

Round Table Discussion between NGO representatives and G8 Sherpas at the Civil G8 Dialogue in Bonn

Participants and Agenda: Please see http://www.forum-ue.de/fileadmin/userupload/g8dialogue/civil_g8_round_table_agenda_participants.pdf

World Economy

Dr. Bernd Pfaffenbach states that foreign policy takes up a large part of the agenda of the g8 meetings. He informs that two outreach meetings are being planned for this year's G8: one with representatives of the emerging economies and one with "a couple of " African Heads of States and the AU.

Martin Khor states that it should be expected that the WTO-Doha-Round makes a last minute appearance on the G8 agenda. He stresses that developing countries should not be forced to liberalise, because that furthers poverty. Furthermore the Doha development Agenda should be pro-development. Regarding the current proposals of developed countries he judges that this is not the case. CSO are concerned about bilateral Free Trade Agreements, they go even beyond the liberalisation scope of multilateral agreements. Khor points out that Civil Society is worried about derivatives and hedge funds and that they need transparency and control. He is disappointed that debt relief has been entirely dropped off the agenda, since more countries need debt relief, lenders need to be regulated and illegitimate debts need to be cancelled. He highlights that multilateral agencies need fundamental changes and that a new quota system is needed particularly giving developing countries more "voice and vote" in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The biodiversity and ecological crisis is already happening. Khor stresses the necessity of conservation and access and benefit sharing.

Dr. Claudia Wörmann reports that G8 industry representatives met in Berlin on April 25. She points out that industry makes a substantial contribution to development and growth. In their opinion the WTO-Doha-Round is a matter of great urgency and all must contribute to a successful conclusion. The industry is ready to cooperate with the G8 with the aim to strengthen and enforce Intellectual Property Rights. For them efficient capital markets are crucial, transparency will help to reduce risks. There is a need to reconcile climate change with energy provision but strictly based on market instruments.

Dr. Jürgen Eckl speaks not only for German Unions but for Union federations from G8 countries. They want to raise the minimum income protection issue at G8. Unions must be protected. Eckl stresses the need to rebalance growth and an orderly work out of global financial imbalances. An equitable construction of globalisation is necessary. Concerning the fight against AIDS Unions recommend to install a high level working group at the G8. he points out the necessity to meet the socio-economic impact of climate change.

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Dr. Bernd Pfaffenbach states that WTO is indeed seen as very important and that G8 will take care of Doha, but cannot preempt negotiations in Geneva. Doha is a development round. He stresses that they rather want to give to developing countries than to take from them, certainly in agriculture. In his opinion Hedgefonds are not bad, yet constitute a systemic risk, as they have 1,4 trillion \$ capital with four times the leverage. The G8 will discuss it. He states that G8 will treat more countries under HIPC, if they fulfil the criteria.

Michael Frein objects that the Doha Agenda as it looks like now is not a Development Agenda but is dedicated to open the markets of the South for the benefit of the North. Regarding Intellectual Property Rights, the workshop at this conference showed, that the industry is fully in line with the G8. But according to the analysis of NGOs strengthening Intellectual Property Rights would hinder economic development in poor countries and, above that, make access to medicines more expensive and difficult. NGO demand that the G8 revise their IPR agenda in a way that will make it contribute to development and Human Rights.

Fr. George Ehusani stresses that global economy has a major responsibility for ensuring justice and equity. There is a lot of discontent in many countries. Terrorism partly stems from discontent and poverty as globalisation makes them losers. Obscene affluence and abject poverty side by side, a recipe for trouble. He points out the need for global economic governance. Big capital cannot be allowed to rule the world as they are not interested in equitable development. Instead, UN-agencies should take responsibility as should the bigger and richer countries. Moderating mechanisms need to be put in place to check the activities of these companies.

Professor Dr. Manfred Niekisch says that from an environmental point of view, the G8-Agenda lacks biodiversity. A decrease in biodiversity threatens the whole planet and its ecosystems, not only plant life. Biodiversity must therefore be high on the agenda and a regular monitoring issue at the G8 summits now and in future. In order to guarantee that there is not further reduction of biodiversity, forest protection and the protection of marine areas need to be high on the agenda, not only as protection measures but for poverty alleviation and justice. Natural resources must be used in a sustainable manner and shared equally.

Masahuru Kohno points out that the G8 are dead serious about an early conclusion of the Doha round. The business sector is most important for development in Africa, peace and stability, HIV, investment and trade. Japan in cooperation with other Asian countries bring their own experiences about development, but eradication of poverty is most difficult. According to him the issue of ownership must be synchronised with supporting NEPAD and capacity building.

Climate/Energy

Hans Verolme warns that global warming will affect a fresh water crisis and that 100s of millions of people will be affected both in Europe and other parts of the world. The rich countries emit 70 % of greenhouse gases. He demands that G8 takes on leadership in this question. The EU has already decided to reduce CO2 emissions by 20 % until 2020. But the reduction of emissions by 80% is needed and no incremental change can do this. According to him that is the key issue, the NGO's long, legal and loud message. The message must be send to the markets to conclude by 2009 to reduce emissions much more. Energy and climate security are not different concepts and should not be plaid against each other. He highlights that the issue of equity is also essential; Africa needs to grow green and sustainable. Real ambition is needed, time is of the essence.

Oliver Robbins says that science has moved on and now we have the data and share the results. Nicholas Stern has shown in his report that Climate Change is an economic issue and a great economic opportunity. Mr. Robbins points out that Energy security and Climate security are two sides of same coin. The G8 leaders think it's a welfare issue. He recognizes that the burden is initially on the rich world to act and that failure will be dire. In the UK there is a greater pressure from business to act according to him. Consumers are beginning to demand action from business. Heiligendamm should not pre-empt the Bali conference and UN Conferences. He points out the need of a global sustainable vision, sensibilising technological possibilities to maintain life styles. Other approaches are also there. In certain areas governments should take responsibility. He stresses that we need a global deal for an urgent response and that different national approaches are legitimate and should be discussed. All countries around the table are taking the issue seriously.

Igor Shuvalov says that three dimensions need to be integrated. In his opinion nuclear energy should not be forgotten even if it is not popular among NGOs. He argues that the Kyoto objectives cannot be reached without nuclear power and informs that Russia is planning to build 26 new nuclear reactors.

From the audience: Remember Chernobyl! (April 26 is the 21st anniversary of the meltdown in Chernobyl)

Steve Sawyer states that G8 needs to take a lead on wind energy. At the moment they are on the wrong course and getting worse. The G8 are still subsidising fossil fuels with 250 billion US\$ per year. He asks which way they are going to steer that ship. He takes exception with what their Russian colleague said. The most effective way to get clean energy is wind energy and it is also the fastest growing in the energy sector. He says that energy security is best supported by local and safe energy sources like wind energy.

Mika Ohbayashi stresses the opportunity for Japan during next year's presidency to take leadership in environmental questions, and to press commitment to the Kyoto protocol, e.g.

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by promoting energy efficiency. German NGO appreciated. In his opinion this kind of dialogue must continue. There are already Japanese plans for a Civil Society meeting.

Masahuru Kohno points out that climate and environment are big issues, to be taken up at the UN FCCC conference in Bali in December. He states that it will depend on discussions there how the Japanese Prime Minister will take up the question and that we need to make full use of revolutionary technologies. Saving energy and recycling will be most important. There are both short and long term goals. He informs that the day before, the Japanese Prime Minister decided that the G8 meeting in 2008 will take place in Hokkaido. The PM will meet with US-President Bush and next week with the EU Presidency.

Nikki Skuce stresses the need to link water and energy. Currently, 2 billion people are without water and the pipelines are not reaching the poor. He points out that ODA increases are required and that the 0.7% target needs to be reached. Renewable energy needs more entrepreneurial support and sustainable energy systems are needed to reduce consumptions in rich countries and access to clean energy in developing countries.

Regine Günther entitles market failure in energy questions as a key problem. Therefore the first task of the G8 is to change that. She asks how and when an international partnership on energy will be built.

Stefano Sannino says that the overall feeling on climate change has changed enormously during the last two years. Carbon emissions both in developed and in still to be developed countries need to be reduced. He points out that the EU decided to take a bold step and are ready to continue, waiting for others to follow suit. It needs public opinion pressure, pressure from the press and from NGOs. Nobody should be left out in the cold, all should participate. The discussion has only just started and will not end in June. He states that it will certainly take two more years to come to terms. He highlights the necessity to converge finally on the nuclear issue.

David Mc Cormick says that Climate Change has been a political question and has been substantive in terms of science. Emerging countries are growing so fast that they need to come into the fold. According to him the US have agreed to participate in terms of technology developments. He quotes that the US took action many years ago and introduced the emission trading system on sulphur dioxide.

David Mulroney informs that in Canada there are roundtables with NGOs and that Canada is a major investor in the energy sector in Africa. He says that they want to expand this strategy.

Joao Vale de Almeida: says that they feel very comfortable talking about energy. He points out that there is a strong market interest in climate change and that we need to work with this interest. Industry and the market need to look at long-term developments, at least 50 years, to justify their investment. Markets and consumers play a strong role in this. He concludes that emerging economies should do the great leap forward and leapfrog some of the dirty investment energy steps.

Africa

Odour Ong'wen: stresses the need to address global imbalances, investment, climate change and corporate society. He points out the responsibility of governments entails creating employment opportunities for our people. It is needed to talk about the debt burden. Resources need to be freed to be able to finance development and that needs to be linked with investment. Mr. Ong'wen underlines that the G8 talks on liberalizing investment rules directly undermine those areas of responsibility. He argues that a good investment framework must allow countries to be selective, regarding types of investment. He says that we all have specific challenges, so we must be specific in how we address them. Investment regimes must legitimise qualified market access and must prevent monopolies by Transnational Corporations. A code of conduct for both domestic and foreign investors is needed. A true level playing field requires that everybody can be called to account. He concludes that the investment climate must be credible and transparent but should not disregard the authority of national governments and the fundamental interest of the people.

Reinhard Hermle approves that Africa has an important place in the summit. But decisive action is needed. Quality and quantity of ODA need to be raised substantially, e.g. in education and health. He states that there is a need to strengthen national health systems in developing countries and the importance to integrate vertical interventions with the overall systems that are in crisis. HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis, etc. all need basic treatment. The initiative for health treatment is too much focussed on the social support insurance model. The G8 need to clearly reiterate the commitments of Gleneagles and include action plans to put them in reality. But 2006 figures have not increased as planned in 2005. That is a real challenge and problem, says Mr. Hermle. He concludes that the introduction of an air-ticket tax must be addressed.

Maurice Gourdault-Montagne: states that the G8 approach on Africa is focused on good governance. He says that they would like China to be part of this effective coordination and that China should be coordinating its activities like others. He stresses that investment must be specific. Finances through air tickets initiatives already exist. On peace and security he says that military peace keeping capacities are needed and stresses the need to bolster the health systems and work on pandemics. Gleneagles wanted to ensure the Millennium Development Goals by 2010 at the latest 2015. He says that the global fund needs to be replenished and that social protection can be improved in Africa. Permanent access to medicines should also be guaranteed. But he states that the G8 may not be able to finance

such a system and that some funds are to be created to ensure this. He informs that France is working on flexibilities concerning the TRIPS agreement.

Khalil Elouardighi informs that funding on Aids has doubled, but the predictability of funding is actually decreasing. A funding plan for predictable resources is needed indicating how it is to be apportioned among the members of the G8.

Wilfried Steen requires that in those countries that are to a large extent dependent on the export of raw materials, the G8 should take appropriate action, so that the local population can benefit. One element would be the implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). If G8 countries wanted to be seen as credible, would this not lead to focus action first on their own authorities and multinationals, for example regarding corruption, he asks. What are you doing to make companies invest in peace?

Marta Ruiz informs that MDRI is not proving additional means. Rules for creditors need to be set, not only for lenders. The G8 need do build new credibility as lenders and need to acknowledge a responsibility for illegitimate debt. The aim should be to set up a transparent arbitration system.

Maurice Gourdault-Montagne states that there are two sides: corruptors and corrupted. Corruption hinders the general economy. There are organisations such as EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and PWYP (Publish what you pay) He says that the question is, who is the 3rd party, who will check up on the others. In his opinion the G8 should think about the role of lender countries.

Masahuru Kohno says that corruption is a moral, a global and a personal issue. The Japanese people would like to see a vibrant Africa. He informs that Japan has an innocent and sound view on Africa. Every 5 years they hold a Japanese-African conference. Mr. Kohno promises that to invite to the dialogue with Civil Society in 2008 in Japan.

Ella Pamfilova says that the initiative to start a Civil Society Dialogue was taken by the Russian Civil G8 in the previous year in Moscow. She thinks finds it very good to see that it has been continued by Germans and that the Japanese are planning to do likewise.

Final Statement

Michael Frein:

At the beginning of this conference, Mrs. Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, the German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, said: "When the G8, the most powerful countries in the world, give a push for development and the protection of the environment, they deserve our support."

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I think, we can all agree. But what, if the G8-Agenda runs counter development and environment? Then we, as civil society, have to oppose. We have to protest, we have to bring alternatives into the public debate.

This is what we did in the past two days and what we will continue to do in Rostock and Heiligendamm at the G8 summit. There will be a big march and an alternative summit discussing an alternative agenda – on the other side of the fence which will separate Heads of States from Civil Society.

What do we expect from G8? Well, on some issues we ask for implementation of the decisions, on some issues we fear exactly that. So, when we say “Keep your promises!”, this refers to debt cancellation and the fight against HIV/AIDS. It does not refer to trade liberalisation, strengthening intellectual property rights or liberalisation of investment rules.

Responsibility and Growth – this is the heading of the German G8-Presidency. Well, growth seems to be a rather outdated and old-fashioned concept, at least for the G8 countries, as we face a tremendous climate change and at the same time an intensive competition in access to resources and raw materials.

Responsibility. The question is: responsibility for what and for whom? From our point of view it is the responsibility of the G8-countries for a world, where all people can enjoy a life in dignity. In this respect, many NGOs believe that the G8 does not meet the challenges. It fails for example, especially in the chapters referring to intellectual property rights and investment of the Heiligendamm Agenda.

This is not only the assessment of NGOs in the North. This analysis is shared by our friends of the South and I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude for their support. They encourage us in our conviction that in a wide range of topics G8 does not meet the challenges of environmental protection and the fight against poverty.

Let me say a last word on climate change. We feel that G8-countries are not engaged in climate protection with full efforts. Especially one big country lacks commitment. But this should not be taken as an excuse for others to hesitate and not to perform in the best possible manner. Do not let the slowest snail decide on how quick progress on climate protection will be.

My last remarks. On behalf of the German Forum on Environment and Development and VENRO, the umbrella association of German development NGOs, our NGO-co-organizer, I would like to thank the Sherpas for giving us the opportunity to present our perspectives, concerns and demands. I also would like to thank the German Sherpa and his team for the good spirit of cooperation in the run-up to this event.

We as NGOs hope, we made at least a little contribution to open up and to democratize the G8 process. This, we all hope, will be continued next year in Japan.

Minutes: Peter Lanzet (EED) and Mona Bricke (NGO Forum on Environment and Development)