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Dear Mr. Sewanyana,

Please find attached Amnesty International's response to the questionnaire regarding participation and decision-making in global governance spaces.

Yours sincerely,

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**Amnesty International's responses to the Questionnaire of the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order on the issue of participation and decision-making in global governance spaces**

**May 2019**

**1. Please share your experience in exercising, or seeking to exercise, your right to participate in public affairs in one or several of the following global governance groupings/spaces: G7, G20, G77/G24, NAM, BRICS, WEF and BG in terms of:**

- a. Access;**
- b. Inclusivity; and**
- c. Influencing the decision-making process.**

Amnesty International has participated in various ways in G7, G20, BRICS, and WEF.

**G7**

**Access:** Civil society engagement in the G& began in 2000 but Amnesty International participated in G7 civil society discussions for the first time in 2019. In February 2019, Amnesty France was invited to a meeting with the French Foreign Ministry on engagement with the UN Commission on the Status of Women, where the agenda included a discussion of France's priorities for its G7 presidency in 2019 in relation to its "feminist diplomacy". This invitation came as a result of the pre-existing relationship between Amnesty France and the French Foreign Ministry – perhaps an indication that access for national level advocacy on the agenda of these groupings/spaces is easier for large, well-resourced NGOs that have pre-existing relationships with their governments.

Amnesty International also receives information from the International G7/G0 Network – coordinated by a US-based NGO. Information on civil society advocacy initiatives towards G7 and G20 are shared with this network. Amnesty International has also recently joined the [G7 Global Taskforce](#), a network of organizations and individuals that acts as a hub for NGO members and groups working on G7 advocacy, and to amplify their work.

**Inclusivity:** Amnesty France was also invited to participate in a Gender Coalition, formed by 55 international and French NGOs working on gender and human rights more broadly. This coalition was actively involved in the preparation of the Women7 Summit

held on 9 May, which resulted in a set of W7 recommendations to the G7 entitled Towards a truly feminist and transformative G7. Amnesty International contributed substantively to the development of several of the recommendations in a process which allowed participating organizations to contribute effectively.

Some 400 women's rights activists from G7 countries and the global south gathered in Paris for the summit, which we understand was open to all to apply to attend but had limited places available. The Gender Coalition prioritised the attendance of organizations that had been actively involved in developing the recommendations; after that, the limited places were allocated on a first come, first served basis.

**Influence:** The W7 recommendations were handed over to Marlene Schiappa, the French minister for women's rights and her counterparts during the Ministerial Meeting on Gender Equality that took place on 9 & 10 May.

As this is the first year of Amnesty's participation, we have little information to draw on from our own experience on the degree to which civil society has been able to influence the decision-making process of G7. However, the recent G7 Health Ministers' Declaration was criticised as being "a declaration of good intentions" but without any real financial commitments for implementation, and with no reference to sexual and reproductive health and rights.<sup>1</sup> Other NGOs have indicated that civil society engagement with the G7 has required civil society organizations to develop new kinds of advocacy strategies with very targeted recommendations that work within much longer time frames than many are used to in relation to national level advocacy. Some have suggested that the question of civil society influence on the G7 could usefully be subject to academic study and have highlighted the lack of support for advocacy and civil society engagement at the G7 from organizations that fund civil society.<sup>2</sup>

G7 commitments can also be a source of leverage for national level advocacy. For example, Amnesty UK has also used the commitment in the 2015 G7 Leaders' Declaration to "*[strengthen] mechanisms for providing access to remedies including the National Contact Points (NCPs) for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises ...[to] encourage the OECD to promote peer reviews and peer learning on the functioning and performance of NCPs ... [and to] ensure that [G7 national] NCPs are effective and lead by example*" to investigate how the UK's National Contact Point handles human rights complaints under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and to make

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<sup>1</sup> Coordination SUD, *G7 santé : réaction de la société civile*, 17 May 2019, <https://www.coordinationsud.org/actualite/g7-sante-reaction-de-la-societe-civile/>

<sup>2</sup> OpenCanada.org; *7 Countdown: How civil society groups hope to get through to leaders*, 28 March 2018,

recommendations on how to strengthen it.<sup>3</sup>

## **G20**

Amnesty International has membership structures in 18 out of 19 G20 member states, as well as a European Institutions Office which undertakes advocacy towards the European Union. The organization has been increasing its engagement with G20 since 2016, both in terms of advocacy towards member states (an important part of influencing the process) and through participation in civil society processes, which have become increasingly formalized since 2010 and now constitute eight strands (Civil20, Labour20, Women20, Youth20, Science20, Business20, Think20 and Urban20).

Although it is difficult to quantify, Amnesty International's experience suggests that issues on which more than one civil society strand can come together in joint positions gain more traction with governments than the positions of the individual engagement strands.

## **W20**

**Access:** Since 2017, Amnesty Argentina's Director has been an official W20 delegate and actively participated in the W20 discussions and in the 2018 summit. How access to W20 is granted is not transparent and appears to be based on participation in informal networks and existing relationships.

**Inclusivity:** W20 does not appear to be particularly diverse, and inclusion of new delegates is left to the discretion of W20's Chair. In 2018, the W20 Chair was a businesswoman and a Member of Parliament from the governing political party.

**Influence:** The Chair and Co-Chair set the agenda for W20 engagement. Amnesty International does not have much information about the degree to which W20 submissions have influenced the G20 process, except where W20 has joined other engagement groups to issue joint statements which appear to carry more weight (see section on C20 below).

## **Y20**

**Access:** G20 countries choose two delegates (usually one woman and one man) to send to the Y20 Summit. Each country has a different process for choosing delegates, including essay competitions, mock G20 simulations and video entries. In most cases, it

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<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International UK, *Obstacle Course: How the UK's National Contact Point handles human rights complaints under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, February 2016, [https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/uk\\_ncp\\_review\\_exec\\_summary.pdf](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/uk_ncp_review_exec_summary.pdf)

appears that countries use the Y20 as a form of leadership capacity building for young people. Delegates spend a week at the Y20 Summit participating in workshops, presentations and deliberations before drafting a communique with policy recommendations. Amnesty Argentina also ran online workshops for young people within the Y20 process on issues of gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights.

**Inclusivity:** Although delegates may come from a range of backgrounds, the emphasis on choosing youth leaders results in the selection of participants who are generally highly educated and often already have considerable international experience. Last year, Y20 invited a range of speakers, including Amnesty International, to participate as special guests. Many of these guests were young people from non-G20 countries. To Amnesty International's delegate, who was not a part of policy deliberations, the process appeared to be democratic and inclusive.

**Influence:** Amnesty International has not analyzed whether or how Y20 engagement has influenced G20 outcomes, except where Y20 has joined other engagement groups to issue joint statements which appear to carry more weight (see section on C20 below)

## **C20**

**Access:** In 2018, in addition to national level advocacy on three priority issues, Amnesty International was (at the invitation of the C20 Chair) the International Coordinator of the C20 Gender Working Group, helping to steer discussions on Gender and the formulation of recommendations on Gender Equality from C20 presented to the G20 under Argentina's presidency. An Amnesty International delegate attended the C20 Handover Ceremony where information was shared about Japan's G20 priorities and the shape of the C20 process in Japan. In 2019, we continued as International Coordinator of the Gender Working Group, at the invitation of the Japanese C20 Chair. Amnesty International delegates attended C20 WG Forums and Summits in both 2018 and 2019.

Host governments have the opportunity to control the C20 process by, for instance, merging the C20 process under the T20 and B20 during their presidency and influencing the availability and scope of funding for civil society engagement and participation. Each presidency therefore can determine its own relationship to the C20 and thence the scope of civil society participation that year<sup>4</sup>.

Additionally, the C20 process under each presidency is decided by the C20 Chair and Co-Chair and to date there has been limited continuity about the way in which C20 has operated in different countries. This also opens up the possibility of the process being heavily controlled in some countries, including by the choice of local NGOs as Chair and

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<sup>4</sup> Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, *The Solar System of G20: Engagement Groups*, 9 December 2016, <https://www.boell.de/en/2016/12/08/solar-system-g20-engagement-groups>

Co-Chair that will promote the view of the presiding government. This is being addressed to some extent by the C20 Steering Committee which is in the process of developing Guidelines for C20. CSOs and individuals wishing to attend the C20 meetings can also potentially face the refusal of visas.

**Inclusivity:** In theory, Civil20 is open to any individual or CSO that wishes to participate and has access to the internet.

In practice, access is largely limited to those in existing formal or informal networks as there is no comprehensive outreach to engage a diverse and large number of CSOs. Looking at the participation lists, it would appear that many CSOs, particularly small, local CSOs, are not aware of C20, or if they are, do not understand the structure or process, how to get involved, and/or the value of engaging, or may not have the resources to engage. This means that those who end up participating either join by chance or are asked to engage by partners on an ad-hoc basis.

From Amnesty International's experience of coordinating the C20 Gender WG, over the past two years, many of the same NGOs have participated – especially those who engaged actively in previous C20 processes when they were hosted in their home country. Transparency International, for example, is a key player in C20 and has been since its formal inception in 2010.

The C20 relies on external (and limited) funding, mainly from the host government, but sometimes supplemented by funding from other sources. This means there is often little, if any, funding for smaller CSOs to attend in-person meetings. C20's priorities are in large part set and reinforced at these meetings, and they provide an important networking and information-sharing opportunity for participants. Grass-roots and minority perspectives are therefore often lacking at C20 in-person meetings and those attending do not appear to represent a particularly diverse set of participants.

For the past two years, C20 has used an online platform to discuss and develop policy recommendations, thereby offsetting some concerns about inclusivity. However, as stated above, those who sign-up and engage in the platform need to be aware of it in the first place. Additionally, the outline of recommendations is often set at the first C20 in-person meeting and those who are not in attendance will have less opportunity to influence the framing. Discussions can also take place through online discussions via online meeting platforms, organized through the discussion chains in the platform, but it is difficult to organize meetings that enable all participants in different time zones to join.

While the online platform is a useful space for discussion, in Amnesty International's experience, engagement is relatively low. Comments and feedback on the Gender Working Group policy paper were received from around only a dozen highly-engaged individuals or organizations. We believe that the need to regularly login to the platform

in order to participate can act as a disincentive to participation.

**Influence:** As the International Coordinator of one of C20's working groups for two years running, there has been immense opportunity to shape policy recommendations across all Working Groups, not just the Gender WG. The process has in large part been very participatory and democratic and, wherever possible, participants' thoughts and feedback, whether on policy recommendations or other matters, have been taken on board.

The question about the impact of C20 input on the wider G20 process is unclear. While we saw some correlation between civil society policy recommendations and statements in the G20 Leaders' Declaration, it is hard to establish the degree to which advocacy by individual CSOs including Amnesty International or the wider C20 has been responsible. Moreover, given the combined volume of outputs from all Engagement Groups, which has been increasing year by year, it would be unrealistic to assume that the C20 policy pack is read in full every year. This is why joint statements and strategic advocacy at the governmental and Ministerial level are essential. Last year, two joint statements were issued by various engagement strands that we believe influenced language in the G20 Leaders' Declaration and Ministerial Statements. One notable advocacy success was the elevation of gender as Argentina's fourth cross-cutting priority mentioned in the Leaders' Declaration, which had not been envisaged at the start of its presidency

There is no transparent and easily accessible list of country Sherpas and/or other key individuals involved in G20 at the national level, which makes it difficult for CSOs to engage in strategic advocacy on key issues. Moreover, information about who is heading the various official Engagement Groups is not widely available (except to other leaders of the Engagement Groups e.g. the Steering Committee of C20). This has made it difficult for C20 participants to approach other Engagement Groups to seek sign-on to joint statements, participate in their workshops, and/or collaborate on other matters.

The wider concern about C20's influence in the decision-making process relates to the lack of transparency and accountability in relation to the implementation of G20 commitments by member states. While Ministers' and Leaders' statements are politically binding, there is no legal obligation to implement them. While the implementation of various financial and taxation commitments are monitored by institutions such as the OECD and the World Bank, and there have been efforts by academics to monitor and report on implementation, the G20's own record on reporting on member states' compliance is inadequate to easily assess the impact of civil society engagement.

Despite this, Amnesty International continues to see value in engaging with the G20 as a way to promote and steer the global narrative on important issues with which civil society is engaging with at all levels. The G20's commitment to sustainable economic growth and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals means it remains an

important forum in which civil society can promote vital issues of inequality, human rights and climate change mitigation.

The networking and convening function of C20 can also have useful spin-offs for local civil society that help increase their influence. For example, during Argentina's presidency in 2018, Amnesty International's section in Argentina joins a local Argentinian coalition of CSOs - the Gender Observatory for G20 - that came together to increase civil society outreach and representativeness on gender issues under G20 in general, especially working through W20 and C20. The Gender Observatory was the National Coordinator of the C20 Gender Working Group in 2018 and has continued to participate in this working group during Japan's presidency in 2019. Considering the lack of access of local and small, grassroots organizations to G20 institutional spaces, this experience has proved to be an important way of increasing participation at the national level and achieving greater impact in the G20 decision-making process.

## **BRICS**

The Civil BRICS process was established in 2015, building on discussions and developments from 2011.

**Access:** Amnesty International has not to date engaged centrally in civil society participation in the Civil BRICS process. In 2018, during South Africa's presidency of BRICS, there were reports that Civil BRICS steering committee members from grassroots organizations were concerned about their co-optation by DIRCO and even about their freedom of expression, citing management and control of their voices as a result of 'diplomatic protocol'. The South African Government was also criticized for failing to provide a meaningful level of financial support for civil society engagement, which was instead provided by external funders.<sup>5</sup>

**Influence:** The Civil BRICS Forum, which first took place in 2015, has to date been under-utilized by both governments and civil society. At the moment, the focus of BRICS governments is directed towards economic cooperation, rather than common political and social issues, including human rights. In fact, the civil society engagement has been regarded by some analysts as being merely a "tick box exercise".<sup>6</sup> There are reports

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<sup>5</sup>Bandile Mdlalose, Lisa Thompson, *State of BRICS Social Struggles: Power Plays in Civil Society and Academia*, 24 July 2018, <https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/07/24/state-of-brics-social-struggles-power-plays-in-civil-society-and-academia/>

<sup>6</sup>Bandile Mdlalose, Lisa Thompson, *Are BRICS civil society talkshops just ticking boxes and not making real 'jam'?* 6 June 2019, <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-06-06-are-brics-civil-society-talkshops-just-ticking-boxes-and-not-making-real-jam>



that by the end of 2019, the New Development Bank (the BRICS bank) will have provided loans and funding worth US\$2.3 billion to South African development finance institutions and organizations – most of which are state sponsored enterprises and projects<sup>7</sup>. This level of economic investment from the centralized BRICS financial institution overshadows the potential for BRICS member states to prioritize, and take meaningful steps to address, human rights issues.

### **National level engagement**

Access to national level governments to conduct advocacy around civil society positions, whether developed by individual organizations, local networks or through formal engagement processes for such groupings is an important piece of the jigsaw of civil society influence on decision making processes. What follows are some reflections from Amnesty South Africa on how the process works there.

**Access:** Amnesty South Africa engages with the South African government during national level consultations on multilateral fora, including BRICS. In South Africa, the government generally consults with civil society before deciding on positions on international and Foreign Policy issues. Amnesty South Africa is regularly invited to civil society meetings with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) as part of its Outreach Programme on South Africa's participation at multilateral fora, which includes BRICS and other spaces. DIRCO technical teams are extremely cooperative and open to engagement with organizations such as Amnesty International and other civil society organizations. They are also open to honest reflections around challenges and the reasons behind various positions taken by South Africa in international governmental forums, including BRICS.

**Inclusivity:** These invitations are widely circulated to over 100 civil society organizations and individuals concerned with such issues who are generally already known to DIRCO. Civil society organizations on that list are also invited to share the invitation to others that are not on the list. The meetings are always convened in Pretoria, although the majority of civil society organizations in South Africa operates from Johannesburg and thus takes most or all of a day for someone to attend. Attendance is at the expense of participating organizations and is usually low – rarely more than 10 people attend. This may be because of the cost of attending (time and travel) and also because of a lack of trust by some elements of civil society as to whether the consultation will lead to any results, or whether it is merely a “tick box” exercise by the government to meet their

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<sup>7</sup> Live Mint, *South Africa to get around \$790 million in loans from BRICS Bank*, 1 April 2019, <https://www.livemint.com/industry/banking/south-africa-to-get-around-790-million-in-loans-from-brics-bank-1554128375495.html>

constitutional obligations to consult. Small, grassroots organizations with fewer resources to travel are therefore disadvantaged in relation to access to decision makers and getting their voices heard.

Therefore, despite a progressive approach to citizen consultation and civil society participation in decision making processes around multilateral forums, there is room for improvement in DIRCO's outreach to smaller grassroots organizations.

**Influence:** DIRCO officials are reported to take detailed notes of discussions with civil society and to share information about challenges, constraints and opportunities in multilateral forums under discussion. There is some feedback afterwards on developments and events at subsequent meetings of the Outreach Programme. DIRCO officials are also effective at reaching out to other government departments in order to share information or to ask for action or clarity.

### **World Economic Forum**

Unlike other groupings and spaces addressed here, the World Economic Forum is not a global governance space so much as a multi-stakeholder discussion forum, but inasmuch as it convenes the most senior decision-makers in the world, it is a useful one for civil society to engage with.

**Access:** There is a good civil society engagement team within the WEF which tries to create a sense of community within the civil society group of participants. The team creates relevant spaces in each signature WEF event, proposes civil society representatives for speaking roles, and creates some face-to-face time for civil society with the senior people in WEF, including the chairman, Klaus Schwab.

However, the civil society engagement team holds limited power within WEF itself and can do no more than advocate on civil society representatives' behalf to the real decision-makers. In Amnesty International's experience, the appetite among leaders present for real civil society engagement is limited. The approach to civil society can be described - with some exceptions - as one of containment. Civil society leaders are further impeded by their inability to bring support staff into Davos and other events, which constrains them in their ability to respond to developments on the ground.

**Inclusivity:** The WEF is a closed space and access is by invitation only. Senior leaders from most international NGOs are invited, as well as some individuals whose activities have been particularly influential on the global state. For example, Pakistani film director Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy was invited to address the 47<sup>th</sup> WEF and was the first ever artist invited to co-chair the event.

There is a sense that the civil society engagement unit would like to increase diversity and voices from the ground but that they face considerable constraints in their efforts to

do so.

**Influence:** Amnesty International representatives who have participated in WEF meetings summarised the WEF as a useful forum since it gives civil society leaders access to top-level governmental leaders and top-tier media. Nevertheless, they highlighted that it is always a struggle for civil society organizations to open and access meaningful space for engagement.

**2. What were the main structural and/or practical obstacles you or your colleagues encountered when participating, or seeking to participate, prior to, during and after decision-making (for instance in terms of shaping the agenda of decision-making processes, participation at an early stage when all options are still open, accreditation, physical and/or online access to forums, issuance of visas, availability of funds, access to information relevant to decision-making processes, etc.)?**

The main obstacles are:

- knowing about the process for civil society participation in the first place and who to contact to join
- lack of independence of the participation processes which leads to the possibility of civil society engagement being heavily restricted by governments operating through local NGOs under their control (GONGOs)
- Lack of prior access for small, local and grassroots organizations to officials at national government level and their lack of experience in conducting advocacy at this level
- language barriers. For example, C20 WG generally operate in English and the language of the host country only, which could exclude the participation of grassroots organizations who cannot use those languages
- internet access and connectivity, including to be able to participate in in-person discussion calls
- access to funding. There is little external funding available to participants to travel to working group forums or summits, which limits the diversity of participants in those meetings where decisions on advocacy positions are made
- visas. In 2018, Amnesty International requested information from the Argentinian government on possible measures available to foreign citizens seeking to enter the country in the days leading up to and during the Summit<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Argentina: Authorities must guarantee the right to public protest during the G20 Summit, 28 November 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/11/authorities-must-guarantee-the-right-to-public-protest-during-the-g20-summit/>

amid concerns that some individuals wishing to protest would not be granted visas. In 2019, there has been considerable consternation at the registration process for the upcoming Open Government Partnership Global Summit to be held in Ottawa, Canada from 29-31 May 2019. Some would-be participants have complained that late registration logistics have left it impossible for them to gain visas in times and have compared the process unfavourably to what they see as a more open process for the 2018 Summit in Tbilisi, Georgia.

- location of meetings. In 2018, Amnesty Canada expressed concerns that the location of some G7 meetings in remote locations in Canada restricted access of people to the locations of the meetings and thus restricted their ability to exercise their right to peacefully protest.
- timing of meetings. If ministerial and Leaders' summits are held early during a presidency, then the space for civil society is restricted by the squeezed timetable for outreach, discussion, formulation of common positions and subsequent national level advocacy. Civil society summits that formulate common positions need to be held sufficiently in advance of the Leaders' Summit to enable Sherpas to take account of civil society recommendations in the drafting of outcome documents.
- transparency and accountability in relation to publicly-announced commitments which makes it difficult for civil society to monitor implementation.

**3. Which improvements do you see as key to secure genuine and meaningful participation in decision-making processes of the aforementioned groupings/spaces, including by the underrepresented parts of society as mentioned above, victims of discrimination and marginalization because of their sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as social movements?**

- Processes for civil society engagement in such groupings should be formalised and widely circulated among civil society at all levels to ensure continuity across time. For example, attempts by C20 to formalise guidelines for the C20 process should be supported.
- Steering committees organising civil society participation should be tasked with ensuring wide outreach to all parts of society, including underrepresented parts and should be accountable to participants in relation to their outreach
- The agenda for civil society engagement should be set "bottom up" by civil society itself and not determined solely by the agenda of the grouping. Civil society should be free to advocate for issues not currently on the agenda of a grouping or space
- States should also stocktake their own outreach in relation to civil society participation in all these groupings and spaces and audit the diversity of participation from their own countries. They should explore ways to ensure that information about participation reaches a wider and more diverse section of society, including through use of social media, online information, local

government forums, National Human Rights Institutions and existing civil society networks.

- Information about key officials in charge of the processes of these groupings and spaces in each relevant country should be widely available both within each country and to members of formal civil society engagement processes.
- States should ensure that the timing of ministerial and Leaders' summits does not unduly restrict civil society participation by creating unrealistic timeframes for open, inclusive and diverse civil society consultations and to allow sufficient time between civil society summits and relevant governmental summits to allow Sherpas to take account of civil society positions when drafting outcome documents.
- States should put in place mechanisms to enable and ensure a wide consultation with civil society in all its diversity on issues to be discussed in international forums. States should consider mandating such consultations in their constitutional and legal frameworks. Such consultations should be conducted sufficiently far in advance of upcoming meetings and events to enable the views of civil society to be adequately considered and reflected in the development of state positions.
- Officials tasked with negotiating policies within such groupings should receive sufficient training in human rights and their relationship with the SDGs to ensure that policies contribute meaningfully to the achievement of the SDGs and are human rights compliant
- Civil Society engagement strands operating in these groupings and spaces should make efforts to build bridges between themselves and to advocate jointly on common policy positions, to increase the likelihood of their influencing the decision-making processes
- The increasing engagement of cities and city networks such as Urban20<sup>9</sup> – a network of core cities that are part of the C40<sup>10</sup> network offer an opportunity for local governments to conduct outreach to civil society to ensure their participation in consultations for city-led engagement in these groupings and spaces. Cities in these networks should be encouraged to institutionalise open, inclusive and diverse civil society participation in their consultations ahead of meetings of these groupings and spaces and should share best practices for enabling such consultation among themselves.
- Organizations funding civil society engagement should consider how they can encourage and consolidate the development of independent, inclusive, diverse and participatory civil society networks in such groupings, with sufficient financial and technical support to provide individuals with equal access to all

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<sup>9</sup> About Urban20, <http://www.urban20.org/en/about-u20>

<sup>10</sup> C40 website, <https://www.c40.org/>

forms of participation without discrimination.

- Large NGOs should consider how they can also facilitate the spreading of information about civil society participation in such processes and actively develop programmes to help small and grassroots organizations to participate, through information sharing, capacity building for national level advocacy, and dedicating staff time to supporting local, regional and international civil society networks engaging with these processes. The opportunity of a country's presidency of a grouping or space can be leveraged to use the convening power of civil society processes to build lasting national civil society networks that can help bring the voice of grassroots organizations to these spaces.

#### **4. What has been your experience exercising, or seeking to exercise, your rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association in the holding of meetings of one or several of the aforementioned groupings/spaces and in the margins thereof?**

Amnesty International itself has not experienced any difficulties in organising protests at such meetings, where it has attempted to do so.

In 2018, the Ligue des droits et libertés (LDL) and Amnesty International Canada (English-speaking and Francophone branches) conducted a joint independent monitoring mission (of 40 individuals) between 6-9 June that focused on the respect of civil liberties in the context of the G7 summit between 7-9 June. The mission was established in light of concerns at human rights violations during the policing of protests including around the G20 Leaders' summit in 2010, where out of 1100 people arrested at the G20, only 6% were ever charged with an offence.<sup>11</sup>

The preliminary findings of the joint mission concluded that although there were no serious injuries, an impressive display of police force - both before and during the G7 summit - contributed to creating a "truly fearful atmosphere" for anyone who wished to express themselves openly and peacefully during the summit.<sup>12</sup> The final report concluded that the summit "ultimately took place in a climate of fear and intimidation. The federal and provincial political leaders and police authorities failed to meet their obligation to ensure and facilitate the conditions for exercising freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly, including the right to protest." The report identified

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<sup>11</sup> Amnesty International Canada and Quebec Civil Liberties Union provide a progress report on their joint monitoring mission at the G7, 8 June 2018, <https://www.amnesty.ca/news/amnesty-international-canada%C2%A0and%C2%A0quebec-civil-liberties-union-provide-progress-report-%C2%A0their>

<sup>12</sup> A G7 summit shrouded in fear and intimidation: Preliminary findings of the monitoring mission, 12 June 2018, <https://www.amnesty.ca/news/g7-summit-shrouded-fear-and-intimidation-preliminary-findings-monitoring-mission>

a set of 17 recommendations to the governments of Quebec and Canada which, if implemented, would ensure the right to peaceful protest and freedom of expression and assembly at any future similar events.<sup>13</sup>

Amnesty International also raised concerns at the potential for human rights violations in the policing of protests during the 2018 G20 Leaders' Summit.<sup>14</sup>

**5. Have you or your colleagues been the subject of reprisal because of your participation, or attempt to participate, in a meeting or activity of one or several of the aforementioned groupings/spaces? If so, please provide information on the type of reprisal, the perpetrator(s), whether you reported the case to the organizers and the relevant authorities, and which action they took to address the situation and prevent reoccurrences (if any).**

Amnesty International is not aware of any reprisals against individuals seeking to participate in any of these groupings/spaces.

**6. In your view, what is the overall impact of the economic and financial policies of the aforementioned groupings/spaces on a democratic and equitable international order?**

The economic and financial policies of such groupings and spaces have a considerable impact on a democratic and particularly an equitable international order.

The policy positions of these groupings affect large numbers of people. For example, the G20 covers almost two-thirds of the global population, more than 80 per cent of global GDP and three-quarters of worldwide Trade. Economic & financial policies are not in and of themselves democratic or equitable and can have negative and positive impacts on the full spectrum of human rights.

Increasingly, such groupings are also addressing issues of global governance that go beyond the economic and financial, such as Counter-terrorism strategies, that can have

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<sup>13</sup> The right to protest under threat: G7 Monitoring Mission Report (Executive Summary), 19 September 2019, [http://liguedesdroits.ca/wp-content/fichiers/resume\\_english\\_web\\_20180924.pdf](http://liguedesdroits.ca/wp-content/fichiers/resume_english_web_20180924.pdf). The full report is available in French *Manifester sous intimidation : Rapport de mission d'observation du G7* at <https://amnistie.ca/sinformer/publications/rapport/manifeste-sous-intimidation-rapport-mission-dobservation-g7>

<sup>14</sup> *Argentina: Amnesty International calls on President Macri to address key human rights issues*, 12 April 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/04/argentina-amnistia-internacional-pide-al-presidente-macri-que-aborde-cuestiones-clave-de-derechos-humanos/>, and *Argentina: Authorities must guarantee the right to public protest during the G20 Summit*, 28 November 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/11/authorities-must-guarantee-the-right-to-public-protest-during-the-g20-summit/>

serious adverse consequences for the enjoyment of human rights. Careful oversight is needed to monitor and promote policies that enhance the enjoyment of human rights and to guard against or mitigate the effects of policies that can cause harm.

In Amnesty International's experience, officials tasked with overseeing their country's participation in such groupings often have little understanding of human rights, and how they can be affected by economic and financial policies. This lack of understanding can hamper meaningful discussions on how to ensure proposed policies and commitments not only meet economic objectives but also human rights obligations and objectives.

There are many examples of positive commitments and policies such as promoting universal health coverage and gender equity and mainstreaming. Similarly, there have been welcome commitments to the importance of ensuring sustainable supply chains which respect human rights, and recognition of need for measures to end online violence against women and to ensure just transitions in the age of the digital economy.

However, all too often, these groupings and spaces do not take a progressive approach to ensuring their policies meet the needs of the most marginalized - such as the G20's failure to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, which would help promote gender equity. Similarly, countries within global groupings such as G7/G20 and BRICS have failed to demonstrate global leadership in the current climate crisis such as committing to ending all fossil fuel subsidies and setting the ambitious targets needed to reduce climate emissions rapidly enough to avert the predicted climate change which will have a massive impact on human rights and threaten the maintenance of a democratic and equitable international order.

In addition, even positive top line commitments are often not adequately developed, even in accompanying action plans and there is little accountability for implementation of commitments. One common criticism is that commitments from such groupings rarely include specific financial targets to turn political commitments into reality.

One positive note is the commitment by most, if not all, of the members of such groupings and spaces to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Some 92% of the 169 SDG targets are linked to specific articles of international human rights instruments and thus the SDGs are a useful way to raise issues of compliance of member states of these grouping with their international human rights obligations.

In particular, the more these groupings and spaces can ensure their policies contribute towards the achievement of Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries, Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, the greater will be



their contribution to the realization of a democratic and equitable international order. Conversely, effective, inclusive and diverse civil society participation in these groupings and spaces will greatly contribute to the achievement of these goals, particularly Goal 16.

**7. More broadly, in what way(s) do you see a lack of genuine and meaningful participation and lack of influencing of decision-making process by the public in global governance grouping/spaces in general hampering the realization of a democratic and equitable international order?**

If members of civil society, and the public more generally, lack genuine and meaningful participation and ability to have an impact on the decision-making process of such forums, then the policies and action plans are more likely to have unintended consequences on marginalised and underrepresented groups. Lack of transparency and accountability around commitments will lead to suspicion and mistrust of officials. If people feel left behind by the processes and policies adopted by such groupings, or that their needs are not being met, the likelihood of protests increases, with all the attendant strains on states to ensure human rights compliant policing.

On the other hand, the civil society networks that have been set up in recent years, and which are slowly being strengthened also allow the exchange of views between many different sectors of civil society from different countries and regions and from different sectors of society. This national, regional and international civil society exchange strengthens mutual understanding, shares learnings from positive and negative experiences and contributes to the development of a more equitable international order.

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