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## **Comments on the Report of the Cardoso Panel**

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### **1. Introduction**

In June 2004, the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations, chaired by former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, released its report “We the peoples: civil society, the United Nations and global governance” (UN Doc. A/58/817, 11 June 2004). The panel had been established in spring 2003 by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan “to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society and offer practical recommendations for improved modalities and interaction.” (UN Doc. A/57/387).

The Panel reflected the growing importance of NGOs in the UN system. By focussing not only on UN-NGO relations in the narrow sense but on the role of different “constituencies” the report offered an opportunity to consider UN reform and the future of multilateralism. When the panel was first announced, however, there were hints that its genesis lay not in a generous UN commitment to strengthen the NGO role but rather in growing concern by governments that NGOs were now too strong, too numerous and too challenging to the status quo. NGOs fears about the panel appeared confirmed when the Secretary General announced its membership with only very slight NGO participation, a chairman with a negative reputation among NGOs in his home country and a Project Director previously employed by the World Bank.

To its credit, the Panel sought out input from NGOs world wide and the final report contains some interesting reflections on the role of the United Nations in global governance and the cycle of global debates. It also offers a few useful proposals, particularly about broader participation of representatives from the South, greater involvement of parliamentarians, opening of other bodies of the UN (beyond ECOSOC) to civil society involvement, and the improvement of the dysfunctional accreditation procedures..

But the Cardoso Report does not fundamentally reflect what NGOs told panel members nor does it address many critical NGO concerns. The report says nothing about additional UN funds for NGO liaison and support. It says nothing about the increasingly restrictive security environment that NGOs face at the UN. Nor does it speak about efforts by governments, North and South, to weaken, subordinate and control NGOs. Rather the report promotes problematic ideas about governance that most NGOs categorically reject. Indeed, the core ideas of the report are damaging to NGOs and to the future of the multilateral system. The panel bases its thinking on a concept of the UN as a place for discussions, not a place for legislation or action. In this sense it proposes to weaken the UN and reduce its capacity to make rules, establish norms and act as a defender of international law.

The report constantly reiterates the idea of “partnerships” or “networked governance”, which puts “multi-constituency”—or “multistakeholder”—processes at the centre of global policy making. “Mainstreaming partnerships” can be seen as a kind of *leitmotiv* of the whole report. According to the report, the term “constituency” at the UN comprises three broad sectors: civil society, the private [i.e. business] sector and the state (governments). While governments are the traditional “members” of the UN, the Panel suggests that the UN view the other actors

[i.e. civil society and private sector] as constituencies, or “stakeholders,” of all the organization’s processes.

Though the report is nominally about civil society, large parts of the report refer to other (usually unspecified) actors. The report constantly refers to “civil society and other constituencies” or to “multi-constituency processes”. Clearly, business is usually the unspoken “other.” The report intends to strengthen the role of business at the UN and this is an important sub-text throughout. Buried in the dull technocratic language of the report, we find a dramatic political reconfiguration of the UN that would reduce the voice of NGOs and magnify the neoliberal policy message. .

The NGO community, in its response and follow-up to this report, must support implementation of the good ideas of the Panel, some of which could strengthen and broaden NGO participation in the UN system. At the same time, though, the NGO community must oppose the report’s many negative ideas. In particular, NGOs should seek to prevent the mainstreaming of “partnership governance,” an idea that implies increased business influence and a weakening of the duties and responsibilities of governments in the UN.

## **2. Critique of the report’s partnership/multistakeholder concept**

The Cardoso Report is based on a new concept of global governance that has been gaining ground in international discourse. It underlines the role played in international politics by “multistakeholder approaches” and policy networks of public and private actors. The new paradigm of international cooperation sees in “global partnerships” (Kofi Annan), “coalitions for change” (James Wolfensohn), or in “global public policy networks” a mode of future international cooperation beyond the traditional multilateralism of nation-states.

Advocates of the new concept (who are largely conservative intellectuals and politicians in the United States and Europe) argue that global problems have reached dimensions that go beyond the competences and capacities of national governments. Governments and international organizations alone are no longer able to address ever-more-complex global policy issues. Therefore, argue the advocates, the business sector and civil society must be actively engaged in global governance.

But this new approach raises serious concerns:

### *Reducing responsibility and accountability of governments*

Governments have recently used multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships as a pretext for avoiding binding intergovernmental agreements. At the Johannesburg Summit, the United States in particular pressed for voluntary initiatives (the so-called “type 2-outcomes”) not as a supplement to intergovernmental agreements (which it argued are “ineffectual”) but as a replacement for them. The Cardoso Report follows in this path, though it has a slightly different emphasis. It affirms the important role of governments in global norm-setting but considers multi-stakeholder partnerships as the most effective means to put norms and targets into practice. In its concept of a “cycle of global debates” the report transfers the responsibility for global decisions away from governments, substituting vague “coalitions” of

civil society, business and governments. Under such arrangements, citizens could no longer hold governments accountable for meeting their targets and fulfilling their own commitments.

*Increasing influence of business interests*

By giving private companies and business lobby groups better access to the UN Secretariat and to intergovernmental fora, the report would enable TNCs to influence even more effectively the analyses, political strategy, and design of UN partnership projects. Therefore, many NGOs warn that the United Nations is selling-out to the interests of major corporations and “blue-washing” companies that violate international standards. As examples, NGOs refer to Nestlé, Shell, Nike, Rio Tinto and BP, rule-breakers that are already active UN “partners” in the Global Compact. Critics view global partnerships as an obstacle to progress on corporate accountability, rather than an instrument to promote corporate commitments to environmental sustainability, social protection and human rights.

*Undermining democratic decision-making*

Partnership models are also problematic in terms of democracy. Where they include private actors in their governing bodies, as for example in the global health alliances, they give private companies or super-wealthy individuals a power of co-decision over the priorities of international policy and the use of public funds.

*Single-issue orientation and weakening of cross-sectoral development strategies*

Many multistakeholder initiatives are single-issue oriented and established independently outside existing intergovernmental structures. But creation of more and more "satellite funds" outside the UN system may not only end up by weakening the United Nations, it may at the same time impede cross-sectoral development strategies aimed at implementing international development goals and targets, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

*Weakening the status of Governmental institutions*

Finally, one important point of criticism focuses on the role perceptions on which the partnership approach is based. It is problematic to use the term "partnership" to characterize the relationship between state and non-state actors, because what the term suggests is an eye-to-eye relationship between and equal status for the actors involved. This relativizes both the special political status of governmental institutions under international law and their (democratic) legitimacy. The use of terms like "partnership" is for this reason not just a question of stylistics, it has eminently political significance. It implicitly downgrades the role of governments and intergovernmental organizations and upgrades the (political) status of private actors, in particular of the transnational corporations involved in these cooperation models.

Instead of mainstreaming the partnership approach, it is urgently called for to independently evaluate such partnership models at the multilateral level. The point would be to examine what influence private business actors have on the problem analyses, political strategy formation, and funding decisions of the different alliances and initiatives.

## 1. Comments on some of the specific proposals of the report

The following table summarizes a few preliminary comments and questions on the 30 proposals of the Cardoso Report:

List of proposals of the Panel of Eminent Persons	Comments and Questions
<b>Convening role of the United Nations: fostering multi-constituency processes</b>	
<i>Proposal 1.</i> In exercising its <b>convening power</b> , the United Nations should emphasize the inclusion of all constituencies relevant to the issue, recognize that the <b>key actors</b> are different for different issues and foster <b>multi-stakeholder partnerships</b> to pioneer solutions and empower a range of <b>global policy networks</b> to innovate and build momentum on policy options. Member States need opportunities for collective decision-making, but they should signal their preparedness to engage other actors in deliberative processes.	Multi-stakeholder partnerships are regarded as the best way to “pioneer solutions”
<i>Proposal 2.</i> The United Nations should embrace an <b>array of forums</b> , each designed to achieve a specific outcome, with participation determined accordingly. The <b>cycle of global debate</b> on an issue should include:	In general, the “cycle of global debates” is an interesting systematic response to the experiences of the World Conferences of the last decade.
•Interactive high-level round tables to survey the framework of issues	Ok
•Global conferences to define norms and targets	Emphasize of the key role of Governments in global norm and target setting
•Multi-stakeholder partnerships to put the new norms and targets into practice	Weaken the duty and responsibility of Governments to implement their decisions
•Multi-stakeholder hearings to monitor compliance, review experience and revise strategies	Ok
<i>Proposal 3.</i> The <b>Secretariat</b> should innovate with <b>networked governance</b> , bringing <b>people from diverse backgrounds</b> together to identify possible policy breakthroughs on emerging global priorities. It should experiment with a <b>global Internet agora</b> to survey public opinion and raise awareness on emerging issues. The <b>Secretary-General</b> should initiate <b>multi-stakeholder advisory forums</b> on selected emerging issues and feed their conclusions to appropriate intergovernmental forums.	Who will appoint the members of the advisory forums? How can it be guaranteed that critical voices are not excluded?

<p><i>Proposal 4.</i> The United Nations should retain the <b>global conference mechanism</b> but use it sparingly to address major emerging policy issues that need concerted global action, enhanced public understanding and resonance with global public opinion. <b>The participation</b> of civil society and other constituencies should be <b>planned in collaboration with their networks.</b></p>	<p>Retaining global conferences is positive, but again, “other constituencies” make their appearance. And there appears to be a gatekeeping role for the UN as to who participates.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 5.</i> The Secretariat should foster <b>multi-constituency processes</b> as new conduits for discussion of United Nations priorities, <b>redirecting resources</b> now used for <b>single-constituency forums</b> covering multiple issues. The Secretariat, together with other relevant bodies of the United Nations system, should convene <b>public hearings</b> to review progress in meeting globally agreed commitments. <b>Being technical</b> and concerned with implementation <b>rather</b> than the <b>formulation of new global policies</b>, such hearings could be convened by the Secretary-General on his own authority. Proceedings should be transmitted through the Secretary-General to the relevant intergovernmental forums.</p>	<p>What does it mean to redirect resources now used for “single constituency forums”? Cutting funds for the Annual NGO-DPI-Meeting? Eliminate civil society advisory groups? Perhaps even reducing funding for the General Assembly and ECOSOC</p>
<p><i>Proposal 6.</i> The General Assembly should permit the <b>carefully planned participation</b> of <b>actors</b> besides central Governments in its processes. In particular, the Assembly should regularly <b>invite</b> contributions to its <b>committees and special sessions</b> by those offering <b>high-quality independent input.</b> The participation arrangements should be made in collaboration with the relevant constituency networks. The Secretariat should help to plan <b>innovative and interactive sessions</b> linked to but <b>outside</b> the formal meetings.</p>	<p>A very cautious formulation. The General Assembly and its committees already invite NGO input from time to time. This is far from the robust arrangements long promoted by the World Federalists and many others.</p>
<p><i>Investing more in partnerships</i></p>	
	<p>The following proposals are highly problematic as they aim to make the partnership approach to the dominant model of multilateral cooperation at the global and national levels.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 7.</i> In order to <b>mainstream partnerships</b>, the Secretary-General should, with the approval of Member States and donor support:</p>	<p>See above</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Establish a <b>Partnership Development Unit</b> headed by a high-level staff member to help <b>incubate and decentralize the partnership approach</b>, guide the needed management shifts, ensure sound evaluations and provide support services <b>throughout the United Nations</b></li> </ul>	<p>NGOs have long favored a single UN official responsible for listening to their concerns and promoting their interests. This would NOT satisfy this need, as it would cover business, parliamentarians and other constituencies. It would be an error to end the independence of NGLS by making it part of the Secretariat.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identify partnership focal points throughout <b>all</b> United Nations organs and agencies</li> </ul>	<p>The problem is not to “identify” such focal points but to provide them with resources so that they can do their work. Many NGO liaison offices have been shut down in recent years due to lack of funds.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Review partnership issues in such coordination forums as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its High-Level Committee on Programmes</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ensure systematic learning from partnership efforts by creating a <b>multi-stakeholder Partnership Assessment Forum</b> that includes United Nations staff, Governments, civil society organizations and others</li> </ul>	<p>This constant emphasis on the “multi-stakeholder” model is thoroughly negative.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Provide training in partnership development to Governments, civil society and other constituencies, as well as to United Nations staff</li> </ul>	<p>NGOs must develop their own methods of working with governments. The UN should not be “training” governments and especially not on “multi-stakeholder” methods.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Periodically review the effectiveness of those efforts</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Proposal 8.</i> The proposed Partnership Development Unit should ensure that lessons of practice are fully internalized in operational and management approaches, conduct rigorous evaluations to learn about the full costs and impact on development of multisectoral partnerships and inform the debate about the institutional implications of the approach.</p>	
<p><i>Proposal 9.</i> The Secretariat should <b>strengthen its relationship with actors in the private sector</b> by:</p>	<p>This is the only proposal that directly mentions the strengthening of the business sector at the UN, though the whole report fosters it by implication.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Incorporating the <b>Global Compact</b> into the proposed <b>Office of Constituency Engagement and Partnerships</b> (see proposal 24)</li> </ul>	<p>Many NGOs have criticized the Global Compact and even those that participate in the process have expressed serious reservations. Most NGOs do not want to co-habit with the discredited Global Compact.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Engaging with small and medium-sized businesses and their national associations and helping to build the capacity and competitiveness of microbusinesses and small enterprises</li> </ul>	<p>Though small and medium sized businesses sound less threatening than huge global TNCs, the UN has mainly interacted with global companies and is likely to continue to do so.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Strengthening the Global Compact’s capacity for and contribution to enhancing corporate responsibility</b></li> </ul>	<p>What does this mean in practice? Very little in our opinion.</p>
<p><i>Focus on the country level</i></p>	
<p><i>Proposal 10.</i> The United Nations Development</p>	

<p>Group should ensure that the rhetoric of country leadership, coordination and partnership is put into effective practice to open space for all constituencies to contribute to the goals of the United Nations.</p>	
<p>At the <b>country level</b> this entails:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Enhancing the capacity of the United Nations <b>resident coordinators'</b> offices to identify, convene and broker the <b>partnerships</b> needed to meet the main challenges and build consensus on country-specific goals (see proposal 11)</li> </ul>	<p>While UNICs are closing and UN country resources are scarcer than ever, what could “enhancing the capacity” mean and what kind of “partnerships” will the resident coordinator “broker.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Conveying systematic messages to country staff about learning from and providing support to civil society and other actors, using the rubric of the <b>Millennium Development Goals</b> and other globally agreed goals as reference points</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ensuring that United Nations country-level staff work with the regional commissions to inject the experience of country-level actors into regional and global deliberative processes</li> </ul>	
<p>At the <b>global level</b> this entails:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identifying and rewarding <b>participation pioneers</b> within the United Nations system by establishing, with donor support, a <b>global fund</b> to support innovations in partnership development at the country level</li> </ul>	<p>“Partnership” advocates will be rewarded with special funds, bringing business links into the entire system</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identifying and disseminating lessons learned from <b>innovative partnerships</b> and countries where cooperation with non-State actors is strongest</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assessing <b>partnership qualities</b> in the annual performance appraisals of resident coordinators and other country-level staff</li> </ul>	<p>UN staff will be forced to embrace the dubious “partnership” principles too.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Persuading donors to support the extra cost of being an effective networking organization, including the greater investment in coordination that this requires</li> </ul>	<p>Note that extra costs are being paid for by outside donors, not through the UN’s regular budget.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 11.</i> The resident coordinators and United Nations Development Group agencies at the country level should undertake the necessary restructuring, coordination and investment to enable the United Nations to meet the networking challenges by:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Initially appointing <b>local constituency engagement specialists</b> in 30 to 40</li> </ul>	<p>Might be useful, as it refers to NGOs only</p>

countries, with facilitation skills and knowledge of civil society in the country (see proposal 25)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reviewing the effectiveness of current country-level information and communication resources, redirecting them to support strategies and partnerships to achieve globally agreed goals</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Establishing <b>civil society advisory groups</b> as a pilot project in a range of countries to guide United Nations strategy; similar advisory groups could be considered for <b>business</b> and other constituencies</li> </ul>	Might be useful if business is not included.
<b>Strengthening the Security Council — roles for civil society</b>	
<i>Proposal 12.</i> Security Council members should further <b>strengthen their dialogue with civil society</b> , with the support of the Secretary-General by:	Sounds good.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Improving the planning and effectiveness of the <b>Arria formula meetings</b> by lengthening lead times and covering travel costs to increase the participation of actors from the field. United Nations country staff should assist in identifying civil society interlocutors</li> </ul>	Arria Formula briefing by NGOs are often not treated seriously by Council members. This seems a cumbersome process that would have only a very small payoff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ensuring that Security Council field missions meet regularly with appropriate local civil society leaders, international humanitarian NGOs and perhaps others, such as business leaders. United Nations Headquarters and field staff should facilitate the meetings</li> </ul>	A good idea.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Installing an <b>experimental series of Security Council seminars</b> to discuss issues of emerging importance to the Council. Serviced by the Secretariat, these would <b>include presentations by civil society and other constituencies</b> as well as United Nations specialists, such as special rapporteurs</li> </ul>	A dubious idea that would drain energy from the successful existing NGO consultation processes and give the Secretariat the role of gatekeeper in selecting those who would speak in the name of NGOs and “other constituencies.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Convening independent commissions of inquiry after Council-mandated operations. A global public policy committee connecting national foreign affairs committees could serve as such a commission (see proposal 15)</li> </ul>	Might work. It’s not clear how NGOs would fit into this one, though, some NGOs already monitor and comment on UN operations.
<b>Engaging with elected representatives</b>	

<p><i>Proposal 13.</i> The United Nations should routinely encourage national parliaments to hold debates on major matters coming up in the United Nations and to discuss those matters with the relevant ministers. Relevant documents, including those in progress achieved on the Millennium Development Goals and other globally agreed goals, should be made available to parliaments when they are transmitted to Governments. The Secretary-General should seek the cooperation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and parliamentary associations. Member States should regularly consult members of Parliament on United Nations matters and debrief them after major United Nations meetings.</p>	<p>Step in the right direction but weak wording</p>
<p><i>Proposal 14.</i> Member States should more regularly include members of Parliament in their delegations to major United Nations meetings, while taking care to avoid compromising their independence. The Secretariat should test opportunities for members of Parliament to contribute as parliamentarians, including in debates before a General Assembly meeting on a major topic. Members of Parliament specializing in a subject could also be invited to speak in relevant committees and special sessions of the Assembly, particularly when they are reviewing progress achieved in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and other agreed global goals.</p>	<p>Nothing new</p>
<p><i>Proposal 15.</i> Member States should make way for an enhanced role for parliamentarians in global governance. They should instruct the Secretariat to work with national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as appropriate, to convene one or more experimental global public policy committees to discuss emerging priorities on the global agenda. These committees would comprise parliamentarians from the most relevant functional committee in a globally representative range of countries. In an experimental five-year period, different organizational arrangements could be tested and, through periodic review, refined over time.</p>	<p>The idea of experimental global public policy committees of parliamentarians is interesting.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 16.</i> The Secretary-General should form a small Elected Representatives Liaison Unit:</p>	<p>Ok</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•To provide a dedicated information service for parliaments and associations of parliamentarians, including a dedicated web-based information service for members of parliament</li> </ul>	<p>Why a special information service?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•To encourage greater attention to United Nations processes in national parliaments</li> </ul>	<p>Ok, but easier said than done.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•To help to create more effective opportunities for members of parliament to take</li> </ul>	<p>Ok</p>

part in United Nations forums	
<p>•To organize global public policy committees to work closely with national parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, specialized agencies and other organizations as appropriate</p>	Ok, but is the IPU the best vehicle for this?
<p>•To foster debate within the United Nations system about new or improved strategies for engaging parliaments and parliamentarians</p>	Better engagement with parliaments will be very positive, but governments are bound to be leery.
<p><i>Proposal 17.</i> The General Assembly should debate a resolution affirming and respecting local autonomy as a universal principle.</p>	Seems like a good gesture.
<p><i>Proposal 18.</i> The Elected Representative Liaison Unit (see proposal 16) should liaise with <b>local authorities</b> and their new world association and disseminate lessons of good practice. The United Nations should regard United Cities and Local Governments as an advisory body on governance matters. The Secretary-General should require United Nations bodies with a national presence to build close contacts with local authorities and their national and regional associations. Specifically, resident coordinators should interact regularly with local authorities to inform them of United Nations programmes and processes and to encourage partnerships with them.</p>	Seems like a good step, though there are also other levels of government between local and national such as counties, departments, laender and states.
<b>Streamlining and depoliticizing accreditation and access</b>	
<p><i>Proposal 19.</i> The United Nations should realign accreditation with its original purpose, namely, it should be an <b>agreement between civil society actors and Member States</b> based on the applicants' <b>expertise, competence</b> and <b>skills</b>. To achieve this, and to widen the access of civil society organizations beyond Economic and Social Council forums, Member States should agree to merge the current procedures at United Nations Headquarters for the Council, the Department of Public Information and conferences and their follow-up into a <b>single United Nations accreditation process</b>, with responsibility for accreditation assumed by an existing committee of the <b>General Assembly</b>.</p>	<p>Too much emphasis on competence and expertise. Who decides if an NGO is competent or not?</p> <p>Transferring the responsibility for accreditation to the General Assembly would only make sense if NGOs get consultative status with the General Assembly.</p> <p>Danger that countries hostile towards stronger civil society participation dominate the GA Committee responsible for accreditation, as is presently true.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 20.</i> Member States should shift the task of reviewing applications to the <b>Secretariat</b> so as to reduce time inefficiencies and increase the technical focus of the review. An <b>Accreditation Unit</b> should be established within the <b>General Assembly secretariat</b>, incorporating staff now responsible for accreditation in various</p>	<p>This de-politicisation responds to recommendations by many NGOs. The advisory body would be purely technical. But because politics tends to seep into this process, who will decide on the membership of the advisory body?</p>

<p>departments (therefore it would be budget-neutral). The Unit would help to set up an <b>advisory body</b> that would offer <b>guidance</b> on whether applications should be recommended or not. A designated General Assembly committee would decide on accreditation based on that guidance. The Secretariat should ensure increased use of information technologies to manage the accreditation process. The Secretary-General should encourage the United Nations agencies, country offices and others to cooperate in the system-wide effort.</p>	
<p><i>Proposal 21.</i> The Secretary-General should foster enhanced coordination and support for the accreditation process by:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Instructing national and regional offices of the United Nations to facilitate applications</li> </ul>	<p>Blah blah</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Using the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination processes to foster closer coordination among United Nations agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions</li> </ul>	<p>Blah blah</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ensuring wider availability of information on the rights and responsibilities related to accreditation (e.g., through booklets aimed at civil society and United Nations staff)</li> </ul>	<p>Excellent idea, much-needed. There also should be a booklet describing security arrangements for NGOs doing advocacy in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 22.</i> The Secretary-General should initiate a <b>consultative review</b>, to be finished <b>within three years</b>, whereupon proposals would be submitted to the General Assembly for revising the accreditation <b>categories</b> to align them better with today's practices and priorities.</p>	<p>Three years is a long time to work out relatively simple proposals?</p>
<p><i>Proposal 23.</i> The Secretariat should encourage the main constituencies that the United Nations works with <b>to form broad networks</b> to help it with <b>selection</b> and quality assurance. <b>But the United Nations should not demand this or stipulate how it is to be done.</b> Such networks would be encouraged to advise secretariats and bureaux on the participation of their constituencies in intergovernmental processes and to help monitor practices and revise strategies, perhaps leading to their evolution into recognized advisory groups. The Secretariat should discuss with those groups possible <b>codes of conduct</b> and <b>self-policing</b> mechanisms to heighten disciplines of quality, governance and balance.</p>	<p>Networks and coalitions of NGOs already play gatekeeper roles in a creative and necessary way. Codes of conduct are badly needed and should be developed by NGOs.</p>

What the proposals mean for staff, resources and management	
<p><i>Proposal 24.</i> With the approval of Member States, the Secretary-General should appoint an <b>Under-Secretary-General</b> in charge of a new <b>Office of Constituency Engagement and Partnerships</b>. This office would be responsible for formulating and implementing the strategy for United Nations engagement with all constituencies beyond the formal membership of central Governments. It would monitor engagements throughout the United Nations system and provide advice and lessons of good practice. It could comprise the following:</p>	<p>No improvement for NGOs over previous arrangements. NGOs should have their own ASG, not be under the same umbrella with business.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A <b>Civil Society Unit</b>, to absorb the <b>Non-Governmental Liaison Service</b></li> </ul>	<p>Danger for NGLS to loose its independence. A big mistake to change the status of the best NGO advocacy unit in the UN system. It should be left alone and given more resources instead.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A <b>Partnership Development Unit</b>, to absorb the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships</li> </ul>	<p>Same same</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•An <b>Elected Representatives Liaison Unit</b></li> </ul>	<p>OK, fine</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The <b>Global Compact Office</b></li> </ul>	<p>Business and Global Compact office don't like this proposal, because it means (in their view) a "downgrading" of the GC office, which now is directly part of Kofi Annan's Executive Office</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The <b>secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues</b></li> </ul>	<p>Indigenous representatives are sceptical about this.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 25.</i> With the approval of Member States, the Secretary-General should initiate a programme to appoint 30 to 40 constituency engagement specialists in offices of resident coordinators to help the United Nations and the wider system enhance engagement with a diversity of constituencies. He should invite contributions from bilateral donors and foundations to a <b>trust fund</b> to finance those appointments for a trial period of four years.</p>	<p>Trust fund is not a new idea, but it might be useful. Most funds garner little money and have little impact.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 26.</i> The Secretary-General should make redressing North-South imbalances a priority in enhancing United Nations–civil society relations. He should enlist donor support for enhancing the capacity of the United Nations to identify and work with local actors, establishing a fund to build Southern civil society capacity to participate and ensuring that country-level engagement feeds into the global deliberative processes.</p>	<p>Positive, but the same problem as 25, with trust funds always under-funded.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 27.</i> The United Nations should establish a</p>	<p>Fine, but as above another trust fund.</p>

<p>fund to enhance the capacity of civil society in developing countries to engage in United Nations processes and partnerships. The Secretariat should seek contributions from Governments, foundations, United Nations sources and elsewhere, and it should establish an administrative and governance structure for the fund that puts maximum emphasis on decision-making at the country level.</p>	
<p><i>Proposal 28.</i> The Secretary-General and other top United Nations managers should frequently take the opportunity to convey to staff the importance they ascribe to constituency engagement and partnership. These issues should feature prominently in all human resources processes, including recruitment, promotion and annual appraisal. Staff throughout the system, including managers, should be given training in such matters.</p>	<p>Excellent idea, but political pressures by states, especially powerful states, often work at cross purposes.</p>
<b>Providing global leadership</b>	
<p><i>Proposal 29.</i> The Secretary-General should use his capacity as chairman of the United Nations system coordination mechanism to encourage all agencies, including the <b>Bretton Woods institutions</b>, to enhance their engagement with civil society and other actors and to cooperate with one another across the system to promote this aim, with periodic progress reviews.</p>	<p>Fine, but such engagements will be uneven. It is doubtful that the SG can persuade the IMF to embrace NGOs, for instance.</p>
<p><i>Proposal 30.</i> Member States should encourage, through the forums of the United Nations, an enabling policy environment for civil society throughout the world and expanded dialogue and partnership opportunities in development processes. The Secretariat leadership, resident coordinators and governance specialists should use their dialogues with Governments to similar effect.</p>	<p>By all means! Actually, states have been increasingly responsive to NGOs, but they are also visibly worried about NGOs. Policy environments blow hot and cold. States will behave differently if they feel pressured by citizens to do so.</p>

## 2. Conclusion - proposals for further action and reform in the UN-civil society/business relations

The participation of civil society in global governance expanded dramatically during the past decade. Due to their high commitment and their expertise, NGOs played a key role in the cycle of world conferences of the 1990s and were assigned important tasks in the follow up processes. They have been instrumental in directing international attention to the importance of sustainable development, poverty eradication and the protection of human rights. Some of the most important milestones in global policy making wouldn't have been possible without

the active involvement and support of civil society, such as the international ban of anti-personal mines and the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

**Therefore, the consultative status of NGOs at the UN should be strengthened and expanded to all institutions of the UN system, including the UN General Assembly and all specialized agencies.**

However, NGOs shouldn't have excessive expectations. They influence global decision making by their experience, analysis and advocacy, but they are not the political decision-makers. Democratically elected Governments and Parliaments are the only actors that can legitimately set global rules and standards and to take global decisions. They are accountable to their electorate and shouldn't not be allowed to privatise their duties by shifting global responsibilities to NGOs and other private actors. Civil society participation must be complementary, not a substitute, to the role of Parliaments. Participatory democracy goes hand in hand with representative democracy.

Against this background, the partnership- or multi-constituency approach of the Cardoso Panel must be treated with scepticism. In particular those "partnerships" that include transnational corporations, business associations or private foundations of wealthy individuals in their decision making bodies are highly problematic, as they allow representatives of private business interests to take part in political decisions about public policies and the expenditure of public funds. This practice undermines the credibility of Governments and all efforts to establish democratic governance structures at the global level.

Therefore, Governments and intergovernmental bodies have to establish clear institutional policies, impact assessments and effective public safeguards to ensure that the public interest is unequivocally at the center of all their interactions with civil society and any other sources of policy advocacy.