bank? Is there anything being done to build civil society's capacity to participate, learn new skills, and come to the UN or the World Bank and give recommendations? Even local authorities should be represented at the UN.

In terms of participation in global institutions, Grzybowski answered that he could not speak to that, being more involved in public debates. The problem with organizations such as the UN, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, he argued, was that they are not willing to listen to civil society. No matter how much discussion one has with them, at the end of the day they are there not to listen, but to control.

Global governance is necessary, but it must not entail concentrated power. As it stands, the UN is not really a democratic organization. If the democratic process is to be strengthened, it will be a matter of asking pointed questions. When you vote for someone, what exactly are you delegating him or her to do? Who controls those who control the means of the democratic process? The best way to work on these questions is to deal with local realities.

In the case of countries where civil rights are either limited or non-existent, what can be done for citizens living in these situations? As much as there is a desire to be inclusive—to involve both civil society and those from the private sector—in the case of regions and countries where there are difficulties (in northern Africa, for example), specific strategies will have to be developed if they are to be included. Should individual identities—based on one's gender or other societal categorizations—be undermined in order to “militate as one big society” in support of Africa?

Parliament and Civil Society

Parliament is part of civil society; parliaments have mandates from their electorate; parliaments are citizens. Yet some parliamentarians feel that they are being usurped by civil society.

Should civil society play a different role in decision-making phases? How can issue-based networks be fostered? How can we establish learning structures to ensure that they address all aspects of the issues they are meant to deal with?

2) Democratizing the Global Economy and Global Governance: Rethinking the Roles of Multilateral Institutions, Rules, and Key Actors at the Global Level

Victoria Elias of the Center for Environment and Sustainable Development “ECO-ACCORD”, Russia Federation, facilitated this session. The resource person was **Jan Aart Scholte**.

One participant noted that global governance and democracy were reminiscent of “a chicken and egg scenario.” Which comes first? Government and civil society are still pondering definitions; the private sector on the other hand has clear models that govern their activities.

It was suggested that, in order to be effective, civil society needs legitimacy and the power to influence. Consensus is important, since “hundreds of opinions will weaken the movement.” Another participant agreed, stating that a lack of a mandate and communication “to the people on the ground” is problematic. If political change to the neo-liberal agenda is to be effected, the current disconnect between the mandate and the people has to be addressed. Everyone’s voice is different, said another participant, but each voice can be guided into commonality. This would lead to civil society bringing forward not one but several voices from multiple stakeholders (e.g., Land Mine Treaty negotiations and the World Summit on the Information Society). Another participant reminded the group that people change laws and regulations: civil society has fought several fights, including NAFTA and water rights.

Another participant suggested that civil society shouldn’t necessarily have a vote but that their voice should be heard by decision makers before decisions are made. Furthermore, decisions should be made public so that those affected can understand the issues and respond.

Does government really represent the people? Or the elite? There is no seamless anti-government push, said one participant. There is some conceit on the part of NGOs who think that the more professionalized NGOs are, the quicker the world will change. The moderator added that civil society has a role in monitoring itself as well; newcomers to organizations can provide assistance here.

Scholte reiterated that civil society is asking to open the conversation in order to develop strategies. He suggested that participants think about what civil society wants and how to get there. He also noted that the very term civil society is problematic; after all, civil society includes the mafia. The term “blurs power struggles within countries and states.”

Powerful countries are running IFIs and their directors are chosen without input from others, said one participant. How can this be changed? Another participant agreed, noting that “it all comes back to money.” One participant suggested that the IMF is underfunded, with most of its resources borrowed from elsewhere. It is a mere intermediary; were it better funded, the issue of equitable voting rights could be addressed.

“I am not convinced that civil society has a place in IFIs,” commented one participant, adding that participation of civil society in institutions like the World Trade Organization has resulted in civil society embodying national interests. When that occurs and the only voice is protectionist, the interest of the people is not served.

During a discussion on the World Bank, another participant pointed out that many global institutions like the World Bank have standards about governance and participation that are not consistently implemented; they need to be held accountable to those. What is participation for? A real fight over equity is looming within institutions like the World Bank. The question is how to work with people within those institutions to ensure equity and governance. Growth in itself does not enhance equity, but equity enhances growth. He invited participants to look at the board of directors of the World Bank. “The most difficult to move are those from our countries,” (e.g., India shot down social policies) he explained. Many push agendas that are not in the interest of the people they are supposed to serve. Furthermore, many countries would be able to contribute (e.g., voting rights) at the World Bank if the 1940s outdated formula were changed. China exemplifies the lack of relationship between economic power and representation.

One participant suggested that the questions of transparency are also applicable to civil society organizations and that they should consider applying standards of consultation and reform as well. She saw “too many voices” at the table. This smacks of a lack of efficiency and tolerance in accepting opposite points of view. The North–South power issue needs to be addressed. The former NGO Steering Committee to the UN was an example of an organization with good South/North and gender balance, which abided by a rulebook that equalized the process. This, said the participant, brought smaller groups into the discussion and provided a system of transparency.

Scholte addressed and summarized some of the points raised by participants:

- Can global democracy be found within present systems, or is it necessary to go beyond those? If one buys into the overarching existing structures, one is stuck there. In contrast, those with very different views might “talk past each other.”
- Is consensus within civil society possible? “Civil society is a mess and so it should be.” The monocultural view associated with neo-liberalism does not apply; an alternative view of global democracies is more appropriate.
- Clearly, in order to speak with legitimacy, civil society needs to be connected to what is happening on the ground.

- There is a problem about access; generally, the stronger voice gets in. “This is about class.” It is the middle-class, professional English-speaker’s voice that is heard. That being the case, it is “our responsibility to engage and involve others.”

During the discussion on local governments, one participant suggested, “I see local governments as natural, strategic allies of civil society.” They can offer legitimacy to civil society. More than 70 countries are decentralizing; empowering local authorities is a key area. Furthermore, if democratic processes are not possible at the local level, “how can we pretend for democracy at other levels?” Agreeing that local government and governance are critical to global democracy, a participant remarked that local government isn’t immune to social class and institutional biases. Local government structures can be much more discriminatory than nation-states (e.g., Nepal, India, and Bangladesh).

Scholte summarized the key questions put forward in the forum:

1. What strategies offer the best possibility for achieving global democracy?
 - Does one work within the current system, change it entirely, either, or both, and in which proportions?
 - Is democracy acted out at the supra-state, state, or local level (or even further, within the family and household unit) and, if across all levels, in what combination?
 - Which states make the decision? Currently, only the major ones. Does civil society only relate to its states or others that will make an impact?
 - Does democracy stand by itself in this debate? Or should it be reconciled with other goals and what are the boundaries? What democratic processes are leading the way?
2. What criteria and signposts should guide civil society action in enhancing global democracy?
 - One must relate back to the base; the people must be heard and civil society must be accountable to them.
 - The issue of a few vs. an infinite number of goals and objectives need to be addressed.
 - How do civil society actors relate with others in the goal for global democracy (e.g., social movement)? How do they relate with parliament and to the state?
 - Who should civil society work with for fruitful coordination? How about the private sector (they already have a corporate social responsibility framework to work with)?
3. What innovative strategies, processes, and practices will enable civil society to achieve the multi-faceted goals that support and advance global democracy? There was no single answer here since participants had different approaches and ideas.

3) Realizing the Democratic Potential of Parliamentary Initiatives: National, Regional, and Global Possibilities

An approach to global governance that is dynamic and interactive, involving local, regional, national, and international levels, is needed. It should be founded on principles such as ecological development, international justice, and universal access to clean water, health care, and education, said facilitator **Michael Cooke**, the Carold Institute, George Brown College, Canada.

Modern globalization and technological developments have eroded democracy, with the transfer of many democratic powers to experts, often beyond national borders, without conscious decision making, said **Heidi Hautala**, resource person for this forum. The biggest losers are parliament and parliamentarians, who are supposed to be the representatives of the will of the people. It is difficult to speak of global democracy unless there is democracy at the local, regional, and national levels.

Today, representative forms of democracy must be complemented by more direct, participatory forms of democracy, through linkages between elected representatives, civil society organizations (CSOs), and citizens, Hautala said. She suggested that CSOs and parliamentarians suffer from an ongoing democratic deficit and that a federalist model for decision making would give citizens the opportunity to make a difference at all levels.

The past decade has seen the emergence of regional blocks, from Europe to Africa and South America. Citizens generally do not yet understand these new formations. What kind of powers and representation should such regional blocks have in the current system? Parliaments continue to play important roles as defenders of fundamental citizen rights, Hautala maintained. Together with civil society, parliamentary networks can be an effective watchdog for good governance by governments and international institutions.

Participants identified and debated a number of program priorities:

- **Encouraging more debate in national parliaments**
Citizens do not really know how decisions are made at regional and international levels; in fact, issues are generally dealt with by executives at the top level. Parliamentarians need to consider issues beyond their national interests and borders.
- **Enhancing capacity building at all levels**
Intermediate models at the local, regional, national, and sectoral levels would build toward a world parliament structure. There is a need to strengthen knowledge and practice at all levels and to create a strong foundation for the global structure. This involves capacity building for both parliamentarians and staff.

The way globalization is managed today is undermining democracy everywhere, and the outcomes of the current global system are in the interests of neither the North nor the South. A better system needs to be built from the national level upwards, with a

focus on good governance and accountability. Moreover, it is important to distinguish which initiatives work in different contexts.

- **Promoting global democracy at all levels**
Principles of global democracy must be cultivated among national bodies and international institutions; these principles would then flow down to lower levels. There was some disagreement on whether to focus energies on building global democracy working from the grassroots and strengthening democracy from the local level up to the international, or vice versa. It would be useful to distinguish the initiatives that work in different contexts (e.g., North and South). One suggestion was a dual process that addresses both regional and sectoral issues.
- **Providing sustained support to parliamentary organizations**
Organizations such as the African Union are facing lack of funding.
- **Facilitating more exchanges among parliamentarians**
Greater North–South exchanges are especially recommended.
- **Creating better collaboration between parliamentarians and civil society on global democracy**
Better collaboration is needed among parliamentarians and other stakeholders. Strategies need to be developed to truly connect parliamentarians to civil society and citizen concerns. CSOs and NGOs need to be better represented in international policy-making fora.

There is a need to identify key programs that are supported by civil society that would make a difference at the international level, provide a means for lobbying parliamentarians, and encourage citizens to sign up in the international registry for an election of a civil society parliament.

Partnering with governments will also be key. National policy makers must be involved, to ensure governmental support and resources for global democracy initiatives.

Heidi Hautala noted that the World Bank has initiated a parliament twinning project, which can be a good tool for promoting democracy building and good governance.

- **Providing support to failing states**
Programs may be nascent or non-existent in failing states.
- **Creating and strengthen parliamentary oversight**
Parliaments should play a larger role in addressing regional and global issues like ecological security and sustainability, poverty reduction, corruption, citizen engagement. Regional and global approaches to parliamentary oversight are needed.

Parliamentarian linkages need to be formed with international institutions like the World Bank; once these linkages are in place, stakeholders can work out principles and processes toward realizing global democracy.

- **Developing a global standard for national democracy through greater representation and participation**

Holding elections does not in itself equate to democracy. It is important to develop a global framework for measuring the degree of democracy in a given country.

Different assumptions exist regarding the meaning of “parliament.” One definition is the elected body that oversees the executive, which in turn holds all the power. Hautala suggested that parliaments are elected by the people, who thereby give them law-making responsibilities. The emphasis was that members are elected, not appointed, to parliament. At the same time, it was noted that parliaments can be partisan. Countries have proven to be reluctant to transfer their elected sovereignty to regional institutions such as the European Union.

It is important that democracies represent the *demos* in its full diversity, and include the representation and participation of women, people with disabilities, etc.

One proposal is that “delegative voting” could bring civil society representatives into parliaments and give them actual real power based on how much support they have from citizens. This would also bring civil society expertise into parliament.

Standards need to be defined for both representational democracy and participatory democracy.

- **Creating a world parliament**

Whether elected or appointed, a people’s parliamentary assembly of national legislators and parliamentarians could act as a meeting body with the UN and help define the global agenda. Such a body could speed up the process toward realizing global democracy. Smaller countries would discover strengthened ability to bargain with the more developed countries.

However, an opposing argument was that almost one third of the world population, more than 2.5 billion people, do not enjoy democracy because they are ruled by monarchies or civilian or military dictatorships. There are pressing issues that need to be addressed in order to bring countries up to speed before global democracy can be achieved. For some, creation of a world parliament is a grandiose idea disconnected from actual issues.

Moreover, it was noted that an international structure for the nations of the world already exists in the UN. Rather than start from scratch, the UN should be revamped and empowered to serve as the world parliament.

However, the counterpoint was that governments have shown themselves to be resistant to structural reforms within the UN or even toward fulfilling their commitments in international agreements. The UN Millennium Development Goals are promising, but far more is needed.

Another challenge is that a world parliament will require a global constitution, which cannot be set up spontaneously. But unless there is a constitution guaranteeing citizen and human rights and governmental and institutional obligations, a world parliament will offer no empowerment to the people.

The powers, responsibilities, and above all, authority, of a world parliament also need to be determined. Should such a body have the authority to develop and enforce policy, or should it be an elected advisory body that passes resolutions reflecting the interests of citizens globally? Another role would be to bring coherence to the progressive positions of different states, parliamentarians, and different international bodies.

Consensus and Divergence

While there was consensus on the urgency to develop strategies toward global democracy, there were different priorities and some disagreement, particularly on developing a world parliament. One note of caution was that strategies and programs must not disenfranchise the third of the world population that has yet to enjoy democratic lives.

4) Building Democratic Linkages at the Local, National, Regional, and Global Levels: Identifying Strategic Possibilities for Responsive Democratic Governance

Facilitator **Thierno Kane**, United Nations Development Programme, USA (UNDP) opened the discussion by saying that it was imperative to construct a vision for civil society before developing strategies for implementation at different levels, because such a vision is seen by many to be lacking. It was also necessary to consider if it was more appropriate to implement participation at multiple levels simultaneously, or to focus on one level at a time.

One participant suggested that the vision for civil society was alive and well at the local level. Very often, local people sharing their local experiences can be helpful to the

construction of a vision for civil society at national and international levels. A number of participants echoed this sentiment, and shared their experiences.

For example, in Colombia, local issues such as public space for democratic participation are in need of support and protection from international organizations, as local institutions (i.e., police, local governments) often use violence as a way of stifling such spaces. In these situations, international support is imperative to protecting local rights and democratic processes.

Lalita Ramdas, acting as the forum resource person, voiced her agreement that participation in civil society needed to be worked on many levels at once. She contended, as well, that historical repression of peoples needed to be taken into consideration when evaluating methods for increasing participation in civil society. Essentially, the point was made that sustained participation can be difficult when you consider the socialization process (i.e., women shouldn't disagree or speak up) that is still very strong in many parts of the world. International and national levels can help provide protection for those in local communities trying to implement civil society participation.

During the discussion of the definition of civil society, a participant wondered what would not be considered as part of civil society. One participant replied that dictatorship was a clear example of a non-civil society. Another added that, in Guinea, neither political parties nor the military were considered part of civil society because that had been the choice of the people there. It was suggested that civil society describes those people who speak for the welfare of all society and not solely the welfare of their respective organizations. He noted that in an ideal democratic society, people elect governmental officials who act on behalf of the entire society, but that all too often these officials end up protecting special interests rather than the society.

The discussion surrounding a definition and vision of civil society was brought to a close by the acknowledgement that definitions are still contested and debated. Participants agreed that developing strategies to increase participation on all levels and increase linkages between levels needed to be further discussed. Lalita Ramdas suggested that "civil society" is a rather generic title under which, most times, fall vastly differing organizations and goals. She pointed out that this generic title can sometimes be misleading, in that it implies solidarity among all members when, in reality, there may be vast differences among groups.

Participants then turned their attention to deficits affecting democratic participation, suggesting ways for addressing them at multiple levels of governance.

In considering how to *increase quantity of participation*, one woman, drawing on her experiences in Guinea, said that education of people at different levels and in appropriate languages was important. She suggested that media can be a useful tool for educating citizens but emphasized that the media must be free to express various viewpoints. She noted that Guinea has employed both a bottom-up approach, as community radio had

become more popular in recent years, and a top-down approach that could help local organizations take education to higher levels of governance.

Kane pointed out that in Africa there had been movements working toward more democratic processes for centuries, but that the key hindrance these movements had faced was the lack of visibility and the lack of democratic space open for them to influence higher levels. One participant suggested that trust was a key hindrance to increased participation. She pointed out that there is an inequality of power at various levels and that the assumption is always that there is more knowledge at higher levels. This leads to

mistrust of higher levels by local people, who feel their concerns are neither respected nor listened to with any sort of appreciation. Trust must be built, then, between local, national, regional, and international levels if successful communication and increased participation is to occur.

The Millennium Review and the MDGs: Opportunity for Impact

The governments of many developing countries are not asking CSOs to help them accomplish the Millennium Development Goals, this despite a proven presence on the ground, said participants in the self-directed workshop, "the Millennium Review and the MDGs." Instead, there is concern that international aid is being used to promote security issues rather than to fight poverty.

A switch from short-term goals to a structural change over the long term will only happen by mobilizing the international community and focusing on the "big picture." Civil society must learn to use the media to its best advantage—to bring the case for change directly to the public—in order to help set the agenda. As one participant said, "Unity is strength!"

*Notes on self-organized workshop 7.

Another participant described the "divide and conquer strategy" whereby local and global levels have been pitted against each other. In his experience, participation increased when moving from local to national levels, but then decreased at the global level. He concluded that local and global levels have the least amount of power and, therefore, should be careful not to see the other as an adversary, but rather an ally.

There was then discussion among several participants that resulted in consensus that *quantity and quality of participation* will be

increased only when equality is addressed. Marginalized people—who feel their voices are not being heard—see little point in joining democratic processes.

One participant suggested that it was crucial to celebrate successes if sustained participation is desired. People need to see the positive things that have been accomplished if they are to have strength and desire to strive for a democratic civil society. Addressing this, another participant cited two examples of successful linkages between levels:

- International campaigns, which have raised awareness and participation between local, national, and global levels;
- The fallout of the recent tsunami, which required all levels of society (local, national, regional, global) to work together toward a common goal.

Efforts toward sustained participation in civil society should learn from these (as well as other) examples as the unique responses undertaken in each situation have recognized the

“power in numbers,” and the need to draw on social capital from multiple levels to achieve sustained civil societies.

The facilitator summarized the discussion, noting that there is a tendency to oversimplify levels we are working on and that the gap between levels—whether it be a gap in power, knowledge, equality, or language—is something that must be addressed if participation in democratic processes is to be fully realized.

Welcome Reception

Rajesh Tandon thanked the City of Montréal and the Government of Québec for their support for the Conference. **Nigel Martin**, Founding President of FIM, welcomed participants and dignitaries, Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, Québec Minister of International Relations and Minister for La Francophonie; and Claude Trudel, Associate Advisor to the Mayor, International and Intergovernmental Relations and City Councillor, City of Montréal.

Claude Trudel acknowledged the valuable work accomplished daily by civil society to protect and reinforce democracy at the international, national, and local levels. He gave several examples of what civil society has been doing in Montréal for democracy. This city was the site, in February 2003, of the largest protests in North America against Canada’s involvement in Iraq, with over 200 000 Montréalers on the street. Similarly, 100 Montréalers joined the Québec delegation at the recent World Social Forum in Porto Alegre.

It is also in Montréal that the Coalition for Cultural Diversity was created in 1999. It is the biggest cultural lobby in the world and is an important leader in the fight to preserve and promote cultural diversity in the context of globalization.

In May 2005, the Montréal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities was proposed. It outlines a number of rights and responsibilities in terms of democracy, economy, social life, culture, environment, and sustainable development. If this Charter is adopted, the City of Montréal will be the first Canadian city with such a democratic instrument.

These examples, Trudel said, show how leadership is now a partnership with citizens and organizations. The public service culture is evolving as a result, and citizens, elected officials, and bureaucrats now often work together.

Various initiatives have been undertaken to reduce the distance between citizens and decision making. The City of Montréal has created a number of councils representing the views and interests of women, youth, the cultural sector, and the heritage community. These bodies provide information and advice to help City Council make decisions. Another important body is the Office de consultation publique de Montréal, an autonomous body dedicated exclusively to citizen consultation. The administrative and

political powers of neighbourhoods have also been increased to promote citizen participation and proximity democracy. “We do not believe that democracy is something that you have once and for all. It must be reincarnated many times.”

Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, Minister of International Relations and Minister for La Francophonie, opened by saying that institutions that were established following the Second World War are no longer an adequate reflection of new international realities. They do not respond to the expectations of international civil society.

In many ways, she said, globalization contributes to a widening distance between politicians and citizens. The result is growing cynicism on the part of citizens, a steady decline in their participation in elections, and the creation of non-parliamentary citizen bodies. Many citizens around the world are worried that globalization will take away their ability to decide their own future.

“We are keenly aware that globalization is an unstoppable movement and that, as a result, traditional structures of governance must adapt,” she said. According to the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, our current difficulties are not due to globalization itself, but to governance problems, and any reform of global governance must be guided by the vision of a fair and integrative globalization.

Québec believes that one of the best ways to gain citizens’ support for globalization and modernized multilateral governance organizations is to counterbalance this evolution with decentralization. This is why the province is pushing to have a seat at the negotiation table, nationally, when issues that matter to the province—national or international—are being discussed. Québec, for example, played a leadership role on the international stage to encourage the adoption by UNESCO of a charter ensuring the right of governments and states to support their culture through their policies.

Québec also participated in the Hemispheria 2005 Conference that took place in Mexico. For the first time, these discussions included representatives from the federated states of Canada, Mexico, and the United States. She explained, “We demand to be where decisions are made because we live where these decisions are felt.”

Dialogue with the United Nations

José Antonio Ocampo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, acknowledged the positive input the UN Secretariat has received from civil society, both in the lead-up to the Millennium +5 Summit and in the specific deliberative processes that are under way at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

“This is a crucial year for many reasons,” he said. “We think this is a great opportunity to restate the principle of multilateralism, with the role of the UN at the centre of that

system.” Citing the three major pillars on which the UN was built—development, human rights, and peace (now reframed as peace and security)—he said the recent Report to the Secretary-General was framed around freedom from want, freedom to live in dignity, and freedom from fear.

These three dimensions are brought together through the rule of law, particularly international law. “States will continue to be the central players in an international system based on nation-states, but the need for a denser democratic network is broadly recognized.” That network must include civil society and the private sector, as well as a variety of regional processes, all of which is consistent with the “very concrete mechanism” of global democracy.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will continue to be the focal point of the UN’s development agenda, and a central message is that the MDGs are achievable. Ocampo said the development agenda takes a broad view of societal development, is built on a “strong rights-based framework,” and incorporates a broad definition of poverty and equality as a central issue for humanity. The Global Partnership for Development, in turn, is based on a framework that includes development financing, international trade, and emerging issues like international migration.

Ocampo acknowledged concerns about accountability for UN commitments to social, economic, and environmental objectives, in contrast to some of the enforcement provisions behind the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund. While the recent Report to the Secretary-General stopped short of recommending formation of an economic and social security council, it called for peer review of commitments flowing from UN conferences, summits, and development co-operation fora.

Cândido Grzybowski expressed concern that citizens and international institutions are moving in different directions, with limited understanding between them. CS is invited to participate in consultations with the UN on agendas they did not help create. While the UN is considering small reforms, he said that there is not enough focus on the dangers confronting humanity. Change happens because citizens demand it, but he explained there are no tools or instruments to support that dynamic at the international level—the Report to the Secretary-General focused mainly on creating wealth in a private sector economy.

This raises the question for civil society of how to enshrine the principles of multilateralism within a system that has no place for community voices. Those principles are not reflected in a system that sets millennium goals that are inadequate to meet development needs, destroys ecosystems to benefit 10 per cent of humanity, and provides aid in response to a disastrous tsunami...yet fails to address the need for debt relief.

Lynn Muthoni Wanyeki recalled the initial resistance to engaging with the MDGs on the part of civil society, including African civil society and the women’s movement. The general sense was that the Goals failed to reflect the commitments of the development

decade, or to address issues of inequity or unequal distribution. That position changed over time, as it became clear that the MDGs would be the organizing framework for all UN agencies. In this “worst-case scenario,” the only option has been to try to influence the process wherever possible, at the national and international levels. CSOs have mainly concentrated on Goal 3, reproductive rights and using Goal 8 to influence the financing-for-development agenda.

But “it’s very clear now that the possibility of civil society having a real impact on the agenda of the Millennium Summit is extremely limited,” she said. Civil society reform proposals have already been narrowed down, access to official processes will be very limited, and there will be no formal method of capturing civil society input. From that starting point, she asked what will become of the two key elements of the Summit agenda—the MDGs, and issues of reform and participation. “No doubt, we can expect a millennium +10 summit, which is one way to see that we’re on this treadmill,” she said.

Ocampo stressed that his own group within the UN defines the organization’s development agenda more broadly than the MDGs. At the same time, eliminating poverty and hunger “would be a huge advance for humanity,” and adherence to other targets would be beneficial as well.

“Are they minor targets?” he asked. “I don’t think they are. The fact that this is a limited agenda does not mean that these are not ambitious targets for society.” Although structural issues matter, “that doesn’t mean that meeting the MDGs is not important.”

Similarly, although there is a great deal of advocacy around accountability and democratic engagement, Ocampo said the UN can already be proud of its openness to civil society, and the September summit could yield further progress. “Some would say that incrementalism is irrelevant,” he said. “I don’t think so.”

A participant asked Ocampo to reconcile his comments with a high UN official’s recent statement that civil society engagement with the MDGs is not a high priority. He called on the UN General Assembly to adopt the kind of participatory process that civil society had introduced for its work on the Cardoso Panel and beyond.

A couple of participants stressed the need to shift the focus from a war on terror to a war on poverty. One participant suggested that terrorism is great for a military-industrial complex that needs to “run down the inventory every two years,” but pointed out that the war on poverty was never won—and the daily attack on the globe’s biodiversity continues unabated.

“What kind of future are we looking at?” he asked. “You can’t just focus on MDGs to solve the problem.”

Another participant questioned the value of structural reforms like peer review, noting that the United States and other G7 governments had urged the UN not to interfere with the governing structures of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. “If you

can't have that influence, how can you do peer review?" Several participants called for a stronger civil society role in multistakeholder dialogues, noting that only half of the governments that attended the Johannesburg conference in 2002 have followed through on sustainable development commitments that were to have been implemented by 2005.

A participant asked Ocampo for his view of the linkages between the development and security agendas.

Ocampo assured participants that the UN places high value on civil society participation, adding that civil society organizations can play a key role by influencing their own national governments and tracking their adherence to international commitments. He explained that the UN attaches major importance to poverty, and is addressing the issue through a lens that includes access to education, health, and gender equality.

He further added that the UN's peace and security agenda extends beyond terrorism, to include peacebuilding measures in the poorest countries of the world. This ties in with poverty, as well, since six of the world's 10 poorest countries have gone through civil war in the past two decades. "For us, peacebuilding is quite an essential part of the war against poverty," he said and the UN's agenda is heading toward that direction more and more.