

Message from the President

The WPC was launched by IFRI at the end of 2007. This was the first attempt ever made to encourage a systematic and sustained process of reflection aimed at fostering the emergence of global governance appropriate for the realities of the 21st century, involving political, economic and social decision-makers, researchers and opinion leaders at the highest level.

- A consequence of globalisation is growing interdependence. Any war – particularly in the Middle East and in West or East Asia – or any new major economic or financial failure would immediately have catastrophic global repercussions. The worst-case scenario would be a combination of political and economic crises. The international system as a whole will not realise lasting benefit from globalisation unless the major states, in close cooperation with the other major stakeholders, all have the will to ensure the structural stability of the whole system by using both coordinated and diversified methods of cooperation (depending on the subject and the region).
- The structural stability of the international system requires a greater sense of global solidarity, whether in the form of more sustainable development or through greater responsiveness to natural disasters.
- The new global governance needs to reconcile two often contradictory criteria, namely effectiveness and legitimacy. For example, as regards decision-making in economic matters, the work of the G20 group needs to be better prepared and its decisions need to be better monitored and implemented. Moreover, the interests of the states that are not members of the G20 need to be better taken into account. As regards political matters in the broadest sense, the rigidification of the United Nations (UNO) system is increasing the risks of greater recourse to bilateralism and of the chaotic decline in the international system. A key question will be the linkage between the future group of permanent members of the Security Council, with its political focus, and the G20 group.
- It is a matter of great urgency. Some of the negative repercussions of the subprime crisis are still very felt. The risk of other similar shocks occurring has not been obviated, far from it. And every day the news headlines remind us that global cataclysms may suddenly occur, notably in the Middle East or in Asia.

When I took the initiative to establish the WPC, with the intent that it should be open to the media, I was aware of the fact that no other international conference existed specifically for the purpose of fostering global governance by bringing together the states and other stakeholders anxious to contribute constructively to the achievement of this aim. It is a matter, this time, of working on a truly worldwide scale in the same spirit as that which has underpinned the construction of Europe since the 1950s, inspired by the following questions: how can we get states and their peoples to see diversity and otherness as mutually rewarding factors rather than as threats? How can we see to it that the spirit of cooperation durably prevails over the spirit of confrontation, in such a way that competitive forces play a positive and not negative role, thereby channelling conflicts of all kinds through institutions that resolve them peacefully?

We are not naive enough to believe that, in order to solve a problem as difficult as the adaptation of global governance to the turbulent environment of the early 21st century, we need only bring together men and women of good will from time to time for an exchange of politically correct views. However, we believe it is possible to capitalise more on the experience and thinking of the best

players and thinkers in various areas of international life, with the aim of building a safer and more secure world. Indeed, when all is said and done, it boils down to security. And there cannot be any security without empathy, tolerance and justice. In this regard, morality and politics go hand in hand.

What the Europeans achieved (albeit incompletely!) under the pressure of the Cold War, the entire international system must now achieve under no other pressure than that of its growing awareness of a shared destiny. Then, and only then, may we perhaps be in a position to speak seriously about an “international community”.

For this third edition of the WPC, we have handpicked all of you on the basis of their individual expertise and reputation. We are grateful to those of you who have shown your confidence in our initiative ever since its inception. We have also endeavoured to strike a natural balance between different regions and cultures, large and small players, various specific areas of governance, and between active participants in the international system and observers thereof. In order to play its part as fully as possible, the WPC must transact multiple geographical, functional and media criteria.

We are convinced that the ideal that inspired our initiative is more relevant than ever. We believe that the world needs the positive contributions of emerging countries if it is to manage change successfully. The “western” countries must not be afraid to recognise that the time has come to extend a hand to them. This year, what symbolises such a new order better than the Korean presidency of the G20, which extends until November 2010?

I am delighted to welcome you to Marrakech. I hope the magnificent setting of this conference will enhance the quality of our work, so that it contributes as much as possible to fostering the cooperative spirit humanity so badly needs to ensure a better future.

Thierry de Montbrial
President and founder of the *WPC*
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