

Global Governance and Sciences

Addressing the Institutional Dimension

The evolution of Global Governance

Over the past four decades international decision-making processes have been marked by an increasing broadening of structures and processes related to the ever more complex Global Agenda of the international community with broader systems of interrelatedness and longer term implications of its multiple dimension. While the Westphalian system of inter-national negotiations and decision-making is basically still sustained the negotiating processes have included an ever broader spectrum of inter-state and non-state partners whose contributions do not only have major influence on the definition of the outcome options but also on their implementation.

The term “Global Governance” is to be understood as the horizontal partnering of state, inter-state and non-state partners in global public space where the common good is to be defined and implemented.

The Partners in Global Public Space

- **International Organisations/Secretariats**

The secretariats of international organisations have early on taken a role of leadership in the development of and responses to the Global Agenda, especially during the Cold War. It was largely due to the international secretariats that new partners like academia and civil society and more recently the private sector and local authorities were brought into global negotiating processes. Civil society and academia were contributing to processes of global issue definition and articulation. The private sector has developed its space of influence primarily over the past decade. Parliamentarians and local authorities have still a rather limited impact on visions, values and operations related to the Global Agenda.

- **Civil Society**

While the Charter of the United Nations provides the Economic and Social Council with the possibility of “suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations” new patterns and structures for civil society contributions and consultations with the General Assembly (special consultations, interactive dialogues etc.) and also with the Security Council (Arria formula) have been developed over the past two decades. More than 3000 civil society organisations have today consultative status with the United Nations with thousands more participating in international conference events.

- **Private Sector**

The private sector is increasingly involved in Global Governance processes ranging from full membership in international decision-making organs (e.g. ILO, CGIAR, IFAD) and concrete operational responsibilities, e.g. the Californian corporation ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) to consultative relations with intergovernmental processes (e.g. World Summit on the Information Society, 2003 and 2005) but also with most of the UN system organisations, funds and programmes, including (under the Arria formula) with the UN-Security Council. The UNCED preparatory process led to the creation of the World Business Council on Sustainable Development. At the invitation of the UN-Secretary-General the Global Compact was established in 1999 with its Secretariat in the

UN which is to enhance the private sector's abiding with the key principles of the international system and enhance its involvement with Global Agenda issues.

- **Parliamentarians**

Political leaders of national parliaments have been interested in international affairs, often articulated in parliamentary committees and in the inclusion of parliamentarians in national delegations to the UN-General Assembly or other major conferences. The Parliamentarians for Global Action, as a civil society organisation with general consultative status with ECOSOC were first in bringing parliamentary perspectives to the UN processes. The Interparliamentary Union (IPU) succeeded in providing a platform to parliamentary leaders on global issues. After a first IPU conference in the UN-General Assembly hall on occasion of the 50th anniversary of the UN a process of institutionalizing the relationship developed leading to the recognition of IPU as an "inter-state" organisation which was granted formal observer status in the General Assembly. The 2005 UN Summit was preceded by parliamentary and civil society conferences.

- **Local Authorities**

The fact that the international community's concerns are increasingly to be addressed by local authorities who are also affected by the economic, social and environmental processes of global change has led to the establishment of the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA) a high level group of selected Mayors and representatives of umbrella organizations of local authorities specially chosen by UN-HABITAT's Executive Director on the basis of their local, national and international achievements in the context of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. UNACLA's task is to offer a positive and innovative vision of the future of the world's cities, advise the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT on issues related to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. It collaborates with the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, as well as with other bodies in the United Nations System.

The role of academia in Global Governance processes

Academia has been an important partner in global governance from the very beginning of the new post WWII international system. The UN agenda in certain areas (e.g. natural resources, environmental protection and sustainability, energy, food and agriculture, crime, disarmament etc.) has been strongly impacted by knowledge produced by the academic community often partnering with civil society (e.g. water, institutional dimension of environmental protection management). In the early years, the secretariats of the UN and of specialized agencies hired academics as advisers in their staff. UN Secretaries-General

U Thant and Kofi Annan had particular interest in bringing academia into the Global Governance processes in a more systematic and institutionalized form. Yet there is growing recognition of the fact that academia's input and participation in Global Governance has been rather fragmented, ad hoc and with major areas of the Global Agenda, in particular the issues related to inter-sectoral interdependencies and the challenges of multiple-objective policy-making remaining unattended and without any institutional framework.

Partnerships between international organisations and academic NGOs

UNESCO was among the first organisations of the UN system to develop structured partnerships with science organisations including them in the implementation of specific global programmes (e.g. International Hydrological Decades). Some governments and regional organisations created research institutions on general and on specific policy issues

related to the Global Agenda. Most of the specialized agencies of the UN system have since developed cooperation, mostly with sectorally defined science communities, usually accredited as civil society organisations. The International Council for Science (ICSU) has succeeded in assuming a coordinating role among a certain sector of the science community's relations with the Global Agenda.

UN institutions of research

UN-Secretary-General U Thant when creating UNITAR in 1964 and then the UN University in 1970 had the vision of providing the UN's policy work with think tank capabilities (e.g. study on UN membership of "very small states and territories"). Specific research institutions were established by the World Bank on food and agriculture (CGIAR), by the UN on issues of the advancement of women (INSTRAW), on disarmament (UNIDIR), crime and justice (UNICRI).

The UN University developed a broad spectrum of scientific centres dealing with such issues as biotechnology, comparative regional integration, environment and human security, food and nutrition, human and social development, geothermal resources, natural resources in Africa, development economics etc.

Sharing knowledge on global issues between East and West during the Cold War led to the creation of the International Institute on Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA).

It is generally recognized, however, that UN research institutions have limited financial and staffing resources in addition to their institutional segregation and the absence of leadership towards the integration of multi-disciplinary work on pluri-sectoral issues. The needed institutional relationship between policy processes and knowledge production is barely existing.

Expert Panels and Global Commissions

There is, however, a growing recognition of the need for academic analysis and data as a fundamental input into processes addressing the new Global Agenda, in particular those issues related to the Global Commons. The four reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change underline the significance of the sciences for decision-making processes on the international community's policy, norm-setting and concrete action programmes.

A major input of academia and of institutions of knowledge production into the global governance processes has come via the work of Global Commissions entrusted with the specific task of articulating concrete policy issues and options. Since the 1970ies Global Commissions/International Panels of senior political and intellectual leaders were entrusted with the preparation of reports on specific issues like development cooperation (Brandt Commission), the sustainable use of natural and environmental resources (Brundtland Commission), the institutional framework of the international community (Carlsson Commission), human security (Commission on Human Security), the role of civil society in global governance (Cardoso Panel), the development of peacekeeping operations (Brahimi Commission), the requirements and legal basis for humanitarian interventions (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty), the new global security agenda (High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change) etc.

The academic back-up staff assumed a major responsibility in the work of all of these Commissions, especially in the drafting of the respective policy documents the quality of which largely defined the success of the various Commissions/Panels.

The Helsinki Process under the leadership of the Presidents of Finland and Tanzania also aimed at bringing together academic and practical know-how and policy responsibility with the goal of articulating issues and concrete policy options for the key topics on our

Global Agenda.

Continuing gaps between sciences and the policy processes of Global Governance

Yet in the broader context of global policy-making processes generally proceed without structured relations with and appropriate inputs from the academic community. It is noteworthy in this context that in the history of the United Nations only one major summit event – the UN Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro 1992 – had a preparatory conference of the science community (Agenda of Science and Environment for Development into the 21st Century - ASCEND, Vienna, 1991).

Conditions of fragmentation of disciplines and policy responsibilities continue both with regard to the academic frameworks, disciplines and mandates and with regard to policy processes. There have been some important precedences in bringing social, societal and environmental issues into the security agenda of the international community (e.g. deliberations in the UN-Security Council in April 2007 on the security implications of climate change) yet the security dimension is largely barred from the organs dealing with economic development, social affairs and societal values and challenges.

The fragmentation is generally also present in the system of reporting on global issues with each specialized agency, fund or programme presenting an analysis of current issues and challenges in their field of responsibility, sometimes using different data and time frames. Policy responses are generally equally fragmented and predefined by institutional responsibilities and capabilities. There is yet no integrated State of the World Report to the international community.

The fragmentation on the side of academic disciplines, programmes and institutions is a similar impediment for addressing the pluri-disciplinary and inter-sectoral nature of current policy challenges.

New options for the integration of Sciences into Global Governance

The report on of the Expert Group on Global Governance of Science to the EU Science, Economy and Society Directorate has been an important input into the development of critical discourse and the consideration of new policy and institutionalized options. It focuses on the societal framework and the international context of knowledge production.

The challenges in the relatedness of sciences with the global society are, however, somewhat broader and include the fundamental interaction with the policy processes and the need inputs from policy making organs of the international community into the scientific community. This implies a more accentuated presence of the science community in the global decision-making processes. Similar to civil society and the private sector, academia will need access to global platforms where an interactive relationship is provided between governmental and inter-governmental decision-makers on the one hand and interdisciplinary representatives of the institutions and capacities of knowledge on the other. At the same time the United Nations will need an entity which sustains an inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary survey of knowledge capacities at global, regional and national levels

There has been a growing need for inputs from the social/administrative sciences into reform efforts in the system of international organisations where some structural development over the past decades violated some of the most basic principles of these disciplines with the consequential negative results.

Creating the Office of the Sciences Adviser to the President of the General Assembly

Following the patterns of past processes of institutional innovation in the international system the decision-making process concerning the enhanced participation and contribution of the sciences in Global Governance will require the clear identification of the concrete issues. This could be accomplished pursuing a process including the following measures

- Establishment of a Global Commission on Global Governance and Sciences by the UN Secretary-General supported by an academic secretariat. Drafting of a report to the UN General Assembly. Such process would have to be supported by
- Preparation of a survey of current global agenda areas and related policy institutions and processes and of the pertinent knowledge production institutions and capacities at global, regional and national levels; identification of specific needs for interdisciplinary research work.
- Analysis of current patterns of interaction between academia and inter-governmental policy-making; identification of gaps
- Review of possible options for institutional innovation concerning the relationship and cooperation between Global Governance and sciences (e.g. consultative processes, mandating of research work of science institutions by intergovernmental bodies, multi-partner platforms for deliberation of knowledge requirements etc.)
- Initiation of an international policy process with the United Nations, the UN system of organisations, funds and programmes, including a special conference of the international science community with the members of the CEB (Chief Executives Board of the United Nations)

Annex

Global Governance and Sciences

Informal Working Group

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