One way to look at the G-20 is as a laboratory for the evolution of international politics in a fast-changing world. The group’s first summit meeting in November 2008, convened by then-President George W. Bush at the height of the financial crisis, symbolized the world’s new power configuration and the need to have emerging powers at the table. Indeed, as more than one writer in these pages points out, traditional Western powers like the United States lost a great deal of credibility owing to their role as the source of the crisis. Now with world leaders gathering in Cannes four years later, it’s a good time to ask how well rising and established powers have done in fashioning solutions to urgent global problems.

The G-20’s massive package of budgetary stimulus in 2008-09 was a dramatic entrance for a new diplomatic forum. It also may have fostered unrealistic expectations.

Rising Powers and the G-20

Are the World’s Emerging Powers Rising to the Challenge?

The challenges of global economic growth are not the only problems that cry out for the kind of cooperation the G-20 embodies.

Club Politics. World leaders gather for the opening session of the G-20 summit in June 2010 in Toronto, Ontario. The G-20 is now recognized as the world’s premier forum for economic issues, though some argue its inclusion of emerging powers like China, India, and Brazil make other topics ripe for discussion. (Photo by Eric Feferberg/Getty Images)
After you help keep the world from sinking into another Great Depression, what do you do for an encore? Indeed, G-20 leaders have been shifting from crisis response mode to longer-term systemic issues. With the group’s core traditional responsibility for global economic growth and financial stability its top agenda item is the imbalance of major economies that are either too dependent on exports or, conversely, spending by their own consumers. The mutual assessment process being led by experts at the International Monetary Fund is aimed at identifying the sources of those imbalances, and the policy steps governments can take to redress them. Regulation of financial markets, to avoid a repeat of the recent meltdown, is the other priority.

**A Wider Agenda**

If the G-20’s defining characteristic is the way it brings emerging and established powers to the table as peers, the challenges of global economic growth are not the only problems that cry out for this kind of cooperation. Indeed, the phenomenon of rising powers has typically been understood as multidimensional—with the BRICS countries having greater influence not just in economic terms but also political, social, cultural, etc. Many are asking if the G-20 should now broaden its horizons to cover a wider range of issues.

To a substantial extent, the G-20 has already added agenda items beyond the global economy and financial system. The most significant new area has been development in less developed countries. The G-20 is a group of the world’s largest economies, convened because of their impact on the overall economic picture. And while aggregate global growth, in today’s interconnected world, makes a difference for conditions throughout the world, it does not narrow the gap with the poorest nations and raise their living standards.

With that in mind, the G-20 formed a development working group and endorsed the Seoul Consensus on removing obstacles to economic growth in less developed countries. Indeed, steadily rising gross domestic product is essential for development, as demonstrated by the impressive growth-based progress of China and South Korea. One major focus of the working group has been to highlight best practices to build infrastructure that enables growth.

University of Johannesburg Professor Chris Landsberg’s contribution to this issue of *Courier* voices concern over lack of G-20 support for development, despite South Africa’s co-chairmanship of the working group. For one of his concerns, financing for development, the G-20 will receive the results of a study by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The other working group formed to deal with a new issue area for the G-20 focuses on anticorruption efforts, and it represents an interesting success story of how the summit process can spur significant progress. With an action plan of encouraging ratification of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), adoption of anti-foreign bribery legislation, clampdown on ill-gotten assets, and stronger national anticorruption agencies, the working group shows how a G-20 initiative can generate significant activity and progress with a modest investment of high-level time and attention. It also undercuts the idea—quite prominent in debate over the G-20—that every issue outside the forum’s core economic mandate constitutes a major distraction.

In his article on the Brazilian perspective, Paulo Sotero of the Woodrow Wilson Center notes another worry regarding the G-20: potential overlap or competition with the old-line multilateralism of the United Nations. For Brazil this represented a significant concern, given its aspiration to a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Now after several years of experience with the G-20, there may be a growing realization that the informal multilateral cooperation of a loosely structured summit process is not only compatible with traditional intergovernmental organizations but actually depends on them.

Finally, Yuli Ismartono, deputy chief editor of the English edition of the Indonesian magazine *Tempo*, looks at how serving as the G-20’s only Southeast Asia representative has prompted her country to engage more broadly in the world. Viewing itself as a bridge between the big economies of the G-20 and smaller developing countries, Indonesia’s focus is on balanced growth and fighting corruption—two issues its own success hinges on.

Another refrain in this issue of *Courier* is the domestic politics confronting G-20 leaders back home, the leaders being politicians after all. The domestic political considerations that underlie diplomatic issues are a familiar dynamic. Equally important is leaders’ appetites for the effort that goes into crafting diplomatic solutions to urgent international problems—though failure to deal with these challenges carries its own consequences, including domestically.

—David Shorr
Program Officer, The Stanley Foundation
Brazilian policymakers view the G-20 as a positive instrument for both their country’s emergence on the world stage and advancement of substantive reforms in global economic governance and crisis prevention long advocated by Brazil. Yet questions certainly remain about Brazil’s continued ability to use effectively the G-20 to fulfill its foreign policy goals.

Such doubts are related less to the country’s desire to engage than to the danger of the unfolding governance reform process stalling under a renewed global crisis that limits Brazil’s prospects. Established as a ministerial consultation mechanism in the late 1990s in the wake of a series of financial crises, the G-20 was for almost a decade a forum where creditor nations sought reassurance that their official and private sector loans would be well managed and eventually repaid.

“One could say that there was a role reversal in the G-20 among creditor and debtor nations from the early, ministerial forum to the leaders’ summits that emerged after 2008,” observed a Brazilian official.

The scene of Presidents Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil and Hu Jintao of China seated on both sides of President George W. Bush at the first heads-of-state summit of the G-20, in Washington in November 2008, marked the symbolic enthronement of Brazil in its rightful place as a major world player amid a fast-changing global balance of power.

Three years later the record shows Brazil overcame its initial reluctance and has made significant contributions to establish the G-20 as the new forum for economic global governance.

A Focus on World Imbalances

Looking ahead, Brazil will continue to remind leaders of the urgent need to address imbalances in the world economy. Put simply, it means the United States should save more and China, the upcoming leader of the new world economic order, and Japan and Germany, the two chronic exporters of the old order, should consume more. Brazil will insist on the recognition of capital controls as a legitimate defense against speculative movements and the negative consequences of excessive global liquidity, while resisting American and European proposals for the adoption of “codes of conduct,” which would hinder its ability to use capital controls according to national needs.

Not surprisingly, Brazil will reaffirm its posture against agriculture subsidies and in favor of the development agenda shaped in Seoul. Brazil’s role in the upcoming G-20 Summit is likely to be conditioned, however, by a couple of new factors.

New President Dilma Rousseff’s policy focus and personal style are quite different from her predecessor’s. In contrast with Lula, who loved the global stage and used it effectively to achieve political objectives at home and abroad, President Rousseff has a more inward-looking agenda. This is a result of both conviction and necessity. She is constrained by an adverse international economic scenario absent in the first six years of Lula’s government. At home, she faces difficult challenges that range from a deficient infrastructure to the poor quality of education, constraints on innovation and various regulatory frameworks that limit Brazil’s competitiveness in the global economy.

Although not new, these challenges were exposed by the impressive progress Brazil made since democratization in the 1980s and economic stabilization in the 1990s. Left unaddressed, they could compromise Brazil’s rise. Rousseff’s clear understanding of the nature of these challenges will guide Brazil’s moves and actions in the G-20.

A technocrat and policy wonk with little personal charisma and sparse appetite and patience for the theatrics of diplomacy, Rousseff is likely to insist at the Cannes summit in November that the G-20 produces changes in global governance that are meaningful, measurable, and help enhance Brazil’s international leadership. One such opportunity may arise from a report on the financing of development French President Nicholas Sarkozy requested from the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation at the G-20 ministerial meeting in Paris in February. The report, to be presented in Cannes, will discuss all forms of development assistance, including Official Development Assistance (ODA) from developed countries; aid from non-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries; and public-private partnerships and private capital as sources of global finance for development.

Rising Powers and the G-20

The Country of the Future Arrives

Facing a renewed global crisis threatening to limit its growth, Brazil will call on G-20 leaders to rise to the occasion.
Development nations that are building their own donor’s programs, such as Brazil; as well as innovative financing, private investment, and the domestic tax and resources of developing governments. Global health and food security, both issues of interest to Brazil, were highlighted in a draft report presented at a G-20 preparatory meeting in Paris. The final document will likely offer leaders a menu of options in each of the various areas and explore alternatives for implementation of various proposals, as a complement to ODA.

Cannes a Test for the G-20

On a more sobering note, Dilma Rousseff is keenly aware that the Cannes summit will test the G-20 in ways not seen since its elevation to the leaders’ level. The meeting will take place as the global economy gives renewed signs of weakness and policymakers from at least half of the member countries seem at a loss on how to address their own national problems. The poisonous and paralyzing political atmosphere in the United States, and low and uncertain growth in European countries, suggests that expectations for the Cannes meeting should be kept low. China, the world’s third largest economy and Brazil’s top trading partner, is increasingly seen in Brazil in a negative light associated with the fear that trade with Beijing is causing loss of markets for Brazilian manufactured products and the country’s “de-industrialization.”

At the policy level, Brazilian officials are aware that the ad hoc nature of the group does not serve well a world in dire need of addressing imbalances. They realize, however, that an unconsolidated G-20 may serve well Beijing’s objectives and doubt that the Chinese are interested in enhancing the group as a platform for change in global governance.

Against this backdrop, Dilma Rousseff is bound to use her first appearance at the G-20 as president to reaffirm Brazil’s commitment to the multilateral agenda approved in Seoul and call on her colleagues to rise to the challenges of a global economy asking for courage and audacity from leaders.

—Paulo Sotero
Director, Brazil Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
Rising Powers and the G-20

Lone Voice From Southeast Asia

Indonesia’s effectiveness and credibility on the G-20 depends on its political and economic performance at home

Developing World. A Balinese woman bundles rice for drying. The G-20 has expanded its agenda to include food security, particularly volatile commodity prices, an issue of great concern to Indonesia. (AP Photo/Firdia Lisnawati)
Indonesia’s membership in the G-20 was a remarkable milestone in the program of reforms it has pursued since the 1998 resignation of President Suharto, who had governed with an iron hand for more than three decades.

The G-20, after all, collectively comprises 90 percent of global nominal gross domestic product, 90 percent of global gross national product, 80 percent of world trade, and two-thirds of the world population. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the G-20 contributes to 84.1 percent and 82.2 percent of the world economic growth by nominal GDP and GDP-Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) respectively.

As the largest economy in the region and the 16th largest in the world in GDP-PPP terms, Indonesia is the only G-20 member from Southeast Asia, although the incumbent Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) chair has always been invited to the G-20 Summit as an observer.

Indonesia has made clear its position on issues covered by the G-20. It believes that strong, sustainable, and balanced growth at the global level is a condition sine qua non for all countries to attain high economic growth.

As such, Indonesia plays an active role in G-20 deliberations, especially in the effort to support the economic recovery process. It also feels that its work in the G-20 should contribute to reforms that uphold good governance and reinforce the fight against corruption. Indonesia is currently co-chair—along with France—of the Anti-Corruption Working Group.

**Development, Corruption, Economy as Top Issues**

As the only member of ASEAN and an active participant in the Non-Aligned Movement, Indonesia supports the G-20 commitment to progress on development issues critical to Indonesia and other developing nations. It believes, for example, that the development dimension is an integral part of the organization’s Framework for Strong, Sustainable, and Balanced Growth. The discussion of any issue in G-20 should take into account its impact on developing countries and how they can benefit from its work.

Indonesia also takes part in promoting efforts to address commodity price volatility as part of the international effort to achieve food security. In a number of G-20 discussions, Indonesia has urged the global community to have a sense of urgency and to take concrete actions on that front, including the creation of an emergency food stock, based on the example of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve.

It is clear Indonesia is making the most out of its engagement in the G-20 to obtain public relations mileage. In its role as co-chair of the anti-corruption group, it hosted the International Conference on Anti-Bribery in Bali last May, together with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Indonesia has also been active in governance, promoting the reform of international financial institutions strongly supporting the shift of 6 percent of the IMF’s share quota to emerging and developing countries to reflect better representation of these countries.

Another example of Indonesia’s increasing interest in governance issues has been its recent endorsement of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), a movement monitoring the revenues from the energy and mining companies. Since it is the first ASEAN country to adopt the EITI, it is also keen to lead the way in a region where nine of the ten member states are engaged in exploiting their natural resources.

Indonesia’s main theme remains the issue of balanced growth as a way to strengthen the interest and aspirations of developing countries. With Australia and Italy, Indonesia is co-facilitator of one of the development pillars of “growth with resilience,” particularly in the field of social protection.

Jakarta supports the establishment of a Global Financial Safety Net as a second line of defense against future economic shocks and to fully utilize regional financial arrangements, such as the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization Agreement.

**A Bridge to the Developing World**

As an emerging economy and the world’s third largest democracy, Indonesia can act as a bridge between G-20 and non-G-20 countries as well as between developed and developing nations. It has the ability to infuse regional perspectives into G-20 debates.

Indonesia’s membership in the exclusive G-20 forum has clearly provided an impetus to its global diplomacy. One case in point is the recent meeting organized by the Foreign Ministry’s Peace and Development Institute, between different sociopolitical leaders in Egypt and those from Indonesia for a frank exchange on what to do following the ouster of an authoritarian ruler.

Indonesia’s capitalization of its G-20 membership will ultimately depend on its ability to overcome myriad problems: deep-rooted corruption that is hindering the economy from growing more rapidly, alleviating the poverty gap that has widened since reforms were launched ten years ago, and as the world’s biggest Muslim democracy, how it can maintain religious tolerance.

—Yuli Ismartono

Deputy Chief Editor of Tempo, English Edition
Rising Powers and the G-20

A Need for Leadership on Africa

South Africa, its continent’s only G-20 representative, has not taken up the cause of development as it should

Thus far the G-20 has been engaging in incremental decision-making with no tangible breakthroughs, certainly none pertaining to the concerns of the developing world. Far from bringing a fresh approach to global governance, the G-20 has avoided tackling those issues on which cooperation could deliver real benefits and serve as a complement to existing efforts, such as the ineffective campaign on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within the United Nations, or the debate on aid effectiveness as led by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Most disappointingly, South Africa, the only African representative on the G-20 and the promising bright new star of which so much was expected, took its eye off the ball and did little to ensure that the G-20 focused on critical development issues.

Instead of placing emphasis on development, the G-20 has instead focused on the need to come up with “balanced” approaches to regulate the risks that shadow banking systems may pose. The concerns of the industrialized powers prevailed again, and this was a parody of their pedestrian procedures.

Even within the context of the G-20, South Africa has not taken up the challenge of articulating this African agenda, instead merely focusing on the narrow issue of capital flow and fiscal stabilization. Expectations had been that it would ensure African interests were well-represented, and that the G8-Africa Action Plan would be pushed to the fore.

But these expectations were soon dashed, and even though South Africa sits on the Development Committee of the G-20, African issues were not being served by Africans in a direct manner. For their part the Western powers showed little sign of wishing to revive the African agenda or meet their commitments to the continent. They continue to undermine African interests and concerns. Issues of debt relief, aid, market access, and support for Africa’s peace operations are still sitting on the bench, and the key elements of the partnership that was negotiated between Africa and the G-8 are back in the dressing room taking an early shower.

Losing Focus on Development

Most disappointing about South Africa’s conformist approach is that the development agenda as it affects Africa is no longer on the table, and no one is making the case for it. During the important decade 1998-2008, key African states, South Africa included, proposed a move away from the historical paternalistic and dependency relationship that they had to endure with their former colonial masters and other industrialized powers, and instead called for genuine partnership, based on the principles of mutual respect, equality, responsibility, and accountability. The G8-Africa Action Plan crafted a development agenda that rested on four pillars:

• Development finance including foreign direct investment, domestic resources, development assistance, and external debt.

• Sustainable economic growth including agriculture and food security.

• Trade; infrastructure; private sector growth; environmental sustainability and climate change; investing in people including education, health, and gender.

• Good governance, with a particular emphasis on peace and security and economic governance.

African states helped to translate these four pillars into a set of development priorities to which the continent aspires. Africans wish to see an acceleration of a global partnership with the continent toward meeting the MDGs, while aligning with Africa’s plans and processes. Emphasis should be placed on sustaining African efforts to boost development assistance and investment in critical growth sectors, while also seeing predictability, sustainability, coherence, and pooling of development aid resources to enhance aid quality. The drought and famine in the Horn of Africa are demonstrations of the primacy of agriculture and food security, including unfettered access to global markets for African products. Africa has been unwavering in its call for continuing provisions of debt relief, including for poor and middle income African countries. To the extent that the African continent in general—and African states in particular—is
committed to transforming themselves into “democratic, developmental states,” the G-20 should prioritize the continent’s educational needs at all levels.

We cannot stress strongly enough the need to build innovation on, and disseminate new knowledge through, science and technology. A key prerequisite for a developmental state is the issue of strengthening of health systems and providing better access to global funds, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization. The G8-Africa Action Plan—which South Africa and the G-20 should now pick up and infuse into its Multi-Year Action Plan on Development—has to support regional cooperation, particularly multi-country projects and provision of regional public goods, environmental protection, and responding to climate change.

Creating Accountability

It is incumbent on South Africa, as the sole African representative on the G-20, to ensure that the development agenda enjoys the necessary support. South Africa should stress that a development agenda that improves the lives of people across the continent will be of benefit to the developed world itself. Even if the G-20 agrees to a more progressive development agenda in favor of the needs and interests of Africa, there is no guarantee that developed countries will keep their side of the bargain; they have a history of prevarication when it comes to commitments to Africa. South Africa could insist on the establishment of a mechanism for close monitoring of delivery on commitments by both sides. This would ensure the partnership is strengthened and that increasingly Africa would be able to take responsibility for and control of its own affairs. The West is notorious for wanting burden sharing without power sharing. Africa and the South should become better organized and speak with a more cohesive voice if they are to extract commitments from the G-20. South Africa should lead by example.

—Chris Landsberg
Professor, Centre for Diplomacy and Policy Analysis (CeDPA), University of Johannesburg
Rising Powers and the G-20

How to Strengthen the
G-8/Africa Partnership

Recommendations and priority actions

For its part, Africa remains committed to an enhanced partnership with the G-8, based on the principles of equality, mutual respect, and accountability. The call, therefore, is for similar commitment from the G-20 and the International Community to provide funding to speed up the implementation of the following mutually agreed programs. The following recommendations and priority actions are proposed to strengthen the G-8/Africa partnership:

1. Delivery on commitments is of utmost importance to the partnership. The global crisis notwithstanding, the G-20 countries should urgently meet their commitments individually and collectively, relating to the quality, quantity, predictability, and timely delivery of official development assistance to Africa.

2. G-20 leaders need to reaffirm their commitment to strengthen the partnership with Africa and to use the evidence presented in this report to address the obstacles that have impeded progress to date.

3. The G-20 should urgently re-commit itself to increasing assistance to at least 0.5 percent and to get on track to reach the 0.7 percent target of gross national income by 2015.

4. If NATO countries can find the resources to ferment three conflicts at once—in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya—then they must find resources to double assistance in the short term and increase it further thereafter, as countries build absorptive capacity.

5. There should be 100 percent debt cancellation for poor countries, where this is necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

6. The G-20 must commit itself to contribute its fair share to fill the global financial gap between the level of commitment (US $16 billion per year), and the amount needed to achieve health MDGs (US $42.5 billion per year).

7. The G-20 should take urgent steps to improve the predictability of development assistance flows, harmonize procedures and pool resources, establish adequately resourced joint funds, and coordinate program and budget support at national levels.

8. The G-20 should commit to providing increased budget support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) on a predictable multiyear basis, and place particular emphasis on countries undergoing post-conflict reconstruction and development.


10. Recognition should be shown that cost remains a critical barrier to accessing healthcare.

11. The G-20 should support the establishment of an AU/NEPAD Partnership Fund Oversight Committee for the allocation and monitoring of the proposed additional funds for Infrastructure and the Comprehensive Integrated National Development Plans. The operational management of funds would remain with those institutions that have the capacity to do so.

12. It is important to impress upon the G-20 the need to support the Investment Climate Facility by contributing the US$550 million required.

13. Finally, it is critical that the G-20 commits itself to a successful conclusion of the Doha Round of trade talks, agree to a timetable to eliminate trade distorting subsidies, and support the strengthening of capacity of African countries to diversify production and exports.

—Chris Landsberg
Professor, Centre for Diplomacy and Policy Analysis (CeDPA), University of Johannesburg
Making the G-20 a Reservoir of Global Leadership: A Maximalist Argument
David Shorr, The Stanley Foundation

The elevation of the G-20 in 2009 to be an ongoing summit-level forum is emblematic of the power shifts that have placed the old post-WWII order under significant strain. This brief takes a consciously maximalist approach in arguing that the G-20 can become a vital multilateral hub where political leaders overcome policy differences and combine their leverage to tackle the major challenges of the era. April 2011 policy analysis brief.

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Our world confronts a growing range of global and transnational problems. It is also home to a diverse ecosystem of multilateral institutions. Yet the instruments of international cooperation have not matched up to the task of solving the problems. Bruce Jones, of New York University, says one place to look for help is the G-20. April 2010 policy analysis brief.

Making Sense of Multilateralism
The United States and rising powers is the subject of this article from the Great Decisions 2011 briefing book. Stanley Foundation program officer David Shorr draws a picture of a multilateral “ecosystem” with a lot of biodiversity among the forums where US officials work with their counterparts.

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

How Are Key 21st-Century Powers Arranging Themselves: For Competition, Coexistence, or Cooperation?
The Stanley Foundation, the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), and the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) held their third in a series of conferences to pinpoint the multilateral frameworks best able to achieve progress in different areas of policy in G-8 and G-20 summits. May 2011 policy dialogue brief.

Planning for Success at the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit
The 2010 Washington Nuclear Security Summit offers both procedural and substantive lessons for making the most of the follow-on meeting scheduled for Seoul in 2012. William Tobey, senior fellow at Harvard’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, offers specific suggestions for how to improve the chances for effective action resulting from next year’s summit. June 2011 policy analysis brief.

1540 in Practice: Challenges and Opportunities for Southeast Asia
Togzhan Kassenova’s policy brief explores the challenges and opportunities to implementing robust proliferation controls in Southeast Asia and discusses broader development and security benefits that implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 can bring to the region. May 2011 policy analysis brief.

The Road to Korea 2012: Nuclear Security Summits and Global Efforts to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism
This brief, from the Stanley Foundation 51st Strategy for Peace Conference, captures the discussion of roundtable participants. It includes key recommendations related to the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit; broader efforts to combat nuclear terrorism, including building international consensus on the threat; and taking additional measures necessary to meet the four-year goal and to sustain nuclear security efforts. January 2011 policy dialogue brief.
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Since November of 2008 the world has witnessed an unprecedented number of leader summits at the G-8/G-20 levels. For all of the expense and excesses of modern summitry, these summits do drive real action on global challenges and can help build more effective action in traditional venues like the United Nations.

Stanley Foundation expert David Shorr has a long history of examining global governance systems. He regularly attends these global summits, and has written and commented extensively on the evolution of the G-8 and G-20.

At the International Media Center for the Cannes G-20 and the Chicago G-8, Shorr will be available for media interviews.

To request an interview, contact Sean Harder at sharder@stanleyfoundation.org or at +1-319-455-6397.