



## THE WORLD POLICY FORUM

Governance Realignment

### Actions for People-Planet-Centered Global Governance

## Empower the G20 to Strengthen Global Governance & Ease Geopolitical Tensions

#### Speakers:

##### Panelists:

- **Kevin Rudd**, Former Prime Minister, Australia and President of the Asia Society
- **Paul Martin**, Former Prime Minister, Canada and Founding Chair of the G20 Finance Ministers Group

##### Moderator:

- **Colin Bradford**, Lead-Co-Chair of the China-West Dialogue, Senior Fellow of the Brookings Institution, and Global Fellow of the Global Solutions Initiative

#### Session description:

There is a lot at stake during this transitional year. The Italian G20 Summit in October and the run-up to it, either raises the intensity and shifts the focus of the public governance discourse, or the world will muddle forward on incrementalist change which is a business-as-usual scenario. None of us involved in this Global Solutions Summit think that will work.

The focus needs to be on "transformational change" and on specific reforms of the G20 which will empower it to lead the "narrative" of systemic transformation in order to reconnect global political leadership to people. There is no going back to normal.

This session will put forward a set of ideas which are specific, practical, feasible and credible to create a "new political dynamic" that can strengthen global governance by energizing and reforming the G20 as a platform for political leadership, rather than talking over the heads of people.

There are three main topics for this session:

Recommended reforms of the G20 to empower it to lead concerted global efforts to address threats to survival and to achieve systemic transformation.

The potential of plurilateral leadership within the G20 to drive forward the people and planet-centered action agenda necessary to achieve social and environmental sustainability.

The inclusion of China in the plurilateral leadership of the G20 as a means of achieving "managed strategic competition".

Key Messages: The year 2021 is a rare moment in world history in which a confluence of social, environmental, racial, economic and geopolitical crises create opportunities and imperatives for systemic responses to systemic challenges.



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No country can manage these crises alone. No single meeting of leaders can manage the transition to new strategies and action plans.

There is an urgent need to mobilize ambitious, concerted global actions and to manage geopolitical tensions in order for the global community to move forward together rather than become divided.

The energizing of the G20 through specific reforms of it and plurilateral leadership within it present a credible focal point to both mobilize global actions and to manage global tensions so that one facilitates the other.

### Objectives:

First, to identify specific reforms of the G20 that could be undertaken by it that would: concentrate concerted efforts throughout the year, lodge responsibility for action in G20 ministers themselves for advancing their portfolios together, strengthen and create international institutions to have capacities commensurate with global systemic challenges, selectively include international security issues and officials in G20 processes to enable direct conversations about sensitive issues in the presence of other countries with stakes in the outcomes, charge senior political advisers and sherpas of G20 countries to connect G20 agendas to public concerns and to prioritize G20 communications for ordinary people, and assure consistency and follow-through from year-to-year to ensure that G20 commitments are fulfilled and plans implemented. (Bradford: Brookings Paper, April 27, 2021)

Second, to highlight the potential impact of deliberately encouraging plurilateral leadership within the G20 by enabling “shifting coalitions of consensus” to result in different groups of leaders and countries leading on different issues, thereby avoiding rigid blocs or alliances from dampening progress. Plurilateralism differs from bilateral or trilateral relationships by pluralizing the tensions among a half dozen players who are drawn from the larger pool of the G20 membership, rotating different actors into the plurilateral leadership group at different moments in time. Plurilateralism provides the advantage of diverse perspectives among a manageable number of leaders. China-West relations is a better arrangement than relying on the US-China relationship to sort itself out alone. Plurilateralism nested within the G20 where rotation in and out of the leadership group is better than a separate single group of plurilateral actors working on their own. (Haass and Kupchan, Foreign Affairs)

Third, to gain acceptance of the reality that the scale, dynamism and trajectory of China means that China is destined to be an integral part of the global future and that China’s role in the world is a work in progress in which all countries have a stake. Therefore, the issue is not how to change China, nor how to contain China but how to forge mutual relationships with China that are professional, responsible, respectful, effective and realistic. The current tensions need to be managed not intensified. There need to be innovative ideas brought into play which can contribute to China’s relations with the world in a positive way for the world and for China. Alternative frameworks exist. Nothing is cast in stone, yet. “Managing strategic competition” (Keving Rudd) between the United States and China is in the global interest and requires political imagination, vision and realism to avoid another bipolar competitive era from emerging in the 2020s. Managing global geopolitical tensions is essential to achieving effective global governance leadership of transformational change to respond to systemic challenges.



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