

THINK7 SUMMIT



The Think7 Quebec Declaration on Global Governance and the Challenges of Complexity and Inclusiveness



UNIVERSITÉ
LAVAL

The Think7 Quebec Declaration on Global Governance and the Challenges of Complexity and Inclusiveness

The Think7//Idées7 Summit: Breaking Silos to Foster Innovation

The Think7//Idées7 Summit brought together researchers from academia and think tanks from all the G7 members, plus China, India and South Africa. We met in Quebec City and Baie St-Paul, Canada, on the eve of the 2018 G7 Charlevoix Summit, at the invitation of Laval University's Institute for Advanced International Studies (*Hautes études internationales*), in partnership with six other Canadian schools of international affairs and think tanks. We collectively combine affiliations to 23 different university centres and think tanks, although the views expressed in this declaration are our own and do not necessarily reflect the views of those institutions.

The Charlevoix Summit takes place at a time of serious concern about the future of global governance. Efforts to address the critical global problems of our time, from climate change to civil wars, to refugee crises and trade conflicts have indeed stalled and even receded. International negotiations are dragging, treaties are denounced when not being simply violated, international organizations are defunded and arbitral decisions are ignored.

Concomitantly, in all of our societies, a strong scepticism about what global governance can accomplish has set in. Large segments of our electorates have concluded, rightly or not, that the global solutions proposed by their politicians have left them either impoverished or deprived of their sovereignty, or both.

What can be done to remedy this state of affairs? We have focused on innovative ways to concretely address two of the most pressing set of challenges global governance must overcome today: those related to complexity and to inclusiveness. Rather than approaching these challenges abstractly, we decided to look in depth at innovative ways to globally address concrete issues — issues that are complex in the sense that they cannot be efficiently dealt with using the traditional kit of global governance tools. Inspired by the priorities identified by the Canadian presidency for this year's G7 and the Sustainable Development Goals, we sought solutions to problems that, by their nature, stand at the juncture of five traditional areas: trade, labour, the environment, security and migration. We also considered how each of these issues poses problems of inclusiveness, especially in terms of gender equity, and how the empowerment of marginalized groups should be integrated into all the solutions put forward.

We therefore submit to G7 leaders proposals for action on a wide spectrum of cross cutting issues. But before presenting our recommendations, we want to share our more general conclusions about what this exercise taught us about the challenges of complexity and inclusiveness in global governance.

The G7 and the Challenges of Complexity and Inclusiveness in Global Governance

Complexity and the need for inclusiveness are stressing the fabric of global governance from without and from within. And they are strongly interconnected.

From the outside, the problems in need of global action increasingly require intersectoral approaches to be efficiently addressed. They also all affect populations unequally, contributing to the further disenfranchisement of certain groups.

From within, international institutions have proliferated at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels, with often overlapping, conflicting mandates. They also have developed along different models, often involving sub-state and non-state stakeholders. This new complexity of global governance has empowered some, but marginalized others.

The G7 is a case in point. It must adapt to address increasingly intricate global issues. Originally conceived as a macroeconomic forum, it has seen its agenda widen to cover issues as diverse as security, development, energy and terrorism. The G7 must also cope with international institutional proliferation, as it coexists with a growing number of other agenda-based summits, including the G20, with different forms of inclusion and exclusion.

G7 leaders are not only, as a group, first-hand witnesses of the challenges that complexity and inclusiveness represent for global governance. They are in a privileged position to address them. As heads of states and governments, they are the only individuals in the G7 who at home, are responsible for all subjects their government's face and for addressing them in synergic, mutually supportive ways. As a grouping of the leading democracies and free-market economies, sharing the same basic values, they have the agenda-setting capacity to foster innovation at all levels of global governance.

The Need for Pragmatic, Evidence-Based Solutions

There are no silver bullets or one-size-fits-all solutions that will solve the challenges of complexity and inclusiveness. We need a global governance ecosystem that is conducive to synergies and innovation based on evidence and the best available science.

The time has come for G7 members to address global issues and assess global policy initiatives using the same approaches they use for domestic policies and regulations: relying on cost-benefit and impact analyses informed by the best science available. These assessments should carefully consider life cycle, opportunity, missed opportunities and other "hidden" costs. G7 members should collectively take advantage of Big Data analytics to develop joint protocols for sharing reliable data on global issues and policies. G7 governments have already developed government-to-government data-sharing models. Universities can help in extending these data-pooling practices, including to the instruments and practices of global governance itself, in ways consistent with high standards of citizen protection and privacy. We now have databanks on trade and environmental agreements, on regional international organizations and on international tribunals that reach levels of comprehensiveness that would have been unimaginable a few years ago.

The G7 is in a good position to reach multilateral agreements: its past history, small number of participants, convergence in values and similar development levels. Today trust is critical. The ability of the G7 to reach multilateral agreements will not only generate trust within the group but will also put the group in a stronger position when engaging with the wider global community.

Proposals for Action Submitted to G7 Leaders

We recommend that G7 leaders should:

A. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

1. Promote education that fosters adaptation and responsible citizenship by integrating STEM with social sciences, humanities and the arts.
2. Coordinate actions on education and mobility within and outside the G7 to overcome vulnerabilities, particularly in poor countries, and to increase opportunities for youth, girls and marginalized groups such as migrants.
3. Acknowledge and share responsibility for regional challenges and disorder posed by large refugees flows.

B. DIGITAL AND DATA SECURITY

4. Develop a strategy for public data security and integrity, including for securing our electoral systems, CBRN non-proliferation, and government-to-government data record sharing.
5. Adopt guidelines for cybersecurity that will strengthen cyber forensics and develop synergies with tech companies to enhance attribution of cybercrime.
6. Work with private sector leaders to enhance cooperation with non-G7 countries to relaunch trust-building measures in data integrity that underpins confidence and citizen participation in a global data commons.
7. Support universities to increase research and teaching on cyber and data security to educate a wider portion of our population on cyber and data hygiene.

C. PROGRESSIVE TRADE AGENDA

8. Include in all trade agreements a requirement to conduct periodic assessments of their social, environmental, gender and human rights impacts on all affected countries, to help design new trade agreements and revise existing ones. These assessments will rely on the best science available and new data.

9. Assess the impact of rapid technological changes on trade, the environment and society, with the view of empowering excluded groups. The G7 should establish a working group to this purpose.
10. Elaborate and expand on the positive developments in recent major free trade agreements concluded by G7 members with a view to creating a new momentum to reinvigorate the multilateral trading system.
11. Mainstream meaningful gender chapters in all trade agreements.

D. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

12. Commit to the recent strategy of the International Maritime Organization on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and further support decarbonizing the shipping sector.
13. Reinforce resilient, sustainable coastal infrastructure and environment to reduce waste in the oceans including plastics.
14. Support the increased involvement of multilateral development banks in funding quality infrastructure projects, especially ones that promote a sustainable environment.
15. Phase out fossil fuel subsidies by 2025, including by ending immediately those that create unfair import competition.

E. FAIR TAX SYSTEMS

16. Consider the value of a global minimum corporate tax rate to address the problem of unfair tax competition.
17. Help identify and take opportunities for sustainable growth through global tax cooperation.

Canada 

Québec 

