

## Civil Society Dialogue with G20

Twenty civil society leaders from around the world engaged Canadian Host Sherpa (for forthcoming G20 Summit in Toronto) Leonard Edwards and Sous Sherpa Graham Flack this Friday in Ottawa around the issues of accountability of G20 to the citizens of the world. Since the beginning of financial crisis in 2008, Summits of G20 leaders of the world have taken a number of important decisions related to global financial governance in Washington (November 2008), London (April 2009) and Pittsburgh (February 2010). The G20 Summit in Toronto (June 26-27, 2010) is following on the heels of G8 Summit in Canada (June 25-26, 2010), and is being co-hosted by the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of South Korea (who hosts the next G20 Summit in Seoul during November 2010).

Organized by FIM Forum for Democratizing Global Governance (based in Montreal), this was the first ever structured civil society dialogue with the G20. As G20 begins to acquire a growing influence in shaping decisions related to global governance, it is of utmost importance that civil society voices from around the world are heard by leaders of G20 such that G20 and its leaders continue to conduct themselves in ways that deepen democratizing of global governance institutions, processes and decision-making.

Over this past two years, G20 has focused its attention primarily on issues related to rescue and repairing of global economy. Hence, the Toronto Summit of G20 is primarily focusing on furthering the operationalization of the Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth of world economy. The engagement of civil society leaders with Canadian Host Sherpa and Sous Sherpa thus focused on specific issues related to macroeconomic policies.

It was pointed out that various bailout and rescue packages in different countries have angered citizens around the world as taxpayers' funds have been seen to be utilized to 'bail out' those institutions (banks and others) which have been actually responsible for causing such financial crises in the first place. Civil society asked G20 to utilize stimulus to focus upon the transformation of national and global economies into 'green economies that eradicate poverty'. The design of future architecture of global economic institutions should be such that it primarily supports food security, employment and social economy (which provides livelihood to more than a billion people around the world). This will require clear and transparent regulation of global financial flows.

One of the major decisions of G20 in its London meeting was reform of World Bank and IMF, including greater capital infusion and broader mandates to them to support global economy. While incremental improvements in voting rights have been made in the World Bank, reforms in IMF are still being resisted. G20 had announced that strengthening of capital base and new roles of these International Financial Institutions (IFIs) was conditional on key governance reforms of IFIs. Civil society demands G20 leaders to ensure that full reform of governance structures and mechanisms of IFIs be completed

latest by the end of 2010 (including procedures for recruitment of heads of these institutions in an open, transparent, global, professional, and competitive basis).

Democratic accountability of G20 as an institution of global governance was at the center of the civil society engagement in this dialogue with host Sherpa. The first concern in accountability is to ensure that G20 doesn't marginalize and undermine other multilateral institutions like the UN system. G20 leaders should, therefore, commit themselves to support and energize multilateral institutions and the UN system to follow through and deliver on such commitments as Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). G20 leaders should publicly signal their support for agreements on climate change and human rights, specially the rights of women and indigenous peoples.

After years of civil society engagement with G8, various models and forms of effective dialogue and constructive engagements with civil society globally have been evolved. Civil society leaders asked Canadian Sherpa to negotiate ways in which such practices can be carried forward to G20 as well. In particular, the forthcoming Accountability Report of G8 was seen as a mechanism that G20 could also adopt in reporting to the citizens of the world outcomes of its decisions and their consequences.

The Canadian host Sherpa promised to take these issues, concerns and demands of civil society to his fellow G20 Sherpas, and to explore ways in which future G20 engagements with global civil society can be institutionalized for transparent and accountable functioning of G20 as an institution of global governance.

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