

# Does the World Need a Government?

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**The following is a summary of a meeting held at Birkbeck College, University of London, on 14-15 August 2025.**

## **Introduction**

Images of the Earth from space reveal it to be a fragile and isolated planet adrift in a vast and, as far as we can judge, uncaring universe. It seems likely that the continued survival and well-being of humanity on this planet will depend on developing global political institutions commensurate with this reality. In particular, strengthened institutions of global governance will be required to deal effectively with planetary-scale existential threats, including climate change, biodiversity loss, endemic warfare, and the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation, that existing sovereign nation-states appear unable to address. On the horizon, issues of global governance will also arise in the context of artificial intelligence and the exploration of space. This is therefore an appropriate time to consider alternative visions of global governance, and to consider whether the building of cosmopolitan political institutions would better enable humanity to address the global challenges of the twenty-first century.

In order to stimulate debate on these important topics, a two-day (hybrid) conference was held at Birkbeck College, University of London, on 14-15 August 2025. The meeting was organised by Birkbeck's School of Natural Sciences, in association with the Centre for the Study of Internationalism. It aimed to connect academics working in the field of international relations with civil society organisations working for improved global governance, as well as young people able to advance these studies into the next generation. The meeting program and abstracts of the presentations are available [here](#). The following summary is based on the authors' abstracts,

supplemented by my own notes (I also acknowledge the short summary produced by Andreas Bummel for Democracy Without Borders). Recordings of the presentations are available here.

## **Day 1: Historical perspectives and institutional proposals**

The meeting was opened by Birkbeck's Vice-Chancellor, **Professor Sally Wheeler**, OBE, who welcomed participants to the College. In her remarks, Professor Wheeler stressed the important role that universities have in pursuing 'blue-skies' interdisciplinary thinking of all kinds, and recalled Birkbeck's proud tradition in this respect. Professor Wheeler noted that the world currently faces major conflicts, such as those in Gaza and Ukraine, in which the world's national governments appear either unable or unwilling to intervene, and that the failure to enforce supra-national resolutions by the United Nations causes great difficulties in resolving such conflicts. Thus, she concluded that the broad topic of international governance to be addressed by the meeting is important and timely.

Following this brief introduction, the former US congressional advisor and speechwriter (and frequent contributor to these pages) **Tad Daley** got the meeting underway in earnest with a magisterial summary of '*World Government: One of the Great Ideas in the History of Political Philosophy*'. Tad surveyed the long history, dating at least as far back as Dante in 1313, and made the case for their profound relevance to the great challenges of the 21st Century. He summarised the brief but incandescent period in the 1940s, when a genuine social and political movement arose for "One World or None" and shared some anecdotes about his relationships with some of the leading protagonists in that movement, including two who went on to serve as United States senators. He argued that portraying world government as one of the great ideas in the history of political philosophy is perhaps the best way to make it into a serious possibility for the future of humanity.

Tad was followed by **Dorothea Christiana**, author of The United Peoples, who spoke on '*The United Peoples: Bringing People Together Who Rarely Meet – But Should*'. The United Peoples project is a result of doctoral research on the United Nations and its relationship with Civil Society. The United Peoples is not an organisation nor an institution; rather it comprises an ecosystem that aims to complement the work of the UN. The intention is to bring healing to the people and the planet that sustains them, where participants can dwell face to face and heart to heart to see the dignity and humanity in one another whilst maybe discovering some more of it in themselves. Dorothea reported that they are now teaching United Peoples diplomacy at universities in Brazil and Germany, and have plans to further expand these educational activities.

The next two talks examined the case for improvements in the UN system. **Daniele Archibugi**, Professor of Innovation, Governance and Public Policy at Birkbeck College, asked '*Can the UN Security Council guarantee peace?*' Summarising some of his recently published work, Daniele argued that while expanding the Council's membership was important, it would not make the body more effective. Notably, all Security Council resolutions have passed with a majority of the

Council, only being vetoed by a small number (often just one) permanent member, and this would still be an issue if the veto power remains, even if the Council is expanded. He argued that “the veto is a pathology of the security council,” and called for structural reforms, including limits on veto power and greater involvement of regional organisations, to strengthen its capacity to maintain peace. Daniele also noted that it would be desirable to add a voice for the worlds citizens in UN deliberations.

**Ishaan Shah** from the Coalition for the UN We Need (C4UN) continued the theme of strengthening the UN with his talk on ‘*From Fragmentation to Unity: Building the UN We Need Through Inclusive Global Governance.*’ Ishaan argued that stronger global governance institutions through transformative UN reform, potentially including a Parliamentary Assembly or even a federal world government, may be necessary in the face of planetary-scale threats—from climate change to nuclear risks. He stressed that we need to show that global democracy can work in order to build trust in the system, and that to do this we will need a “new architecture of cooperation.” Drawing on C4UN’s history, advocacy, and partnerships, Ishaan highlighted the essential role of civil society in navigating geopolitical headwinds to build accountable, inclusive, and trust-based institutions for a UN fit for the 21st century.

The final talk of the morning session was given jointly by **Aishwarya Machani**, Member of the Global Citizens' Assembly Network, and **Reema Patel**, Implementation Director of the Global Citizens' Assembly, who gave a presentation on ‘*A Global Citizens' Assembly.*’ Their presentation explored the idea of a deliberative global citizens’ assembly and the role it could play in strengthening global governance. Their case for a global citizens’ assembly built on research from the fields of deliberative democracy and global governance, lessons learnt from democratic innovations across the world, and first-hand experience of advocating for global governance reform.

Following a lunch break, **Andreas Bummel**, Executive Director, *Democracy without Borders*, returned to the theme of UN reform. In his talk on ‘*The draft Second UN Charter and the role of a Parliamentary Assembly,*’ Andreas noted that Article 109 of the UN Charter provides for a review conference after ten years from its signing in 1945, but that this has never been implemented. With this in mind, he introduced key elements of a draft *Second UN Charter*, presented by an international study group on the occasion of the 2024 UN Summit of the Future. Aimed at reimagining the United Nations for contemporary global challenges, the document seeks to strike a balance between pragmatism and visionary reform. Among its key institutional changes is the proposed creation of a Parliamentary Assembly as a complementary body to the General Assembly. The presentation offered an insight into how a Parliamentary Assembly could function within the UN system as a result of a UN Charter revision and contribute to a more democratic and representative way of global deliberation and decision-making.

Building on the previous presentation, **John Vlasto**, Executive Board Chair, World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy, spoke on ‘*Global Governance of the Earth System.*’

John began by noting that change is coming, whether we like it or not – the only question is whether humanity chooses to take agency by managing our interaction with nature, or faces the consequences of failing to do so. He went on to explore the possible future of global environmental governance within the framework of a global constitution, offering a long-term perspective on integrated and democratic planetary stewardship. The presentation then turned to the medium-term proposals set out in the draft Second UN Charter, with a focus on two key institutional innovations: the creation of an Earth System Council and a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly, designed to strengthen the legitimacy, coordination, and accountability of global decision-making. John illustrated the value of such global-level decision making by reference to the elimination of smogs in London – this was achieved by placing strict limits on the burning of coal in the city (via the Clean Air Acts of 1956 and 1968), but this was only possible because a government existed able to enact and enforce the relevant legislation. Something similar will be necessary at a global level to mitigate climate change and other global-level problems. With this in mind, John summarised short-term proposals for an International Environment Court, strengthening the climate COP process, and the appointment of a UN Special Envoy for Future Generations. He argued that, taken together, these proposals form a strategic pathway—from practical, achievable steps today to the deeper structural reforms needed to build a just, democratic, and sustainable global order.

John was followed by **Maja Groff**, Convenor of the Climate Governance Commission and co-author of Global Governance and the Emergence of Global Institutions for the 21st Century, who spoke on ‘*Global Unfinished Business and Next Generation Architecture -- A Crossroads.*’ Maja emphasised the importance of “peace through law,” and summarised the historical development of the international legal system, beginning with the Hague Peace Conference of 1899 and the Permanent Court of Arbitration up to the UN Charter and the International Criminal Court. She argued that the range of existing international instruments and organizations contain the seeds and foundations for their own growth and transformation, but that nation-states have yet to come to terms with the implications of these developments. Maja also addressed the nature of novel, convergent challenges currently confronted by the international community, not least unprecedented ecological and Earth system challenges. She argued that we are at an inflection point in history, and that new efforts must be consciously and strategically made to ‘weatherproof’ the international system. Such efforts must be both visionary and practical, and employ high levels of technical expertise drawing on the best available talent around the world. An example is provided by the Mobilizing an Earth Governance Alliance (MEGA).

**Mathias Koenig-Archibugi**, Associate Professor of Global Politics at the London School of Economics and Political Science, then gave his on his presentation on ‘*World Government as an Empirical Question*’ in which he summarized the conclusions of his recent book *The Universal Republic: A Realistic Utopia?* Although fundamental transformations of global governance may be considered unsuitable topics for empirical research, Mathias argued that the theories, methods and data of contemporary political science can help improve the debates on three key questions:

(i) whether a world government is achievable, (ii) whether it would be viable as a democratic polity in the long run, and (iii) and whether it would be desirable given the diversity of the world's population. assessed the survival prospects of a hypothetical democratic global polity. While cautious about the likelihood of the emergence of a world government in the first place, Mathias concluded that the structural conditions for its stability are probably stronger, and concerns about a lack of democratic legitimacy probably weaker, than are often assumed.

This theme was taken up by **Farsan Ghassim**, Assistant Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin, who gave an on-line presentation on '*Institutional Design and International Public Attitudes Toward Global Governance: A Worldwide Survey Experiment.*' His presentation summarised the results of a recent ground-breaking paper co-authored with Jonas Tallberg (Stockholm University) and Maksim Zubok (University of Oxford). This paper reported the results of a survey experiment in nine countries across the world. The results showed that international public attitudes toward international organisations are most positively affected by cosmopolitan design features such as independent representatives, majority voting, and substantive policy powers to address real-world problems. Farsan concluded that policymakers could therefore generate greater support for global governance through relevant reforms of international organisations. His latest research builds on his prior work such as '*Who on Earth Wants a World Government, What Kind, and Why? An International Survey Experiment*' (with Markus Pauli) which is currently among the most read articles in the *International Studies Quarterly*.

After a welcome coffee break, **Heikki Patomäki**, Professor of World Politics, University of Helsinki and author of *World Statehood*, discussed '*World-Making Projects, The Cunning of Reason, and the Evolution of World Statehood.*' Heikki considered the prospects of global political integration by developing the notion of "worldmaking projects" (WMPs). Through an analysis of past and present trajectories of political organisation and related developments of infrastructures of communication and movement, he examined how specific conjunctures, crises, and transformative projects have opened space for novel institutional forms. His analysis distinguished among various types of WMPs, including changing forms of liberal, socialist and fascist WMPs in the 20th and 21st centuries, each embodying distinct imaginaries and institutional aspirations. He advanced a non-linear, multi-layered conception of political evolution involving a cosmopolitan social democratic, or democratic-socialist, WMP. Heikki stressed the contingent nature of transformative moments and the role of reflexive agency in shaping alternative futures, and offered a nuanced account of how a layer of world statehood may evolve as an outcome of worldmaking practices responsive to shared human and planetary concerns.

Heikki was followed by **Aaron McKeil**, Academic Director for the MSc International Strategy and Diplomacy programme, London School of Economics, who summarised the conclusions of his recent book *Cosmopolitan Imaginaries and International Disorder*. Aaron noted that although the idea of a cosmopolitan order embracing all humankind is ancient, and that

following the Cold War was widely believed to be an emerging future, it has been opposed by a revolt against globalism. Why have attempts to construct cosmopolitan order struggled to emerge in the modern global world? Aaron argued that this is because advocacy for cosmopolitan order reform has struggled to recognize the political identities of states and populations and to legitimize its proposed political hierarchies. As a result, these efforts have been overwhelmed by states shoring up their power and remobilizing exclusionary nationalist identities, especially when struggles are intensified in contexts of international instability and economic turmoil.

The final presentation of the day was given (on-line) by **Eva Erman**, Professor of Political Science, University of Stockholm, who summarised her paper '*Does Global Democracy Require a World State?*' Eva argued that this question is usually answered with an unequivocal 'No', and that it is generally argued that a world state is neither feasible nor desirable. Instead, different forms of global governance arrangements have been suggested, involving non-hierarchical and multilayered models with dispersed authority. In her presentation, Eva adopted a 'function-sensitive' approach, resisting the predominant binary view of a world state (i.e., either accepting it or rejecting it) and offering a more nuanced answer to the question. A basic presumption of the approach is that the content, justification and status of principles of democracy are dependent on the aim they are set out to achieve, what functions they are intended to regulate, and the relationship between those functions. Within this framework, Eva advanced the important concept of 'sufficient stateness' and argued that this would require supranational legislative entities, and perhaps supranational judicial entities, but not necessarily supranational executive entities.

In the **general discussion** concluding the first day, the eminent historian of world federalism, Joseph Baratta, who attended the meeting on-line, posed the question: "What historical event or trend of events can we cite to convince a busy official or responsible politician of the need to take another step toward establishing a democratically representative, majority rule, international parliament?" Participants considered his question and suggested various answers, ranging from climate change to the control of artificial intelligence, but were unable to identify any particular historical event. Regarding artificial intelligence, Petros Gelepithis, Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Science at the University of Crete, argued that, rather than being seen as a threat, humans ought to be able to design AI systems to help implementing *direct* global democracy.

## **Day 2: Additional institutional proposals and some philosophical and cosmic perspectives**

The second day began with an on-line presentation by **Luis Cabrera**, Professor of Political Science, Griffith University, Australia, on '*Regional Organizations and World Government.*' Luis pointed out that many past advocates of world federalism envisioned a prominent role not only for nation- states and global governing institutions, but also for regional organizations. Luis examined how far such visions have been borne out. He stressed the importance of the EU in

terms of its depth and breadth of integration, but also noted that there is already ‘more world government’ at the regional level elsewhere in the world than is often appreciated. He concluded that “we have more world government than we think, but less than we need,” and that regional integration can be an element towards achieving better global governance.

Luis was followed by **Josephine Borghi**, Research Group Leader at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, and Professor in Health Economics at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Josephine gave an on-line presentation on ‘*Transnational health challenges as an entry point for cosmopolitanism.*’ She pointed out that health challenges like pandemics, and those associated with climate change and migration, transcend national borders, exposing the limitations of existing governance structures which are nationally framed. Josephine argued that transnational health risks provide an entry point for advocating for cosmopolitan approaches to global governance. She showed how cosmopolitan principles can guide the redesign of global health systems and financing mechanisms to more effectively manage common goods for health and advance universal health coverage worldwide. For example, a World Parliament could help enforce global health agreements and support the coordination of global health actors, as well as enable the equitable sharing of resources.

The third talk of the morning was given (again on-line) by **James Bacchus**, Distinguished University Professor of Global Affairs at the University of Central Florida, a former member of the US House of Representatives, and former chairman of the Appellate Body of the WTO. Jim stressed that most of the problems we face are problems of *governance*, and can only be addressed by improving governance, especially democratic governance. With this in mind, he summarised the conclusions of his recent book *Democracy for a Sustainable World: The Path from the Pnyx*, in which he maintains that the path to global sustainable development is participatory democratic global governance. He argued especially for a central role for ‘sortition’, where representative citizens are selected at random to sit on decision-making bodies (as practiced in the ancient Athenian democracy). His book draws on the successes and the shortfalls of Athenian democracy to offer specific proposals for meeting today’s challenges by constructing participatory democratic global governance at every level of human endeavour to enable human flourishing in a sustainable world.

Following these three on-line presentations, the meeting moved back to in-person presentations with a talk by **Nils Gilman**, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President at the Berggruen Institute and co-author of *Children of a Modest Star*. Nils spoke on ‘*The IAEA as a Model for ‘Planetary governance*’. Rather than trying to build a unitary world federalist government, Nils proposed creating specialized planetary governance institutions that focus on specific risks and where states delegate narrow authority over specific functional tasks. He argued the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) offers an interesting model: initially focused on promoting the development of civilian nuclear energy, the IAEA evolved to address the planetary threat of nuclear proliferation. He argued that the IAEA embodies several key characteristics of planetary governance institutions: narrow technical scope, expertise, accepted

sovereignty limitations (inspections), and evolved authority, demonstrating states can cede specific sovereignty when facing shared existential threats. He argued that similar planetary governance institutions should be built to mitigate climate change and pandemic risk.

The final talk of the morning was given by **Stefan Pedersen**, Research Fellow at the University of Sussex, who spoke on ‘*Loyalty to Earth: A Precondition for Planetary State Formation.*’ Drawing on his earlier paper, [Planetarism: A Paradigmatic Alternative to Internationalism](#), Stefan argued that that loyalty to Earth, rather than to individual nation-states, is the missing cultural foundation for planetary political integration, and that ‘planetarism’ is a comprehensive theoretical alternative to nationalism that points to ‘Earthlings’ as a new political identity. He argued that “the planet is already a nascent political community anticipating its self-governance,” and that a tipping point will occur once a majority of people see the Earth in political terms as their primary home and habitat. Stefan argued that science (especially Earth system science), and images of the Earth from space, are already developing this perspective.

After lunch, **Gaia Vince**, an award-winning science writer and broadcaster, summarised her recent book ‘*Nomad Century: How to Survive the Climate Upheaval.*’ Gaia argued that present global governance cannot keep pace with current global problems. Earth systems don’t take notice of arbitrary lines of borders drawn on maps – these lines are not real but are human-made and not helpful when we have to deal with common problems. For example, as climate change makes large parts of the world increasingly uninhabitable, hundreds of millions of people will have to move. This migration is already underway and is inevitable. It is a consequence of global fossil energy use, global poverty, global food and water inequalities, global biodiversity loss, and global insecurity. None of these issues can be solved at the city or nation level. For instance, building new resilient energy infrastructure requires bilateral, regional and global agreements. Gaia concluded that planetary scale crises demand planetary scale governance to create a better, more responsive human world that can respond to the more hazardous and destabilised earth systems.

**Tiziana Stella**, Executive Director of the [The Streit Council](#), then gave an on-line presentation on ‘*Federal Union as Heuristic Framework: Scalability, Freedom and Constraint before AGI and Beyond Earth.*’ Tiziana argued that artificial intelligence, space expansion, and persistent great power competition will demand a change in governance structures before technological lock-in forecloses institutional alternatives. Tiziana proposed federal union as a heuristic framework for addressing these challenges, highlighting Madison's compound republic (1787-1789) and Streit's (ultimately unsuccessful) open nucleus federal union proposal (1939) as historical examples. She argued that federal unions exhibit a capacity for positive feedback mechanisms essential for managing compounding complexity, providing a framework for human decision-making as technology advances into the AI and space domains.

**Robert Whitfield**, Chairman of the [One World Trust](#), then spoke on ‘*Does an AI World need a Government?*’ Robert reminded the meeting that until a few decades ago humanity’s greatest

risks were natural, but now they are man-made. He argued that the greatest such threat today may be uncontrolled advanced artificial intelligence (AI). There are attempts to develop both technical solutions and governance solutions, but Robert argued that the risks are currently growing far faster than the capability to contain them. The first challenge is to address the problems of advanced AI within the existing governance structures, but the issue of enforcement is critical. One possibility might be a ‘Baruch Plan’ for AI, but the original Baruch Plan for nuclear energy was never implemented and creating something comparable for AI may be just as elusive. Robert concluded that it is difficult to imagine reliable enforcement short of a governance structure where, at the global level, there is a World Government capable of protecting the world from the downsides of advanced artificial intelligence. He argued that this may prove critical for the future of humanity.

The next talk was given by **Clément Vidal** from the Free University of Brussels on ‘*Governing the Planetary Transition: Integrating Complexity Science and Evolution into International Relations.*’ Clément drew attention to the increasing complexity in evolutionary history, noting that biological evolution demonstrates that it is possible to manage increasingly complex systems. However, he argued that pressing planetary challenges across the geosphere, biosphere, and noosphere exceed the capacity of individual nation-states, demanding new principles for international relations and planetary governance. Building on a recent [paper](#), he considered the potential emergence of a ‘planetary superorganism’ and argued that effective global governance must develop mechanisms to manage cooperation analogous to previous major evolutionary transitions in biology. By integrating principles from complexity science and cybernetics, he considered the design of adaptive governance systems and emphasized the critical role of control mechanisms—such as buffers and hierarchical modular structures—that balance centralized coordination with distributed action across local to global scales. Finally, in addition to these ‘cybernetic’ considerations, Clément also noted the importance of new human *stories* to provide a shared sense of purpose and to introduce positive aspirations into human societies.

After the break, **Thomas Moynihan**, a historian of ideas and Research Affiliate at the [Centre for the Study of Existential Risk](#), asked ‘*Are We Accidentally Building A World-Brain?*’ Thomas pointed out that over the past 150 years, various voices have questioned whether — through the increasing coordination and cooperation of humans across the planet's surface — we might be building a sort of “planetary brain”, whether we intend to or not. His talk explored the history of such ideas, tracing them to their roots in pre-Darwinian theories of the trajectories of evolution to the concept of the ‘noosphere’ introduced by Teilhard de Chardin and Vladimir Vernadsky. Tom uncovered numerous forgotten and discarded voices who had thought along these lines, and discussed visions which have cast the coalescence of a “world-brain” in both a positive and negative light: as either out salvation from extinction, or the annihilation of human autonomy.

**Nikola Schmidt**, Head of Centre for Governance of Emerging Technologies at Institute of International Relations in Prague, then spoke on ‘*The Responsible Cosmopolitan State in Space Politics,*’ summarising arguments presented in his recent edited volume [Governing Emerging](#)

*Space Challenges.* Nikola noted that, the more we learn about the universe, the more responsibility is placed on political authorities and the question “Who is in charge?” gains ever greater significance. For example, the risk of a meteorite impact is a global, collective problem, but national governments are not equipped to deal with such global challenges. He introduced the concept of a ‘responsible cosmopolitan state’ as a practical framework for addressing urgent challenges in space politics – i.e., states can embed moral responsibility in their foreign policies through informed, ethically grounded decision-making. Central to this is a redefinition of sovereignty: not as radical political autonomy, which isolates state interests and undermines global cooperation, but as ‘sovereignty-as-autonomy’ – the capacity to act responsibly, with awareness of global consequences. From this perspective, he argued that states can govern areas like planetary defence, space mining, orbital debris, and high-power laser deployment in a morally legitimate way. Importantly, this vision of cosmopolitan responsibility operates within the existing international order, enabling even small states to shape global policy.

The space governance theme was continued by **Ian Crawford**, Professor of Planetary Science and Astrobiology at Birkbeck College London, who spoke on ‘*Who Speaks for Humanity? Some political implications of a human future in space.*’ Building on the conclusions of a recent book chapter, Ian argued that future human activities in outer space will require the development of political institutions able legitimately to speak for humanity as a whole in this transnational domain. He identified a range of possibilities, including the formation of a world space agency and a strengthening of the UN system, but argued that ultimately the logic points in the direction of bringing space exploration within the remit of a federal world government, the creation of which would also be desirable for numerous additional reasons. Although, at present, humanity may lack a sufficiently strong sense of global community for the formation of strong global political institutions, Ian agreed with Stefan Pedersen that the cosmic perspectives provided by space exploration can help lay the psychological foundations on which such institutions might be built. He also agreed with Clément Vidal that creating a shared sense of *purpose* will be valuable in uniting humanity, and argued that a global space exploration programme could provide a positive focus for such aspirations.

The final talk of the meeting was given by **Francisco Diego**, a lecturer and research fellow in Astronomy at UCL, on *Paradise Planet Earth: A Unique Cosmic Oasis Under Threat*. Francisco presented a masterful, ‘big historical’, summary of the evolution of the universe, our planet, and life on Earth, that produced ‘a global paradise’. He reminded the meeting that humankind emerged in Africa, populating much of the planet’s land area by migration over tens of thousands of years. Settling at higher geographical latitudes gradually modified skin colour, due to the lower intensity of local solar radiation, but fundamentally all human beings are African. Migration was followed by exploration, including by African settlers from Europe, seeking new maritime trade routes. America was then ‘discovered’, already populated by African settlers that had arrived via Asia a few thousand years before. The European discovery of the rich natural resources of the global south became a tragedy for the local populations and for the natural

environment, which destruction has increased at an accelerated pace in the last few decades. As a result, Francisco argued powerfully that the original global paradise is being destroyed by invasions, pointless genocidal wars, rainforest destruction, loss of biodiversity, and land, oceans and air contaminated with toxic chemicals. He concluded that this global catastrophe now requires urgent global solutions involving the unified actions of all nations, leading him to argue for a strengthening of the United Nations (e.g., by removing the veto power from the Security Council) and perhaps the creation of a global collective government.

While individual perspectives differed, a shared sense emerged from the meeting: current arrangements of global governance are incapable of dealing effectively (or even at all!) with mounting global problems. There was thus a consensus that much more effective approaches to global governance are urgently needed. In terms of a long-term vision, there was a consensus that any kind of future global polity would probably need to be based on the principles of democracy, federalism, and the implementation of subsidiarity on a global scale. The wide-ranging discussions showed that there is no shortage of ideas or expertise, but further progress will require increased political will and, crucially, wider public engagement.