FIM/G8 Project 2002-07

SUMMARY

FIM began this project in 2002. At that time there was no formal dialogue between intentional civil society and the G8. Civil society (CS) had already been operating events parallel to the G8, which included mainly peaceful, but also violent demonstrations. Following the killing of a protestor in 2001 in Italy, G8 officials were looking for ways to begin constructive dialogue with CS and the FIM proposal arrived at a fortuitous moment for the Canadian government hosts.

The primary objective in 2002 in Canada and in 2003 in France was to reach agreement on the principles of dialogue between international civil G8 and to agree upon a process of dialogue. CS organizers were concerned that unless a positive tradition was developed rapidly, the US would refuse such a dialogue during their hosting year in 04.

In fact, although there were positive experiences in 02 and 03, the US officials declined to continue the dialogue with civil society in 04. Nevertheless, the host of 05 the UK, let it be known well in advance of 05 that they were open to direct dialogue.

In 05 in the UK there were several firsts. The host government contributed substantial financing, the civil society of the host country became actively engaged in the planning and implementation, experts meetings were organized around the official G8 agenda issues which resulted for the first time in a dialogue which concentrated on content rather than process and the number of participating sherpas increased dramatically.

There was further advancement in 06 in Russia. All of the trends established in the UK were strengthened and, for the first time, all sherpas participated. A precedent-setting 2-hour session was held between CS organizers and the host Head of State, Mr. Vladimir Putin. A second important network of international NGOs also organized a meeting with Mr. Putin on G8 agenda items as well as other issues.

The Russian meetings continued another trend begun in the UK. The host civil society took full leadership of meetings between G8 officials and international G8 and the involvement of Southern civil society continued to weaken. As in the UK, issues of great importance to domestic CS of the host country had a major influence on the process and content.

At the outset of 07 it is important to note that, although there has been important progress in this initiative, no official tradition of CS/G8 dialogue is yet in place. Each year will continue to stand on its own and it will still take a combined effort on domestic and international civil society, from North and South, to continue any meaningful discussions.
1. The Montreal International Forum (FIM)

FIM was established in 1998 in Montreal as a global alliance of individuals and organizations with the goal of improving the influence of international civil society on the United Nations and the multilateral system. FIM believes that the stated goals of the UN are beyond reasonable reproach and that the challenge of the FIM alliance is to assist meaningfully in bringing them to fruition.

FIM provides a neutral setting for an annual Forum for reflection and active learning about the interaction between international civil society and the multilateral system. In so doing, the Forum draws lessons from experiences in different sectors, regions and multilateral institutions that can strengthen the voice and participation of civil society actors in the multilateral system.

2. 2002; Origin of the G8 project

This project is an excellent example of collaboration between a private funding Foundation and a global civil society organization. The spark of the idea began within the Ford Foundation. Ford was concerned about the lack of public accountability of the G8 and inquired whether FIM, with its interest in multilateral democracy, would be interested in trying to open up a direct dialogue with the G8.

A memo was prepared for the FIM Board of Directors and the Board discussed the proposal via teleconference. It was agreed that the proposal fell within the Mission of FIM. The G8 is multilateral, even though it has no permanent secretariat and no institutional home. It was deemed essential that the voice of Southern civil society be heard within the G8. Although G8 is almost a virtual structure, it does take real decisions that, when applied, have an important impact upon the South and upon those multilateral agencies whose policies and programmes directly impact upon the South.

As well, FIM could bring its neutral convening powers to the process.

There was concern expressed within the Board about the risks involved in proceeding. However, it was agreed that the G8 was perhaps the paramount multilateral body of global influence and that some form of dialogue with international civil society was essential. The Board decided to proceed, subject to several important conditions.

In approving the project, the FIM Board identified four conditions. 1) FIM would not present itself as a gatekeeper of global civil society. 2) FIM would concentrate on the means of improving the process of dialogue between civil society and the G8. (It was recognized that other bodies are better equipped to discuss the content of this year’s G8 meeting.) 3) FIM would deal only with global issues affecting civil society and the G8, and would not deal with issues specific to Canada, the host G8 country in 2002. 4) In opening up dialogue with the G8, FIM did not wish, in any manner, to confer legitimacy upon the G8 as a global governance mechanism.

It was understood that changing the consultative patterns between civil society and the G8 would be a long-term process.
Risks
Several risks were identified from the outset. The greatest concern was that FIM would isolate itself from the broader civil society community by appearing to be a spokesgroup for a broad CS constituency. The concern was twofold; one, that by our actions we would appear to be a representative body and two, that some of the G8 authorities would use FIM discussions to claim that broad-based consultation had taken place with international civil society.

It was also unclear whether sufficient consensus could be achieved within civil society networks, including within FIM itself, as to the value of the exercise.

There was serious concern that, by beginning a formal dialogue with the G8, FIM would confer a greater legitimacy upon the G8 than was intended.

It was recognized that the G8 authorities might reject the idea of such a dialogue outright.

At the time of the FIM Board decision, less than 6 months remained before the Kananaskis meetings. There was a risk that, given time pressures, FIM might not be able to achieve the required quality of analysis and discussion.

To manage these risk factors it was essential that responsibility for approval of the process, selection of the participants, and strategic options be with the FIM board of Directors.

It was also recognized that any proposal put forward would also have to meet with the wishes of the Ford Foundation, as there was no alternative source of funding readily apparent at that time.

3. Canada 2002

Framework of negotiations with host authorities
The choice of site, agenda, content and process of each G8 meeting is almost entirely the prerogative of the host Head of State. The host sherpa plays the major role in administering all arrangements, but in a very real way, the G8 remains personal to the Head of State, and informal. From a negotiating perspective this makes the G8 a moving target. In 2002 there were no precedents to be observed, nor was there any institutional memory that could give a legitimate series of benchmarks. Given this rather ephemeral structure, the accumulated experience within the FIM network of dealings with multilateral organizations was of limited value.

All negotiations were conducted with a secretariat set up within the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This secretariat, although having some semblance of permanence, was in reality shored up considerably in order to assume Canada’s hosting responsibilities.
Early expectations by FIM were high, if not downright naïve. FIM hoped to be part of the G8 formal discussions, similar to the position that civil society actors play in other multilateral fora. Our original objective of meeting with the Heads of State themselves was rejected out of hand. It was pointed out by senior bureaucrats, (somewhat petulantly), that not even Ministers of the host country had access to G8 discussions.

Part of a steep FIM learning curve was the realization that even a meeting with all sherpas was unlikely. The major hurdle in bringing together all sherpas appeared to be the problem of lack of time. Given the increasingly late date, this appeared to be an understandable limitation.

As expectations became more realistic, the FIM strategy took on a clearer focus.

**FIM Strategic Considerations:**
FIM staff observed some of the consultative sessions organized by the Canadian host Sherpa with representatives of Canadian civil society. In the instances observed it was apparent that these were consultations in name only. The real exercise appeared to be to inform civil society about the G8 and its priorities, and to sell the proposed Canadian agenda. Any embarrassing and/or critical questions were readily deflected. No real dialogue emerged and the meetings were not structured so as to allow civil society participants to present any kind of coherent counter-agenda.

As a result, FIM became convinced that it was essential that the host Sherpa not be designated as host or chair of the proposed meeting. It was suggested, and accepted, that a mutually acceptable neutral chair be identified.

It was also apparent that the selection by FIM of the civil society participants would be key to the meeting’s success. Unfortunately, since agreement on the principle of the meeting itself occurred so late in the process, it was impossible to present names of participants to the G8 authorities until late in the process.

FIM identified several basic principles for the identification of participants. First, it was important that each participant be there in their individual capacity. Notwithstanding, it was also imperative that each participant have a strong networking experience.

CS participants had to have diplomatic skills. FIM felt that it was essential that the meeting be discrete in nature, that it be ‘behind closed doors’, and that embarrassment on either side be avoided. Both parties had to leave the meeting judging that it had been a success, and that it would be worthwhile to continue the exercise in the future.

Since it was inevitable that not all participants would have known each other in advance, nor have collaborated together, it was essential to choose people with a finely developed sense of teamwork. Participants would have a relatively short period of time together, time needed to agree upon the immediate as well as long term objectives, to identify and prioritize an agenda, to identify spokespeople etc. Fragile egos would hinder this process.
Canada agreed early on in the negotiations that the host Sherpa would participate in the meeting, and from there a convenient date was established. FIM strongly requested that, irrespective of the lateness of the date, senior representatives from the other G8 members be invited. This was agreed to.

The agreements were, in fact tripartite; amongst FIM, the host government and Ford Foundation. Contact with potential participants had to be developed before a final agreement was in place.

It was agreed that there were several precedents in multi stakeholder dialogues that could provide important lessons for any form of consultation between civil society and the G8.

It was agreed that no long-term objectives by FIM, and/or other possible organizations, could be identified until the first meeting was concluded.

It was recognized that the planning process for Kananaskis was well advanced and that civil society input could be more viable and effective leading into the 2003 meeting in France. Nevertheless, it was agreed to ask that African civil society representatives be invited by the G8 and/or the host government to meet with the five African Heads of State invited to Kananaskis.

**Participants**

FIM invited fifteen participants from around the world. The objective was to have a majority of participants from the South, and to strive for gender and regional balance. Participants were invited in their personal capacity and on the basis of their knowledge of and experience with international civil society dealings with multilateral bodies. In spite of a tight time frame and the delicate nature of the project, the response by invitees was enthusiastic.

**Discussion in preparatory Montréal meeting**

The 15 civil society participants met for 2 full days on May 21-22 in Montreal in preparation for the meeting with the G8 representatives. Presentations were given by both participants and outside experts on 1) the history of multi-stakeholder dialogues, 2) an insider’s view of the G8 from a former Sherpa, and 3) African perspectives on the NEPAD experience, with special attention given to the role to date of African civil society.

In the ensuing discussion, considerable attention was paid to the danger of allowing the G8 to use meetings with civil society as a means of establishing a long-term G8/civil society agenda and, therefore, strengthening their own (G8) legitimacy.

It was agreed that process and content are both part of the same spectrum, and that while process was the priority, it could not be totally divorced from content. In this regard, it was agreed that NEPAD presented an important example of how the quality of the content could be adversely affected by a poor process of consultation beforehand. Ultimately, therefore it was decided to discuss the NEPAD experience with the G8 representatives.
02 Issues Discussed
The Ottawa meeting was held on the afternoon of May 23/02. The G8 was represented by the Canadian host Sherpa to the G8, the French Ambassador to Canada and a colleague, the British High Commissioner to Canada and two representatives from the Japanese Embassy to Canada. Betty Plewes, an independent Canadian consultant, chaired the meeting.

This first meeting was for three hours. Following general introductory comments, civil society participants made three presentations, each of which was followed by one half hour discussion:

1. **The global democratic deficit and civil society engagements:** G8 is seen as an informal club with little accountability. This leads to public apathy, cynicism and a widening credibility gap between global governance structures and those being governed. The G8 consultative process is recent and inadequate.

2. **The NEPAD consultative process:** NEPAD does not have wide African support. It is not a one-time opportunity. It is seriously flawed, with a total lack of gender analysis, its underlying macroeconomic framework has been put into question, and its resource mobilization strategy may well be unworkable. The NEPAD process needs to be opened up.

2. **Future G8-CS dialogue, building upon multi-stakeholder experiences:**
   The underlying principles must be good governance, transparency and legitimacy. G8 cannot continue to hide from its constituents. There is a wealth of experience of dialogue between civil society and multilateral bodies. Several examples of previous engagement between civil society, the G7/8 and different multilateral organizations were presented.

A specific request presented was that the G8 host facilitate a meeting between African civil society representatives and the five African Heads of State invited to Kananaskis.

**Results**
The G8 host made no concrete commitments. The request to meet with the African leaders was deemed best to be arranged directly between African civil society and the African leaders, but the request for facilitation by Canada was not denied outright. (FIM wrote a letter to the Canadian host Sherpa requesting official Canadian support in arranging a meeting between African civil society representatives and the invited African Heads of State. No meeting occurred.)

The Canadian host Sherpa requested that all African civil society critiques of NEPAD be forwarded to his office to inform their own work for the G8 Action Plan for Africa.

A checklist of considerations in establishing an effective consultation process was presented to and accepted by the French delegates.
There was a mutual agreement to have a Kananaskis post mortem meeting with civil society. (Although FIM and the Canadian authorities agreed upon the value of a post mortem meeting, this never occurred. Immediately following Kananaskis there were significant changes within the Foreign Affairs’ secretariat. This halted all momentum and made continuity difficult.)

The French expressed their interest in consulting with civil society leading up to the 2003 G8. (Once the 2003 host Sherpa was named and the new team well ensconced, Canada was very helpful in supporting FIM’s efforts to organize a 03 consultation, to be held in France shortly before the Evian G8. Similar support was also received from the UK and France itself, two of the participants of the 02 meeting.)

**Lessons learned from Kananaskis**

The effort to agree upon an improved and consistent model of G8/civil society dialogue would be of long duration.

A growing number of G8 countries (perhaps even then a majority) favoured improved dialogue with civil society.

Civil society expertise and political clout was, generally, highly appreciated. Receptivity for an ongoing dialogue would vary importantly, depending upon the host country.

In spite of its fluid structure, the G8 was, for civil society activists, an unavoidable multilateral body.

Civil society efforts must be proactive in nature and strategies must be applied throughout the year, beginning long before the official hosting responsibilities are transferred. (Host countries change officially on each January 1)

Civil society must try to influence the agenda setting well in advance of the meeting. Although the agenda is entirely the prerogative of the host Head of State, it is inevitably influenced by the ongoing meetings of G8 Ministers, world events, perceived priorities of the host country, carry-over issues, etc.

Civil society leaders in the host country must see the FIM dialogue as complementary to other civil society initiatives being undertaken globally and/or within the host country.

Global civil society is a major actor in global governance and has now developed sufficient diplomatic experience to exert influence.

It was agreed that, as preparations began for France, civil society actions had to be coordinated with the G8 schedule. Civil society coordination had to be in place soon enough to attempt to influence the setting of the agenda, normally completed about six months prior to the actual meeting. From the outset, close cooperation between French and global civil society would be essential. Once they were identified, all G-8 sherpas must be contacted, individually and collectively, by civil society within and outside of the G-8 countries.
Once the agenda is finalized, global coordination by civil society would concentrate on two converging priorities; bringing their expertise to bear upon the content of the meeting and also ensuring that there is a viable system of democratic consultation.

Most importantly, and certainly, a difficult challenge would be to ensure that all of this was done in a way that did not further legitimize the G-8 as a governance body. Any slippage on this objective would split civil society into weakened camps.

With this in mind, the Global Governance Conference (GO2) on Oct 13-16/02 in Montréal, entitled, Civil Society and the Democratization of Global Governance, included a special session on the G8. This session served as an important occasion to bring together those civil society participants from France who were actively planning an engagement for 2003 and their global counterparts.

G6B, the Parallel 2002 Conference
It was safe to say, through the fault of no one, that the impact of G6B on Kannanaskis was minimal. G6B was a successful parallel event, but with no real lines of intersection into the G-8 meetings. There was, in fact, a last minute possibility of a meeting between civil society representatives from Africa and the five African heads of state, invited by the Canadian hosts as the authors of NEPAD. But this proposed meeting fell through due to a lack of consensus amongst the African participants.

3. France 2003

The preparations with the French for the 2003 G8 went smoothly. The French had arrived in Ottawa in 02 with a somewhat sceptical attitude, but had rapidly seen the value of this direct and forthright dialogue.

There were two minor issues to be resolved. The French government wanted formal assurance from French CS organizers that this meeting would receive their support and, since they wanted to host the meeting at the Elysée, they were opposed to the appointment of a neutral chair.

On the first point, FIM undertook discussions with representatives of the French coalitions of NGO networks, CRID and Coordination Sud, to ensure that the FIM project would complement any national civil society efforts within France leading up to the G8. As a result of these discussions, when asked by the French officials whether our initiative would cause them any difficulties with their own civil society, FIM was able to confirm that we had their ‘official support’.

On the second point both parties agreed that there would be no designated chair.

First meeting of Platform Group
Coincidentally with FIM’s preparation for the 03 meeting in Paris, the French coalition of international NGOs, Coordination-Sud, convened a meeting with some of its counterparts from the other G8 countries. The first meeting included representatives from the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), Interaction of the USA, and BOND of the UK.
Sherpa meeting
The 2003 meeting was held in a special global context. The war in Iraq had begun and relations between France and the USA were strained. There was an effort by the Americans to isolate the French in their opposition to the war, and perhaps as a result of this ambiance, French government officials indicated to FIM that France wanted to collaborate increasingly with global civil society.

The Elysée meeting was held in May 03. For the second year running the only sherpa present was the host sherpa. In addition there were senior ambassadorial representatives from the UK, Canada, Germany, Italy, and Russia. The Japanese ambassador to France attended and there was no American representative.

2003 Issues Discussed
At the meeting CS participants raised issues based on a commitment to principles of democratic global governance and a strong belief in the need for G8 accountability to universal multilateral bodies, as well as to a wider grouping of nations and peoples, particularly in the South.

Largely because of the Iraq war, global security was addressed as a major topic. The participants argued that: “A human security approach is needed because the ‘war on terrorism’ increases social and economic instability, impacts negatively on human rights, exacerbates local conflicts and monopolizes enormous resources that could otherwise be spent on human security priorities”.

Other issues raised included:
- Human security is best addressed through existing framework such as MDGs
- MDGs relate to critical G8 agenda issues (poverty, aids, water, etc.)
- Responsibility of G8 countries with MDGs is critical (the credibility of commitments is still lacking)
- Urgent progress is needed on funding different mechanisms simultaneously: ODA levels, debt reduction and a new international taxation scheme (they are meant to be additional)
- Economic and financial stability can be secured through opening G8 markets to products from the South (agriculture, notably), elimination of dumping and reform of macroeconomic rules (IMF) that limit social spending

This was the second year of NEPAD discussions and the participants observed that:
- The NEPAD process is diffused; transparency is needed with respect to implementation steps, levels of disbursements and interface mechanisms with civil society both at the regional and country levels. Peer review process should work both ways.
- NEPAD ownership and beyond: the responsive approach of G8 countries to NEPAD should be applied as well to African demands with:
  - Agriculture: urgent need to move beyond the moratorium (which is a good first step) to agreement on commodity prices, eliminating dumping and opening G8 markets to Africa
  - HIV-AIDS: need immediate and adequate commitments for the special fund
  - Medicine (access): at a minimum, no backsliding on the Doha agreement
o TRIPs: should support “Africa Group” on traditional Knowledge & culture
o ODA not to be used as negotiation card by G8 countries in trade talks (Cancun)

As in Ottawa participants continued to advance the advantages of Democratic Multilateralism as well as ‘democratizing’ the G8 process. Points included:

- In response to the crisis and systemic undermining of multilateral system, G8 countries need to renew a clear commitment to a multi-polar world and put its weight behind the UN system to reinforce multilateralism
- On “democratizing” the G8 process and facilitating engagement, the following ideas were advanced.
  o Decisions: use ‘communiqués’ (making decisions /“impulsions” more transparent)
  o Engagement: more informal & formal exchanges, timely releases, throughout the year
  o Demonstrations: governments should approach them as a key democratic right of citizens, not as a security concern
  o Implementation: make public the follow-up and implementation status of past G8 decisions
  o Process: Make public all steps in the 12-month G8 cycle including transition process
  o Dialogue: Use and build on precedents and experiences in other multilateral systems
  o Space: create space for briefing (before) and debriefing (after) with civil society

Lessons Learned
During preparations for the French meeting, it became obvious that the FIM initiative required support from the host civil society and, in particular, those elements of national French CS who were responsible for organizing parallel events. In fact the office of the French President insisted that such support be confirmed. This realization influenced future planning and has been an important component of planning since.

In some ways the 02 dialogue was a ‘love-in’ between the civil society participants and the host government. Given that the Americans were not present and that both CS and the French government were seriously opposed to the war in Iraq, the discussions were amicable and geared unexpectedly towards the war.

Also for the first time, it became apparent that the host government saw political advantage in being in solidarity (on selected issues) with key elements of international civil society. (This tendency has since been maintained and, in some case intensified.)

The absence of American officials brought a sense of unreality to the dialogue; CS participants realized that any serious agreement with G8 officials would require American buy in.
5. USA 2004

2003 marked the second straight year that the USA had not participated in the
dialogue with civil society. FIM entered into planning with American officials with a
(realistic) assessment that the possibility of achieving their commitment was low.

The FIM secretariat explored closely with senior American officials the possibility of
a civil society dialogue prior to the 2004 G8 meetings in Sea Island. Since the FIM
Board was concerned from the outset that the Americans would not agree to a
meeting, parallel negotiations with the British, the 2005 hosts, were also conducted.

Following several phone conversations, a face-to-face meeting was held in
Washington with a career foreign affairs diplomat who has been seconded to The
National Security Council. The NSC oversaw the 04 G8 and this official reported
directly to Condoleeza Rice, the then head of the NSC.

FIM received a sympathetic hearing to our proposal, but eventually the Americans
recommended that we put all of our efforts into the UK G8. This was received as
realistic, friendly, helpful advice.

Months later we learned that the American Administration had decided that on 2004,
there would be no ‘outreach’, because if there were, “they would have to deal with the
NGOs”.

Backup Plan rejected
Following the notification that there would be no dialogue with G8 officials, FIM
tried to submit a back up plan to the Ford Foundation for financial support. This
alternative plan had been in the original submission to Ford and which was included
given the possibility that a formal US meeting might not occur.

In lieu of a direct dialogue with G8 officials, FIM had proposed a 2-day meeting that
would have two main objectives. First, the event would be a serious brainstorming
occasion to finalize the concept of a permanent civil society mechanism of dialogue
after the UK G8. This would be done with the intent of ensuring agreement with the
UK to have this model agreed to by all G8 countries during their 05 meeting.

The second objective would have been to use the US 04 meeting to ensure high-level
media understanding of civil society’s interest in the G8 process. In order to achieve
these two objectives we aimed to convene a meeting close to the dates of the 04 G8
and also to convene it close to the G8 site.

Although we had wanted to proceed with our ‘standard’ G8 meeting in the USA in 04,
we were not really disappointed about the US reaction. Given their absence in the first
two meetings, it was doubtful that we could have begun to negotiate any kind of a
permanent mechanism with them as hosts. This freed us up to begin negotiating with
the British much sooner than would otherwise have been the case.

Of special note in 04
Although American CS and international civil society activities were low key in the
04 G8 at Sea Island, there was an important CS initiative out of Africa. This led to the
arrival of a delegation of African CS participants in the USA at the time of the G8 who concentrated on sensitizing the American public and media to the issue of NEPAD.

A second Platform meeting was held in Washington in early 04 and coalitions were present from all G8 countries with the exception of Russia. A similar meeting is planned for the UK at some time prior to the 05 G8.

6. 2004, FIM’s growing understanding of the G8

Up to 2004 the FIM experience had been very much a learning-on-the-job process. Some of the key factors that influenced our capacity to negotiate, as well as the means by which we may do so, were learned through trial and error.

First, each G8 is the personal affair of the host head of state. He or she determines the agenda. The official G8 meeting is really private in nature and to which normally powerful ministers seldom have direct access. The host head of state takes over the process on January 1 of the hosting year.

There is no permanent G8 secretariat. Every head of state names a Sherpa as their official representative in the planning process. The sherpa may or may not be a senior professional civil servant. In some cases, the sherpa is a trusted friend of the head of state. The same sherpa may be in place for several years, or may be changed yearly. Each sherpa will have a small secretariat support team. Typically all eight sherpas meet several times a year. When it is time for a head of state to host the meeting, the secretariat in the host country can typically grow in size for a period of about 18-24 months, this occurring therefore every eight years.

There are no automatically recurring agenda items. This was somewhat changed with the 2002 introduction of NEPAD and the subsequent naming of ongoing African personal representatives (APRs) who are still in place. Nevertheless, it remains entirely the prerogative of the host head of state to decide whether any issue will continue to be on the agenda.

Non-host heads of state are very sensitive about pressuring the host head of state regarding any perceived agenda priorities. However, the agenda is often altered at the last moment due to world events and /or the unavoidable influence of the USA head of state.

A host country assumes responsibility in January. The host sherpa may be named at a still later date. The G8 meeting is in June. The agenda is often decided upon close to the June date. This typical tight schedule increases the challenge for civil society to plan and react with care and knowledge.

Original expected outcomes
The original intent by Ford and FIM was to establish a permanent dialogue mechanism between international civil society and the G8. It was hoped that FIM would create a selection process of the CS participants that was transparent and
included some form of accountability back to a broad CS constituency. It was assumed that, given the variety of issues that are dealt with by the G8, different areas of CS expertise would be tapped each year, according to the host agenda.

FIM’s intent was to build an atmosphere where constructive and respectful dialogue would occur.

One important objective had been to engage the Americans early enough so as to ensure a successful meeting in the USA in 2004.

FIM planned to retreat from the process after the 2005 meetings in the UK.

After the Genoa tragedy, G8 governments acknowledged that there had to be some form of dialogue with civil society. In that respect, the FIM proposal was judged to be timely. It was an unspoken understanding that G8 governments wanted to diminish the perceived need for costly and often dangerous civil society demonstrations and that the FIM dialogue might help in that objective.

Results up to 04
By the end of 04 only some of the FIM objectives had been achieved. It was generally agreed that we had generated constructive dialogue. On that basis, we were in a position to possibly have some increasing influence on G8 agendas and their content.

We were no closer to a permanent dialogue mechanism than when we started, nor had we implemented, nor even identified a more transparent and accountable process.

We had not succeeded in engaging the American administration.

The two host governments that up to then had collaborated with FIM were positive about their experience and had indicated their satisfaction with FIM and with the project methodology.

The G8 platforms (which can claim some degree of representivity within their respective G8 countries) were still at an embryonic stage. The differences in institutional culture between the various coalitions are huge and they were still getting to know each other. It was, and remains, clear that it will be a long time before they are able to implement any kind of significant joint efforts on the G8.

Reflections at the end of 04
1. At that point it appeared that the objective of creating a permanent dialogue mechanism was a faulty objective. It appeared highly unlikely to occur. The principle of the host head of state being free to set the agenda is sacrosanct.

2. It was not felt to be in the best interests of civil society to encourage any ‘institutionalization’ of the G8. As difficult as it was to deal with such a ‘moving target’, the possibility of encouraging, even indirectly, a permanent and inevitably powerful secretariat, was considered to be fraught with danger.
3. FIM, or a replacement coordinating body, could aim for more transparency and broader involvement. It was not feasible however, to try to identify an organization or structure that ‘represented’, and was legally accountable, to international civil society. The potential of the platforms to bring concentrated CS influence from within the G8 national constituencies, would still take several years to develop.

4. The voice of Southern civil society is an important component for effective G8 agenda planning. It remained essential that this voice be channelled directly, rather than via Northern-based ‘representatives’.

5. Within the 04 political climate of the USA it was difficult, if not impossible, to identify civil society partners who supported strong multilateralism and at the same time had access and influence with the American administration. This hampered our ability to engage the USA in this project.

6. A strong majority of G8 members were willing to support the FIM effort.

7. International civil society had within its ranks the knowledge, experience and diplomatic skills required to contribute meaningfully to the G8 exercise.

Following the difficulties of 04 the FIM Board approved the following proposal in September 04.

**04 Recommendations for FIM**

1. that FIM maintain its commitment to the G8 project beyond 2005 and that this commitment respect the conditions as originally outlined by the FIM Board
2. that FIM seek alternate sources of funding for the project and in particular that FIM encourage the G8 governments themselves (or, if necessary, the host country) to finance the project annually
3. that FIM move the annual date of the joint meeting up to January of each year
4. that FIM try to ensure that the G8 participants are all at the sherpa level
5. that FIM broaden involvement from within southern civil society
6. that FIM be more transparent and participatory in the selection process of CS participants
7. that FIM ensure expert level input from civil society into specific agenda items that are judged as being of special import to Southern civil society
8. that FIM continue to encourage official American participation in the project

**7. UK 2005**

**Preparations**

Discussions with senior G8 officials in the UK began in mid 04. We had several preparatory talks with the key British officials responsible for organizing the 2005 G8. From the outset the UK indicated a strong openness to dialogue with civil society. They had verified with the Canadian and French authorities as to the merit of the FIM approach and indicated that their commitment was solid. This was clearly the case from the outset and all the way though 2004/05.
However, they also made it clear from the beginning that no final decision regarding our proposal would be taken until January 2005. In no manner did they want to appear to be sending a critical signal to the Americans during 2004, while the USA was still the official G8 host.

Also in the tail end of 2004 FIM had several meetings with BOND, the Umbrella body of UK NGOs and CS coordinator of G8 activities in 2005, in order to ensure a complementarity between the FIM approach and that of UK civil society.

UK authorities were much more advanced in their planning and identification of agenda issues than were the 02-04 hosts at a comparable point in time. In general the UK authorities seemed to be prepared to continue with the basic model that we had used beforehand. However, they recommended strongly that we advance our sherpa meeting up to January, in order to increase our capacity to influence the final agenda.

In discussions during the final planning meeting in 04 with UK officials, they suggested that a representative from Chatham House join us at the meeting. Chatham House had proposed an interesting G8 project that they felt could integrate well with the FIM initiative. In that meeting it was agreed that FIM would retain responsibility for planning the sherpa meeting while Chatham House would be responsible for organizing some prepatory expert meetings on the two 05 agenda topics, Africa and Global warming.

The UK government agreed to finance the dialogue.
This was the first time that financing had come from within G8 circles. FIM had discussed the possibility of the dialogues being financed within G8 budgets and had some reservations about CS losing control of the process. In discussions with UK officials, we did examine the advantages of the dialogue being funded from a common G8 pot to be funded by all G8 members. This was rejected as being too unwieldy and contentious.

2004 was the first year where FIM began to work in collaboration with other networks. Chatham House, in partnership with FIM and also the Green Globe Network, Climate Action Network and LEAD International, convened a series of planning meetings. A neutral chair was agreed to and Simon Upton, Chair, Sustainable Development Roundtable, OECD, was agreed to by both sides.

In a final phone call between FIM and UK officials, just before the financial allocation was finalized, the UK official suggested that their funds be transferred directly to Chatham House, since they were already receiving monies allocated to other G8 civil society preparations and that a single grant would simplify administrative procedures. This was agreed to and consequently had serious ramifications as to FIM's ongoing role in this process.

Expert Meetings: Africa and Climate Change - 21 March
A series of meetings in preparation for the Sherpa consultation were arranged in the days before 23 March. On 21 March two expert meetings were held, focusing on the
Gleneagles Summit themes - Climate Change and Africa. These meetings provided for broader stakeholder input into the Sherpa meeting.

Meeting with sherpas

All G8 governments and the European Commission attended the meeting, with 5 sherpas present – an unprecedented turnout.

2005 Issues Discussed

a) Dr. Rajesh Tandon, the Chair of FIM and Executive Director of PRIA in New Delhi, spoke to the broad context of the 2005 meeting. He highlighted the following points:

- There was a sense of urgency in 2005; important gatherings that year included Copenhagen/Beijing, the MDGs, the Millennium summit and the WTO.
- Leaders of G8 were expected to exercise leadership and to contribute to solutions of problems facing humanity as a whole; not just within the G8 countries.
- There was a growing interdependence of causes and consequences of problems, demanding global actions based on strong multilateralism.
- Although civil society had participated in a growing number of commitments made in previous decades through treaties/conventions/agreements, there was a sense of disillusionment with global leadership because of the lack of resources and political support required to deliver these commitments.
- Attention to issues of growth, development, poverty, environment and security, was fragmented instead of comprehensive and integrated strategies/actions.
- Civil society expects the G8 individually and collectively to use its good offices to urgently move forward through local, national and global institutions to deliver existing and new commitments in respect of these issues.
- Strengthening consultations with civil society and stakeholder groups locally, nationally and globally can contribute to the delivery of commitments

b) Ms. Muthoni Wanyeki, FIM Board member and the Executive Director of Femnet in Nairobi, presented CS concerns regarding Africa, including the following points.

- NEPAD and G8’s Action Plan for Africa was premised on mutual accountability
- African progress included the AU’s adoption of NEPAD as a development programme
- The G8’s progress included commitment to, and the monitoring and evaluation of progress on G8’s Action Plan for Africa
- The Commission for Africa’s Report was an indicator of how far both sides still had to go
- Mutual accountability: recognising the contribution of the arms trade to conflict in Africa, members of the G8 should commit to a legally binding treaty within the appropriate multilateral fora, on arms proliferation; and increase the transparency of their extractive industry TNCs beyond voluntary codes of conduct.
- CS representatives reiterated existing civil society recommendations: 100% debt cancellation; delivery of existing debt relief measures without conditionalities beyond the promotion of inclusive democracy; reach agreement on modalities for
enhanced debt relief measures pre-Summit to enable progress on aid at the G8 2005 Summit

- CS welcomed the recommendations in the report of the Commission for Africa on increasing aid to Africa and proposed the immediate doubling of aid to Africa by all members of the G8 and the establishment of a date for meeting the ODA target of 0.7% GDP
- Quality: un-tie aid; drop economic conditionalities; recognise dangers posed to transparency as well as gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming by possible reversion to budgetary support.
- That, within the appropriate multilateral fora, G8 members commit to an end to agricultural subsidies, an end to pushing for WTO compliance within the context of bilateral and other trade agreements such as the EPA’s, a lowering of tariffs, and an end to tariffs escalation on African exports.
- CS urged a review of the functioning of the current link between the NEPAD leadership and the G8 APRs through the Africa Partners’ Forum, with particular respect to the ability of civil society from Africa and the G8 to contribute to its deliberations (and, for example, through opening up reporting under the UNECA and the OECD-DAC)

**c) Ms Jie Yu, of Greenpeace China, presented the CS position on Climate Change including the following points.**

- That G8 members accept the outcome of the Hadley Centre conference ‘Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change’ showing that the scale and urgency of climate change is much greater than previously thought. Urgent action is required to limit the dangerous climate change that will occur as the global average temperature increase approaches 2°C above pre-industrial levels.
- G8 countries committed to multilateral approach to preventing climate change must move ahead with strengthening the Kyoto regime, with or without unanimous participation.
- Set domestic targets for renewable energy including wind, solar and biomass using cogeneration and distributed energy systems where feasible.
- Within the G8 countries, create a network of the agencies financing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects
- CS views energy efficiency as the least-cost response to climate change and urged that G8 members strengthen standards on vehicles, buildings, appliances and equipment
- That G8 members mainstream climate change into development planning

**Reflections on 05**

The 05 UK meetings marked an important watershed for this dialogue. For the first time, all G8 members participated. For the first time, the G8 host country financed the dialogue with CS.

The CS approach moved considerably from its previous emphasis on process, to dealing with the specific content proposed by the host Head of State. For the first time, there was sufficient planning time available for CS, including the necessary time to convene experts.
Also for the first time, most of the preparation work was done by host civil society organizations (led by Chatham House) and the role of FIM was directly complementary to national CS initiatives. FIM expenses were covered within the general budget, which was administered by Chatham House.

Importantly, southern CS gave less leadership than before. In the African expert meeting, for example, only about 5 participants out of about 60 were from Africa.

For the first time the CS participants used a ‘divide and conquer strategy’. When it became clear that there was agreement amongst seven G8 countries on the importance of global warming, the participants asked whether those seven countries would be prepared to act in unity without the engagement of the lone dissenting country. The host sherpa indicated with no ambiguity that such a choice was indeed possible.

### 8. Russia 06

The 2006 meetings between civil society and the G8 were handled quite differently than in previous years. From the outset, Russian President Putin named a former parliamentarian and current human rights spokesperson, Ella Pamfilova, as Chair of an NGO coalition. This coalition became responsible for what became known as Civil G8. It was in turn guided by a National Advisory Council and International Advisory Council. This latter body seemed to change in composition regularly, but included several Russian members. Two FIM Board members were on this body. From the outset, the Russian process was heavily financed by Russian private and governmental sources. Civil G8 covered all FIM out of pocket expenses.

FIM was regularly consulted throughout the process, but communications remained fuzzy, perhaps in part because of language difficulties.

**Sherpa meeting**

Following an unsuccessful effort by Civil G8 to formalize a common position on eight G8-related topics, including the three G8 official agenda items, a closed meeting was held in May between 19 CS participants and all sherpas.

Unlike in previous years, the CS participants spent very little time planning together (a total of about 2 hours in lieu of 2 days). As a result, the CS positions were not focussed and, for the first time, there was open disagreement amongst CS representatives in front of the sherpas. Without the required time to prepare, the quality and professionalism of the CS presenters varied considerably from case to case.

Following this meeting, and under the leadership of the National Advisory Council, and benefiting from written comments from the International advisors, the CS participants continued to hone their position papers in preparation for a large July meeting in Moscow.

The July meeting involved about 600 CS participants, including nearly 500 from Russia. Southern involvement was scattered, but the African delegation was relatively
strong. Sessions followed a format that was similar to all previous Civil G8 meetings. Participants were divided into 8 working groups, each of which had the mandate to finalize a position paper in time for a meeting with Russian President Putin. The eight topics, in addition to the three G8 agenda items, Global energy security, Education and Infectious Diseases, included: Sustainable Development; Human rights; Global security and CS; Ecology (GMOs); and Business and Society.

**Meeting with the Russia President**

There was a full day set aside for CS planning meetings. During these meetings the International Advisory Council met formally on two occasions. FIM and others fought hard and successfully to ensure that presentations to Putin were limited to 3 minutes each. We also insisted that each working group nominate their presenter, who would then ‘rehearse’ their 3-minute presentation in front of us. This was resisted at first (it was seen as somewhat paternalistic by the Russian members of the Council), but after successfully airing different ‘cultural perspectives’ on this approach it was adopted and utilized.

In the view of many, this led to a successful and historic occasion.

The plenary with Putin lasted about 2 hours. After each three-minute presentation, he responded at length. The thorny issue of impending legislation defining the legal context of Russian civil society was raised within the Human Rights presentation. Putin committed himself to ensuring that the legislation would not be abusive towards Russian civil society. His main concern was the intrusion of foreign NGOs into internal Russian politics. He expressed sympathy to the CS anti-nuclear position, but indicated unequivocally that Russia would go nuclear.

In other words, he gave the impression that when he disagreed, he did so unambiguously. Conversely, when he agreed, which he often did, (especially on GMOs) it appeared to most participants that he was also being straightforward.

**Passing the Torch**

In November 06, there was a meeting designed to pass the Civil G8 torch on to Germany, the 07 G8 host. A preliminary plan from the Germans had already been ‘approved’ by the 06 International Advisory Council. At this meeting it became clear that the German sherpa and G8 secretariat would come from the German Ministry of Economics. Historically this Ministry was not favourably disposed to civil society, so the gains of 02-06 remained far from being assured.

**Reflections on 06**

Civil G8 was an impressive process (lengthy as it was) of work over several months, through several drafts of position papers, which concluded in highly focussed presentations to Putin. In an exciting and often frustrating way, this was democracy in action. Each issue was thoroughly and openly discussed. Some debates were hot and irreconcilable. However, out of this came some clear consensus on each issue, which could be shared with Putin (and/or other G8 leaders and their sherpas); each a hard-fought consensus which had to be seriously considered by G8 organizers.
Lessons learned
In many ways, Russia 06 continued two important changes begun in the UK. Each change is a sign of success, but they have brought with them a new set of issues.

a) Host government involvement
The first change is that the G8 host governments are increasingly committed to and engaged in this dialogue. This also means that they are committing funds, and to some extent, influencing the agenda and the process. In 05, the UK government contributed about 250,000 pounds sterling and in 06 Russian sources, including the government, probably contributed several million US.

In each case the money was granted to a host national coordinating body and the CS process, including international engagement, became effectively the responsibility of this national mechanism, which also in each case, continued to consult with FIM.

In these two years it also meant that the host country’s priorities strongly influenced, if not dominated, the CS debate and agenda. In 2005, British CS was working in a pre-election context and knew that the G8 would have an impact on whether Labour or the Conservatives were elected. This influenced the entire working relationship with the host government.

2006 was even more dramatic in some ways. Clearly, with the eyes of the world on the host country, the G8 was an occasion to consolidate and ensure the gains of Russian civil society within a newly emerging democracy. It is reasonable to conclude that this was, in fact, the major intent of Russian CS.

b) CS involvement
The increased interest of host G8 governments in formally dialoguing with CS is a clear indication that, on one important level, the FIM initiative has been a success. This is leading in turn to a rapidly increasing interest by a growing number of NGOs to become part of this process and/or to initiate parallel processes. We can only expect this trend to continue.

In 06, for example, there was a parallel engagement by the IANGO (International Advocacy NGOs) group of NGO. This includes some of the larger international NGOs such as Greenpeace (the initiator), CIVICUS, WWF etc. Most of them are northern based, although Social Watch is also an active participant in this informal grouping. They succeeded, with no prior discussion with the Civil G8 Advisory Council, in having their own meeting of 12 participants with Putin. Originally they had requested to meet with all G8 Heads of State, but this was refused out of hand.

The broader engagement of CS with the G8 can only be welcomed. We can expect this type of interest to grow, not only among international NGOs, but also among national NGOs within the G8 countries and, especially within each year’s host country.

(c) Diminishing role of southern CS.
From the outset of this project in 2002, FIM saw this exercise as an occasion for spokespersons from Southern Civil Society to bring their concerns directly to senior
G8 officials. FIM has always felt that G8 governments have ample occasion to meeting Cs representatives from within their own country. As well, it is relatively easy for host sherpas to visit with CS participants from other G8 countries at the same time as they visit their counterpart sherpas throughout the planning phase. The missing component in the growing G8 dialogues was Southern CS.

As G8 governments and host country NGO’s have become more engaged however, the numbers of southern participants has decreased substantially. It is worth mentioning that of the 60 or so people at the year’s final Civil G8 meeting in November, there was not one participant from the South. The closest was the representative from the London-based African Diaspora movement.

9. 2007; Looking forward

We have now reached a point where it is possible to think of implementing a multi-functional process. The first function would be to try to influence the G8 agenda before it is finalized. Ideally, this would include a proactive position by CS in addition to reacting to topics proposed by the host government. This would require some form of internal CS dialogue early in the calendar year.

Once the agenda is finalized, the second function would be to influence the content of the agenda. This would require expert analysis, keeping in mind that the primary agenda topics will probably change each year. It would also involve, similarly to this year’s Civil G8 process, achieving some level of consensus throughout a growing portion of international CS.

A third function is a highly focussed meeting with the sherpas. This could continue to be the prime responsibility of FIM and that this would be an occasion to ensure that the voice of Southern CS dominates. However, this is being increasingly encroached upon by civil society from within G8 countries and we can expect increasing expectations from a growing number of INGOs.

A fourth function is the systematic monitoring of G8 commitments. In 2006 the University of Toronto G8 Director was actively involved with the CS process. The U of T has been monitoring G8 decisions for years and is considered to be the leading school of knowledge and intelligence on G8 matters. They are prepared to collaborate actively with CS in the future.

FIM is well placed to continue to ensure strong southern CS involvement. In some cases this will be an uphill battle, as many G8 country-based NGOs believe themselves to be sufficiently empathetic and knowledgeable to play an effective intermediate role.

10. The issues of Neutrality, Accountability, and Representivity

When Forum International de Montréal (FIM) began its dialogue with G8 planning officials in 2002, our intention was to shepherd the process until a more representative body from within civil society could take over. Our initial assumption was that the
process would not be viewed as legitimate unless and until this happened. But how was this to happen? One of the tenets of representative democracy is that it must be the product of universal suffrage, but there is no civil society electorate. How could any organization bring to the table delegates representing the vastness and diversity of civil society around the world? The answer, we decided eventually, is that it can’t, nor should it pretend to do so. In spite of this, FIM believed that the FIM/G8 dialogue still has legitimacy.

In retrospect it appears that there were three major constraints to this process of becoming representative. One was very practical in nature; one was strategic. The third, a conceptual one, developed later out of the other two.

Practical considerations
Because of financial constraints and also because we wanted to ensure a fully participatory dialogue, we were faced with an immediate practical constraint of how to achieve broad-based representation. We therefore decided, both internally and with G8 officials, that we would limit civil society participants to 15. We took great care to ensure regional and gender balance in these 15 slots, while always respecting the FIM mandate to ensure that southern participation dominated. But this of course was merely scratching the surface of the representation question. Even within these limits, there was no ‘suffrage’- these people were nominated by FIM, not selected by their own groups.

And it would have been impossible to ensure that every minority linguistic, lifestyle, religious, ethnic, and/or disadvantaged group was involved.

Given these inevitable constraints, and while never actually using the term, we sought other means of ensuring some degree of ‘legitimacy’. In addition to the two ‘group’ selection criteria we used, we also drew up a short list of ‘individual’ selection criteria. We felt that we needed individuals who brought, through their experience and reputation, wide-scale credibility. We also sought people who had extensive experience in multilateral negotiations. Because of the delicate nature of the dialogue (the 2002 G8 came on the heels of the Genoa tragedy and no one could predict whether Kananaskis would also be subject to large-scale violence), we looked for people who worked well in a team and who had proven diplomatic skills.

FIM’s niche is in civil society/multilateral relations and, as with all professional communities, the major players are by and large known to each other. We were reasonably confident from the outset that we could bring together a team that would have the required skills and also receive broad external moral support.

Strategic considerations
While recognizing the importance of this dialogue, FIM was concerned that our entering into it could have two consequences we were anxious to avoid. First, it could imply that we recognized the G8 as a legitimate global governance mechanism. Secondly, the G8 might confer on us the status of being ‘representative’ of international civil society, and as a result feel justified in claiming they had consulted with civil society. We therefore stated at the outset, in writing, that FIM was in no way a gatehouse for international civil society and that our entering into this dialogue
did not mean that FIM recognized the G8 as a legitimate global governance mechanism. The G8 organizers accepted these terms.

Conceptual evolution
So we had both practical and strategic reasons for disclaiming representative status. But were the factors underlying these reasons specific to our situation or systemic? It began to seem to us that our particular difficulty was part of a larger whole. And the more we disclaimed representivity and the less we aspired to be representative, the more we questioned the premise that representivity is an essential component of legitimacy, especially for a civil society organization.

In view of our concerns over representivity and legitimacy, this manoeuvre may seem odd, but since there was in any case no practical possibility that we could be truly representative, we were anxious that representative status should not be ascribed to us for purposes we disapproved of.

But if the legitimacy of the FIM project was not rooted in any claim that we represented international civil society, what was it rooted in?

Tacit acceptance by civil society
The French were sufficiently satisfied with the results of our discussions prior to Kananaskis in 2002 to decide to continue the process in 2003, and the British and Russians both strengthened the process. It became clear that by some means we had established credibility and, by extension, some degree of ‘legitimacy’. Although the Americans did not attend the 2002 and 2003 meetings, they participated with vigour in 05 and 06.

In our internal reviews after each meeting, the FIM Board also reiterated its commitment to continuing this difficult project, which we knew would take time to produce measurable results. For the first two years FIM limited its public reporting to a short resume of proceedings on its website. In 05 FIM collaborated with Chatham House in London, and the process was more visible than previously and also included a greater degree of outside consultation than before. This growing transparency reflected a greater security in the overall credibility of the exercise and a corresponding easing of tensions between civil society and G8 organizers. In Russia the process gathered even more visibility and inclusiveness.

Legitimacy based on acceptance
So, if this process is not representative, how is the process credible and how accountable are we? There is a parallel with the profit-making part of the private sector here. We are, in a very real way, dealing with market forces. ‘Goodwill’ depends upon the product in a similar way to that of a business. We provide a service and we have stakeholders. If we fail to deliver a service that is acceptable to our peers (our civil society stakeholders), we will be forced to abandon the project. It wouldn’t take long for G8 organizers to realize that our colleagues did not respect us and that they are not receiving credible advice and/or opinions.

Our view has changed, therefore, over the course of this initiative. At the outset, we assumed that it would be legitimate in the long term only if it became the responsibility of a representative civil society organization which, for the reasons
outlined above, FIM could not and would not claim to be. But it became increasingly clear to us that any existing organization would have similar difficulties in making and substantiating such a claim. Does this fact limit the potential of civil society to play a vital role in global governance? We did not and do not believe so. Instead, and gradually, FIM has found other means to develop credibility and legitimacy for the process. The mutual agreement, by G8 organizers and FIM and its partners, to continue the process conveys credibility and legitimacy.

One of the many reasons why civil society is participating more directly in governance issues is because of a growing frustration with current practices of representative democracy (the democratic deficit). It would be ironic if civil society strove in its turn to fill the representative vacuum. The FIM experience with the G8 suggests that this is neither practical nor strategic, nor based on sound thinking. We expected criticism from within civil society. We have received some, the most vocal being from colleagues who held positions of responsibility within ‘representative bodies’. The criticisms were (and are) largely conceptual in nature, centring on our right to enter into a dialogue ‘on behalf of civil society’.

Surprisingly, there has been relatively little criticism about our decision to actually undertake dialogue with the G8. This seems to reflect a mature understanding and acceptance of the diversity of civil society, and the prevailing attitude might be summed up as: ‘We prefer to deal with the root problem and to protest the existence of the G8, but in the meantime hopefully you can mitigate the damage.’ To the best of our knowledge, no participants have been personally criticized for taking part in this exercise.

We receive suggestions for agenda priorities and we are sometimes seen as being naive if we seriously expect to achieve any concrete results. At this stage, however, our objective remains basic: to demonstrate to G8 organizers the value of open and frank dialogue with international civil society. Every time the new host country decides to continue the exercise, we are achieving that objective.

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