



## A Look Back

### Civil20 Germany 2017



# Preface

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In 2017, the G20 summit of the heads of state and government took place in Germany for the first time. It was clear for VENRO and the Forum on Environment and Development as civil society umbrella organisations that we want to accompany the German G20 presidency in a critical and constructive way as we did the German G7 presidency two years before. Therefore, we gladly accepted the invitation of the Federal Chancellery to organise the Civil20 process, i.e. the civil society process accompanying the G20 presidency.

The Civil20 (C20) are an alliance of national and international civil society organisations that has been forming annually already since 2009 in order to accompany the work of the G20 and to give a collective voice to international civil society on globally relevant topics.

Since 2013, the C20 has been officially recognised as an engagement group of the G20. Every year, a C20 process takes place in parallel to the G20 process, and a C20 summit is held in the run-up to the G20 summit, at which international civil society – not only from the G20 countries – presents its joint positions. The goal of the C20 is therefore to involve international civil society, also beyond the G20 states, more closely in the G20 process and to institutionalise this exchange.

We already hosted the Civil G7 Dialogue in 2015 during the German G7 presidency, and we were now able to successfully build on these experiences.

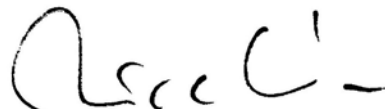
The C20 process took place in the time period from August 2016 to October 2017. The Steering Committee established at the beginning of the process was responsible for steering, and the six thematic working groups established shortly afterwards did the content-specific work. Supported by an office, we organised a variety of events and thus promoted the networking of civil society within itself and with political decision makers and media representatives. Particular milestones were the discussion with the chief negotiators of the heads of state and government at the G20 sherpa meeting in March and the panel discussion with Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel at the C20 summit in Hamburg on June 18 and 19.

However, our aim went beyond the mere lobbying and advocacy work, since we also want to strengthen the long-term and sustainable cooperation of international civil society in the G20 context. For this purpose, we put a special focus on the cooperation with representatives of Argentinian non-governmental organisations – Argentina will assume the G20 presidency on December 1, 2017 – and a successful handover.

Overall, we consider the C20 process 2017 a common success of all actors involved. The international orientation of the process has contributed to the global networking of civil society actors and enhanced the influence of civil society on the G20. We hope it will be possible to continue this equally well in the coming years. We thank all those who have so successfully contributed to this year's C20 process, and we hope you will have a stimulating read.



Director, VENRO



Director, German NGO Forum  
on Environment and Development



# Preparation and establishment of the C20 working groups

When the C20 process 2017 was launched, we established a Steering Committee in August 2016 that is composed of civil society representatives of all continents and leads and accompanies the C20 process. The Steering Committee, consisting of 14 permanent members, oversaw the C20 process and ensured that the demands were politically coherent and consistent in the overall picture of the work of the C20. Just like the role of the working group co-chairs, this was set down in the Terms of Reference that were decided on by the Steering Committee at its first meeting. In retrospect, many persons who were active in the C20 process wished for more transparency and more intensive communication of the work and the discussions in the Steering Committee to the C20 process as a whole. However, as the work on the Steering Committee was unpaid, a significant expansion of the communication effort beyond the core tasks was not possible.

## C20 Steering Committee

Barbara Fürst, Oxfam Germany  
Christoph Bals, Germanwatch  
Esteban Serrani, Fundacion SES  
Eva Hanfstängl, Bread for the World  
Fanwell Bokosi, Afrodad  
Jesse Griffiths, Eurodad  
John Ruthrauff, InterAction  
Jürgen Maier, Forum on Environment and Development  
Klaus Schilder, VENRO  
Maria Emilia Berazategui, Poder Ciudadano  
Martin Tsounkeu, ADIN  
Nancy Alexander, Heinrich Böll Foundation Washington DC  
Patricia Miranda, Latindadd  
Wael Hmaidan, Climate Action Network

In October 2017, we set up the C20 office. It created a website with an internal online platform for the communication of the working groups. Moreover, we convened a first meeting of the Steering Committee. We identified civil society actors from the North and South that were interested in the C20 process and partly already had experience from the previous years and wanted to actively participate in 2017, too. For this purpose, we made use of existing European and international civil society networks in the G20 context and built others – also and especially with the support of many NGOs from all over the world.

Through an online consultation carried out in December 2016 in which representatives from 56 countries participated (see Figure 1), the Steering Committee determined priority topics for the C20 work that were considered of particular importance for the presidency year 2016/2017. Based on eight topic proposals that the Steering Committee had developed with a view to the G20 agenda of the German presidency in 2017, we invited representatives of civil society organisations from all over the world to vote on the most important topics proposed. Beyond the proposed topics, they had the possibility of proposing further topics of their own. 373 persons from 56 countries already indicated in mid-December 2016 that they wanted to actively participate in the C20 work (see Figure 2).

From the priorities of the C20 identified in the consultation, the Steering Committee founded six working groups that were to form the working framework for the coming months:

- 1) Agriculture, Water, Food Security and the Environment
- 2) Global Health
- 3) Inequality, Gender and Social Protection
- 4) Reform of the International Financial System
- 5) Responsible Investment and Role of the Private Sector
- 6) Sustainability: Climate and Energy

Figure 1: Where did the participants of the survey come from?

372 participants from 56 countries

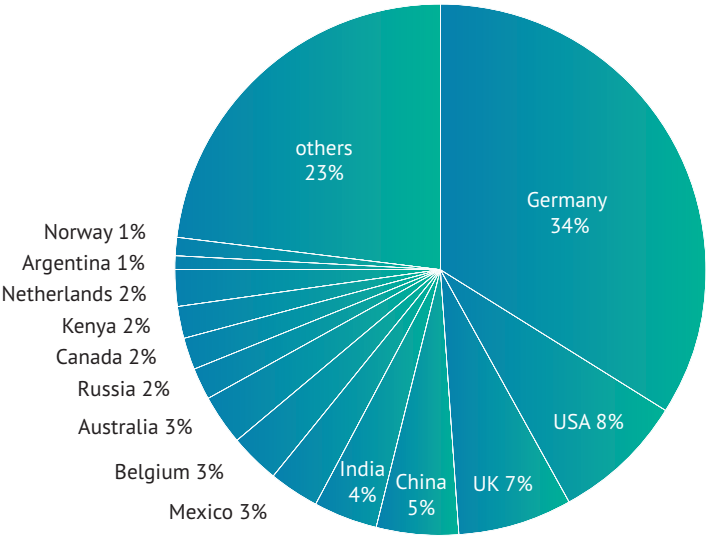
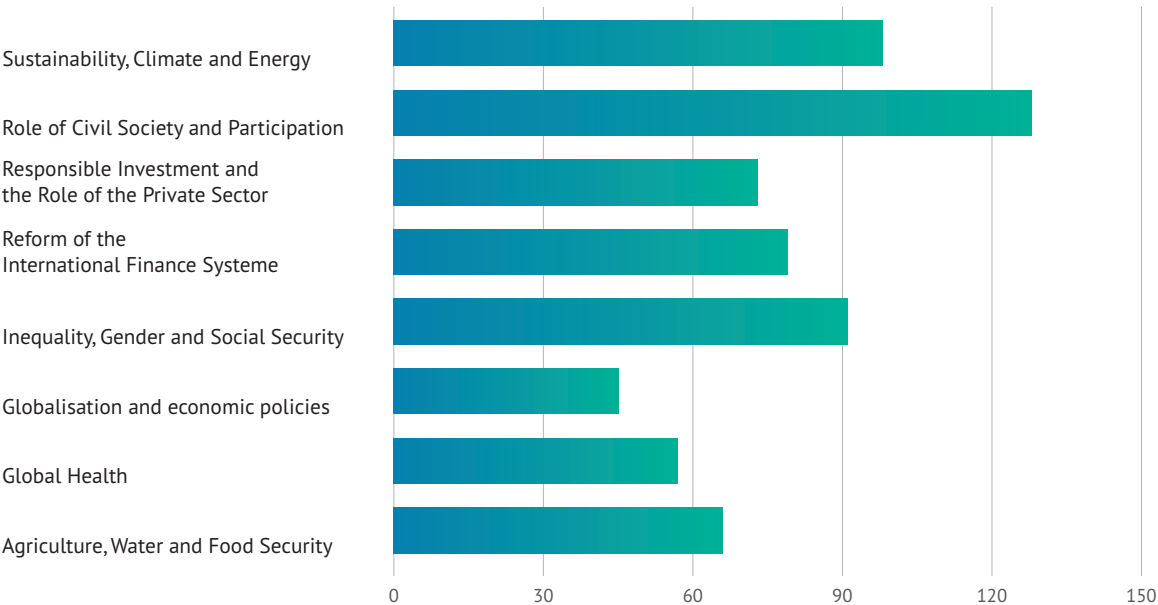


Figure 2: In which working group would you like to actively participate?

Multiple mentions possible, 372 participants

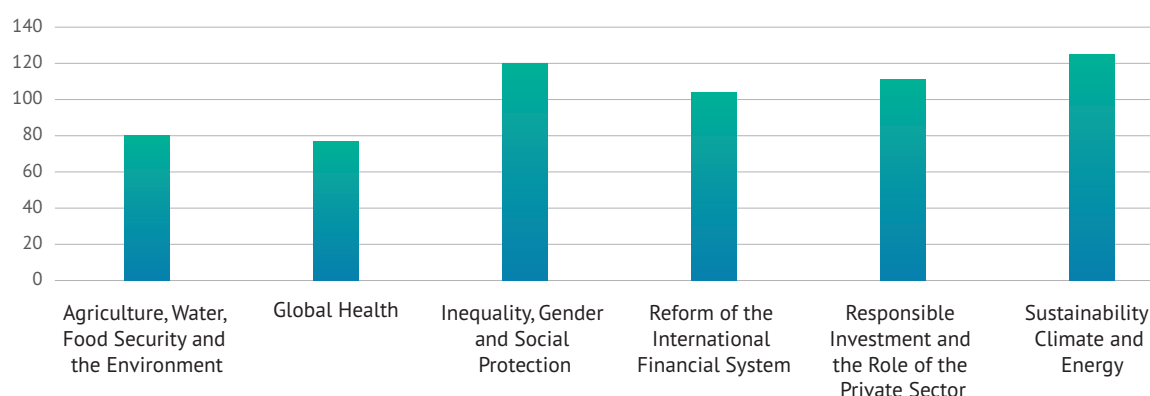




# Positioning of the C20 working groups and C20 narrative

During the first conference calls of the working groups that were each chaired by a member of the Steering Committee, the newly constituted groups elected two co-chairs each – one representative of German civil society and one of international civil society. In the beginning of January, the co-chairs took over the coordination of the working groups. The content-specific work largely took place in conference calls, on the C20 online platform and through communication on specially created email lists. Already from the beginning of the process, between 80 and 120 persons per working group took part in the mailing lists of the working groups (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: How many persons are on the mailing list?



Some C20 working groups immediately began working on detailed positions for the G20 process. Particularly, this was the case for topics that have been on the G20 agenda for several years and, for this reason, have been accompanied intensively by civil society for (sometimes many) years. In other groups, electing co-chairs proved to be a challenge because the group members mostly did not know each other and had to build mutual trust first.

Working Group	Co-chairs
Agriculture	Jerry van den Berge, EuSAIN Jürgen Maier, Forum on Environment & Development
Finance	Artemisa Montes Sylvan, OMEC · Markus Henn, WEED
Inequalities	Davies Okombo, UCDP · Katharina Scheffler, Plan International Germany
Investment	Cindy Woods, ICAR · Mirjam Wolfrum, CDP
Health	Marwin Meier, World Vision Germany · Rachael Crockett, Results UK
Sustainability	Christiane Averbeck, Climate Alliance Germany Wael Hmaidan, Climate Action Network

Meanwhile, in February 2017 the members of the Steering Committee developed the C20 narrative entitled “Globalisation – There are a Thousand Alternatives”, in which they described the fundamental perspective of the C20 on the G20 as a group and the agenda of the German G20

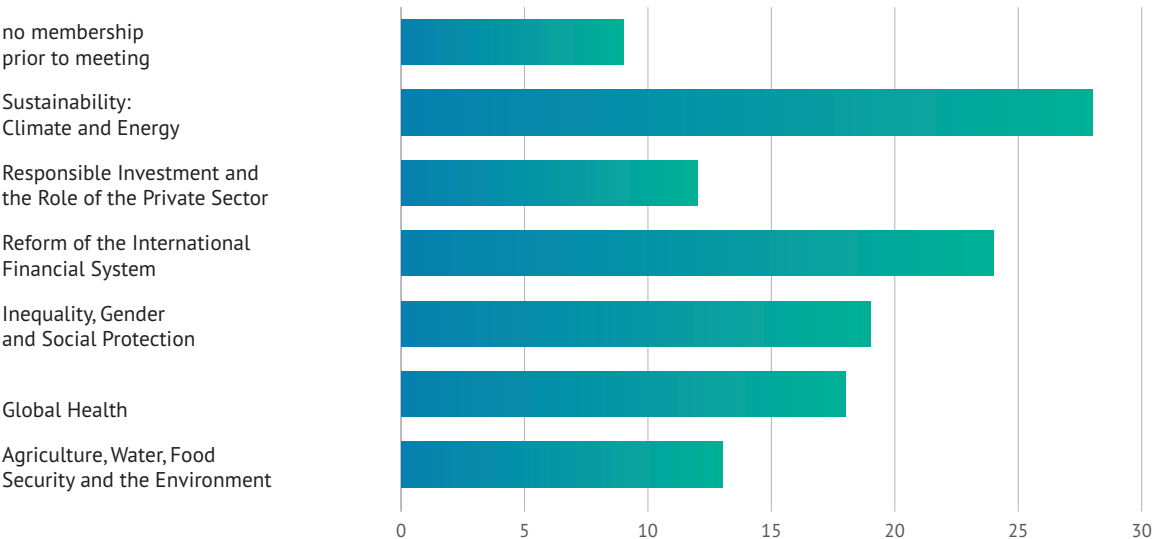
presidency. The bottom line of the C20's reflections is that the responsibility for the form and the negative consequences of the current neoliberal globalisation lies largely with the G20 countries. By contrast, the C20 advocate for a globalisation that places all people worldwide at the centre, and for using the economy as a means for the purpose of overcoming poverty and creating sustainable development but not viewing economic growth as the sole policy objective. Whereas the idea and content of the narrative was welcomed by all participants of the C20 process, many would have liked to have a more inclusive process — and also more time — for the development of the narrative in order to be able to comment on it more comprehensively.

A first highlight of the C20 2017 was the meeting of all working groups on February 16/17, 2017, in Berlin. On the 37<sup>th</sup> floor of a hotel on Berlin's Alexanderplatz, civil society took a position on the G20 policies; 125 participants from 30 countries took part in the meeting (see Figures 4 and 5). After an input by Dr. Ralf Retter from the sherpa staff of the Federal Chancellery, who presented the German G20 agenda and answered questions, the participants, some of whom had travelled far to attend, discussed the draft of the C20 narrative. In the afternoon, the working groups met and developed their policy recommendations to the G20 further. On the morning of the second day, there was a first opportunity for substantive discussions with representatives of the German G20 presidency, with heads of divisions and policy advisors of the Ministries of Finance, of Health, of Agriculture, for the Environment and for Economic Affairs. At the end of the meeting, there was an exchange among the working groups in order to check the consistency of the positions developed and to refine them.

The meeting was considered a great success by many participants — not least because all working groups achieved more in these two days of personal exchange than they could have achieved in weeks of working online and in conference calls. Above all, they realised that in their work in the C20 process they should focus on the overall political picture and should promote the development of detailed positions within their own organisations and international networks but not replace it with the work of the working groups. In this way, the working groups were able to develop short and concise demands and recommendations. Future C20 processes should therefore also attach great importance to sufficient opportunities for personal exchange.

Figure 5: How many participants were in each of the working groups at the meeting?

123 participants





# Sherpa meeting and further lobbying activities

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The working groups finalised their political recommendations in early March. At the sherpa meeting on March 24, 2017, Jürgen Maier, Patricia Miranda and Klaus Schilder, acting for the Steering Committee, presented these demands to the chief negotiators of the G20 heads of state and government, the sherpas, in Frankfurt am Main and discussed the demands with them. However, the timeframe of this discussion was very limited. In only 90 minutes, and moreover together with the representative of the engagement group Science20, the C20 therefore focused on a few main demands chosen in advance. The sherpas welcomed the work of the C20 and announced that they would take the recommendations of civil society into account. However, they also criticised that the C20 were addressing six topic areas and thus their thematic scope was too broad; a focus on fewer topics would make things easier. The C20 representatives responded that the C20 mirror the plurality of international civil society on the one hand, but also the increasing variety of topics of the G20 themselves.

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## Civil20 was invited to the following events of the G20:

### Intergovernmental negotiations

- ▶ G20 sherpa meetings
- ▶ G20 Sustainability Working Group

### In the framework of G20 working groups

- ▶ G20 Development Working Group Multistakeholder Forum
- ▶ High Level Anti-Corruption Conference for G20 Stakeholders

### Furthermore

- ▶ Digitalisation conferences
  - ▶ Energy Efficiency Forum
  - ▶ Resource Efficiency Conference
  - ▶ IIF G20 Conference
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In the following weeks, representatives of the C20 working groups were invited to a variety of conferences and round tables of the German G20 presidency, including the G20 Africa conference, and took part in the discussions there. Moreover, the C20 were able to bring about that several workshops of the G20 working group meetings included representatives of civil society. It can be considered a particular success that representatives of the C20 working group on sustainability (climate and energy) were able to present their recommendations during a meeting of the G20 Sustainability Working Group. This was the first time that the C20 were invited to actual intergovernmental negotiations. At this meeting, Gillian Nelson, one of the co-chairs of the C20 sustainability working group, presented the C20 recommendations and discussed them. A joint declaration of the engagement groups B20, T20 and C20 drew particular attention at this meeting. It emphasised the urgency of political action for a sustainable energy transition. The government side underscored that this message came together from very different spheres of society.





*Chancellor Angela Merkel discusses with representatives of the national and international civil society during the C20 Summit on June 18-19 2017 in Hamburg (from left to right): Bernd Bornhorst (VENRO), Winnie Byanyima (Oxfam International), Lori Wallach (Public Citizen, USA), Ernst-Christoph Stolper (German NGO Forum on Environment and Development) and Tanja Samrotzki (moderator).*

The representatives of the C20 working group received particular appreciation and constructive feedback for their work also during the lunch together with the government delegations of the G20 Sustainability Working Group before the official presentation. Individual discussion points were pursued further with great interest in informal talks, and the positive cooperation with civil society on the topics of energy and climate was emphasised.

The exchange with the G20 Development Working Group (DWG) was also intensive. Together with further engagement groups, the C20 representatives took part in a workshop directly before the meeting of the DWG on March 14 and 15 in Bonn. The exchange with the members of the DWG was open, though direct feedback from the government representatives was mostly provided informally during the breaks. As a result, three consensually developed key recommendations of the engagement groups were presented to the DWG. Due to time constraints, the Steering Committee was not able to accept the invitation to another workshop of the DWG on October 25 in Paris at which the implementation of the G20 Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was discussed, but two C20 representatives took part in a concluding workshop of the G20 DWG on inequalities and the role of the private sector on October 16, 2017, in New York.



# C20 summit and C20 communiqué

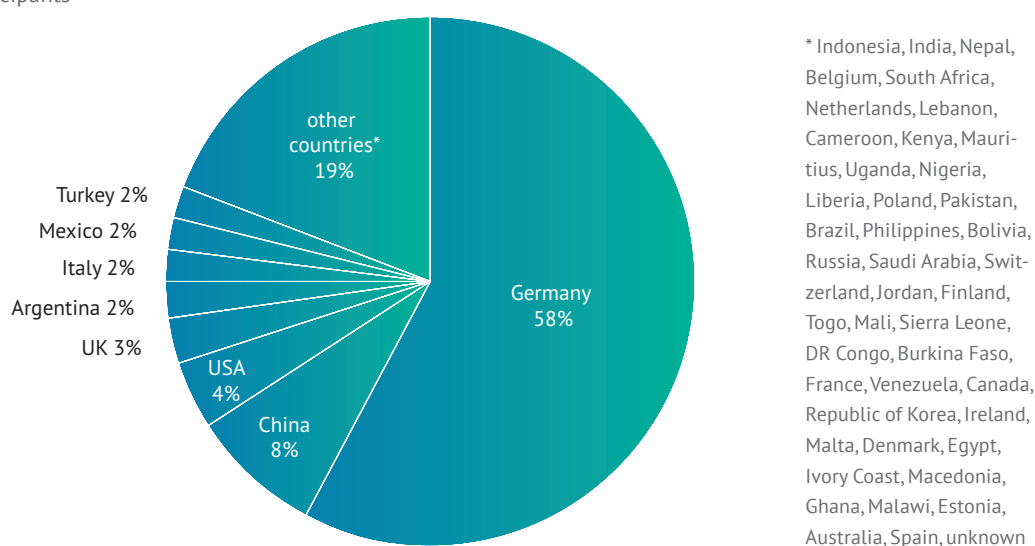
In the run-up to the C20 summit, the Steering Committee drafted the C20 communiqué based on the demand papers of the C20 working groups. It presents the central guidelines of the work of the C20 and in particular demands a just globalisation, as well as more space for civil society engagement. All persons who had registered for the C20 summit were asked early on to give feedback on the draft. Based on the feedback, the Steering Committee put the result to a vote at the C20 summit.

In the course of the C20 process, a variety of other civil society organisations became aware of the C20 process. At the time of the C20 summit, the six working groups had more than 600 members. These persons represent organisations from more than 70 countries, including all G20 countries.

The C20 process under German presidency culminated in the C20 summit on June 18/19, 2017. Around 400 civil society representatives from 60 countries (see Figure 6) came together in the HafenCity University in Hamburg in order to network, further develop positions and have discussions with representatives of the German G20 presidency as well as other stakeholders.

Figure 6: Where did the participants come from?

all 396 participants

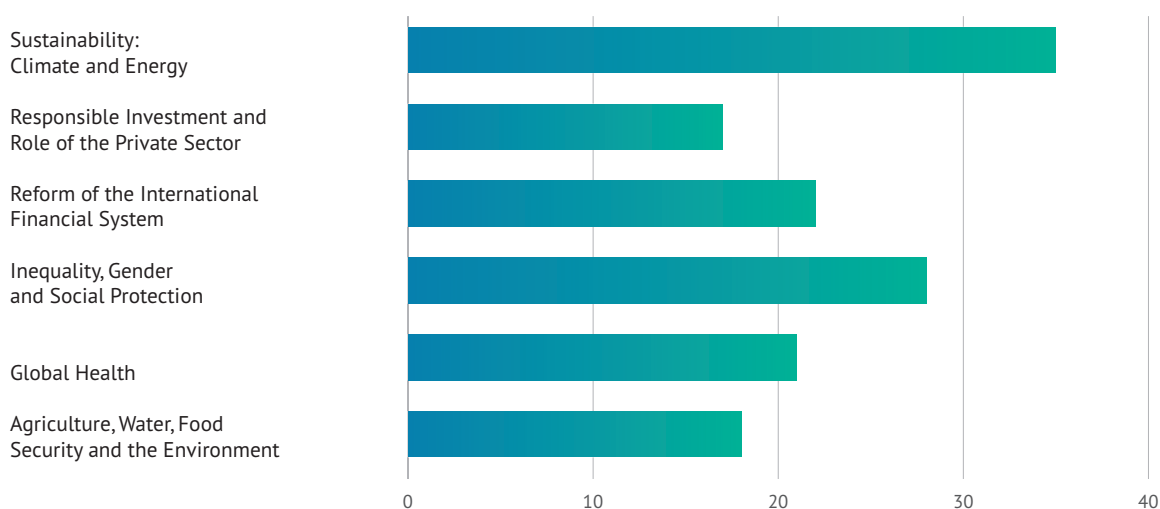


The first day was reserved for the exchange within civil society. After a welcome address by Heike Spielmans, managing director of VENRO, and Jürgen Maier, managing director of the Forum on Environment and Development, and a greeting by the Second Mayor of Hamburg, Katharina Fegebank, representatives of international civil society outlined the political challenges in four short presentations: Oscar Ugarteche (Latindadd, Mexico) presented the problems of the global growth model. Red Constantino (Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, Philippines) explained why we need an agenda for active solidarity in order to be able to achieve the goal of limiting global warming to at most 1.5 degrees in this century. Georg Jansen (Via Campesina Germany) demanded that the dwindling of the farming community worldwide would have to stop. Rachael Crockett (Results UK) illustrated in her contribution why health is the basis of economic growth.

After these presentations and short discussions, the afternoon was about delving deeper into the content in workshops. In a variety of different formats, the C20 working groups and individual members of C20 working groups discussed the policies of the G20 states and their influence on people worldwide. For “newcomers” there was an introductory workshop on the G20 and the work of the C20. There were also specialised workshops on topics such as integration of refugees, the economic empowerment of women and infrastructure investment. Topics such as the G20 compacts with Africa, environmental protection and digitalisation were also discussed. During the late afternoon, activists from Hamburg’s civil society joined in order to network with the C20 representatives from all over the world and to present the state of the local work in preparing for the G20 summit in the city. In the evening, all participants were invited to a reception in Hamburg’s city hall by Mayor Olaf Scholz.

**Figure 7: Half of the participants have been active in a C20 Working Group**

168 persons have not been active before in the C20 Summit



On the morning of the second day, the C20 working groups continued their work with an exchange with representatives from politics, business and academia. For this purpose, heads of directorates-general and of divisions from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry for Development, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance, as well as representatives from academic institutions, public-private partnerships, associations and business came to Hamburg in order to discuss the C20 demands and to develop recommendations further. After the adoption of the C20 communiqué at noon, the C20 summit culminated in a plenary panel discussion in the afternoon. At the beginning, Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel held a speech in which she emphasised the role of civil society: *“When civil society shows commitment, this generates debate, and this is always beneficial in the end. That’s what makes democratic culture vibrant. During the last two days, you have made an important contribution in this regard. I want to thank you for that right now [...]”* Merkel went on to say that the freedoms of expression and of the press are being stifled in an increasing number of countries: *“There are also negative impacts on cultural diversity and, ultimately, on the ability of all of civil society to shape the future.”* After the C20 Steering Committee had presented the Chancellor with the C20 communiqué, she had a discussion with Bernd Bornhorst (VENRO), Ernst-Christoph Stolper (Forum on Environment & Development), Lori Wallach (Global Trade Watch) and Winnie Byanyima (Oxfam International).

By virtue of its internationality and diversity of topics, the C20 summit 2017 helped give a strong voice for justice, democracy, human rights and the conservation of natural resources to civil society in German, Europe and internationally. It was the climax of a C20 process that internally and externally showed by its inclusivity that civil society is an important independent voice in the G20 process that wants to and must be listened to now and in future.



# Results of the C20 process 2017 and outlook

Many participants of the C20 process agreed that during the German G20 presidency the C20 was very well organised and much more comprehensive and inclusive than in the past years. It was — and this was one of the greatest successes of the C20 — not primarily a national process but oriented very internationally, well beyond the G20 countries. This resulted in a strong networking of global civil society and a strengthening of the collective voice on globally relevant challenges.

The C20 worked well not only with the G20 presidency but sometimes also with other engagement groups, as far as there were common goals. This was the case for the topics of open society, climate and energy, among others. Individual statements written jointly with other G20 engagement groups were able to capture the attention of politics and media and thus underline the demands of the C20. This was possible because the C20 was able to incorporate many of its demands in the joint statements. On the basis of common political interests and demands, the cooperation with other engagement groups could be continued in future and possibly be extended to other engagement groups. However, this also depends on the persons responsible in the respective engagement groups. The opportunities and risks also for an independent and critical profile of the C20 as a whole should be considered beforehand.

The cooperation and the outreach within civil society and to other stakeholders worked well, but while the cooperation with the press and other media was good, there was considerable potential for improvement in this regard. For instance, op-eds could be placed in future in which the authors also indicate their role within the C20. The media coverage of the C20 summit, which took place around the same time as the G20 summit itself and also offered many occasions in Hamburg for reporting, was extraordinarily positive. More than 100 journalists took part in it. All large German television stations and nearly all national daily newspapers reported on the two-day event. Several international media also covered the C20 summit and its results.

However, the C20 process starts anew with every G20 presidency. In contrast to the governments, there are no sherpas or established structures for the C20 so far that could ensure a certain continuity across the succession of changing G20 presidencies. It was therefore essential this year to fulfil the particular ambition to ensure a knowledge transfer to Argentinian civil society. This has been achieved — also through an evaluation workshop on September 14/15, 2017, in Berlin in which six organisations of the Argentinian C20 process 2018 participated.

Civil society should continue to attempt to set its own thematic priorities. Through the stronger interconnection of non-governmental organisations in the G20 context, it should be possible in the run-up to the Argentinian G20 presidency to articulate positions that could then already be taken into account in the G20 agenda. In this respect, the cooperation with the German G20 presidency itself also proved a success: Departments coordinating the G20 working groups took up concrete proposals of civil society so that they were reflected in publications of the working group. Moreover, it proved helpful that national civil society works in international coordination with the sherpas in their G20 member states in order to represent C20 interests. This strategy has already been pursued with great success. It can be extended to further G20 countries and consolidated.

Overall, a stronger political engagement with and more direct access to the working structures of the G20 would have been desirable. Whereas this was indeed possible for some G20 working groups, others completely blocked this access. In particular, there was only occasional exchange with the ministers of finance and the finance track at the sherpa level. Moreover, more transparency on the part of the G20 with respect to the work programme and the political discussion



points would have been desirable. Representatives of the C20 were invited to several workshops and forums in the framework of G20 working group meetings. However, it was not possible to find out how the input into the political process was taken up and whether it was even discussed. At the same time, we welcome that this access was possible at all. It was particularly positive that the G20 Sustainability Working Group invited the C20 to a working group session in order to have a direct discussion with all government representatives. This was the first time that such open access existed; it should be adopted for other G20 working groups as well. The invitation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> sherpa meeting in March is also considered positive — even though the time for discussion was too tightly scheduled to allow the many topics on the G20 agenda to be at least briefly addressed. All in all, it was helpful for the C20 to have these formal and informal forms of access, irrespective of the impacts achieved. For the coming G20 presidencies — especially Argentina 2018 and Japan 2019 — it will be important to further strengthen the independent role of civil society in the C20. Only in this way can non-governmental organisations be an important mouthpiece also in cases when the G20 presidency is held by countries in which civil society is under pressure or fundamental human rights are sometimes directly restricted by the governments.

As a general rule, the access of civil society to the G20 must not be worse than that of other engagement groups or lobbying organisations. Particularly for the finance track, but sometimes also for the sherpa track, the B20 had privileged access. For instance, in the framework of the meeting of the G20 finance ministers the German G20 presidency (represented by the German Federal Bank) organised a conference with the Institute of International Finance — a worldwide lobbying association of financial market service providers. The speakers at this conference included Minister of Finance Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble. However, neither he nor his state secretaries took up the invitations of the C20 for a meeting.

The role of civil society and particularly the ‘shrinking spaces’ that more and more severely narrow the scope for action and expression of civil society were an overarching topic of this year’s C20 process. This was reflected upon in most of the working groups. However, we did not succeed to the desired extent in making this a prominent topic of the German G20 presidency. Especially with a view to some G20 governments, this is a topic that will also play an important role in future — not least because it is absolutely necessary from the perspective of the C20 that civil society in all states be able to act independently and without fear of repression.

The very international orientation of the C20 process, well beyond the G20 states, was also a great success. In future, this should be built upon. But international civil society cannot do this on its own. It is dependent on the willingness to cooperate on the part of the G20 members and particularly of the coming presidencies. The German G20 presidency placed this on the agenda as one of its central topics and was also able to make exemplary progress in this respect. Now it is up to the German government and to the coming presidencies to continue to ensure this in future and in cooperation with coming G20 presidencies.

*Participants of the C20 Summit discuss their take on globalisation and the G20.*



# Thank You

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WWF Deutschland

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*The C20 Steering Committee, panellists and Walter Pelka, president of the HafenCity University, with Chancellor Angela Merkel during the C20 Summit on June 18-19 2017 in Hamburg.*

Civil20 is the G20 engagement group of the international civil society. It represents more than 150 organisations from over 50 countries, giving civil society a loud voice in the G20.

Find out more at **[www.civil-20.org](http://www.civil-20.org)**

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