Brief Report of the C20 Hand Over Event and Strategy Meetings on the Continuity of C20

Japan’s presidency of G20, which is from 1 December 2018 to 30 November 2019, will be over soon. In this context, C20 (Civil 20) Hand Over Event was held in Tokyo on 18 November inviting the representatives of civil society of G20 hosting countries from 2018 to 2022, including Saudi Arabia (2020). The following is the report of the hand over event and the strategy meeting on the continuity of C20 held in the margin of the event. This report is the brief summary of the event by Japan C20 2019.

1. Background of the Hand Over Event

The schedules of G20 in Japan was unique; the Leaders’ Summit was held in June, which is very early timing compared to past G20s, and various Ministerial meetings were held from May to November. Most of the Summit of G20 Engagement Groups, including C20, were held from March to May, except L20 Summit in August. It meant that, unlike G20 in Argentina in 2018 whose hand over event was held on 3 December right after the G20 Leaders’ Summit, the hand over event should be held independently from G20 events in the end of the term of Japan’s presidency.

Also, the hand over event is the first case with “C20 Principles”, which was approved by C20 International Advisory Committee and Steering Committee of C20 in June 2019. It meant that we need to keep the core value of C20, including global character, transparency, independence, inclusiveness, continuity and predictability. In this context, the continuity of C20 with these core values appeared important for the future.

In this context, Japan C20 Presidency hosted the C20 2019 Hand Over Event inviting 5 of G20 hosting country civil society representatives from Argentina (2018), Saudi Arabia (2020), Italy (2021), and India (2022), as well as the leaders of global and regional civil society networks related to SDGs.
2. Summary of the Hand Over Event

The Hand Over Event was held at the Sacred Heart Global Plaza, from 13:00 to 17:00 on 18 November 2019. The event was moderated by Tomoko Hoshino, Japan Local Coordinator of C20 Environment, Climate and Energy Working Group, and Aoi Horiuchi, C20 Sous-Sherpa.

Part 1: Reviewing the G20 and C20

The first part was the review of the G20 Summit and the role of C20 itself. Yuka Iwatsuki, Chair of C20 2019, made opening remarks with appreciation for all the participants of the process of C20 2019. After her remark, Keisuke Suzuki, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, made special remarks as the response from the government representative of G20 hosting country. A panel discussion, with Suzuki, Iwatsuki, Maria Emilia Berazategui (Transparency International, former C20 Sherpa in 2018), and Kenji Kanasugi (current G20 Sherpa representing Japan), followed the two remarks. In the session, Kanasugi summarised the outcomes of G20 including Osaka Track on data governance. Suzuki emphasised the necessity of C20 to expand its role and increase its capacity. Iwatsuki defined the role of C20 as (a) facilitating dialogue, (b) securing civil society space, (c) promote accountability. Berazategui emphasised the importance of meaningful participation of civil society for G20 process.

Part 2: Evaluating Thematic Issues of G20 and C20

There were 4 agenda-based plenary sessions attended by each Working Group Coordinators. First Session was on social development agenda including education, health and gender; Naoko Shiroya, Education Working Group (WG), Masaki Inaba, Global Health WG, and Asami Kamiya, Gender WG, shaped the outcomes and remaining challenges of each issue. Second Session was on environment, climate and infrastructure; Tomoko Hoshino, Environment, Climate and Energy WG, Kimiko Hirata, Climate Sub-Group of EEC WG, and Yuki Tanabe, Infrastructure WG discussed the outcomes and challenges of G20 on respective issues, including marine plastic waste.

Third Session was on digital economy, trade and investment, and international financial architecture; Masaki Inaba and Shoko Uchida, who led the Trade and Investment WG and Digital Economy Task Group and Hiroo Aoba, International Financial Architecture WG spoke about their outcomes and remaining challenges. Trade and Investment WG and Digital Economy Task Group were newly established in 2019, since the
Government of Japan intends to mainstream these issues, especially on Data Governance. Speakers expressed their willingness to continue advocacy for further G20 process in the future.

Forth Session was on anti-corruption, shrinking civic spaces, labour, business and human rights; Maria Emilia Berazategui, Anti-Corruption WG, Juliana Catania, Local2Global WG, Hideki Wakabayashi, Labour, Business and Human Rights WG, spoke about the outcomes and remaining challenges on these issues. Additionally, Katsuhito Okubo, representing Japanese youth movement for sustainability, made a speech on the participation of youth for G20 process.

Part 3: Continuity of C20 for the Future

In the third part of the event, the civil society representatives of 5 hosting countries of G20 from Argentina (2018), Saudi Arabia (2020), Italy (2021), and India (2022), discussed their experiences. Before the panel discussion, two speakers made speeches; Maria Emilia Berazategui, former C20 Sherpa in 2018 and C20 Steering Committee member in 2019, introduced “C20 Principle”, then, Her Highness Princess Nouf bint Muhammad bin Abdullah al Saud, Chair of C20 2020 in Saudi Arabia, explained about the schedule of the C20 engagement in 2020. Starting with C20 Kickoff Event in mid-January, a face-to-face meeting in March, C20 Summit in October, and G20 Leader’s Summit will be held in November.

After the two presentations, panel discussion of the continuity of C20 took place; Juliana Catania of Argentina, Masaki Inaba of Japan, Princess Nouf Muhammad of Saudi Arabia, Riccardo Moro and Stefania Burbo of Italy, and Harsh Jaitli of India, were panelists representing civil society in G20 hosting country from 2018 to 2022. Representatives of Argentina and Japan spoke about the outcomes and challenges of their C20 process, and representatives of Saudi Arabia, Italy and India spoke about their expectation and concerns on G20, as well as their plans for C20 and G20 advocacy.

After the panel discussion, Anselmo Lee, C20 Steering Committee member, made a speech on how to align civil society advocacy on C20 and SDGs. Then, Kazumi Yamaguchi, representing Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability (JYPS), made a speech on how to ensure true participation of youths in G20/C20. After a short Q & A session, where human rights issues of the G20 hosting countries were raised, Atsuko Miwa, Co-Chair of C20 2019, closed the event with remarks, mentioning the importance of continuity of C20 and G20 advocacy with the principles of accountability, peace and participation leaving no one behind.
3. Strategy Meetings on the Continuity of C20

On the margins of the Hand Over Event, strategy meetings on the continuity of C20 was held on 18-19 November, with the attendance of each representative of C20 hosting countries and the Japan local coordinators of C20 Working Groups. At the Round 1, in the morning of 18 November, participants discussed two agenda; (a) plans of C20 2020 in Saudi Arabia, (b) continuity of C20 Working Groups. At the Round 2, in the morning of 19 November, participants shared the updated information on the situation around G20 in Italy, which hosts G20 in 2021, and India, in 2022.

4. Further Process for Saudi Arabia C20 Summit in 2020

G20 Presidency will be handed over from Japan to Saudi Arabia on 1 December 2019. The Government of Saudi Arabia will announce its priority areas and G20-related schedules around the date. The key schedules with regards to G20 Engagement Groups, including C20, will also be announced. The C20 hand over process from Japan to Saudi Arabia will also be accelerated in the final week of November and early December.

The hosting organisation of C20 2020 in Saudi Arabia is King Khalid Foundation (KKF). The Chair of C20 is Her Highness Princess Nouf bint Muhammad bin Abdullah al-Saud, and Sherpa is co-served by Rahaf al Sanosi and Osamah al Henaki, both from KKF. They clearly expressed their will to respect the C20 Principle and keep the existing structures, including Steering Committee (SC) and International Advisory Committee (IAC), and all the 11 Working Groups (10 WGs plus Digital Economy Task Group in 2019) will remain in C20 2020. KKF leads the process of nomination of C20 SC/IAC members and international coordinators of Working Groups with sufficient consideration on the structure and leadership of current C20 leadership.

C20 Saudi Arabia 2020 is still working on inviting Steering Committee members that represent past and future C20 Presidencies with leaders from C20 Australia, C20 Argentina, C20 Germany, and C20 Japan, while also having members from upcoming C20 Italy and C20 India, together with two Saudi CSOs representing different regions. This composition is meant to ensure continuity, inclusiveness, and representativeness of C20’s global network.

As Saudi colleagues start assuming their responsibilities as the host of C20 2020, carrying its legacy and positive impact forward, they strongly commit themselves to serve the global civil society community in upholding the C20 Principles and demanding proper access and influence of C20 working groups to all G20 governmental discussions. They also commit themselves to advocate for the C20 positions to be presented, heard, and adopted at every Sherpa meeting, every Ministerial meeting, every Working Group meeting, and maintaining C20’s continuous presence at the International Media Centre during the Leaders’ Summit.