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The views expressed in the response are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of 2019 C20.

Questionnaire

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 BM in terms of:

- Access;
- Inclusivity; and
- Influencing the decision-making process.

I had chances to participate in 2018 W7 in Ottawa and 2019 W7 in Paris as a participant, and have been involved also in 2019 C20 which took place this April in Tokyo as its Co-Chair. For G7 and G20, citizens' right to participate in discussions has been ensured to a certain extent through establishment of engagement groups whose activities are included in their official process. However, their influence on decision-making process is another story. From my experiences on the above-mentioned fora, I should say that it totally depends on the relations between civil society and each government, and also on recognition of each government in terms of the importance of participation of citizens in policy decisions. In relation to management of participation of citizens' groups such as C20 in decision-making processes, the attitude and perception of host country or presidency matters a lot.

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.)?

Even though official engagement groups are established at G20 and G7, there is very little space for us to shape the agenda as well as to participate in official discussion and to influence decision-making, unless our agenda is very much in line with the focus of respective host country, which often is not the case. Sometimes, it made us feel that engagement groups are just there to give governments an excuse that they listen to diverse voices.

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?

- Understanding of the importance of democracy by respective member country
- Better political environment in each country that nurtures democracy, broad-based participation, and civil and political rights

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?

Fortunately, since W7 and C20 have positions of official engagement groups of G7 and G20 respectively, we have not had explicit obstacles to exercise our rights to freedom

of expression or peaceful assembly. It does not mean, of course, that our voices are heard.

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).

Fortunately, again, we have not experienced any acts of reprisals, at least in Japan, due to the participation in W7 and C20.

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?

In relation to G7 and G20, their agendas have been very much concentrating on economic and financial policies, which, in a way, give them an excuse to avoid issues of democratic and equitable international order. It is especially in this sense, I believe, that engagement groups such as C20, C7, W20 and W7 have a lot to contribute to the discussions of G7 and G20, since the strong thrust toward neo-liberal economic and political paradigm pushed by the major economies has significant impact on the widening gap between few rich people and the rest of the populations domestically and internationally.

It might sound a bit too extreme, but the present economic and financial policies directed by G7 and/or G20 have contributed to division, instead of unity or harmony, and to uncertainty and anxiety, instead of peace, democracy and sustainability.

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?

Neo-liberal economic and political paradigm that dominates the present global governance and disproportionately benefits a few global multilateral enterprises will keep widening the gap between rich and poor, thereby increasing uncertainty and dissatisfaction among the general public both in developed and developing countries. Uncertainty and dissatisfaction tend to lead to violent extremism in many parts of the world, which gives governments a good reason to take up oppressive measures under the name of encountering terrorism without dealing with the root causes of such phenomena. This will pose a major threat to democracy and human rights.