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To open this fifth World Policy Conference I would like to very briefly develop three points and review some of the ideas that led to its creation.

First point - the nature of interdependence has changed as a result of globalisation. It has become “non-linear”, as can be seen from the examples of the financial and economic crisis since 2007-2008, and the “Arab Spring”. In other words, more than ever before, tiny a priori causes can have significant and fundamentally unpredictable effects. This is what is commonly referred to as the butterfly effect.

There are numerous potential risks - for example, criminality and terrorism in all their forms, such as in the Sahel the threat from AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) or cyber-attacks. This explains why, therefore, in order to preserve the opportunities and benefits offered by an open world, it needs to be better organised and global governance needs to be strengthened in all areas.

In practice, such global governance is at present based on the forms of organisations or institutions as illustrated below.

First of all, existing institutions – the UN, regional organisations (such as the African Union, the ECOWAS, the Arab League), the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank and the Regional Development Banks, the network of central banks, etc. These institutions obviously need to adapt.

Second example, informal “mini-lateralism”, based on flexible political or economic coalitions with a variable geometry, in line with the interests and abilities of each.

Third example, an improved G20 capable of constituting an efficient steering committee at least in so far as concerns economics.

These examples are not limitative. Extended governance can only ensure the viability of the international system overall if it is sufficiently legitimate and efficient. This objective is not currently impossible, given that the world, although heterogeneous, is not revolutionary, as Europe was at certain times in its history. The postures of countries such as North Korea or Iran are exceptions. For all that, the conditions of legitimacy and efficiency are in part contradictory. And in some cases, heterogeneity can cause crises in the system although not necessarily systemic crises. This is currently the case with Syria, as a result of points of view that are proving difficult to reconcile within the Security Council. Among the permanent members – the USA, the UK and France are on one side, with China and above all Russia on the other side. To all this is added the question of trust, which is not just a combination of legitimacy and efficiency. Thus it can be maintained, since the sudden appearance of sovereign debt crises in Western countries, that on the economic level global governance is at the moment suffering from a serious lack of trust. Within the European Union for example, Member States appear at times to be unable to implement decisions, even though they took them collectively.

Second point – international relations remain principally, but no longer exclusively, interstate relations. States are in effect the main political units, i.e. the main expressions of collective life. In times of crisis, peoples turn towards States.

We have seen it in recent years. But globalisation has weakened the power of governments. This explains the problem of global governance. In many domains, today, governments can only take the correct decisions by conferring or negotiating with other active units whether public (other States or international organisations), or private (companies, trades-unions, etc). Generally, international relations have become much more fluid as a result of the revolution in information and communication technologies. One of the paradoxical risks of the modern world is that these realities and the resulting difficulties lead to nationalist and protectionist reactions. When times are difficult people are always tempted to turn in on themselves and the current period is no exception. This risk is real and could lead to new systemic crises. This explains the importance, for all institutions in charge of global governance, of maintaining a coherent and credible stance on the opportunities that an open world represents for all, provided that it is organised in a suitable manner. We thus return, at an even deeper level, to the theme of trust. It should be noted that, in the world in which we are living, diplomats would appear to be guaranteed a bright future!

And finally the third and last point. In a rapidly changing context there has clearly arisen the need to identify and manage what can be called “global public goods”, despite the fact that, strictly speaking, the notion of public good cannot be separated from that of political unity. However, the world is not ready to be constituted as a political unit. We can not therefore count on “global” political unity to define and handle global public goods. Nor can we even rely totally on governments, that are largely bogged down in current affairs. This explains why it is important to gradually create a “global civil society”, generating pioneering researchers who act as a driving force for the benefit of systems of public and private deciders, what I have called “decision making factories”. The networks of think tanks have adopted this approach, which is also, but in a different context, the approach adopted by the World Policy Conference. Our aim is, via substantive work, to contribute to the furthering of global governance, by bringing together States, particularly medium-sized and small states, companies and other active units from civil societies, and more generally those, of all origins or nationalities, that want to help to create – albeit in a very pragmatic and gradual manner – a form of “global” political unit compatible with current and future technological and scientific development. It is not a dream for us to start to prepare the world of the 22nd century.

For this fifth WPC, we have chosen to focus on certain major concrete aspects of global governance, rather than on institutional architecture. I will not go into them in detail here, as they are described in the booklet and the programme that you have received. To finish, I will add a final remark that could be considered banal but the importance of which can not be overestimated. Thanks to improvements in the means of transport and information and communication technologies, leaders can now see each other, talk to each other, meet with each other. There are now greater opportunities for establishing relations between them and eliminating misunderstandings. Depending on their domains, they form themselves into clubs. This represents perhaps the best chance for moving global governance forward. My wish is that the WPC shall gradually become a genuine transversal club for the benefit of this governance and that it shall contribute to making sense of a world that has become senseless. We only need examine recent history to see that the most dramatic situations have resulted from a monumental failure in communication. Saddam Hussein was isolated from the world. Bachar el-Assad travelled, received people and telephoned a bit, but he was and remains the prisoner of an apparatus that, for its part, lives behind closed doors. Ayatollah Khomeiny only receives foreigners whose support he can count on. And what can we say about the Communist dynasty in North Korea? The lesson that I take – we should never be afraid of opening ourselves up to the world, of giving and receiving. Identities are not dissolved, on the contrary they flourish, in a climate of welcoming and generosity.