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Civil Society's Impact on the Multilateral Sphere: Lessons Learned and Future Directions



A Report on the FIM Annual Forum
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President's Introduction

The following is a report on Forum International de Montréal's (FIM's) 2007 Annual Forum, prepared for us by Dr. Heather MacKenzie. The Annual Forum has now become our signature event. This year was special for FIM in that, after nine year's of existence, the FIM Board felt it was time to step back and take stock of where FIM had come from and what are the new challenges facing us over the next five years.

In my view, participants responded to this mandate in an exciting and inspirational fashion. You will see in the report a thought provoking overview by FIM's Chair, Board of Directors, Dr. Rajesh Tandon, of the events over the last nine years, and which have reshaped the context within which we work. Interestingly, each and every one of these events reinforces the pertinence of the FIM mandate, yet forces us to constantly evolve and rethink our priorities.

In their efforts to see beyond the horizon, participants were able to put into focus some quasi-invisible trends that are bound to shape FIM's work in the immediate future and beyond.

Three major observations stand out. First, international civil society is increasingly moving its advocacy from global multilateral bodies to regional bodies, a shift which FIM will investigate more closely in preparation for next year's Forum in Addis Ababa. Second, there is a growing need for stronger civil society leadership, an issue many NGOs are reluctant to face, but which is a clear prerequisite for dealing in a complex and changing environment. Third, the entry of China into Africa, coupled with clear evidence of a burgeoning and autonomous civil society within China, opens up new concerns and opportunities for FIM and similar bodies. FIM will also study this phenomenon closely over the next year.

I would like to thank FIM's Office and Programme Administrator, Ms. Caroline Alcaraz for her seamless organization of this Forum. To the reader, I hope that you find substance of interest in this document and I invite you to look at our redesigned website as it will appear in the weeks ahead.

Nigel Martin
President/CEO
Montréal, May 22, 2007

Executive Summary

This is a report of Forum International de Montréal's (FIM) Annual Forum: *Civil Society's Impact on the Multilateral Sphere: Lessons Learned and Future Directions*, held in March, 2007 in Montréal, Québec, Canada. Forum objectives were to: define the challenges and opportunities facing future Civil Society Organization/Non Governmental Organization (CSO/NGO) relations with multilateral bodies and systems; identify the present and emerging governance issues and priorities arising from these challenges and opportunities; and identify concrete means by which CSOs/NGOs can address these issues in the coming five years. For two days, leading civil society practitioners and academics focused on these objectives. They examined the challenges and opportunities for civil society relations within the contexts of the changing, often nebulous and opaque, "post-911", global and regional multilateral systems and of emerging new phenomena such as the rise of a global civil society, resource capture, and politics of identity. Important patterns of change were discerned in these discussions, including: the growing rich/poor gap; the power of information technology to change global civil society; the growing priority of climate change; the erosion of global multilateralism; the rising southern powers; the new, more visible, role of Islamic civil society; and the emergence of China as a superpower. Participants identified two major interrelated issues critical to successful CSO/multilateral engagement: closing the existing knowledge gaps on all aspects of multilateralism and civil society and strengthening issue-based, proactive CSO leadership. These two means of engagement were seen to be critical for strengthening CSO legitimacy and accountability.

List of Participants

Mr. Colin Ball

Australia

Dr. Jane Barratt

International Federation on Ageing,
Canada

Mr. Roberto Bissio

Instituto del Tercer Mundo (ITeM),
Uruguay

Dr. David Brown

The Hauser Center for Nonprofit
Organizations, USA

Mr. Michel Chaurette

CECI, Canada

Dr. Manuel Chiriboga

Rimisp, Ecuador

Dr. Jean-Pol Evrard

Secours Catholique – Caritas
Internationalis, France

Dr. Peter Hajnal

University of Toronto, Canada

Ms. Molly Kane

InterPares, Canada

Mr. Thierno Kane

Civil Society Organizations Division,
BRSP/UNDP, USA

Mrs. Meena Khadimi

Bahrain Women Society, Bahrain

Mr. Barry Knight

Centris, United Kingdom

Dr. Réal Lavergne

Canadian International Development
Agency (CIDA), Canada

Mr. Ezra Limira Mbogori

Mwengo, Zimbabwe

Ms. Megumi Miyashita

Japan NGO Center for International
Cooperation (JANIC), Japan

Mr. William Pace

Coalition for the International Criminal Court
(CICC) / World Federalist Movement-Institute
for Global Policy (WFM-IGP), USA

Dr. Jim Riker

Beyond the Classroom (BTC), University of
Maryland, USA

Mr. Cyril Ritchie

Forum for Democracy (ICSFD), Switzerland

Mr. Ziad Abdel Samad

Arab NGO Network for Development, Lebanon

Dr. Olga Speranskaya

Eco-Accord, Russia

Mr. Mohammad Tahseen

South Asia Partnership Pakistan, Pakistan

Dr. Rajesh Tandon

PRIA, India

Mr. Brian Tomlinson

Canadian Council for International Cooperation
(CCIC), Canada

Ms. Nkoyo Toyo

Gender and Development Action, Nigeria

Ms. L. Muthoni Wanyeki

Kenya

FIM Secretariat: Mr. Nigel Martin, President &
CEO; Ms. Caroline Alcaraz, Office and
Programme Administrator; Dr. Heather
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Civil Society's Impact on the Multilateral Sphere: Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Introduction and Forum Objectives

In March 2007, Forum International de Montréal (FIM) convened its Annual FIM Forum. Twenty-six leading thinkers and practitioners¹ met in Montréal for two days to share their lessons learned and to reflect on future directions and the means for impacting the multilateral sphere. This report reflects the presentations and discussions as they relate to the following Forum objectives:

- Define the challenges and opportunities facing future Civil Society Organization/Non Governmental Organization (CSO/NGO) relations with multilateral bodies and systems;
- Identify the present and emerging governance issues and priorities arising from these challenges and opportunities; and
- Identify concrete means by which CSOs/NGOs can address these issues in the next five years.

These objectives reflect a favorable bias toward, and commitment to, multilateralism. It is nine years since the inception of Forum International de Montréal and during that time the understanding of multilateralism has changed. FIM's Mission however has remained constant: to improve the influence of international civil society on the United Nations and the multilateral system. In 1998 FIM felt that its Mission allowed it to play a neutral convening role. Since then, however, what was first seen as the inherent value of multilateralism has been seriously challenged. This challenge has led FIM to acknowledge its bias in favor of the importance and value of multilateralism, and of civil society's impact on multilateralism, while retaining a commitment to remain neutral on any content under discussion. Thus, this bias and commitment was an overarching context for Forum discussion.

Forum Format

The Forum was designed to provide ample opportunity for open discussion, brainstorming, and learning. A background paper prepared by Mr. Nigel Martin, circulated prior to the Forum, and the opening comments of Dr. Rajesh Tandon, recalled relevant events and markers of the past eight years leading up to where we are now. Short papers or Power-Point presentations were followed by questions and discussion in plenary and then by brainstorming in smaller groups focused on the workshop objectives. Four presentations of examples and lessons learned regarding civil society relations with regional/cultural multilateral bodies launched Day One:

- Mr. Colin Ball: *Civil Society – Intergovernmental Interaction in the Commonwealth.*
- Ms. L. Muthoni Wanyeki: *Civil Society and the African Union (AU).*

¹ Twenty-one participants were from civil society organizations, three from academia, one from the Canadian government, and one from a multilateral institution.

- Dr. Réal Lavergne, with Mr. Brian Tomlinson: *Challenges and Opportunities for Civil Society Relations with the OECD: The International Aid Effectiveness Agenda*.
- Mr. Ziad Abdel Samad and Mr. Nigel Martin: *Civil Society and the Organization of the Islamic Conferences (OIC)*.

The following presentations, focusing on civil society relations and lessons learned with global multilaterals, provided the starting point for Day Two:

- Dr. Jim Riker: *Civil Society and the United Nations*.
- Dr. Peter Hajnal: *Civil Society and the G8*.
- Mr. Cyril Ritchie: *Civil Society and New and Restored Democracies (ICNRD)*.

At the end of each day, a closing plenary summarized the major themes arising from the discussions. Dr. David Brown's Day One summary articulated the general patterns that had been identified and the emerging challenges and opportunities that they bring to global civil society. The Day Two summary comments of Dr. Rajesh Tandon and Ms. Muthoni Wanyeki captured the overall Forum conclusions on civil society's impact on the multilateral sphere, lessons learned, and future directions.

Challenges and Opportunities: Where we are and where we have come from

The last eight years have seen the rise of what the *New York Times* has called the "second global power", public opinion. Perception by public authorities and by the general public towards civil society has changed dramatically since FIM was established in 1998. Indeed, the successful influence of civil society on international diplomacy has increased steadily, bring with it growing pressure on multilateral organizations to increase transparency and accountability. A global civil society has emerged.

Some markers and events coinciding with, and influencing, this emergence, including FIM initiatives, were recalled in the Forum's opening plenary: the *World Conference on Civil Society (WOCSOC)* convened by FIM in 1999; the civil society reaction to the (2000) Millennium Summit and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); Monterrey; Cancun; the emergence of the World Social Forum: *Another World is Possible*; "9/11"; the declaration of the "war on terrorism"; American invasion of Iraq; *Global Governance 2002 (G02)* and *Global Governance 2005 (G05)*, convened by FIM; the impact of Chavez; and the "IT meltdown".

Technological advances continue to play a significant and increasing role in the emergence of a global civil society. The expanding interconnectedness of the global community through the Internet and the World Wide Web was seen as a conveyor of "seeds of hope", empowering the "other superpower". Several events inspired hope for global civil society including the 1997 Nobel Prize recognizing the successful mobilization of civil society in the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines, the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle, the millions who protested the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, and the record amounts given in response to the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster in 2004.

We have arrived at the post “9/11” world, having moved from a shared perception of dealing with relatively impenetrable, powerful, and influential global institutional multilateral systems, to a time when these institutions, and the accompanying discourse of multilateralism, are “stagnant”. Participants discussed the global hopes and possibilities for reforming the following new, and emerging multilateral systems:

The United Nations

Given the relatively recent appointment of Ban Ki Moon, participants felt the “jury” was still out as to the new Secretary General’s potential impact on multilateralism. UN reform was not, as yet, evident or convincing to everyone present. Reform was seen by some to be more “air than action”. Others felt that significant progress had been made in implementing institutional change.² Indeed, the survival of the UN was linked to the survival of multilateralism in general. The UN is an important linking mechanism between national, regional, and global bodies and there are many different types of CS engagements with the different UN bodies. NGOs have been able to successfully influence important UN decisions and policies and have written conventions on, for example, torture, children, and land mines. There is a hope for increasing civil society access to the UN ECOSOC in the proposal to create a leadership body, the “G24”. This possible multilateral grouping has the potential to be a more transparent alternative to the G8. Of interest and relevance to UN transparency are the live telecasts of UN proceedings in parts of the world including India.

The Organization of Islamic Conferences

The second largest multilateral organization, after the UN, is the Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC) with 57 member states; yet little is known about its inner workings. Presently, there is one civil society organization with consultative status with the OIC.³ There is a growing civil society movement to lobby for civil society accreditation with the OIC as well as an indication from the new OIC Secretary General of a willingness to engage with civil society. A working group, along with committed NGOs from Muslim and non-Muslim countries, has, as its primary objective, to gain CSO accreditation with the OIC. This group, as part of its multiyear strategy, is presently learning more about the OIC and the OIC Ten Year Plan. It is clear that Muslim civil society is beginning to seek a formal relationship with the OIC.

The International Conference of New or Restored Democracies

The International Conference of New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD) was established in 1988. It is an initiative of developing countries to share experience on democratization and good governance and had no civil society engagement until 1997. The first formal engagement was in 2003. This process has evolved to a tripartite engagement of governments, parliamentarians, and civil society. The ICNRD, while maintaining its independence, is increasingly engaging with, and supported by, the UN.

² See published proceedings on the UN web site.

³ The Committee for the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation.

The Group of 8 and the Group of 1

The “horrible entity”, the G8⁴, is a nebulous target for civil society engagement. Indeed many NGOs choose, on principle or ideology, not to engage with the G8. While it remains important for civil society to work to influence and collaborate with the G8, the G8 itself is a “process”; the annual summit meeting simply a point on a continuum of ongoing negotiations. The G8 +5⁵, the G1, G2, G17, G20, and the “shadow” G8, consisting of former G8 officials, are all part of what is, in practice, a much larger “club”. Given the northern roots and dominance of the G8, there was a question as to why southern civil society should “chase” the G8, increasing its legitimacy in the process, and some questioned the legitimacy of the G8 as a site for discussion on Africa.

The role of the United States, the “G1”, is shifting from global political force to stalemate. Indeed, democratic spaces and processes in the United States have changed dramatically in the aftermath of 9/11 as more militaristic policies are accepted, society’s voices have become more muted, and access to accurate information more restricted.

The African Union

The emergence of the African Union (AU) has brought a positive shift in African civil society engagement. This engagement has been enabled by commitments to civil society and to gender equality articulated in the AU's Constitutive Act. However the number of African CSOs able and willing to work at the regional level is still small (given the obvious focus of the AU on issues at the national level). Advocacy by African civil society at the AU has however yielded significant results, including the adoption and ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Rights of Women in Africa. A good example of civil society engagement is the advocacy of African civil society around the African Commission and the emerging African Court. More specialized engagement with other AU mechanisms has yet to evolve. The imperative of increasing African civil society engagement is intensified by the upcoming debate and decision on an AU government moving towards the establishment of a United States of Africa.

Emerging Phenomena

Participants also identified economic and social phenomena that are becoming increasingly important to discussions on multilateralism and governance.

There is a new politics of economic growth and resource capture as China and India join global competition for resources and markets. China is becoming a more visible actor, overtaking Europe in its numbers of billionaires and is now assuming its place as a global economic force. Yet, in all parts of the developed and developing world, the rich/poor disparity continues to grow.

⁴ See Hajnal, P. (2007) *The G8 System and the G20*, Ashgate, which examines the G8, past, present, and future.

⁵ India, China, Brazil, South Africa, and Mexico.

Changing demographics, the rise of the global middle class, and impending “massive transfers of wealth” to children of the baby boomers offer both opportunities and challenges for global civil society. Will the newly wealthy be “concerned with the poor” or “retreat into selfishness”? It is important for civil society to determine how and where to act in the face of these, and other, powerful demographic trends.

The “politics of identity” is also more visible and widespread as ethnic, racial, religious, and other distinct “identities” and ensuing alignments become more assertive. The rich (and famous), through philanthropy and advocacy, have also become influential actors on the global stage. Indeed, as pre “9/11” multilateralism wanes in this, more fragmented, global scene, a complex new landscape is emerging.

Present and Emerging Governance Issues: Where we are now

Given the rise of global civil society and the shifting power dynamics between regional and global multilateralism, what are the new governance issues that we face? It was clear from presentations and discussions that global multilateralism may have a weaker future than it had in the past. At the same time, regional, bilateral, sub regional, and transborder alliances and agreements have increased. While the visibility, power, and influence of global civil society have, in some ways, increased, there remain inequalities and imbalances related to the size of CSOs and the stage of democratic development of their countries. Powerful international NGOs have undertaken global advocacy functions and, in the process, are weakening the capacity of smaller NGOs, and NGOs in newly emerging democracies, to influence multilateralism. Interaction of small NGOs with the multilateral system remains limited. There are also inequities within regional multilateral organizations. While rich civil society organizations may be pro civil society, some continue an imperialist trend, persisting in “telling others (i.e. poorer members) how to do it”.

As the FIM Forum discussions progressed, themes of fragmentation, uncertainty, hope, and expectation emerged. New identities, regional, and global powers were in tension with fragmentation and environmental and human security. Some felt it was too early to assess where we are going and that we are not living in a time where issues are “two sided”, but, rather, many sided. The questions are: How do we find our way toward true “universality”? How do we take the majority into account? The discussions captured part of the answer as the rise of global civil society, the world wide web and the Internet, the changing global multilateral system and newly emerging regional and bilateral bodies, a new politics of identity, new demographic phenomena, and the growing number of individuals empowered by vast personal wealth or through the ‘second global power’ bring diversity and universality to the foreground. Participants identified large patterns of change:

The Patterns of Change

- The rich/poor gap is increasing;
- Information technology is changing the world and civil society as we know it;
- The consequences of climate change are pressing and will soon overtake other priorities;

- Globalization will continue to increase on the economic, social, and cultural levels;
- The north/south disparity will grow;
- Global multilateralism will erode;
- Regionalism, bilateralism, and multilateralism is a rising and, as yet relatively new and unknown phenomenon in terms of global impact;
- There is a rising southern power through regional processes that impact on the multilateral system;
- The role of civil society is changing, becoming more visible, and potentially more powerful;
- There is a new, as yet blurred, role of Islamic civil society and the OIC is a major emerging regional multilateral body
- China is the emerging world superpower and is having an increasing impact on the global economy and environment;

Having identified these patterns, participants then discussed how civil society can take advantage of the openings and possibilities for influence. Participants explored the readiness and sophistication of global civil society and of multilateralism to engage with each other, asking what means do we have for engagement?

Identifying Means of CSO Engagement with Multilateralism

Participants identified two major interrelated issues critical to successful CSO/multilateral engagement: closing the existing knowledge gaps on all aspects of multilateralism and civil society and strengthening issue-based, proactive CSO leadership.

These two means of engagement were closely tied to issues that are increasingly critical for successful CSO/multilateral engagement: legitimacy and accountability, and the political and contentious issue of representation. Participant's experience has shown that CSO legitimacy and accountability are reflected in the "tenacity and rigor" of their interactions with governments and multilateralism, that governments are happy to deal with NGOs that are helpful, and that NGOs that are unaccountable eventually fade away. Who CSOs represent, on the other hand, was seen to be an issue of democratic rights. While participants questioned the representativeness of governments and multilateral systems, CSOs were seen to be composed of citizens with citizen's rights to freedom of association and expression. Thus, while CSOs cannot claim to represent the people in the way that democratic governments can, they can claim to represent themselves with the right to propose solutions to problems that affect citizens.

Thus, closing the existing knowledge gaps and strengthening CSO leadership as means for engagement were discussed within the context of strengthening the foundations of CSO legitimacy and accountability. Following are participant's thoughts on these means.

Close the Knowledge Gaps

The following knowledge-related questions were posed: Are CSOs learning well enough from the lessons of our existing experiences of CSO/multilateral engagement? What are the new multilateral forms? What are the regional mixes? Why do states engage in these multilaterals? What do we know about the diversity of civil society organizations? What is the range of civil society engagement options and precedents? How willing and able are multilateral structures and mechanisms to handle CSO input? How do transformational coalitions and multilaterals work?

It was felt that CSOs do not know much about the new coalitions and how they work. A knowledge gap exists as to the diversity of bureaucracies⁶ and how to build effective relationships with diverse multilateral bodies. Given that experience has shown that friendly bureaucrats and civil society representatives don't necessarily produce needed changes, the effectiveness of building friendly alliances with bureaucrats was also questioned.

These questions reveal a knowledge gap and an important need for increased research and scholarship into all aspects of civil society and multilateralism. While academic research was criticized for avoiding "the messy stuff", increased CSO collaboration with academia was seen as important for improving civil society's knowledge base. At the same time, the need for creation and dissemination of practice-based knowledge was emphasized. Pulling together lessons learned from civil society engagement with different types of multilateral organizations would help to uncover the nature of the existing knowledge gaps. Several methods were suggested.

Comparative studies could help to create "tool-kits" for multilateral/CSO engagement. Case studies, in particular teaching cases, were seen to be one viable method for demystifying and capturing the heterogeneity of civil society. Virtual working groups, on-line publication of cases studies, and small papers were suggested as means for disseminating lessons learned. Historical analyses were also seen as important for contextualizing the present and learning from our past.

Participants were advised to seek more thorough engagement with and knowledge of, the UN and that the Conference of UN NGOs (CONGO) must play an essential role in this objective. Understanding the Cardoso Report, which enabled CS hearings with the General Assembly, and learning more about the history of constructive NGO relations with the UN were also encouraged. One question to be pursued was: Are there CSO mechanisms for monitoring and disseminating UN debates and outcomes to the general public? Specific work is also needed to understand trends associated with China's emergence as a superpower.

With regard to the language of knowledge dissemination, civil society jargon was criticized for mystifying important issues of global governance. More accessible, journalistic writing was suggested as a public educational vehicle.

⁶ It was noted that the G8 has no bureaucracy

Strengthen Proactive CSO Leadership

CSOs were criticized for a general reactive leadership style. How can CSOs lead on the critical issues of our times? How can CSOs be more proactive in their leadership? Mobilization of public concern is a major factor for successfully influencing the multilateral sphere. In addition to accurate, accessible, and critical knowledge and information, mobilization requires leadership. CSO leadership is required most critically in the areas of reestablishing global norms and of upholding human rights and commitments to the environment. Monitoring of international agreements and laws and seizing new opportunities for engagement with multilaterals stood out as important leadership issues. Indeed, what is monitoring? How can CSO leadership “hold the bullies to account” while avoiding a divisive or pious stance of appearing to represent themselves as the “good guys”?

Participants offered many ideas for strengthening CSO leadership. Primary among them was to think globally in terms of governance - to take a broad view of global governance and civil society. The UN remains the leading global governance institution and offers the primary hope for democratization of global governance. Through their active engagement and advocacy in U.N. global conferences and in the field since the 1970s, civil society organizations have helped to influence, shift, and strengthen the U.N.’s priorities toward protecting human rights, advancing poverty eradication, promoting sustainable development, supporting women’s empowerment, and advancing democratic governance.

However, these priorities will not be attained unless civil society can participate fully and contribute meaningfully to U.N. agenda setting, deliberations, and policy formulation and implementation processes. Organizing civil society preparatory committees to UN meetings, determining the state of high level UN panels, establishing global standards and models for quality and inclusiveness of UN CS engagement, and determining the isomorphism of UN and state policies and practices all require proactive CSO leadership. Civil society organizations also need to engage in advocacy with other key actors (parliamentarians, national governments, and citizens) in order to strengthen the transparency, accountability, and democratic decision-making of the United Nations.

The G8 was seen to be a more nebulous, yet valid, target for civil society leadership. It was acknowledged that, where most G8 members are concerned, commitments are rarely made at the Summit but are actually made beforehand. The G8 is “10% substance and 90% performance”. The G8 as a legitimate, representative, accountable entity was also questioned. To what extent is civil society targeting G1 and G2, as opposed to the nebulous whole? The G8 gatherings consist of other powers, the “plus five” (India, Brazil, China, South Africa, Mexico). Is someone from civil society collecting left over Sherpas? To what extent is southern civil society engaged? Should southern civil society be “chasing” the G8 at all?

When not the host country, G8-related bureaucracies are engaged with summitry at a relatively low intensity. These countries focus more intense attention for short, three-year periods only (the year leading up to, the year of, and the year following the summit they host). Given this periodic nature of G8 country engagement, a FIM/CSO

leadership and accountability role was seen to exist in providing continuity in the overall G8 Summit process.

Presently, there are no strong CSO alliances to take on the bullies. CSOs should establish committees of enquiry, focusing on upcoming issues related to G1 and G8 and holding the bullies to account. The message was: Don't wait for people to be killed before taking on the bullies. Questions were asked regarding how one determines who the bullies on the global stage are and what FIM should be doing regarding pursuing ways to demand accountability of the bullies.

CSO leaders must use existing mechanisms and seize opportunities to work with multilateral bodies that are beginning to engage with civil society. Engaging with the OIC, for example, can make a large impact globally and the OIC was seen to be "ready to hear".

CSO leaders should also create forums on global standards, including on meeting agreed upon standards and identifying how they are being violated. In Africa there is a growing concern within civil society regarding the aggressive Chinese "resource capture" and subsequent environmental impact. Civil society must be more proactive in engaging with existing American, Indian, and Chinese multinationals in Africa.

Civil society must see emerging new economic powers as an opportunity instead of adopting the more divisive, bipolar view of threat. As the north/south power dynamic shifts, are emerging powers following the rules of international law? It is important to discern who is meeting accepted legal standards and where democratic mechanisms are weak. India, for example has democratic mechanisms, whereas China does not.

As U.S. hegemony declines, China is an emerging global superpower and must be a focus for CSO leadership. As China emerges, easy comparisons and parallels cannot be made between China and the U.S. Importantly, with regard to (potential) civil society impact, China was described as sensitive to public opinion and straightforward regarding its business intentions. It is also important not to forget that, given the post "911" climate in the United States, U.S. civil society needs support from international civil society.

Finally, civil society must develop leadership to engage with the private sector and with transnational institutions, in particular, global food enterprises. Participants offered keys to credible CSO leadership: getting organized and in a timely way, finding funding apart from direct government funding, spending time and effort at the national and regional levels, being undaunted by government officials, making every effort to work constructively, and linked with closing the knowledge gap, always doing the necessary homework.