



IDEAS FOR THE SIXTH INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE OF GREYCELLS

[1st quarter 2024? Hybrid format at the Palais des Nations or at the Graduate Institute?]

MULTILATERALISM OF THE 21ST CENTURY: WHAT ROLE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL GENEVA?

The global context: Multilateralism, and more specifically the role of the UN, is under threat. Russia's aggression to Ukraine is only the most recent and the most significant violation of the international legal order established in 1945. The crisis is not confined to the security and political dimensions. Far beyond the paralysis of the Security Council, it also concerns all other domains of international values, rules, and cooperation, from health to human rights, trade to environment, telecommunications to social policies. New York diplomacy is affected and makes the headlines very often, but the "International Geneva" is equally involved. Inevitably, a process of adjustment and adaptation of multilateralism to new political, military, economic, social and environmental forces will start – is already starting, insofar as we are already in a sort of new Cold War. The risk of resorting to improvised solutions, fragmented reactions and short-sighted decisions is high: future agreements and new mechanisms should be grounded on analysis and in-depth debates.

The preparation of the future of multilateralism in Geneva should not only be an academic exercise confined to professors and students: the practitioners (current and former diplomats, international civil servants, NGOs experts, journalists) involved in the daily work of Geneva-based institutions have an insiders' privileged knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of the multilateral machinery. The interface between theoretical and hands-on approaches will enrich the reflection on the future global governance, as well as the interface among seniors and young professionals and researchers.

Main goals and issues to be discussed in this intergenerational Dialogue:

- To reflect and debate on: how the International Geneva -all its state and non-state actors, and more particularly the Geneva-based UN entities- will evolve in the next 5 to 10 years, considering the current global context? What forecasts and main trends can we envisage?
- Several diplomats and academics around the world are working on proposals to reform the UN Security Council and the global governance structure, but with a strong focus on the New York environment, topics and mechanisms. The Geneva very rich and complex multilateralism is not yet involved in, nor articulated with the New York features, components and processes: how to connect both dimensions –New York and Geneva-- when devising a new international order? What are the risks of decoupling the New York political decision-making power from the Geneva multifaceted range of global issues and negotiations?
- Comparisons and exchanges are also needed among Swiss and Geneva authorities, UN officials and diplomats, and other stakeholders (NGOs, academia, private sector, the civil society of locals and expats, youth and seniors) interested in the various facets of the International Geneva. How to involve all parties in the preparation of the future? How to achieve a comprehensive and enriching complementarity between the various interests and goals of all stakeholders?

Main features of this intergenerational Dialogue: As usual in Greycells' events, this Dialogue will be open to all, experts and non-experts. All panels will be intergenerational and will involve diplomats, current and former UN officials, students and professors, representatives of local and international communities. The event will have a hybrid format and the main conclusions will be widely disseminated in Geneva and New York. An anonymous online survey will provide inputs to the debate, as usual in Greycells' Dialogues. The Steering Committee will include all interested partners.

Suggested preliminary programme of the event (max. 2 hours 30'):

Introduction (total max.15') :

-Welcome by the President of Greycells, the Canton de Genève and/or Fondation pour Genève, the Graduate Institute.

-The lessons of 100 years of multilateralism in Geneva (by John Burley): it could be a 5' video with images based on the Divonne exposition.

-Overview (5') on ongoing research and debates on the reform of multilateral structures and rules, particularly in New York (Foundation of Global Governance and Sustainability – FOGGS, or Global Governance Forum, or Coalition for the UN We Need C4UN).

Panel 1:

Human rights: how should the Human Rights Council evolve? Which values, policies and mechanisms will be determinant in the future? How should evolve the role of International Geneva in this domain? (a representative of the OHCHR, one NGO, one diplomat; interaction with the audience)

Panel 2:

Do the SDGs still matter? How the new economic-social-environmental policies and a new “eco-social contract” could take advantage of the inputs provided by the International Geneva?. (UNRISD, ILO, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a Geneva-based transnational enterprise; interaction with the audience)

Conclusions:

-Results of the online anonymous survey

-Final Roundtable with M.Möller, Honorary President of Greycells and member of the Board of Directors, GESDA; the DG of UNOG; a students' representative; a Geneva-based professor; a diplomat.

Additional inputs to the debate:

-Short videos of students interviewing seniors, and vice versa on what is their vision of the future International Geneva.

-Short research papers prepared by students (based anywhere in the world) on the future International Geneva in general or on the evolution of specific topics addressed in Geneva. Greycells could organise an international competition with a Jury composed by UNOG, UNIGE and the Graduate Institute, the KAF, Fondation pour Genève, Canton et Ville de Genève: the best paper would win a prize.

This intergenerational Dialogue should be a preparatory event of the “Geneva Intergenerational Summit” in 2024, and both would provide concrete inputs to the UN Summit of the Future in New York (September 2024).