

9. Global Community Outreach: The G20 and Africa

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Hello, I'm John Kirton, Director of the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto and your lead instructor for G8 Online 2002.

In this session, "Global Community Outreach: The G20 and Africa," we examine the G8's record in reaching out to involve other countries and international organizations, particularly those from the developing world and from Africa itself.

Critics have long charged that the G7/G8 is a closed club, a **plutocracy** in which only the wealthy, largely white, powers of the north are allowed in. Defenders of the G8's current composition respond that those on the outside also have their own such exclusive **minilateral** or **plurilateral** groupings, such as the G77 and G15. They add that, there are many other bodies, notably those of the broadly multilateral United Nations system, in which everyone is included and has an equal voice and vote. More recently, however, today's **globalization** is leading to rapid growth, economic openness and democratic freedom in many parts of the less developed world. There is thus growing pressure for the G7/G8 to relax its **constricted participation** and associate ever more closely with a select group of the most important countries and international organizations on the outside.

"Bring in more members," "hold the fort as is" or "selectively associate" with others — these are the competing claims. In choosing among them, we ask what the G7/G8 has actually done in years past, and what it should do in the years ahead.

In this lecture, I argue that the G8 has already done much — but should do more — to associate selectively with outsiders, in order to maximize its effectiveness in our rapidly globalizing age. As a **democratic concert**, the G8 must remain closed in its full membership to only

major democratic powers with global responsibilities and reach. But even the classic **Concert of Europe**, created by the **Congress of Vienna** in 1815, involved outsiders when the issue at hand demanded that they be brought in. Similarly, with the end of the cold war, at the Paris Summit of the Arche in 1989 the G7 began, cautiously but repeatedly, to bring ever more outsiders, ever more permanently into a dialogue, and later into an ongoing association with the group. The Kananaskis Summit will mark the next major step forward in this process. Below the Summit peak, the expanding array of G7/G8 institutions has done an impressive job of involving many outsiders, most recently with the new **G20** finance ministers, launched in 1999, constituting a new decisive move. Looking ahead, the leading democratic members of the G20 should be given a more permanent association with the G8 Summit itself, at the leaders' level and across the full array of issues at the centre of **global governance** in our globalizing age.

A. Reaching Out at the Summit Since 1989

On July 14–16, 1989, the leaders of the G7 gathered in Paris to launch their third seven-year cycle of summitry, to celebrate the bicentennial of the **French Revolution** and to highlight France's contribution to the development of human rights. At the end of the Summit, the G7 leaders received a startling letter from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev saying he wanted to come into the institutions of the West. This bolt-out-of-the-blue breakthrough led to the end of the cold war during the next decade, the emergence of a democratic Russia and its full membership in a new G8 club. But Paris 1989 was also significant for a second "outreach" reason: at the start of the Summit, the G7 leaders gathered for the first time with a

select group of leaders of developing countries from all geographic regions, including Africa. They had dinner and a dialogue on the north-south development issues that were one of the G7 Summit's prime concerns.

This innovation inaugurated a tradition that spread in subsequent years. To be sure, outside leaders had long lobbied individual G7 members through letters and meetings delivered as the annual Summit approached. Moreover, G7 hosts and members had individually consulted and debriefed the outside countries and organizations they were closest to. But now, in 1989, some of the outsiders could connect with the Summit members collectively at the Summit itself. After the Paris Summit, the first pioneer was the Soviet Union, and then Russia. It came for post-Summit meetings at the 1991 London Summit, the 1992 Munich Summit and the 1993 Tokyo Summit. Russia expanded its role when it joined the new "Political Eight" at the 1994 Naples Summit, the 1995 Halifax Summit and the 1996 Lyon Summit. In 1996, Russia also hosted the first ever intersessional summit, on nuclear safety in Moscow. In Lyon, the G7 also invited the leaders of several major international organizations to join them for a post-Summit dialogue.

It took some time for developing country leaders to return to the Summit after their 1989 start. The Japanese host Kiichi Miyazawa and U.S. president Bill Clinton did hold a pre-Summit meeting in 1993 with Indonesia's Suharto at Tokyo. In 2000, when Japan next hosted, again there was a pre-Summit meeting for a favoured few outsiders (Kirton and Takase 2002). But at the 2001 Genoa Summit, G8 leaders invited leaders of selected, largely African, developing countries and international organizations to their Summit, to launch preparations for a new paradigm and action plan for African development.

At Kananaskis in June 2002, African leaders and the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, will return to the Summit, for the sec-

ond year in a row. But for the first time ever, they will be not guests at an added-on meeting but full partners participating in the Summit itself.

B. Reaching Out from the G7/G8 System Since the Start

Beneath the Summit at the apex, the broader G8 system below has — almost since the start — reached out to involve others in its work. It has done so in the first instance at the official level. Here Summit-inspired working groups such as the Missile Technology Control Regime have broadened to include others as core members, as the functional need arose. Most recently, the Digital Opportunity Task Force (the Dot Force), the Renewable Energy Task Force and the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis (the Health Fund) have brought in not just outside countries but also international organizations and civil society groups.

Over the past decade, as the post-cold war, globalizing era has taken hold, the G7/G8 has reached out at the ministerial level to involve others. This process started with meeting on the Economic Aid to Ukraine, held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in October 1994. It continued most recently with the G7 health ministers' meetings (with Mexico) in Ottawa in November 2001 ("Ottawa Plan for Improving Health Security"), and in London, England, in March 2002 (see its statement).

The most dramatic development at the ministerial level, however, has been the 1999 creation of the G20 finance ministers forum (Kirton 2001a, 2001b). This new body was inspired by the 1997–99 Asian-turned-global financial crisis. It joined the finance ministers of the G7 countries with those of the systemically important emerging economies from around the world and representatives of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**. Chaired by Canada's Paul Martin for its formative first two years, this body met in Berlin in December 1999, Montreal in October 2000, and Ottawa in November

2001 in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks. Its agenda focuses on issues of finance. But has reached out to embrace many of the other core concerns, including social and ecological values, of our globalizing age.

The early evidence suggests that the G20 has come to establish its place alongside other new bodies, notably the IMF's International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC). Moreover, the G20 is becoming a forum where major developed and developing countries can come together to shape a broad consensus on the critical global issues of the day. The clearest evidence of its value came at its most recent ministerial meeting in Ottawa in November 2001. An earlier G7 consensus on far-reaching moves to combat terrorism was fully and enthusiastically endorsed by the major emerging economies around the world. Nonetheless, there are those who argue that much more needs to be done if global governance is to move beyond the G7 to involve the broader group of developing countries that the globalization process has harmed and can help (Helleiner 2002; Culpeper 2000).

C. Reaching out from the G7/G8 System in the Years Ahead

To some, the obvious next move is to create a similar G20 forum for the foreign ministers in the G8 and major developing countries, or even to have G8 leaders meet as part of a G20 Summit itself (Johnson 2001). Such a formula may be useful on functional grounds, in a world where globalization is creating ever greater capabilities within major developing countries, and even greater vulnerabilities between them and those of the G8. But a G20 foreign ministers forum or summit does confront the core question of how it would advance the democratic mission that is the G8's ultimate *raison d'être*.

One solution might be to create a foreign ministers or leaders-level G20 with only democratic polities included. However, there may not yet be enough such durable democracies

among major developing countries to make this a productive approach in the short term. The superior solution is to begin to associate more closely with the G8 itself those handful of democratic, developing emerging powers, starting with India, that have demonstrated their global vision and ability to contribute to global governance as a whole.

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Discussion Questions

1. If the G8 were to invite some democratic developing countries to the annual Summit, what should be the criteria for selection and what countries should be included in the list?
2. What would happen to the G8 as an effective centre of global governance if the United States were to be removed, voluntarily or involuntarily, from it?
3. In terms of being forums for global governance, what are the respective advantages and disadvantages of plurilateral or minilateral international institutions on the one hand and broadly multilateral or universal ones on the other?
4. If a G20 for foreign ministers were to be included, how would and should the countries and international organizations that are members differ from those in the current G20 finance ministers forum?
5. What are the respective historic contributions of Britain (with the Magna Carta), France, the United States and Canada in the global development of human rights? Which countries have given the strongest expression to human rights values in their G7/G8 diplomacy?
6. Given that the heads of international organizations are not democratic, popularly elected leaders, why, how much and how do they deserve a place at the Summit of the G7/G8 as a democratic concert?

Quiz

1. The Concert of Europe was created by the:
 - a. Treaty of Westphalia in 1648
 - b. Congress of Vienna in 1815
 - c. Treaty of Versailles in 1918
 - d. The Treaty of Rome in 1957
2. Developing country leaders first attended a G7/G8 Summit in:
 - a. 1975
 - b. 1989
 - c. 1993
 - d. 2000
3. The G20 finance ministers forum was created in:
 - a. 1920
 - b. 1975
 - c. 1989
 - d. 1999
4. The leader of Soviet Union/Russia first met with G7/G8 leaders at a Summit in:
 - a. 1989
 - b. 1990
 - c. 1991
 - d. 1992
5. The first time African leaders met with G7 leaders at the latter's Summit was:
 - a. Toronto 1988
 - b. Paris 1989
 - c. Denver 1997
 - d. Genoa 2001
6. The current Secretary-General of the United Nations is:
 - a. Mike Moore of New Zealand
 - b. Don Johnston of Canada
 - c. Horst Köhler of Germany
 - d. Kofi Annan of Ghana