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# Taking the initiative on global governance and sustainable development: Summary

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# Une nouvelle gouvernance mondiale pour le développement durable

## *Taking the Initiative on Global Governance and Sustainable Development*

Paris, 13-14 avril 2003

## Summary Report

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The conference “Taking the Initiative on Global Governance and Sustainable Development” that was held in Paris on 14-15 April 2003 and organized by IDDRI, gathered 40 international experts from various backgrounds (academic, non profit, former political leaders). The closing session was chaired by the President of the French Republic. It was an opportunity to present the conclusions of the conference with a view to enriching the discussions at the Evian Summit.

This summary report follows two directions: the first concerns immediate action by the G8 heads of state in a context of crisis of the multilateral system, a serious crisis revealed by the Irak war; the other concerns an analysis of this crisis so as to understand its origins, reflect on new concepts that may help rebuild international collective action and find new means to solve the global problems of sustainable development.

**Reaffirmation of the Millenium goals.** The first direction on the eve of the Summit is to clearly reaffirm the goals established by the international community and adopted by each and every country. These are the Millenium goals backed up by the commitments taken at Kyoto, Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg. This implies that the G8 countries fulfil their commitments, launch the necessary reforms, in particular in the field of agriculture, and increase financing for global public goods.

The reaffirmation of these goals does not mean that there is only one way of achieving them. Several analyses presented during the conference highlighted the value of *ad hoc* coalitions for fulfilling commitments, the role of corporations and civil society, the importance of defining standards for collective actions at the regional level.

Even if the development of the multilateral system is currently blocked or questioned, there remains space for action based on international regimes gathering diverse actors in varying configurations. However, the need for coherence among international actions, in particular of economic institutions, and these goals remains crucial. This coherence raises the problem of balance between private and public standards. Yet, the questioning and criticism of the multilateral system should not be forgotten. Addressing global problems of sustainable development requires a consensus on actions to be undertaken, and a common framework to implement them.

In order to achieve this, a new conceptual reflection is necessary, taking into account the failures of the existing global governance system and the real difference of opinions concerning responses.

Security and its link with sustainable development was the first theme to be addressed. Collective security, like individual security, is first among public good; sustainable development will not be achieved without security. The position of the American administration today is that of preventive action –war– in response to threats –the September 11, 2001 attacks requiring an extra territorial response to an attack on American territory. The discussion led to the idea of preventing preventive action, in other words that the causes of terrorism and violence should be dealt with preemptively through new military, civil, political and economic responses.

**Rethink the concept of sovereignty.** This discussion on security showed that it is necessary to rethink the concept of sovereignty. Confused with the Westphalian notion of the nation state, sovereignty has been progressively assimilated into the multilateral system as respect for and inviolability of borders and the non interference of external authorities in domestic affairs.

Today, this position is undermined by the integration efforts linked to globalization, growing technological, economic and environmental interdependence, as well as to the emergence of networks of global stakeholders who show their solidarity and build alliances that bypass or limit state sovereignty. The networks involve economic interests as well as public interest associations, but they also encompass organized crimes and may shelter terrorist networks.

Questions linked to the defense of vital interests and to internal security challenge the concept of sovereignty. The idea here is to question the support to failed states, a concept which has been much discussed, including their control over natural resources that have enabled them to survive and to finance criminal networks.

There are two approaches to natural resources. The first, linked to the doctrine of preventive action, analyzes the “exhaustion” of the concept of sovereignty and the need to change a state’s competencies in case of failure. This leads to the idea that it is necessary to create original institutional formulas that could replace the state’s authority to manage natural resource revenues that finance violence. This relativization of sovereignty could legitimate the supervision of states or of their exploitation of natural

resources. It bases its intervention on the global risk inherent to failed states.

The second approach consists in questioning sovereignty from the perspective of a right to development and the situation of the citizens of these failed states. It is governments' failure to secure peace, security and development that justifies intervention. This approach is based on the establishment of international standards for resource importers and exporters. Payment transparency, traceability of product flows, and citizens' control over resource revenues are means to restore responsibility to holders and users' of natural resources. An international research program is being set up on the concept of sovereignty as a "responsibility to protect", which would include both strategies of corruption eradication and coherence of international aid policies.

A charter for natural resources that takes this approach has been proposed. The links between security, development and the means of intervention have to be analyzed. This analysis is a way of rethinking the concept of sovereignty.

**Invent new rules.** A second direction for the renovation of the multilateral system is based on the recognition of the role of civil society at the global level and, more widely, the need to rethink procedures to solve collective problems.

The participation of economic actors, of public interest groups, local actors (local and regional authorities...), the nature of contractual relations between these stakeholders and public institutions are new, experimental and diversified.

The contractual nature of these relationships corresponds to the emergence of elements of global civil society who do not find adequate responses in the international system. The idea is thus to reflect on the grammar, the principles, and the rules of an institutional system appropriate to globalization.

Several approaches have been discussed starting from the common view of the inadequacy of nation states to the globalization process. Some analysts recommend the creation of global policy networks gathered around solving a global problem. Stakeholders from different backgrounds, private, public, institutional, or individual citizens, would participate in the elaboration of standards implemented by the members of these networks through access-transparency and accountability.

Other approaches favor the organization of coalitions of the willing, of *ad hoc* groupings; they reflect on the construction of international regimes based on the practice of actors, focusing on flexibility and effectiveness of arrangements designed to achieve the established goals. This new debate is based on three lines of questioning of the institutional system: criticism of its lack of legitimacy and effectiveness as well as its inequitable aspect; double standards in the implementation of international rules; regimes based on the interests and constraints of the wealthiest countries. This approach leads us to reflect on the principles of a new global governance that would respond to these three major criticisms.

The discussions have shown the need for further debate on the concepts of this new global governance through a renewed transatlantic dialogue and research on the basis of the objectives of developing countries who are already major actors in international negotiations. The fields of the environment (climate) and natural resources, health, migration, and rural development have been identified as possible fields of analysis and experimentation.

In the closing session, the President of the French Republic expressed his wish to see this conceptual debate on global governance followed up so as to enrich the G8 process. A network of discussions on global governance, which necessarily includes a transatlantic dimension, could be set up around research centers, foundations, and non governmental organizations.