Globalising Civil Society
Continuity and Change
By
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Context

Relations across people, communities, societies and nations have been seriously affected by the phenomenon of globalisation as it evolved over the past 15 years (since the fall of Berlin wall). International relations across countries have been undergoing significant restructuring after the Second World War several categories of world had begun during the ‘cold war’ period - First, Second, third. The United Nations system incubated new formations- G7 (now G8), G77 and more recently G20. NATO as a transatlantic military alliance and non - aligned movement (comprising largely of newly liberated countries of the “third world”) emerged in the 50’s and 60’s as strong transnational associations. In the decades of the 70’s and 80’s growth of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) fuelled economic development, not only in Europe and North America, but also in the Far East (Japan, South Korea, etc.)

Numerous treaties of the UN system (human rights, literacy, gender justice, habitat, sustainable development, social development, reproductive health etc.) in the 1980’s and 90’s became binding policies for national governments. In the same period, structural adjustment loans from the World Bank (and regional development banks) and IMF further shaped and determined economic and social policies in the “recipient” countries of the South. Massive expansion of IT and telecommunications technologies supported increased global capital flows in the 1990’s. Policies and rules of World Trade Organisations (WTO) facilitated the expansion of global trade to unprecedented levels and integration of global markets to an accelerated pace in the last 15 years.

It has been argued that the forces of, and trends in, globalisation have resulted in several significant implications on the functioning of governing institutions at the national level:

a) Forces of globalisation have been shaping national policies in the spheres of economic development and trade. Not only policies and conditionalities imposed through such formal mechanism like WTO and WB/IMF determine national policies, but also informal arrangements like the world economic favours (Davos) have significant influence over economic and monetary policies of national governments.

b) Regional trading blocks and arrangements (ASEAN, APEC, NAFTA, EU, MERCOSOUR, SADC and now even SAARC(?)) have begun to further determine priorities and policies of national decision- makers.

c) National governments, even elected parliaments, have on many occasions not been able to fully know of, debate and decide upon the terms of various global agreements. Few parliaments know of terms of structural adjustment.. or Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) of the WB/IMF; few political parties texts of emerging treaties from the UN System (be they on xenophobia & racism, human rights or environment or gender).

d) Social development issues and policies on access to basic education, health care and drinking water etc. have been significantly influenced in most developing
countries as a consequence of these forces of globalisation. Standard solutions are being imposed through standard institutional designs - one size fits all? Without consideration for local, national or regional variations and priorities. G8 (an informal club of the leaders of the richer countries in the world today) is defining development agenda for Africa called NEPAD?

e) Present forces of globalisation have been led from the top - globalisation of the elites across countries has created immense gulf and distance across families and communities within countries as well. The recent advertising and media campaign of Government of India projects “India Shining” without reference to nearly 350 million Indians still living in abject poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. Policies of liberalisation and privatisation of government control and ownership over productive natural, physical and financial resources have been so far practiced from the point of view of large national and transnational industry and trade interests, not from the point of view of a tribal “self-employed” family living in forest areas. Such subaltern communities have become losers in globalisation, mere spectators from far.

Globalization core

Many different phenomena and aspirations have been clubbed together as trends of globalisation as witnessed since 1990s. It appears that two major characteristics distinguish the current phase of international linkages from its previous manifestations. The first aspect is the enormous, complex and dense market and financial interconnectedness across the world. The support to private market initiatives through national and international policies has resulted in enormous increases in investment flows across the world and in linkages between the producers and consumers across national boundaries. Linkages between stock exchanges, foreign exchange, futures trading etc., are only illustrations of this phenomenon. The increase in global trade across countries during this period is further illustration of deepening market interconnectedness world - wide. This implies that producers in one part of the world relate to consumers in another part through provision of goods and services. As John D.Clarke (2003) points out:

- Over the 1990s, global export volumes rose 12% per year
- Global flows of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) increased four times during 1988 to 2001 - to US$ 760 billion
- Foreign exchange transactions per day increased to $1200 billion in 2001
- Nearly $600 billion in bonds was traded cross - border every day in 2000.

The second most distinctive characteristic of this phase of globalisation is what has come to be called ICT (Information Communication Technology). The rapid rise in internet connectivity, the second most distinctive characteristics of this phase of globalisation is what has come to be called ICT (Information communication Technology). The rapid rise in internet connectivity, mobile and wireless telephony and improvements in technology such that access becomes easier around the world has resulted in massive implosion of information about, and communications with, different others in different parts of the world. This access to both hardware and software has created a possibility where people in one part of the world can learn about events shaping people in other part of the world almost online, in real time instantaneously. And this knowledge is not merely limited to printed word but
Participatory Research In Asia includes visual images and voices of the people themselves. As noticed by John D. Clark (2003):

- Six megabytes of computer memory cost only $11 in 1999
- While there were 50 sites on world wide web in January 1993, these had grown to 350 million by 2001
- More information could be sent over a single cable per second in 2001 than was sent over the entire internet in a month four years ago.

Recent market surveys have indicated that nearly half the population of the world will be using a mobile telephone in ten years. The price of personal computers, relative to per capita GDP, has fallen dramatically in most countries of the world. Viewed in this sense and analysing globalisation primarily with respect to the above two characteristics, it can be argued that benefits and gains of globalisation, as represented through market interconnectedness and ICT, have been quite uneven within and across countries. Producers of goods and services have remained largely concentrated in those countries where market infrastructure and production technology was already well developed. Use of new Information Technology implies knowledge of language, minimum professional and educational capacities and therefore, is unevenly accessible to people in remote, rural and tribal areas, those with limited or no literacy skills and with limited financial means to access technology.

In very few countries of the world attempt has been made to address the problem of uneven access to markets and ICT. It can be argued that the digital divide is coterminous with the market divide and the winners and losers divide around the world. Even in southern countries like India, South Africa and Brazil, only those have access to benefits of globalisation, who have had the possibility to link-up with markets and use ICT. Therefore, within these countries as well, there has been a growing gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', the elites and the 'majoritarian'. This market-driven globalisation with primary concern for expansion in penetration of markets through financial, trade and related instruments has, therefore, created a new set of winners and losers around the world.

As this process was moving forward and beginning to create the differentiation between the winners and losers, in almost a parallel process, withdrawal of welfare state began to occur. Some argue that this has been triggered and caused by globalisation. It may appear that seeds for decline of the welfare state were sown already in the late 1970s and 1980s; in some parts of the world, restructuring of welfare state had begun in early 1980s itself. The forces responsible for restructuring of welfare state are multiple but clearly the capacity and resources available with the state became a major constraint in continuing with its post World War II paradigm. Such a decline and restructuring of welfare state happened in Europe and Japan as well as in the developing countries of the south. One of the major consequences of the decline of welfare state was the withdrawal of state responsibilities in ensuring delivery of basic services like education, healthcare, drinking water and sanitation. The principle of 'user - pays' in order to ensure accountability of these services makes sense for the urban, middle class and those who can afford it. But where basic infrastructure itself is lacking (like in distant rural and tribal areas) such an approach essentially meant leaving those communities entirely on their own to fend for themselves with respect to basic education, primary health care, drinking water and sanitation, as such basic services become non-accessible by the 'have-nots'. It contributed to
further increase in the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘haves-nots’ during the process of globalisation through market interconnectedness and ICT. Does the associative phenomenon of restructuring the welfare state compound and magnify the differentiation between the winners and losers of globalisation in many countries of the South as well as some countries of North?

In this context the issues of ‘ethical’ globalisation and approaches to inclusive, bottom - up globalisation have been argued. For example, the World Social Forum has been a gathering place for a variety of responses to globalisation from the perspective and the point of view of the ‘have-nots’. While some of these voices in World Social Forum had taken a position of outright rejection of globalisation, some others define their concern in relation to the exclusion, further marginalisation and deprivation of some sections and countries in the face of current structures for and methods of globalisation.

Global Democratic Deficit

Be that as it may, it is important to acknowledge that many institutions and issues have acquired increasing significance for great impact on the lives of people worldwide in the last 20 years. These institutions and issues transcend the traditional boundaries established by nation-states and affect humanity as a whole. It is in the context of these institutions and issues that huge democratic deficit exists today. An early attention to these issues came in respect of structural adjustment programmes (SAP) began in late 1970s. It became obvious that decisions about national economic policies and priorities were being made in Washington for many countries of the world.

Likewise, multilateral UN bodies began to be significantly influenced by those forms of decision-making which were less than universally democratic. Over these years, the General Assembly of the United National lost it centrality and Security Council has emerged as the most important Fora, particularly after the Cold War. The Security Council is an exclusive club, with unequal rights to those who were ‘victors’ of the last World war. Similarly informal associations (like G7/G8) of the leaders of rich countries have become enormously powerful in assuring influence on multi-lateral institutions, financial institutions and national governments.

Multilateral corporations have also gained in significance, spread and outreach during this period. World Economic Forum (Davos) has become a major ‘think - tank’ on behalf of the private global capital. Yet, accountability of these multinational (MNCs) is largely limited to the countries of their origin. Standards of regulations, treatment of employees, communities, human rights compliance are all restricted to their own home country and ignored largely in other countries where they have production or marketing units. The rise of WTOs as a multilateral mechanism for decision - making has created huge questions about the unequal distribution of power between the large, rich countries and small, poor countries.

This democratic deficit actually related to the problematique of global governance. And this problem of global governance has enormous importance in light of those issues which transcend national boundaries. Issue of human security, environmental sustainability, capital flight and human migration are complex and significant issues. The caused and solutions of these lie beyond the immediate boundaries within nation - states. These have been further
compounded by September 11 events and the growing internationalisation of terrorism. There are multiple examples of issues (pollution, destruction of Ozone layer, global warming, Greenhouse Gas Effects) affecting the ecological balance of our universe. Likewise, rapid, unaccountable and large volumes of capital flow through stock markets significantly affect the valuation of companies and currencies, and it has become increasingly evident since the 1997 East Asia crisis. Human migration across countries and millennia; but it the present context, movements of people across nation-states, through both legal and illegal channels, both for employment and human rights issues, has acquired a complex meaning, defying simple solutions. A recent analysis of voices of anti-globalisation movement at Social Fora makes some interesting observations (Said and Desai, 2003):

“Supporters believe that globalisation and global capitalism are the only way to combat poverty and totalitarianism and should therefore be embraced wholeheartedly by all and sundry. Reformers believe that there is more to globalisation than capitalism. The state, according to Reformers, is not eroded but transformed, working under new constraints of ‘overlapping sovereignties’. They do not believe that globalisation could or should be reversed; instead, they call for it to be humanised. Alternatives reject the entire conceptual framework and are more concerned with carving out spaces where alternatives paradigms can coexist. Over the past three years, due to the resurgence of the new group we call the Regressives and the weakening of Reformers; many activists are being pushed into Isolationist positions.”

(Global Civil Society, OXFORD, 2003)

There is growing demand for democratisation of institutions of global governance. Forum International Montreal is a global alliance of individuals and organisations with the goal of improving the influence of international civil society on the multilateral system. Its first conference on Global Governance 2002 focused on the emerging democratic deficits and was titled ‘Civil Society and the Democratisation of Global Governance’.

**Civil Society**

In the face of these global trends and challenges what has been the experiences and contributions of civil society? What, in fact, is civil society? In 1970’s and 1980’s several initiatives of non-governmental organisations began to posit an alternative development discourse and agenda through their practical work on the ground. These organisations performed several functions. First and foremost was social mobilisation and awareness raising; informing people about their rights, and organising them to demand these from state institutions was an important contribution in that period. Questioning large scale, top-down development programmes through demonstration of bottom-up participatory initiatives in the field of education, healthcare, natural resource management, etc. became the basis for challenging inadequate and inefficient models and programs of development in many countries of the South. Development NGOs began to be noticed in different countries around the 1970s, for their alternative development paradigm, which implied local level development. This was in contrast to the prevailing national agenda, which tried to establish national priorities through a series of top-down development interventions by national governments.

The most dynamic characteristic of the alternative development paradigm was its participatory nature. This paradigm believed that development cannot be delivered from outside; that people can develop themselves; their own
involvement, knowledge and contribution is an essential foundation for any sustainable development. People’s own participation can be enabled through local knowledge and local resources, and enhanced through a series of interventions leading to their collective empowerment. This approach relied substantially on conscientisation and collective mobilisation of the marginalised themselves. Non-formal education, community organising and leadership building were the kinds of interventions that this alternative development approach of NGOs signified. This contrasted from the mainstream development paradigm, which focused on growth in GNP and macro-economic development.

People’s participation in the 1970s was not on the agenda of most governments or international agencies. Alternative development paradigm, therefore, was an alternative to the practice of the state. In many parts of developing world, large scale development projects were resulting in displacement of indigenous people, rural poor, urban slum-dwellers from their land, livelihood and community. Civil society organisations began to critique such development projects on the basis of who benefits and who bears the cost of such projects. It is this critique, which then subsequently led to what began to be called a ‘right approach’ to development. These human rights were larger than civic and political rights and included right to a decent livelihood, right to life and right to life with dignity.

The concept of civil society remerged after the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989. Grassroots civic action began to be seen as a countervailing force to authoritarian regimes and top-down development policies and programmes. Civil society can be viewed as a manifestation of individual and collective initiatives for common public good. In its most practical sense, civil society operates at local level in villages and neighbourhoods where people work together to address common public problems, build relationships of mutual trust and solidarity and thereby enrich their associational life. Building on this grassroots local experience, civil society also engages with local and national governments to influence policies and programmes and to access resources for the well-being of the marginalised and excluded.

“In this sense, it is the private, self-motivated and somewhat autonomous initiatives of individuals and collectives that constitute the collage of civil society. This broad definition allows us to look at civil society in three different ways. First civil society is a space that is free, open and accessible. Therefore, it is a space for ideas, for action, for discussion and debate and for contestation. In this view, civil society is the base arena where values, perspectives and norms are developed, debated, accepted and contested. Civil society also represents the space where subaltern, hitherto inaudible and unarticulated views can be expressed.

Civil society can also be seen as a movement for advancing various causes. In recent decades, causes like women’s rights, human rights, children’s rights, tribal rights, peace and the environment, have all been advanced through a variety of social movements. There are also movements for protest-protest against the policies and actions of powerful national and international institutions that go against dams, factories, mines, dislocation and displacement.

Civil society is also a set of organisations. These are primarily self-help mutual help and mutual support groups. Through them, families and citizens get together and look after their common public good. Neighbourhood associations, village councils, local sports and culture groups, pond maintenance committees and
forest protection groups are all examples of such civil society organisations. Civil society also includes strong membership organisations, such as trade unions, cooperatives and social clubs.

(Does civil society matter? Governance in Contemporary India, Rajesh Tandon and Ranjita Mohanty, 2003)

How has the domestic civil society been affected by these trends of globalisation? It may be difficult to present a common response to diverse countries and situations. Many different analysis have been presented but three common implications seem to emerge around the world. First, domestic civil society has gained greater recognition and visibility as a rightful player in addressing various problems; it has emerged as a separate sector, first not third, in respect of their relations with the state and the market. In many countries of the south, the dominance of the state continues to be the prime focus of attention of civil society. Civil society interface with state institutions remains the most problematic political phenomenon of contemporary times.

“Indeed a veritable “global associational revolution” appears to be under way, a massive upsurge of organised private, voluntary activity in virtually every region of the world in the developed countries of North America, Western Europe and Asia; throughout Central and Eastern Europe; and in much of the developing world. The rise of the civil society sector may, in fact, prove to be as significant a development of the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries as the rise of the nation-state was of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries”.

(Global Civil Society: An overview, Lester M. Salamon. Et.al,2003)

There is an increasing trend for civil society to deal with the consequences of market institutions as well. Consumer movement is the clearest manifestation of this phenomenon around the world. Accessing public services for the people and promoting human rights of all without discrimination have become increasingly as integral part of the agenda.

Second, greater expectation on civil society organisation has been placed in respect of delivery of public services. As the welfare state restructures itself, it has placed new demand on civil society for undertaking delivery of public services, especially for the marginalised. Thus, there has been a growth of large public service delivery organisations which are undertaking massive programmes of service delivery in basic education, health care, water, sanitation etc. One obvious and visible arena is in the field of self-help groups and micro-finance. As argued by Salamon et.al (2003), service function of civil society world wide accounts for nearly two-thirds of the civil society sector. However, there are serious issues in this relationship.

“Increasingly, governments are calling upon voluntary organisations in many countries of the South to get involved in the promotion of development programmes, largely those designed by the State itself. Even where some of these programmes appear to be based on voluntary-organisation-recommended development principles and assumptions, many voluntary organisations are finding that their co-operation with the state in a large measure, becomes undertaking a sub-contract for fulfilling of development targets and completion of programmes. The nature of the relationship becomes one of the contractor and the sub-contractor, where the voluntary organisations receive a certain payment for fulfilling certain targets prescribed by the state within a given development framework.”

(Voluntary Action, Civil Society and the State, Rajesh Tandon, 2002)
Third, there has emerged greater demand for and requirements of engaging with
global institutions and issues as they impact the lives of their own people. Civil
society organisations have been visibly participating in numerous international
conferences of the UN systems, attempting to critique programme of the Bretton
Woods Institutions and raising their voice in relation to new arrangements of
trade:

“As they move from ‘parallel summits’ organised in coincidence with meetings of
governments or international organisations, to independent global civil society
gatherings, such events are becoming larger (55% had more than 10,000
participants and 8 events had demonstrations with more than 50,000 people),
more coordinated across the globe, and with a bigger political agenda,
increasingly integrating economic and development issues with demands for
democracy and peace.”

{Global civil Society, Oxford, 2003}

Globalizing Civil Society

As these implications translate themselves in different ways in different countries,
the discourse about civil society has moved from local and domestic arena to
global level. Nearly ten years ago, one of the early writings on this theme was the
first publication of CIVICUS, entitled “Citizens: Strengthening Global Civil
Society”. “The same processes that globalise problems also globalise their
possible solutions. Global civil society is a new concept. Will it be capable of
generating the energy and resources needed to cope with global problems and
concerns? Recent history gives us reasons for hope. And hope can also be
strengthened by inspired, principled human action.

Global market mechanisms and structures of world governance can only be
democratised through concerted global citizen action. This is the lesson that
popular movements have learned in their long struggles to democratise
government, the market and society within each county. The challenge to
planetary citizenship is therefore, to expand to the global arena the struggle for
democracy and human development that has so far been carried out basically at
the national level.

Citizen initiatives aimed at addressing public issues and problems are no longer
to be considered residual actions. They are now in the center, not the periphery.
The actors of civil society are not following the prescriptions of the state or of the
market, but creating their own initiatives. In this sense, the non profit sector can
be said to be not the third, but the primary sector of society”.

{Citizens: Strengthening Global Civil Society, CIVICUS; world Alliance for citizen
Participation,1994}

These important statements shaped CIVICUS as a world platform for citizen
participation. Ten years later, fresh assessment is needed? Global civil society
now is been used as a concept to define multitude of initiatives that have
emerged in the past ten years. Several definitions and approaches have been
used to define global civil society. First, international non-governmental
organisations (INGO) and associations are commonly believed to be the basic
infrastructure of global civil society. The top ten TNCs, according to Clark (2003),
comprise of CARE, World Vision, Save the Children, Oxfam, Plan International,
Medicines Sans Frontiers, WWF, Red Cross, Aprodér, CIDSE, such INGOs
account for nearly 80% of all international aid following to civil society.
Second, social movements around issues of global concern worldwide are seen to be the dominant voice of global civil society. Most visible social movements have been organised around the themes of environment, human rights, gender justice and peace. These movements find specific expressions through focused campaigns as in respect to nuclear non-proliferation treaty, anti-Dam struggle, landmines, women’s rights and reproductive health, etc.

“During the past few years, and especially since the much-publicised demonstrations against the World Trade Organisation in Seattle in 1999, the term global civil society has been much in vogue. Although some of the case studies in this book do use this term, they refer more often to elements of transnational civil society or international social movements to describe a spreading web of networks of organisations based in different countries’, usually but not always led by NGOs. Such transnational networks abound, but there are few global citizens to constitute a global civic society in the deepest meaning of that term”.

{Global Citizen Action, Michael Edwards and John Gaventa, 2001}

Third, a wide variety of informal public protest initiatives have gained visibility and ascendancy since Seattle in 1999. These have since been witnessed in Genoa (at G8 meetings), Washington DC (WB/IMF spring meetings), Doha & Cancum (WTO Ministerial meeting). Such form of direct action by individuals drawn from multiple countries, ideologies and persuasions have gained velocity and visibility through media and are labelled as the new phenomenon of global civil society.

“The term ‘dot cause’ can apply to any citizen group who promotes social causes and chiefly mobilises support through its website. In social movements, dot causes can be important mobilising structures, attracting new support, coordinating collective action and producing and disseminating new framings. These dot causes, collectively, offer a loose ideological framework (a rejection of global capitalism and today’s structures of global governance): learning and exploration opportunities (especially web-links to like-minded sites); illustrations of citizens actions (particularly, step by step guides to direct action); the ability to bypass the traditional media; and mobilisation for large-scale events into which individual groups of activist can plug their actions (such as the international protests and days of action)”

{Globalising civic engagement: civil society and transnational action, John Clark, 2003}

Regional networking and cooperation among associations is another dimension of trans-border civil society action. In a seminal study in Asia-Pacific, Tadashi Yamamoto (1995) points out this trend: “Many reports covering emerging economies in Asia point out that, at this stage of development, NGOs in these countries believe that joint efforts and closer communication with their counterparts in Asia Pacific will help strengthen their efforts in a significant manner. Modern advanced communication technology and transportation, they believe, greatly facilitate the exchange of information as well as joint endeavours by organisations in the region. They assume that countries within the independent Asia Pacific region share common economic, cultural, and political objectives, and they believe this will enhance the effectiveness of collaboration among them.”

{Emerging Civil Society: In the Asia Pacific Community, Tadashi Yamamoto, 1995}
Despite these expressions and manifestations the central question is does global civil society exist? It is my contention that we are witnessing a period of transition where globalizing civil society is work-in-progress. And there are many caveats and problematiques in this work-in-progress. The first and most crucial problematique is whose voice is being heard in global platforms? Whose voice represents global civil society in response to democratic deficits in global governance? Most common is the voice emanating from International NGOs and global associations largely based and financed from the North. Western Europe and North America have been the centres of vast majority of such initiatives.

“Two centres of the organisational infrastructure of global civil society become apparent in Europe, with the highest concentration in western Europe and North America with higher concentration along an axis from Montreal to New York and Washington”

(Global civil Society, Oxford,2003)

These voices, though not representing the domestic grassroots civil society, are many at times viewed as articulations of the grassroots around the world. But there is a growing recognition that there are significant disconnects between voices in global platforms and the experiences at the grassroots domestically. Many actors and protagonists of global voices do not have strong on-going accountable and mutually symbiotic relationship with grassroots civil society experiences nationally and domestically.

The second problematique relates to the dominance of global media in representation of global civil society. This is the age of CNN. When global media focuses its camera on the streets of Seattle or Washington, it tends to present protests on the streets as the only significant manifestation of global civil society. Silent, invisible struggles of numerous others at the grassroots and creative, positive solidarity actions of millions of organisations and individuals to address daily problems of survival remain outside the view of the cameras of global media; and therefore, remain invisible, unknown and unrecognized. This creates a dichotomy between understandings of global civil society as merely protest actions in situations where a dominant actor at global civil society as merely protest actions in situations where a dominant actor at global arena is painted as “bad” on the one hand, and positive actions of people coming together to work with their governments and in their own villages and slums around the world on a common issue on the other. This emerging rejection of certain types of civil society actions become defining examples of global civil society, further undermining the diversity and richness of civil society action around the world.

The third problematique has to deal with the meaning and implications of citizenship in the face of globalisation. Almost everywhere around the world today citizenship is equated with and defined in, the framework of nation-state. We are a citizen of a particular country, based on laws and constitutions of that country and our citizenships granted by the government of that country. If problems of global democratic deficit require global civil society action, then there is a growing demand and need for evolving meanings and expressions of global citizenships.

“Finally, the most fundamental challenge for global citizen action hearkens back to the need to address the theory and practice of global citizenship. What level of civil society participation and power are possible and desirable in the global arena? Where do the rights and responsibilities of global citizenship intersect with other rights and responsibilities in the household, in local and national governments and in the marketplace? How can citizen voice in global debates be
structured in ways that promote a genuine sense of equality and democracy in global civil society itself?

{Global citizen Action, Michael Edwards and John Gaventa, 2001}

However, most of our political leadership elected through democratic process remains accountable, and particularly sensitive, to the politics within the country and the constituency of electorate within the country. As a result, these political leaders, though operating in global arena, continue to behave as leaders of national and domestic constituencies. It is precisely this sectarian, populist, domestic agenda that determines the postures and policies of these political leaders as opposed to concerns for a common global public good. It is precisely because of these nationalist postures that the largest global civil society action in early 2003 as anti-war demonstrations were largely ignored by political leaders that went to war in Iraq.

It is also because of these that political leaders reject global cooperation arrangements and treaties which can benefit all of humankind. In order to address the issue of global governance and global leadership, as many have been suggesting in recent years, it may be worthwhile to promote the ideals and expressions of global citizenships. Certain universal human values based on principles of human justice, equality and solidarity have to be the basis of enhancing the appreciation of citizens as global actors with rights and obligations to a global human order. Citizens create the building block of global civil society where actions by citizens in different villages and neighbourhoods taken locally can be constituted as a part of global civic action because they share a common set of values and believe in shared vision of global human order.

“Democratic governance is with citizens, not against them. Citizens are not enemies of the state; they are the rationale for it. In the new consensus, democracy is not a spectator sport, with citizens merely applauding or sighing from the sidelines, or forced into adversarial complaint or criticism. The new democracy is about the participation of citizens. It is a journey, a parade where diversity is celebrated, the public good is negotiated and intense deliberation and dialogues is conducted. It is not about who wins and who loses. It is about being involved.”

{Citizens and Governance: civil society in the new millennium, 1999}
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