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## Promote Interstate Cooperation

### Contribution to GTI Forum [An Earth Constitution: Has the Time Come?](#)

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There is no doubt that the world needs global coordination and governance. With a global economy, social justice and sustainability simply are not possible with governance that is only national.

But to suggest that this necessarily requires a world government is, to my mind, an error. In a world that is not culturally homogeneous, one-size-fits-all solutions are not appropriate, at least not at this stage in the evolution of human cooperation. What, then, should be the guiding principles and architecture for formulating flexible yet effective global cooperation?

As opposed to some form of world government, “effective global cooperation” would mean an international agreement or treaty that is entered into by all or sufficient nation-states for global problems to be properly addressed.

The principles underlying such an agreement could be the following:

1. **Simultaneity:** The provisions of the agreement would be implemented by all or sufficient nations simultaneously. In that way, capital and corporations could not play one nation off against another. All nations would win.
2. **Give and take:** The contents of any agreement would cover multiple issues so that what a nation might lose on one issue, it can gain on another. For example, if a climate agreement were paired with a global wealth tax or currency transactions tax, the vast proceeds from the tax could be used to compensate those nations having the highest costs to cut their emissions. (The absence of such a multi-issue approach explains why existing UN efforts are failing.)

3. **Policies, not targets:** Such an agreement would not consist simply of targets. Rather, it would be an agreement on precisely what policy actions each nation will implement to achieve the agreed targets. Each nation will therefore know precisely what every other nation will implement, and when, and what the likely effect on its economic competitiveness will be. (The lack of such transparency contributes to the uncertainty and inaction we see today).

4. **Not a one-size-fits-all approach:** The contents of any agreement need not be the same for all nations. For example, rather than the rate of corporate taxation being identical in all countries, the agreement could be that all nations would increase their rate by an agreed percentage. In that way, every nation's competitiveness would be maintained but the amount of tax revenue raised to fund public services would increase dramatically.

5. **Democracy wherever possible:** The contents of such an agreement would not be determined by national governments alone. At least in democratic nations, citizens (or their chosen experts) could determine the contents while at the same time declaring their intention to give strong voting preference at all national elections to candidates who have signed a pledge to implement the agreement, to the probable exclusion of those who refuse. In that way, not only would such an agreement be highly democratic, but politicians would also have an electoral incentive to sign the pledge while those who refused could risk losing their seats. With more and more parliamentary seats and even whole elections being won or lost on fine margins, it need not necessarily take a majority of citizens to cause political parties and governments to support the agreement.

In countries that are not democratic, the government itself would be invited to join the international negotiations at an appropriate time. The voluntary structure outlined above means that no nation has anything to lose by joining such a process and that, as the world steadily deteriorates, each will have much to gain.

In that way, all nations, regardless of their political culture or system, can be included in such an agreement, while citizens (at least those in democratic countries) would have a strong influence over its contents.

The above-mentioned principles offer an interim yet vital step that might be called "practical global cooperation." It falls short of a world government—and intentionally so—and yet it would be a

dramatic step forward that would solve problems like climate change, thereby demonstrating the benefits of global cooperation/governance to citizens all over the world. For without seeing those benefits, it is unlikely that citizens will support any move towards concrete world government. We might note, moreover, that the European Union and other such structures evolved out of practical cooperation. Practical cooperation came first.

A further benefit is that it does not require any reform of the United Nations. Citizens in democratic countries, at least, can follow these principles independently right now.

Global cooperation or world governance/government has never happened before. We would therefore be wise to support all the main campaigns working for these objectives, some of which have been mentioned by other contributors to this discussion. Nevertheless, a campaign based on the above-mentioned principles can be seen at [www.simpol.org](http://www.simpol.org). So far, more than 100 Members of the UK Parliament have signed its pledge. They come from all the main political parties. A growing number of MPs from various parties in other countries have also signed its pledge.

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## About the Author



John Bunzl is a global political activist and businessman. In 2000, he founded the Simultaneous Policy (Simpol) campaign, a way for citizens to use their votes to drive politicians towards global cooperation. It has supporters in over 100 countries and enjoys the support of a growing number of Members of Parliament around the world. He has authored or co-authored a number of books including *The Simpol Solution*, *Monetary Reform – Making it Happen!*, *People-centred Global Governance – Making it Happen!*, and *Global Domestic Politics*. He has published numerous articles on global governance in the *Journal of Integral Theory & Practice*. He has lectured widely, including to The Schumacher Society, The World Trade Organisation, The Lucis Trust, and various universities.

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