

**The Report of the Chairperson
To the Council of the World Federalist Movement
Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark,
October 2003**

On Wednesday, October 8th, I received an e-mail from the Hon. Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, former Foreign Minister of Canada, and now Director of the Liu Institute for International Affairs at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, inviting me to the launch of his book, *Navigating a New World: Canada's Global Future*.

Granted that Dr. Axworthy's book is written from a Canadian perspective, it is nevertheless a book for world federalists. In uncompromising and even stark prose, Dr. Axworthy lays out a choice of futures: the choice between a complex, challenging yet democratic world order based on the rule of law, effective institutions of global governance, human rights and human security, and multilateral approaches to world issues from conflict resolution to HIV/AIDS; or a unilateral, imperial vision of American hegemony, a very new world order promulgated by the Bush administration and tested in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Our Council meeting, with its well conceived public *fora*, is at the *nexus* of this choice. Our contribution to the former approach to world order has been carefully, painstakingly formulated over more than half a century. Yet we dare not assume that we have all the answers. Voices from the global south, from environmentalists, religion and women are too articulate, and too strong to ignore, and we are always on the verge of having to "go back to the drawing board."

Wearying this may be, but it ought never to discourage us. Federalism is, by its very nature, an extraordinarily fluid and flexible philosophy of governance. We learn as we work together, and, as I welcome you to this meeting, I anticipate much learning – and much work.

We are, of course, responsible as a Council to review our movement's progress towards implementing the decisions of the 2002 Congress in London, and to receive the accountability reports of our excellent International secretariat.

But there are sobering organizational questions for us to address as well.

As we evolve, shall we become more a member-based organization, or remain a member organization governed NGO, or develop a hybrid of sorts?

Is it time to revisit and reconfigure our quasi-parliamentary governance structure, or develop something more creative for an international NGO in a less straightforward age, an age in which we are still trying to imagine what international democracy might look like?

Is it time to set aside our standing committee structure, or to develop a “sessional committee” approach, allowing for real work on real issues to be undertaken at Council meetings?

How shall we engage our membership worldwide more effectively, whether as individuals or in the context of MO’s and AO’s?

Is our most effective strategy our continued UN support and reform work, or are there other arena’s in which to promote our ideas?

I have no clear sense of how we will address, let alone resolve these challenges, but I do look forward to the attempt.

As Chairperson, it is, of course, my first duty to preside over our work together, which I did at our incoming Council meeting in London, and will during these days together in Copenhagen.

I also participate in the meetings, both by phone and in person, of the Executive Committee.

Regular correspondence, mainly through e-mail, with the IS and our membership internationally comprises a significant amount of my work, as does reflection on our Council agenda.

In addition to these basic tasks, I answer invitations to write and to lecture about world federalism in the academy, the religious networks concerned with questions of justice, peace and world order, and in the broader community in general.

I am also privileged to maintain ongoing conversations with friends of our movement, like Dr. Axworthy, now heading the Liu Institute.

In all of this, I consider myself privileged to be the Chair of our Council, and beginning my eighth year at your service.

Dr. James Christie
Council Chair