

Reform of the Global Governance: Global Democracy for the Global Commons

Under this heading, the TwR-II Coordination Team at IIASA co-ordinated a special online consultation with the TwR Community of Science and Practice (CoSP) on 21th of June 2023. The meeting brought together experts from the TwR CoSP and IIASA scientists to address issues regarding the current state of multilateral systems and the democratic representation within these systems, thus prompting a discussion on the possibility of establishing a global Parliament - representing global citizens rather than nation-states.

In this context participants first discussed, whether there is indeed a "governance gap" that a global Parliament would address. It was concluded that global democratic legitimacy remains insufficient. The distribution of power within key UN bodies such as the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly is skewed and hence these bodies can be considered somewhat outdated as they do not reflect current (geo)economic, military, geopolitical, and other contexts. Furthermore, current multilateral systems are often driven by self-interest among individual nation-states, potentially hindering the protection of global commons for future generations. The urgency of tackling global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss and so on, has brought the topic of establishing a global Parliament to the forefront - once again.

These discussions led to the further questions: which mandate a global Parliament or a similar body would have, and how it would complement the existing global governance systems. It was agreed that the creation of a so-called global Parliament could play a distinct role within the existing UN system. While the UN General Assembly and UN Security Council would remain key institutions of global governance, the global Parliament could complement them by amplifying the voices of the peoples. Parliamentarians from different countries would not necessarily vote the same way as their governments, allowing for greater plurality and the formation of diverse coalitions. Alternative proposals, such as small-scale cooperation of willing parties and clubs, are seen as complementary when global cooperation falls short (e.g. C40 Cities association).

Finally, more specific design modalities were discussed, e.g. how to ensure an equitable representation of people as well as the broader socio-psychological issues of how current international decision-makers and various stakeholder groups may receive such proposals. It was agreed that an equitable representation of people in a global Parliament presents a significant challenge. Differentiation and divisions among countries make achieving a common vision to prioritize global challenges and legitimacy across the spectrum very difficult. The decision-making mechanisms and representation within such an organization

must navigate these complexities and embrace diverse perspectives. It was proposed that young people could act in a special way as ambassadors for a global (youth) Parliament, adding enthusiastic support and moral legitimacy to the initiative. This would also help to support the youth movement advocating a stronger emphasis of policy on the global challenges which are likely to significantly affect the lives of the next generations.

The deliberations from this consultation will inform the concluding chapter of the upcoming IIASA Flagship report on the occasion of IIASA's 50th anniversary, which will be presented in various high-level science-policy forums.