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I will start, as you wished, Thierry, with a small historical presentation. However, I would also like to switch to the present time and to try to answer your questions. The origin of the G7 was to create an informal get-together of a small number of leaders. At that time, the issues were mostly about the international economy, oil prices and oil shock, and also monetary conditions and the coordination of monetary policies. The scope of the G7 meetings has been very much extended, and quickly enough extended to foreign policy and security policy, but also more recently to global affairs. Now, today, the G7 has lowered legitimacy in terms of what it represents in the world. In the beginning, it accounted for more than 60% of global GDP. Now, it represents maybe something like 40%. In the beginning, it represented 20% of the global population. Now, it is 10%. Also, the other big difference is that the world has very much changed in terms of international governance. International governance as a whole is in disarray. It is in a difficult condition.

Out of the crisis, of course, which occurred recently, we have got the G20. It is interesting to note that just before the G20, in the years leading to the G20, we had a number of attempts, like the so-called Heiligendamm Process, to associate the most important emerging countries with the G7. We then had the G20 created in the conditions everybody knows. We now see a G7 which regularly practices what we call outreach. Even if we have the G20, the G7 regularly invites leaders from other countries.

I will try to use my experience as a G7 and G20 Sherpa here, which I was for three years – 2017, 2018, 2019 – to contribute to your debate with a small reflection on what today makes the legitimacy and the efficiency of the G7. I think what remains from the beginning is the informality of the meetings between the leaders. In Biarritz, in 2019, our president told me when I was his Sherpa, “I do not want to spend my time on negotiating long conclusions. I want to have, like it was meant in the beginning, a private discussion between the leaders.” That is what happened. If you see the conclusions from 2019, they are very short and different from the usual conclusions.

The second important thing to guarantee efficiency is unity and having leaders who are able to have similar goals and represent countries which share basic features and values, and who are able to agree on what they want to achieve. However, I would say immediately after that, that another condition, and it might seem a bit contradictory, but it is not – it is complementary – is being able to have strong unity while still not being in a situation of building one block of countries against another block of countries. This is the reason why what we call outreach, of which there is probably not enough today, is really important. Here again, I will give the

example of what we did in Biarritz. We did not only invite countries, non-members of the G7, to take part in an informal discussion, but we also made it possible to prepare the meetings with them. They had their own Sherpas, and we had sectoral conclusions in different sessions with those countries.

One important case for us was Africa. We had a session dedicated to Africa, with a special outreach for African countries. I think it is a very important case. The last thing I want to add is that the way for the G7 to be seen as having efficiency and legitimacy is to get concrete results. I will take the examples of the last two summits. I will mention the Hiroshima Principles on Artificial Intelligence, a very important result, which is one of the building blocks on which the international community is trying to build a common view on how to see the development of artificial intelligence. More recently, we had a very important decision made by the seven countries to support Ukraine, with a concrete decision on financial support.

However, again, if you look at the big topics covered by the G7 and the G20, you see a lot of commonalities: global subjects, including climate and biodiversity, food security, the fight against inequalities, artificial intelligence – as I said – and the digital developments, and how to avoid a divide in the world regarding the capacity to use those new technologies. My conclusion here, and I will be happy to take part in the debate, for the way forward, is that the G7 needs to keep this informality, this possibility to have a common deliberation of leaders on the most important problems of the time, but also to be able, through working with other countries – and here I leave open the different possibilities, you mentioned enlargement, for instance, of the G7, or different kinds of outreach or better outreach – to have the capacity to contribute to and bring their own solutions to the global discussion.