Globalization at a Dead End – Visions for a Restart

Nationalism is on the rise: while the United Kingdom prepares for leaving the European Union, US President Donald Trump works on protectionist policies and a tightening of border controls. Support for right wing parties is growing in various countries. Populists use the anti-globalization atmosphere for their dangerous and nationalistic goals.

One thing is certain: the approach on globalization is stuck in a legitimacy crisis. The one-sided focus on the liberalization of trade and capital flows resulted in a shift of power dynamics. The distribution of gains in living standards has been very unequal.

The poorest countries in the world have barely improved their economic situation and are now confronted with the consequences of climate change. Many middle-income countries in Asia and Latin America managed to reduce poverty, but at the cost of rising inequality, severe environmental degradation, and poor working conditions and human rights violations. In industrialized countries, the surge of inequality and competition has fueled economic and social insecurities, which people perceive as threatening.

The global financial and economic crisis has intensified the criticism on deregulation policies: people mobilize globally against new trade and investment agreements like TTIP and TPP as they see national standards in terms of labour rights and environmental and consumer protection at stake. Also among top economists there is an increased advocacy for a fundamental change in the policy stance on globalization – away from further market deregulation and toward more adequate regulations and a more equitable distribution on the global, regional and national level.

There is urgent need for change in global economic policy to confront the surging nationalism. Globalization has to be reshaped toward social cohesion, human and trade union rights, global justice, climate protection and a sustainable and stable global economy. For the first time in decades there is potential space to move toward a new model for globalization but ideas and courage to explore new avenues are lacking.

How can we organize this restart? Which are the problems that need to be addressed? What role should international agreements and national policies play? These and further questions will be center stage at the conference, which takes place in the lead-up to the G20 Summit under German presidency in Hamburg. Thus, the conference organized by Bread for the World, the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) for Labour20, Forum for Environment and Development, Greenpeace, IG Metall and Misereor addresses national policy makers also in their current role as G20 presidency.

Date:       May 2, 2017

Venue:      Hotel Aquino – Meeting Center of the Catholic Academy, Hannoversche Straße 5B, 10115 Berlin
PROGRAM:

9:00 am  Registration
9:30 am  Welcome – Mr. Pirmin Spiegel, Misereor
9:45 am  Key Note speech: Globalization in Crisis – The Need for New Visions
          Prof. Dani Rodrik, Professor for International Political Economy, Harvard University
10:45 am  Panel I: Key Problems of Globalization
          Chair:  Ms. Petra Pinzler, Author and Journalist, Die Zeit
          Discussants:
          Prof. Dani Rodrik, Professor for International Political Economy, Harvard University
          Mr. Reiner Hoffmann, Head of the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)
          Ms. Sweelin Heuss, Head of Greenpeace Germany
          Mr. José de Echave, Head of Department for Mining and Community Engagement, Cooper
          Acción, Lima
12:00 pm Lunch
1:30 pm  Parallel Panel Sessions: Possible Reforms
          a) Fair Globalization: What Could and Should Trade and Investment Policy Contribute?
          b) Enforcement of Workers’ and Human Rights in Global Value Chains
          c) Which Global Governance Structure Can Ensure the Primacy of Environment, Climate
             Protection, and Human Rights Over Business Interests?
          d) Our Planet has Limits! – Is a Green Economy the Solution for Global Environmental
             Problems?

          For a full description please see the following pages

3:30 pm  Coffee Break
4:00 pm  Panel II: The Way toward a Fair and Sustainable Globalization
          Chair:  Ms. Petra Pinzler, Author and Journalist, Die Zeit
          Discussants:
          Mr. Lars-Hendrik Röller, G20 Sherpa for the Chancellor’s Office
          Dr. h.c. Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel, President of Bread for the World
          Mr. Wolfgang Lemb, Member of the Executive Council at IG Metall
          Mr. Jürgen Maier, Executive Director of the Forum for Environment and Development
          Dr. Volker Treier, Chief Executive Officer of the Association of German Chambers of
          Commerce and Industry (DIHK)

6:30 pm  Reception

Simultaneous interpretation will be available. Please register before April 24, 2017: veranstaltungen.dgb.de/glob
Panel a) Fair Globalization: What Could and Should Trade and Investment Policy Contribute?

The discussions on TTIP and other trade agreements has pushed trade policy into the limelight of public debate. The traditional focus on the liberalization of markets and deregulation has generated a maldistribution of benefits within countries around the globe. Regulations in areas that benefit normal citizens from provision of public services to environmental and consumer protection as well as workers’ rights have come under substantial pressure by growing global competition and privileged access to private arbitration courts for foreign investors.

- How should trade agreements be shaped to prevent negative repercussions for the environment, social standards and human rights?
- How can trade policy be contextualized to assure a fair distribution of trade gains?
- How can we change the overall goal and the decision-making processes of trade policy? Which mechanisms and instruments need to be put in place?

Chair: Mr. Florian Moritz, Department for Economic, Finance and Tax Policy, DGB

Discussants:
- Mr. Franz Ebert, Research Fellow, Max-Planck-Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law
- Ms. Herta Däubler-Gmelin, Lawyer and Politician, former Member of Parliament
- Mr. Kwabena Nyarko Otoo, Analyst and Researcher, TUC Ghana

Panel b) Enforcement of Human and Trade Union Rights in Global Value Chains

Consumer goods are produced around the globe in more fractionalized ways that are cost effective but harmful of workers’ rights and the environment. Companies, often with good reputation engaging in social dialogue and workers’ participation in consumer countries, behave quite contrary along their supply chain. In producer countries, human rights violations and poor working conditions are the norm. Voluntary corporate social responsibility of companies as well as private auditors and certifiers have failed to improve the situation. Business opposition has stymied national legal initiatives and international standards intended to assure workers’ rights and decent wages in the complex and hidden supply chain.

- How can workers’ and human rights be effectively implemented along the global supply chain?

Chair: Mr. Michael Windfuhr, Deputy Director, German Institute for Human Rights

Discussants:
- Mr. Horst Mund, Head of the International Department, IG Metall
- Mr. Wolfgang Krause, President of the European works council, Thyssen-Krupp
- Prof. Dr. Remo Klinger, Attorney, Geulen & Klinger
- Ms. Nele Meyer, Senior Executive Officer ESCR, Amnesty International Brussels Office
Panel c) Which Global Governance Structure Do We Need to Best Ensure the Primacy of Environment, Climate Protection, and Human Rights Over Business Interests?

While investors’ rights are protected through enforceable arbitration tribunals, international treaties on environmental protection, workers’ and human rights lack effective enforcement mechanisms. This imbalance in enforcement of different interests is reflected in the composition of international organizations and the access to and influence on relevant policy forum. The G20 together with the World Bank set the international agenda in many areas whereas more democratically governed UN organizations struggle to keep political influence.

- What new agreements and institutional reforms at the international level can protect national democracy and allow countries to prioritize the public interests their citizens favor over the desires of powerful firms?

Chair: Mr. Jens Martens, Director of the European Office, Global Policy Forum

Discussants:

Prof. Dr. Markus Krajewski, Professor for International Law, University of Erlangen-Nürnberg
Mr. Frank Hoffer, Director of the ACT-Foundation
Dr. Roda Verheyen, Lawyer specializing in environmental and international law
Mr. Jochen Steinhilber, Department for Global Policy and Development, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation

Panel d) Our Planet has Limits! – Is a Green Economy the Solution for Global Environmental Problems?

The resource-intensive economic model, rapid growth of countries in the global south and expanding trade flows has produced severe social and environmental damage. Planetary boundaries remain disregarded. Would everybody live like we do in Germany, we would need already four planets! Agreement at the G7 Summit in Elmau and the climate summit in Paris to develop a decarbonized and climate neutral economy but leaves open the question of how to achieve this without conflicts and decline of living standards.

- How can we balance prosperity in the global north, higher living standards in the global south and global conservation of scarce resources?
- How does a “just transition” strategy look like that provides opportunities for workers in a decarbonized economy?
- Is the “Green Economy” approach a possible solution? Or will it be inevitable for the global north to reduce consumption to give people in the global south a chance to live in dignity?
- Could we think of an alternative model of prosperity that is less based on further expanding global trade and promotes a regional trading system?

Chair: Mr. Stefan Krug, Head of Political Affairs, Greenpeace

Discussants:

Ms. Lili Fuhr, Specialist for international environmental policy, Heinrich Böll Foundation
Ms. Sharar Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation
Mr. Stefan Körzell, Member of the Executive Council, DGB
Ms. Juliane Voigt, Carbon Market Watch
Ms. Julia Fernandes, Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens, Brazil