

Policy Statement on the G20

WHEREAS

- WFM supports the development of global governance that is more representative, just and democratically accountable;
- WFM supports economic global governance that promotes a more equitable economic world order, the elimination of global poverty and realization of the MDGs;

NOTING

- That the G20 describes itself as “the premier forum for our international economic cooperation;”

AND RECOGNIZING

- That the G20 is a more representative forum than its predecessor, the G8.
- That the G20 recently mobilized coordinated international action to mitigate the effects of the financial crisis and has encouraged additional international financial governance reforms.
- And that the formation and continuance of the G20 reflects the advent of a multipolar world order.

CONCERNED HOWEVER

- That preferences for ad hoc deliberative forums like the G20 undermine the relevance of international treaty-based organizations, including the United Nations
- And that, as a forum to promote international cooperation, the G20 has numerous political and legal deficiencies. These deficiencies include:

(1) Lack of democratic accountability.

- Billions of the world’s citizens, mostly the poor, are not even indirectly represented through the participation of their government.
- The G20 has to date developed far fewer arrangements for consultative processes with citizen representatives that are utilized at other international organizations.

(2) Questionable legality and legitimacy.

- There is no international treaty underpinning to the work of the G20. It lacks a codified global consensus supporting its membership, purpose, functions and decisions.
- Transparency. Inadequate information on the work of the G20 (both internally among members as well as to the wider global public) represents unacceptably opaque arrangements that do not meet minimal standards of public accountability.

(3) Structural deficiencies.

- Membership. There is no consensus on the appropriate number of members, who they are and on what basis they are selected.

- There is no G20 Secretariat. Lacking its own permanent staff, the required work of the G20 is carried forward by “working groups” of national officials, selected think tanks and selected international organizations.

(4) Concerns over mandate and agenda.

- Its status as a self-appointed ad hoc forum of mostly powerful and wealthy governments contributes to concerns that the G20 agenda is dominated by “haves” deciding global policy to the disadvantage of the world’s “have-nots.”

- The G20 requires mechanisms to ensure that the needs and priorities of the majority of humanity.

THEEFORE THE WORLD FEDERALIST MOVEMENT CALLS FOR, AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY:

(1) Action by governments and other international stakeholders to address the urgent need for improved legal and institutional foundation for international economic governance.

(2) The rooting of reformed institutional and legal economic governance within the framework of the United Nations System. This could be achieved through a reformed and re-mandated ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council), or through a new regionally representative body such as the Economic Coordination Council as called for by the Stiglitz Commission.

(3) In the near term, the G20 develop regularized and transparent procedures for consultation with civil society organizations.