

IKV BRIEF

THE C20 2015 SUMMIT: “CIVIL SOCIETY HAS A SAY”

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“The ones who know owe those who do not; and the ones who have owe those who do not have”, said the C20 Steering Committee Chair Zeynep Bodur Okyay in her opening speech at C20 Summit. Quoting such a sentence was well-fit in the context of the C20 Summit because in year 2015, a billion people still live on less than 1.25 dollars a day; 795 million people live with chronic hunger; the richest 85 people in the world own as much as the poorest half of the humanity, and 57 million children do not have access to primary education. This sentence is a manifestation of the urgent need for building a better world *for all* and the work that has to be done by the world leaders themselves.

Civil society, by adopting the motto “We Have a Say”, came together at the C20 Summit to discuss the critical issues that today’s world is facing and to convey their messages to G20 leaders on 15-16 September 2015 at Boğaziçi University which is one of the most prominent universities in Turkey.



Key Findings

- Civil society representatives, by adopting the motto “We Have a Say”, came together at the C20 Summit to discuss the critical issues that the world is facing today and to finalise the C20 Communiqué which conveys the messages of civil society to G20 leaders.
- C20 Communiqué can be defined as a summary of the policy recommendations developed by 5000 individuals representing more than 500 civil society organizations from 91 countries in the last 18 months.
- Turkish civil society leaves a heavy agenda to China which will take over the G20 Presidency in December 2015 ranging from fighting with poverty and inequality to measures for increasing women’s employment. Along with the “conscientious responsibility”, C20 Turkey also hands over a “digital library” to Chinese civil society to ensure the continuity over the agenda considering the fact that the issues faced by the world cannot be addressed in such a short period of time.
- Experience sharing between the presiding countries is crucial with regard to practicalities ranging from drafting the policy recommendations to finalising the communiqué given that the C20 was recognized as an official engagement group two years ago.

Background: On the Road to C20 Summit

Representatives of 14 civil society organizations from Turkey, which came together for “a world where knowledge and wealth is shared more equally”, started working for a civil society initiative that would convey the messages of civil society to G20 leaders even before Turkey officially took over the presidency of the G20. In April 2015, C20 was officially recognized as an engagement group of Turkish Presidency of G20 which further accelerated the work on the way to C20 Summit.

The priorities of C20 2015 were identified through a participatory online consultation process, which asked civil society representatives from all around the world to vote for the issues they wanted to see on the agenda. 1,169 people from 90 countries, representing 388 organizations took part in the online survey¹. According to the results of the survey, which was prepared based on the analysis of the priorities of previous years and which was available on 6 languages, the overarching objective of the C20 2015 was identified as “tackling inequalities and promoting sustainable and inclusive development” with a particular focus on four thematic areas as inclusive growth, gender equality, governance and sustainability.

¹ Further information on the methodology of the survey is available on <http://c20turkey.org/uploads/C20%20Turkey%20Priorities%20for%202015.pdf>

The working groups which were set up on the four thematic areas and led by a national and international co-chair started an open and participatory consultation process with civil society representatives to develop common policy positions and joint recommendations to the G20 through conducting online surveys, meetings held with experts and regional consultation forums organized abroad. The policy papers of each working group which based on the policy recommendations were published before the C20 Summit outlining the issues on the agenda as well as the content of the C20 Summit².

15-16 September 2015: Highlights from the C20 Summit

C20 Summit, which was held at Boğaziçi University with the participation of more than 400 civil society representatives from 52 countries, created a platform for national and international civil society to share their ideas, experiences and recommendations regarding the critical issues that the world is facing today.

In the opening speech of the C20 Summit, C20 Chair and IKV Vice-President Zeynep Bodur Okyay underlined that civil society organisations have an important role to correct the injustices in the world as the inequalities have been on the rise for the last 30 years and the gap between the “haves” and “have nots” is growing every day. In this process, she mentioned, the C20 Turkey Steering Committee acts as a facilitator to bring together the experiences, wealth of knowledge and expertise of civil society organisations from all around the world. C20 Chair Okyay further underlined that C20 Summit creates an opportunity to accumulate all the efforts and to finalise the C20 Communiqué that would convey the message of civil society to the G20 leaders.

Following the opening speech of C20 Chair Okyay, the participants of the Summit shared their experiences and recommendations on the four thematic areas of C20 Turkey which are inclusive growth, gender equality, governance and sustainability. Participants of the Summit, in more than 50 discussion sessions took place for two days, developed common policy positions and recommendations on different issues ranging from support measures for women’s businesses to long term decarbonisation goals; from exploring causes of inequality and ways to fight against poverty and inequality to the role of civil society in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

At the second day of the C20 Summit, the participants came together with the representatives of G20 engagement groups namely B20, W20, L20, T20 and Y20 to discuss common issues on the agenda. In addition, Dr. Sare Davutoğlu gave a speech on improving people’s lives within G20 and beyond and addressing global challenges with a particular focus on refugee crisis. In her speech, Davutoğlu mentioned that guaranteeing economic stability and decreasing inequalities prevalent in almost every society through integrating inclusive growth should be at the centre of growth strategies.

² Policy papers on Inclusive Growth, Gender Equality, Governance (Anti-Corruption and Tax Justice) and Sustainability are available on <http://www.c20turkey.org/page/dynamic/27>.

The keynote speech of the C20 Summit was given by Professor of Economics of Massachusetts Technology Institute Daron Acemođlu, who is among the 10 most-cited economists in the world, on the relationship between democracy, economic growth and civil society. Underlining the findings that economic growth increases by 25 percent in the following years after democratization of countries, Acemođlu highlighted that democratization also leads to increase in the welfare of the disadvantaged, decreasing child mortality and encouraging market reforms. While, underlying that democracy - on its own - is not enough for ensuring equality in the society, Acemođlu mentioned that inclusive political institutions are essential for effective distribution of political power within which civil society has a significant role.

At the closing ceremony of the C20 Summit, C20 Communiqué which was finalised with the contributions of participants during the Summit was presented to the Deputy Prime Minister Cevdet Yılmaz, Former Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan and G20 Sherpa Ambassador Ayşe Sinirliođlu. Reflecting his comments on the C20 Communiqué, Deputy Prime Minister Cevdet Yılmaz underlined the importance of democratization both at the national and international level to tackle global injustices. In his speech, Former Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan mentioned that the growth policies following the global financial crisis are not inclusive and the current global economic growth is a result of monetary expansion rather than structural reforms. In this respect, he mentioned that G20 Turkish Presidency identified priority areas as inclusiveness, innovation and implementation. Finally, G20 Sherpa Ambassador Ayşe Sinirliođlu underlined that G20 Turkish Presidency puts inclusive growth at the centre since inequality is the major impediment for economic growth.

Civil Society Call to G20 Leaders: C20 Communiqué

C20 Communiqué can be defined as a summary of the policy recommendations developed by 5000 individuals representing more than 500 civil society organizations from 91 countries. To put it simply, it is a 7 pages-long outcome of all the ideas produced in the last 18 months.

C20 Communiqué, which was finalised at the C20 Summit to convey the messages of civil society to the G20 leaders, starts with a clear message: "C20 Communiqué calls upon world leaders to become champions of a world governed according to the principles of an inclusive growth that respects human life, rights and dignity, and planetary boundaries". Underlining that increasing inequalities and discrimination on the basis of gender, socio-economic class and ethnic identity has become the reality experienced by millions of people, C20 Communiqué highlights that these inequalities and discrimination have reached a level that is no longer economically, politically or socially sustainable. As the summary of civil society recommendations to address these issues, the C20 Communiqué puts forward specific recommendations on inclusive growth, gender equality, governance and sustainability.

In this respect, with regard to inclusive growth, the C20 Communiqué calls upon G20 leaders to devise strategies that target decreasing inequality and fight against poverty as well as committing to tackle the multidimensional nature of inequality by way of facilitating access to social protection and public services. With regard to gender equality, the C20 Communiqué asserts that G20 leaders should recognize and reduce women's unpaid work; create gender-responsive policies and legislation; and monitor commitments made by G20 by setting up a national monitoring mechanisms and systematically measuring progress in gender equality and empowerment.

With regard to anti-corruption, the C20 Communiqué asserts that G20 leaders should ensure transparency in procurement processes through disclosure of awarded contracts; ensuring legal right to access public information; and to implement the Los Cabos High Level Principles on Asset Disclosure by Public Officials. On international taxation, the civil society calls upon G20 leaders to commit to a multilateral mechanism for automatic exchange of information including Beneficial Ownership information; to collect and publish annually statistics on the aggregate sums passing through their financial systems; and to reaffirm that the aim of international tax rules should be to ensure that multinational enterprises are taxed.

On sustainability, the C20 calls upon G20 leaders to agree on a fair and equitable long-term emission reduction and decarbonisation goal; to commit to a 100 percent renewable energy future by 2050; to make energy efficiency and renewable energy an infrastructure investment priority; and to take action to phase out fossil subsidies by 2020. In the concluding part of the C20 Communiqué, civil society representatives underline that the recommendations summarised in the document are vital – but not exhaustive - steps towards tackling global inequalities. In this respect, C20 Communiqué asserts that civil society across the world is keen to continue dialogue with G20 leaders to find a comprehensive solution for shared human development and to jointly create a world of unity where the benefits of growth are genuinely enjoyed by all.

The final version of the C20 Communiqué is available on [here](#).

From Istanbul to Beijing: C20 Turkey Heritage

On 1 December 2015, China will take over the G20 Presidency from Turkey. As Turkey is getting closer to hand over the G20 Presidency, the heritage of Turkey to be given to Chinese Presidency is taking shape as well. Although Turkey has incorporated new issues on the G20 2015 agenda, the priorities and policies identified by Turkish presidency represented continuity with the previous years. Developing the accountability framework and country-specific investment strategies are one of the best examples of Turkish presidency's efforts to pursue the "additional 2.1 percent global GDP growth by 2018" objective set by the G20 leaders during the 2014 G20 Summit in

Brisbane³. From this perspective, it is possible to argue that Turkey is also leaving a heritage that would enable continuity between the countries which preside over the G20. Considering that there is no secretariat of the G20 and the presidency is taken over by a different country every year, it is of a tremendous importance to have continuity among the priorities of the G20 presidencies for building effective measures to address the issues on the global agenda.

Along with G20, the agenda of G20 engagement groups to be handed over to the country that will take over the presidency of the G20 is also of significance with regard to having a holistic approach to the issues dealt with. In this respect, the C20 also carries a great responsibility. Turkish civil society leaves a heavy agenda to their Chinese counterparts ranging from fighting with poverty and inequality to measures for increasing women's employment. Along with the "conscientious responsibility", C20 Turkey also hands over a "digital library" to Chinese civil society to ensure the continuity over the agenda considering the fact that the issues faced by the world cannot be addressed in such a short period of time. Given that C20 is recognized as an official engagement group two years ago, experience sharing between the presiding countries becomes crucial with regard to practicalities ranging from drafting the policy recommendations to finalising the communiqué. In this respect, "digital library" provides a substantial resource which dates back to 2008 including several documents related to the G20 and C20 processes⁴. Although concerns exist whether Chinese government will recognize C20 as an official engagement group, it is possible to state that the heritage to be left by the C20 Turkey will be beneficial to convey the messages of civil society on the global issues to the world leaders.

What's Next?

C20 Summit should not be considered as an event that ended the C20 process. Rather, it has been a platform for civil society representatives from all around the world to come together to finalise the policy recommendations developed over the last 18 months. Therefore, a process which should be considered as equal importance started after the C20 Summit where the C20 Communiqué was approved.

In the period since the end of the C20 Summit to the G20 Leaders' Summit, which will take place on 15-16 November 2015 in Antalya, civil society representatives continue advocacy efforts at the national and international level to increase their engagement with G20 leaders. Following the C20 Summit, as is before, the civil society organizations from all around the world that actively took part in the process continue advocating for the policy recommendations on different platforms as well as mobilizing their efforts for G20 leaders to address the issues faced by the world today.

³ Tristram Sainsbury & Hannah Wurf, "Turkey's G20 Summit Approaches", 25.08.2015, <http://www.t20turkey.org/eng/pages/blog/b30.html>, retrieved on 28.09.2015.

⁴ The resources section of the C20 is available on <http://www.c20turkey.org/resource#panel-all>.