

Paraty Dialogues



2026
Outcome Report



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Paraty
Dialogues

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About Paraty Dialogues



The Paraty Dialogues was born from a simple observation: many of the world's most influential spaces for reflection on geopolitics and global affairs remain concentrated in Europe and North America. So, this initiative emerged from the aspiration to overcome this void, by creating, in Brazil, a permanent space for international reflection, capable of bringing together people from different countries, regions and professional backgrounds to reflect and discuss the challenges before our world. The objective is, therefore, not to reproduce debates taking place elsewhere, but to contribute with a distinct perspective, one informed by Brazil's experience and what might be described as a 'tropical' perspective on global affairs.

This choice is also grounded in Brazil's particular position in the international system. The country has historically maintained channels of dialogue across political and geopolitical divides and, more recently, its presidencies of the G20, BRICS and COP30 have reinforced its capacity to convene actors with different interests and perspectives. At a time of growing international fragmentation, this ability to engage across divides creates an opportunity for Brazil not only to participate in global debates, but to host and shape them.

The concept was, therefore, to establish an international gathering with a deliberately different format: small enough to allow substantive exchange, diverse enough to challenge established assumptions, and removed from the usual institutional settings in which international debates take place. Participants would spend several days together in an off-site environment, with space not only for more formal discussions but also for the informal interactions through which trust, intellectual exchange and new relationships are often built.

Paraty became a natural setting for this ambition. Its combination of history, cultural heritage and nature offered more than a backdrop for the meeting. Away from major political and financial centers, the town provided the conditions for a less formal and more reflective form of dialogue. The intention was to create an environment in which participants could temporarily step outside their institutional routines and engage more openly with different perspectives.

The partnership with Ambassador Antonio Patriota was instrumental in transforming this initial idea into the Paraty Dialogues. It combined CEBRI's convening capacity with a diplomatic perspective deeply associated with multilateralism, international law and Brazil's ability to engage with countries across different regions and political traditions. From the outset, the initiative was conceived around new people, new conversations and the possibility of shifting part of the international debate toward Brazil.

From its early stages, the vision behind the Paraty Dialogues found an essential partner in the Open Society Foundations, whose support and belief in the initiative were instrumental in turning the idea into reality as a new space for global dialogue in the Global South. José Roberto Marinho was another fundamental partner to bring the Paraty Dialogues to life. From the outset, he embraced the vision behind the initiative and generously opened his home in Paraty to its participants. His unwavering support and gracious hospitality helped create precisely the kind of setting the Dialogues had envisioned: one of openness, trust and genuine exchange, where discussions could continue beyond the formal sessions.

The first edition brought this concept to life by gathering a deliberately plural group to discuss one of the defining questions of the present moment: how international cooperation can be preserved and renewed amid geopolitical fragmentation, climate change challenges and mounting pressure on multilateral institutions. Future editions may address different global issues as circumstances evolve.

The longer-term ambition is therefore broader. The Paraty Dialogues seeks to establish a recurring international space in Latin America where ideas can be tested, disagreements explored and relationships built across geopolitical and institutional boundaries, and where the reflections generated over several days can subsequently travel beyond Paraty, informing wider policy debates and international agendas.

In this sense, Paraty is both a place and a proposition: that some of the conversations needed to understand and shape the future of the international system should also take place from the Global South; that Brazil can provide a credible space for those conversations; and that, in an increasingly fragmented world, bringing different actors together to think beyond established divides is itself a contribution to international cooperation.



Julia Dias Leite

CEO, CEBRI – Brazilian Center
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Overview

Paraty Dialogues in numbers

3 days of discussions

15 countries

29 institutions

32 Participants

17 Foreign participants

15 Brazilian participants

Three thematic axes

Geopolitical
Landscape

Climate and
Sustainable
Development

Global
Governance

The Paraty Dialogues created a space for dialogue on geopolitical transitions, international cooperation, climate action, sustainable development and the future of global governance, with particular attention to the perspectives and role of the Global South.

A high-level group of global leaders and experts

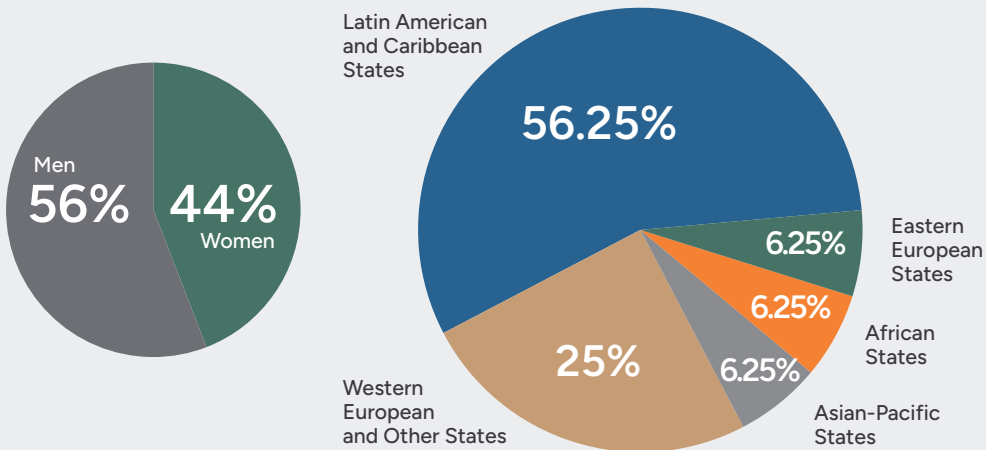
The discussions brought together perspectives from diplomacy, academia, government, civil society and the private sector. The Dialogues convened a former Executive Director of ICAN, the organization awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, alongside former foreign ministers, a former President of the United Nations General Assembly, senior United Nations officials, heads of international organizations, academics, diplomats, business leaders and representatives of civil society.

Paraty Dialogues on a map

Participants came from America, Europe, Africa and Asia, bringing different regional experiences and geopolitical perspectives to the discussions.

15 countries

4 continents





Towards a Cooperative Multipolarity: Reflections and Pathways for International Cooperation

This summary reflects the writers' personal impressions of the discussions. No participant is in any way committed to its content or expression.

Introduction:

A System in Transition, Not in Collapse

The inaugural Paraty Dialogues took place at a moment of unusual uncertainty in international affairs. Geopolitical competition is intensifying, armed conflicts are multiplying, military expenditure is rising, climate change is producing increasingly immediate consequences, and technological transformations are redistributing power among states and non-state actors alike. At the same time, institutions designed to manage international cooperation face growing pressure, while polarization, both among and within countries, is apparently narrowing the political space for constructive collective action.

Yet, one of the clearest messages to emerge from the discussions in Paraty was that crisis should not be confused with collapse. Predictions of the demise of multilateralism may obscure both its continuing relevance and the considerable institutional, legal and political infrastructure that remains available for international cooperation. This **distinction between disruption and transition** provided an important starting point for the discussions, as the international system seems to be experiencing both simultaneously. The geopolitical landscape is becoming more multipolar across different dimensions: although military power remains highly concentrated, economic influence is more broadly distributed, and diplomatic agency can extend well beyond the greatest powers. Even small states can exercise consequential influence when institutions and international law provide avenues for action, as illustrated by Vanuatu's role in bringing the question of states' climate obligations before the International Court of Justice.

The transition is, therefore, neither linear nor uniform. Different forms of power are being redistributed at different speeds, while **polarization increasingly intersects with multipolarization**. This creates risks of fragmentation and confrontation, but also opportunities for a more representative international system.

A recurrent concern throughout the Dialogues was the possibility of approaching a **systemic tipping point**. The concept, usually associated with climate change, can also be applied to international governance. Persistent paralysis of institutions responsible for peace and security, trade and international cooperation could eventually produce damage that becomes increasingly difficult to reverse. This raises an issue of **intergenerational responsibility**: future generations should inherit not only a habitable planet, but also a functional international system capable of managing conflict and facilitating cooperation. In that sense, allowing multilateral cooperation to deteriorate beyond such a point would be as irresponsible, in institutional terms, as allowing environmental systems to cross dangerous thresholds.

At the same time, participants repeatedly cautioned against narratives of inevitable institutional failure. International law and multilateral institutions have produced achievements that risk becoming invisible precisely because they have become embedded in international life. The prohibition on the use of force, mechanisms for peaceful dispute settlement, international courts, global norms and decades of institution-building remain significant constraints on power, even when they are violated. The appropriate response to selective compliance should not be to abandon the rules, but to insist more consistently on their application.

This point leads to one of the fundamental propositions emerging from Paraty: **multilateralism matters insofar as it is capable of disciplining power**. A system in which states select only the rules that suit them risks becoming a form of competitive multilateralism rather than a framework for genuine cooperation. The credibility of international law ultimately depends on resisting double standards and reaffirming that comparable conduct should be judged according to comparable standards, irrespective of the actor involved.

The discussions nevertheless rejected the assumption that renewed cooperation requires returning to the institutional arrangements of an earlier era. The international environment that produced the post-war order has changed profoundly. New economic powers have emerged; decolonization transformed the membership of the international system; technological capabilities have shifted influence toward corporations and individuals with resources that can rival those of states; and cities, subnational governments, civil society organizations and scientific communities increasingly shape outcomes that were once considered the exclusive domain of national governments. Moving beyond the nostalgia of reconstructing the past,

the task is to **preserve what works while adapting cooperation to new distributions of power and agency**.

This perspective also helps explain the significance of holding the Dialogues in Brazil. Recent Brazilian presidencies of the G20, BRICS and COP30 demonstrated that, even under conditions of heightened geopolitical tension, diverse actors can still be brought around the same table. Paraty extended that experience into an area less commonly associated with international debates hosted in Brazil: peace and security. One of the initiative's innovations was to link Brazil's comparatively peaceful regional experience and long-standing participation in the UN system to its potential role in wider conversations on international security.

More fundamentally, Paraty suggested that the debate should move beyond traditional categories such as "great powers" and "middle powers", as **influence is increasingly issue-specific**. It connects to what was described as a broader **network of responsible actors**. One of the practical outcomes of the gathering was precisely the recognition that those committed to international law, rational cooperation and a functioning multilateral system are neither isolated nor necessarily a minority. The challenge is to connect them more effectively and translate a dispersed constituency for cooperation into collective agency.



From Unipolarity to Cooperative Multipolarity

If there was broad recognition in Paraty that the unipolar moment has receded, there was considerably less certainty about what will follow it, as multipolarity should be understood as an uneven and unfinished process in which different centers of power are emerging across military, economic, technological and diplomatic domains. This distinction matters because **multipolarity describes a distribution of power; it does not determine how that power will be exercised.** Discussions offered a useful framework for thinking about three possible trajectories. The first is **competitive or conflictual multipolarity**, in which rival poles seek to compel smaller states to align with one camp or another. The second is **managed multipolarity**, in which competition persists but is constrained by agreed rules and mechanisms, analogous in some respects to the managed bipolarity of the Cold War. The third is **cooperative multipolarity**, in which multiple centers of power coexist while retaining sufficient institutional structures, rules and political incentives to cooperate on shared challenges.

The distinction captures an important conclusion from Paraty: **multipolarity itself is neither the problem nor the solution.** A cooperative multipolar order would not eliminate strategic competition, nor would it require states to share identical interests, values or political systems. Rather, it would seek to establish sufficient rules, restraints and channels of cooperation to prevent competition from becoming systemic confrontation. This requires institutions capable of disciplining power while providing meaningful space for a wider range of actors to participate in shaping international outcomes. On the other side, the less-desired alternative is an international environment increasingly plagued by attempts at establishing spheres of influence, transactional alignments and pressure on less powerful states to choose among competing poles. Such a trajectory would risk replacing the inequities of unipolarity not with greater pluralism, but with multiple centers of coercion.

For this reason, participants repeatedly stressed the importance of the agency of states outside the major-power competition. The future international order will not be determined solely by the relationship between the United States and China. Regional powers with global influence, smaller states acting collectively, regional organizations and transregional platforms as well as issue-based coalitions can all contribute to shaping the constraints within which major powers operate. As in domestic systems, the organization of actors with individually limited power can itself become a mechanism for checking abuse of power. The ultimate goal should be to build an international environment in which **different configurations of actors can cooperate around different problems while remaining anchored in common rules.**

That insight would become one of the most practical themes running through the Paraty discussions: the future of multilateralism may depend less on finding a single institutional solution than on learning how to combine **universality with variable geometry.**



Rethinking Multilateralism: Towards an Ecosystem of Cooperation

A central theme running through the Paraty Dialogues was that **the current difficulties of multilateralism should not be equated with the irrelevance of the United Nations**. The UN retains a unique source of legitimacy: its universality, the principles embodied in the Charter and its capacity to provide a common normative framework for international cooperation. Participants repeatedly recalled that the Organization has survived periods of acute geopolitical confrontation and has adapted to transformations at least as consequential as those confronting it today. Current challenges therefore call for reform and political creativity, rather than abandonment.

At the same time, there was broad recognition that **the UN cannot, and need not, be the institutional venue through which every global problem is solved**. One of the most consequential ideas emerging from the discussions was that international cooperation can be understood as an **ecosystem**, anchored in the UN Charter, but composed of multiple and complementary layers of action.

The notion of **two-tier multilateralism**, applied in the context of COP30 and invoked in Paraty, distinguishes between what genuinely requires universal agreement and what can be advanced through coalitions of interested actors. Universal institutions would continue to establish fundamental principles, norms and common objectives, while more flexible arrangements could accelerate implementation where consensus among all states is either unnecessary or temporarily unattainable.

This is not an argument for replacing universal multilateralism with fragmented cooperation. On the contrary, the objective is to develop an ecosystem that is more flexible without becoming fragmented; more representative without sacrificing effectiveness; more inclusive without producing paralysis; and more anticipatory rather than merely reactive. The guiding principle is

complementarity: **different institutions and coalitions performing functions for which they are best suited while remaining connected to broadly accepted international principles.**

Such an approach also responds to the reality that different problems require different forms of cooperation. Universal participation may be indispensable when defining fundamental norms or addressing truly indivisible global challenges. Other issues may be more effectively addressed through variable geometry, plurilateral arrangements, regional institutions or coalitions of interest. Participants explicitly questioned the usefulness of treating multilateralism as a one-size-fits-all approach and emphasized the need to design arrangements according to the type of collective-action problem involved.

Regionalism can be particularly important within this architecture. Global principles may require regionally differentiated implementation: solutions appropriate to Latin America and the Caribbean will not necessarily correspond to those required in Africa or Asia. Rather than viewing the global and regional levels as competing sources of authority, participants called for greater coordination among them, based on **global convergence around principles combined with regional and local ownership of implementation.** This could simultaneously improve effectiveness and restore confidence in institutions by making international cooperation more visibly capable of delivering concrete results.

Forums outside the UN can likewise serve useful complementary functions. The G20 was repeatedly cited as an example of a sufficiently inclusive setting capable of testing proposals and generating political momentum when universal institutions are deadlocked. BRICS and other plurilateral platforms create space for coordination among actors whose interests do not necessarily coincide across all issues. Such forums should not be evaluated primarily by whether they reproduce universal consensus, but by whether they can facilitate cooperation and feed constructive outcomes back into the broader international system.

This points to another important conclusion from Paraty: **consensus should not always be treated as a precondition for action.** Requiring universal agreement at every stage of implementation can give individual actors disproportionate capacity to prevent progress. A more pragmatic architecture would preserve consensus where universal legitimacy is essential, while allowing coalitions to move ahead with implementation in areas where willing actors can join forces to achieve common objectives.

The concept of **coalitions of interest** emerged repeatedly as a practical mechanism for doing so. Such coalitions can bring together countries with different political alignments but overlapping interests around specific challenges. They need not constitute permanent blocs or require agreement across the full international agenda. Their strength lies in their capacity to organize cooperation around concrete objectives and to evolve as circumstances change.

However, institutional flexibility alone will not be sufficient. The redistribution of agency in the international system extends beyond states. Corporations increasingly exercise international influence through digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, communications platforms and strategic technologies. Cities and subnational governments sometimes command resources greater than those of sovereign states. Scientists, universities, philanthropies and civil society organizations possess expertise, networks and continuity that can outlast governmental mandates. Participants therefore called not only for renewed multilateralism but also for **multisectorialism**. These stakeholders should be incorporated more systematically into the governance of issues in which they already exercise substantive influence. Their participation can also provide continuity across political cycles and, in some circumstances, help bridge societal polarization. This broader engagement was described as a form of **multilateral stewardship**, as responsibility for sustaining international cooperation cannot rest exclusively with national governments. This expansion of actors must nevertheless be accompanied by corresponding forms of accountability. If corporations and other non-state actors exercise international influence, they must increasingly be expected to behave as responsible international actors, and not be allowed to operate beyond meaningful oversight.

Taken together, these discussions suggest a model of **layered multilateralism**: universal institutions providing legitimacy, norms and common principles; regional organizations adapting global objectives to regional circumstances; plurilateral and issue-based coalitions accelerating action where universal consensus is unavailable; and non-state actors contributing expertise, implementation capacity and long-term stewardship. Seen in this light, institutional experimentation should not be interpreted as evidence of multilateral fragmentation. Properly coordinated, it may instead constitute one of the principal modalities through which multilateralism adapts to a more complex and multipolar international order.



Climate Governance: From Negotiation to Implementation

Climate change provided perhaps the clearest illustration in Paraty of both the continuing necessity and the limitations of contemporary multilateralism. No country can address the climate crisis alone, and decades of international negotiations have created a body of rules, commitments, institutions and scientific knowledge that would have been impossible without multilateral cooperation. At the same time, the growing gap between negotiated ambition and implementation has exposed the limits of a system excessively dependent on consensus-building.

The starting point of the discussion was straightforward: **climate change must no longer be treated as a specialized environmental agenda**. It has become inseparable from economic policy, development strategies, trade, industrial transformation, energy security and, increasingly, geopolitics. As a consequence, the issue is not only confined to which climate commitments governments are prepared to negotiate internationally, but which economic and political conditions are required to make implementation possible domestically. Effective climate governance must connect global objectives to the economic and social realities within which governments are expected to deliver them.

The Brazilian experience across the G20 and COP30 provided an important reference point. The discussions highlighted the value of connecting the economic and climate tracks rather than treating them as parallel agendas. COP30 also benefited from previous Brazilian efforts to integrate development, inequality, forests and climate into a broader political framework. Nevertheless, participants recognized the unique contribution of the COP process. For all its limitations, the UNFCCC has established a universal framework, generated common expectations, mobilized scientific and political attention and created a moment in which climate change becomes a genuinely global conversation. Moving forward, the international

community should determine **what the COP process should continue to do, and what other mechanisms can achieve alongside it.**

This distinction mirrors the concept of layered multilateralism discussed throughout Paraty. The UNFCCC can remain the indispensable venue for universal negotiations and common norms while complementary arrangements accelerate implementation. Climate cooperation would then operate simultaneously through universal agreements and through coalitions of countries, businesses, financial institutions, subnational governments and civil society organizations capable of moving faster on specific objectives.

COP30 offered concrete illustrations of this approach. Once the limits of formal negotiations became apparent, the Presidency developed **roadmaps as implementation instruments**, seeking to maintain momentum beyond what could be formally agreed through consensus. The logic was significant: reaching the limits of negotiability does not necessarily mean reaching the boundary of possible action. The **Tropical Forests Forever Facility** (TFFF) illustrated how developed and developing countries can organize cooperation around forest protection outside the requirement of universal UNFCCC consensus. Similarly, cooperation among major jurisdictions on carbon markets demonstrated the potential for coalitions to develop practical arrangements capable of complementing the universal climate regime.

To summarize: **consensus is not a precondition for implementation.** This does not mean bypassing multilateral commitments or lowering collective ambition. Rather, it means distinguishing between decisions that require universal legitimacy and actions that willing actors can begin implementing immediately. Successful initiatives can create new constituencies, demonstrate feasibility and eventually influence broader international standards.

Such dynamics can transform the way diplomatic deadlock should be understood. Participants noted that the most difficult actors are not necessarily those that openly resist proposals during negotiations. Visible disagreement can be negotiated. A more serious obstacle arises when actors remain disengaged throughout the process and intervene only at the end to prevent consensus. More continuous diplomacy, earlier engagement with potential blockers and greater use of implementation coalitions could help reduce the ability of late-stage opposition to immobilize collective action.

The experience of countries whose positions have evolved over time also suggests that today's opponents need not remain tomorrow's blockers.

Brazil's own changing role in international forest negotiations was cited as an example of how political and economic conditions can alter a country's international posture. The same can be said of the way China has now embraced international cooperation on the environmental front.

The question was raised in Paraty as to whether **the annual COP cycle is still sufficient as the principal organizing mechanism for international climate cooperation**. The intensity of attention generated by the COPs remains valuable, but climate implementation requires continuous diplomacy between conferences. Has the time arrived to review a system organized around annual negotiations that produce cycles of expectation, disappointment and renewed negotiation when many of the most consequential decisions increasingly occur elsewhere? To fill this gap, participants explored whether climate governance could benefit from a more permanent institutional capacity within the United Nations devoted specifically to implementation.

One possibility discussed was a UN Climate Council, potentially under the authority of the General Assembly. Such a body would not replace the UNFCCC or assume its negotiating mandate. Instead, it could provide continuous political attention to implementation, disseminate effective practices and help connect climate action with economic, development and other areas of global governance. The analogy with the evolution of the UN human rights architecture is instructive. Institutional innovation does not necessarily require dismantling an existing regime nor does it require Charter amendment. A UNGA resolution can suffice. New bodies can be created to perform functions that become necessary as an agenda evolves. One lesson-to-be-learned is **to distinguish institutional legacy from institutional sufficiency**: the achievements of the existing climate regime should be preserved, while its gaps should become the starting point for complementary mechanisms.

The climate discussion also underscored the need to broaden the substantive agenda. Climate change cannot be separated from the wider triple environmental crisis and from the patterns of resource use underlying it. Fossil fuels, biodiversity loss, critical minerals, industrial policy, technological transformation and security increasingly intersect. Competition for the resources required by both the energy transition and defense industries makes this nexus particularly important in a more contested geopolitical environment. To illustrate, technologies required for decarbonization depend on mineral-intensive supply chains whose ownership, processing and governance have significant implications for development and geopolitical influence. A transition that reproduces extractive patterns between North

and South may be technologically green without being economically or politically sustainable. **Climate cooperation must therefore address not only how rapidly technologies are deployed, but also who produces them, who controls their inputs, who captures their value and how their benefits are distributed.** Knowledge is equally important. Tropical forests are mostly located in the Global South, and the knowledge used to design policies for their protection should flow primarily from the tropics.

The discussion also pointed to areas that remain insufficiently integrated into current negotiations. While mitigation and adaptation dominate climate diplomacy, carbon dioxide removal and the management of accumulated atmospheric stocks were identified as increasingly relevant to long-term climate stability and risk reduction. Whether these questions belong within existing COP structures or require complementary institutional arrangements remains open, but their growing significance illustrates the need for governance mechanisms capable of anticipating emerging challenges rather than responding only once they become unavoidable.

Ultimately, the climate debate reinforced a broader conclusion running throughout the Paraty Dialogues: **there is no viable path to climate stability without international cooperation, but cooperation need not remain hostage to universal consensus.** The next phase of climate governance must therefore connect negotiation with implementation, global objectives with domestic economic incentives, universal institutions with coalitions of interested and ambitious actors, and climate policy with the wider transformations in development, technology, trade and resource governance.



Reforming Global Governance: Working from Within and Beyond Existing Institutions

Calls to reform global governance are hardly new. The composition of the United Nations Security Council, the use of the veto, the representativeness of international financial institutions and the capacity of multilateral organizations to respond to new challenges have been debated from the very onset of the United Nations. What emerged from Paraty, however, was a more pragmatic proposition: **the absence of agreement on comprehensive reform need not become an excuse for institutional immobility.**

Some of the most consequential innovations in the UN system did not arise from moments of geopolitical harmony. They emerged through political pressure, institutional experimentation and, at times, precisely because existing arrangements had become untenable. Participants noted that **friction can generate reform**, and competition among states, dissatisfaction with institutional paralysis and initiatives led by smaller countries have all contributed historically to changes in multilateral practice. The transition from a G7 format to a G20, more multipolar, coordination mechanism took place during the 2008 financial crisis.

Nowhere is this dilemma more visible than in the relationship between the UN Security Council and the General Assembly. The Security Council retains unique authority under the Charter, but repeated paralysis on major peace and security crises has damaged its credibility. The problem is particularly acute when permanent members are themselves directly involved in conflicts or possess strategic interests in the matters under consideration. Participants discussed both underused Charter provisions and political mechanisms that could address or mitigate paralysis without requiring Charter amendment.

At the same time, the General Assembly has demonstrated growing political relevance. Its universal membership provides a source of legitimacy that

becomes particularly important when the Security Council cannot act. Mechanisms such as Uniting for Peace illustrate that Council paralysis does not necessarily exhaust the capacity of the United Nations system to respond politically to threats to international peace and security.

A paralyzed Security Council does not automatically imply a powerless United Nations. Even if General Assembly decisions lack the binding authority of Security Council resolutions, they can perform an important role: denying legitimacy to violations, establishing political expectations and increasing reputational costs.

The discussions suggested that the Assembly could use its existing authority more confidently. One possibility raised was for the UNGA to consider matters of exceptional gravity proactively when Security Council paralysis is foreseeable. Such action would not substitute the Council's formal powers, but could clarify the position of the broader UN membership before political facts become entrenched. This approach reflects a wider principle: institutional authority should not be confused with institutional initiative. There may be considerably more room for action within the existing Charter than current diplomatic practice routinely exploits.

Participants also examined the possibility of a Charter Review Conference under **Article 109**. The significance of the proposal lies partly in reopening a debate about institutional adaptation that has remained dormant for decades. However, reform should not wait for such a conference. On the contrary, Article 109 and incremental reform were treated as potentially complementary avenues: one keeps open the possibility of structural revision, while the other asks what can be accomplished immediately through existing rules, political practice or General Assembly resolutions.

Security Council reform remains unavoidable because its present composition does not reflect a distribution of power fundamentally different from the post-Second World War. However, expanding permanent or long-term representation need not automatically entail expanding the veto. This opens the possibility of increasing the Council's legitimacy without multiplying the number of actors individually capable of blocking action. Innovative proposals were discussed. One model would substantially broaden the Council's composition while preserving the existing P5, but provide the wider membership with collective mechanisms capable of constraining individual vetoes. The discussions also highlighted a fact sometimes obscured in debates about the veto: elected members already possess collective power. Decisions

require affirmative votes beyond the P5. Greater coordination among non-permanent members could therefore strengthen their political influence even before formal institutional reform occurs.

Paraty highlighted the reality that **institutional design alone cannot compensate for an absence of political leadership**. The discussions attached particular importance to the role of the **UN Secretary-General**. Historical experience demonstrates that Secretaries-General have sometimes exercised greater diplomatic and political agency than a narrow interpretation of the office might suggest. Good offices, mediation, agenda-setting and the ability to mobilize international attention provide the Secretary-General with forms of influence that depend as much on political judgment and willingness to assume calculated risks as on formal authority. This makes the selection of future UN leadership particularly consequential.

The General Assembly itself also has agency in this process. The relationship between the Council's recommendation and the Assembly's appointment of the Secretary-General should not be reduced to a purely ceremonial exercise. The wider UN membership can articulate expectations about the qualities, legitimacy and leadership required from the next holder of the office.

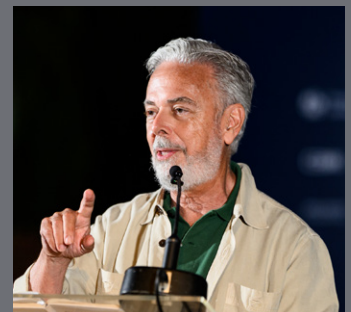
Perhaps the most important insight from the governance discussion was that **institutional evolution rarely occurs through a single dramatic breakthrough**. The UN system itself provides evidence of adaptation. Institutions such as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council emerged because new needs became politically salient. General Assembly procedures have evolved. International courts have acquired greater relevance. Smaller states have used institutional mechanisms creatively to change international practice.

This suggests a nuanced theory of multilateral reform: **progress can be cumulative**. An individual General Assembly resolution may appear modest. A procedural innovation may initially affect only a narrow category of cases. A coalition may begin with a limited number of states. Yet, taken together and sustained over time, such changes can alter expectations, political dynamics and ultimately institutional behavior.

This perspective is especially important in the current geopolitical environment. If a comprehensive reform bargain is difficult precisely because the international system is undergoing a period of intense competition, insisting that meaningful change can occur only through comprehensive consensus risks guaranteeing paralysis. Paraty instead pointed toward a strategy of

institutional incrementalism with strategic ambition: pursue achievable reforms now while maintaining pressure for deeper structural transformation. The same outlook applies to international peace and security. The traditional assumption that mediation should be led primarily by major Western powers no longer reflects the distribution of diplomatic agency in the international system. Regional powers, smaller states, regional organizations and actors from outside traditional security establishments can possess relationships, credibility or access that make them effective intermediaries.

Recognizing a broader universe of mediators would be consistent with cooperative multipolarity. A more plural international system should produce a more plural diplomatic infrastructure. The discussion went further, exploring whether mediation and conflict prevention could sometimes incorporate actors beyond governments. Private-sector representatives and civil society organizations may possess relevant technical capabilities, networks or channels of communication. Their involvement cannot substitute legitimate interstate diplomacy, but carefully designed participation can expand the instruments available for preventing escalation and building confidence.



From “Like-Minded” to “Like-Purposed”

This understanding of cooperation also requires reconsidering the value of **like-minded groups**. If effective coalitions are composed only of governments that already interpret international problems in the same way, they risk contributing to geopolitical fragmentation. Diversity of perspective is often what allows a platform to understand a problem more completely and build solutions capable of attracting wider support. The more useful criterion may therefore be **shared objectives rather than shared worldviews**. Countries need not agree on every aspect of the international order to cooperate on climate finance, food security, nuclear risk reduction, pandemic preparedness or specific institutional reforms. Coalitions built around common purposes may prove more resilient, and politically more expansive, than coalitions based primarily on political or ideological affinity.

This distinction also responds to one of the communication challenges identified in Paraty: **multilateral advocates cannot limit themselves to “preaching to the converted”**. If international cooperation is to recover political legitimacy, its constituency must expand beyond actors already committed to it. This requires engaging the undecided, demonstrating practical results and showing why cooperation advances concrete national and societal interests rather than presenting multilateralism solely as an abstract normative commitment.

Taken together, these reflections suggest that **the reform of global governance should be understood less as an event than as a continuous political practice**. It involves defending universal institutions while using their existing authorities more creatively; pursuing structural reform while refusing to make it a precondition for progress; strengthening the General Assembly when the Security Council is blocked; broadening representation without automatically reproducing veto privileges; empowering diplomatic leadership; creating new institutional mechanisms where genuine governance gaps exist; and allowing regional, plurilateral and multisectoral arrangements to complement universal institutions. In this sense, much can be done before everything has been reformed.



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From Diagnosis to Action

A Paraty Agenda

The Paraty Dialogues did not seek to produce a negotiated declaration or a consensus document. Participants represented different regions, institutions, sectors and political perspectives, and the search for agreement was not an integral part of the exercise. The items below should therefore not be read as formally agreed positions, but as practical directions that emerged from the discussions.

The purpose of identifying a Paraty Agenda is to translate areas of convergence, promising proposals and recurring concerns into possible pathways for action.

This summary reflects the writers' personal impressions of the discussions. No participant is in any way committed to its content or expression.

- 
- 1 **Build cooperative multipolarity**
 - 2 **Develop a layered architecture of multilateral cooperation**
 - 3 **Conceive coalitions of interest as instruments of implementation**
 - 4 **Empower the General Assembly with greater political agency**
 - 5 **Treat leadership as part of institutional reform**
 - 6 **Create continuous mechanisms for climate implementation**
 - 7 **Bring economic governance into the climate architecture**
 - 8 **Move from exclusively state-centered multilateralism to multilateral stewardship**
 - 9 **Rebuild the public narrative around cooperation**

1

Direction

Build cooperative multipolarity

Multipolarity is emerging, but its political manifestation remains open. The central strategic objective should be to prevent a more multipolar international system from degenerating into competing spheres of influence (or spheres of coercion) in which less powerful countries are pressured to align with rival poles. This requires strengthening mechanisms that discipline the exercise of power. International law must be applied according to consistent standards, and multilateral institutions must provide meaningful channels through which states with less material power can organize collectively and shape international outcomes. The objective should not be to eliminate competition, but to **embed competition within rules and institutions capable of preserving cooperation.**

2

Direction

Develop a layered architecture of multilateral cooperation

The future multilateral system should establish more clearly **what requires universality**. The UN should remain the normative and legitimizing core of the international system. Yet, universal institutions can coexist with regional organizations, trans-regional platforms, plurilateral arrangements, issue-based coalitions and other forms of variable geometry.

This requires a more explicit division of labor: universal institutions can establish principles, norms and common objectives; regional arrangements or cross-regional platforms can translate them into context-specific strategies; and smaller coalitions can pioneer implementation where universal consensus is unavailable.

3

Direction

Conceive coalitions of interest as instruments of implementation

Where universal consensus is unnecessary or unavailable, countries and other actors with converging interests can be encouraged to move ahead. These coalitions of interest should be practical, issue-specific and open to expansion. They need not require political alignment or agreement across the wider international agenda. Their legitimacy should derive from the compatibility of their actions with international law, the public value of their objectives and their openness to broader participation. Successful coalitions can demonstrate feasibility, create incentives for participation and ultimately influence wider multilateral arrangements.

4

Direction

Empower the General Assembly with greater political agency

Security Council paralysis should not automatically translate into UN paralysis. Without attempting to substitute for the Council's Charter responsibilities, the General Assembly can make fuller use of its universal legitimacy and existing authority. This could include more systematic recourse to established mechanisms when the Security Council is blocked, greater political scrutiny of veto use and earlier consideration of crises whose gravity warrants attention from the wider membership.

The broader principle is that **existing institutional powers should be fully exercised before their inadequacy is assumed**. Comprehensive UN reform remains important, including Security Council expansion or Charter review, but substantial room for political initiative exists under the current framework. This was explicitly reflected in the discussions: the prospect of an Article 109 review conference remained relevant, but participants also stressed that much could already be done under existing rules or through change enacted under the powers of the General Assembly.

5

Direction

Treat leadership as part of institutional reform

Institutions are shaped not only by mandates and procedures but by the individuals entrusted with guiding them. The selection of the next UN Secretary-General, therefore, represents more than a personnel decision. **The international community needs a leadership capable of exercising good offices, defending the Charter and taking calibrated risks when circumstances require it.** The upcoming selection is strategically important and recalls the value of a Secretary-General willing to stand for the principles of the Charter irrespective of political currents. The existing mandate can be exercised more imaginatively and courageously.

6

Direction

Create continuous mechanisms for climate implementation

The climate governance architecture needs to evolve from an annual negotiating cycle toward **continuous diplomacy and implementation**. The COP process remains indispensable, but complementary mechanisms should sustain political attention between conferences, identify implementation bottlenecks, disseminate successful practices and connect climate action to finance, development, industrial policy, trade and technology. The proposal for a permanent climate structure within the UN system, potentially a Climate Council associated with the General Assembly, deserves further examination as one possible mechanism for filling this gap.

7

Direction

Bring economic governance into the climate architecture

Climate action cannot succeed if it remains institutionally separated from economic decision-making. Finance and economy ministries, development banks, industrial policymakers and actors responsible for trade and investment should become more integrated into climate policy formulation and governance.

Climate policies that constrain development, reproduce extractive economic relationships or distribute the costs and benefits of transition inequitably will lack political legitimacy. A viable global transition must therefore address **who finances it, who controls technologies and critical resources, where value is created, and how development gains are distributed.**

8

Direction

Move from exclusively state-centered multilateralism to multilateral stewardship

Governments need not exercise a monopoly over the capabilities required to address global challenges. The private sector, universities, scientists, civil society, philanthropic institutions and subnational governments can be incorporated more systematically into international cooperation, not merely as observers or participants in parallel events, but as actors capable of contributing knowledge, implementation capacity and continuity. Non-state actors can provide continuity beyond electoral cycles and, in polarized environments, may sometimes build bridges in support of the role of governments.

Greater influence must, however, be accompanied by greater responsibility. Corporations and technology actors whose decisions have geopolitical consequences should be expected to meet standards of transparency and accountability commensurate with their international influence.

9

Direction

Rebuild the public narrative around cooperation

Multilateralism faces a **narrative challenge**. Repeatedly describing international law and multilateral institutions as ineffective is not politically neutral. It reduces the political space available for action and encourages cynicism, opening the gateway for unilateralism. Narratives of inevitable failure undermine public agency and may ultimately benefit actors who undermine the existing system in order to bypass international rules. A more effective public narrative should neither deny institutional failures nor romanticize the existing order. It should explain **what international cooperation has achieved, where it continues to work, what is at risk if it disappears, and where citizens and institutions can still exercise agency**. The objective is not optimism for its own sake. It is to avoid turning justified criticism into a self-fulfilling prophecy of institutional decline.



From Diagnosis to Action

Opportunities

International reform need not begin with a grand bargain. Small, feasible initiatives can alter practices, create precedents, demonstrate what works and, over time, accumulate towards more consequential change. In a period in which comprehensive institutional reform is challenging, identifying areas where action can begin immediately is therefore not a substitute for structural ambition, but one possible pathway forward.

On that basis, actionable opportunities can be identified.

This summary reflects the writers' personal impressions of the discussions. No participant is in any way committed to its content or expression.

- 
- 1 **Build and maintain a network of responsible actors**
 - 2 **Launch small coalitions around clearly defined objectives**
 - 3 **Preserve and deliberately design spaces for cross-geopolitical dialogue**
 - 4 **Map and activate underused authorities within existing institutions**
 - 5 **Use the Secretary-General selection process to debate the kind of UN leadership the present moment requires**
 - 6 **Create systematic channels between negotiators and implementers**
 - 7 **Catalogue, communicate and scale successful implementation models**
 - 8 **Broaden participation beyond diplomatic communities**
 - 9 **Develop a more effective communications strategy for multilateralism**

1 Build and maintain a network of responsible actors

Governments, civil society organizations, experts, businesses and other institutions committed to international law, multilateralism and rational cooperation are often working toward similar objectives without necessarily knowing one another or being aware of parallel initiatives.

The immediate opportunity is therefore to **map, connect and coordinate existing initiatives before necessarily creating new ones**. Networks established through gatherings such as the Paraty Dialogues can be maintained between meetings through exchanges of information, identification of complementary projects and the formation of smaller working coalitions around specific issues.

2 Launch small coalitions around clearly defined objectives

Instead of beginning with institutional design, identify problems for which a limited group of actors already shares sufficient interest to act. Such groupings need not be based on broad political alignment; they can be organized around specific objectives and expanded as results become visible.

The climate discussions offered several examples of this implementation-oriented approach. Initiatives such as the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF), cooperation around carbon markets and the COP30 roadmaps are different ways of maintaining momentum when the limits of formal negotiations or universal consensus are reached. Rather than treating these initiatives as substitutes for the UNFCCC, they illustrate how specific configurations of actors can complement universal frameworks by testing solutions and accelerating implementation.

3

Preserve and deliberately design spaces for cross-geopolitical dialogue

At a time when international forums risk increasingly becoming gatherings of actors who already agree with one another, creating settings in which participants from different geopolitical, regional and institutional perspectives can engage substantively is itself a form of multilateral infrastructure. The **G20** was highlighted as a sufficiently inclusive forum capable of bringing established and emerging powers into the same political space and testing initiatives that may be difficult to advance through universal institutions. **BRICS**, meanwhile, can be a platform for political coordination and part of a process of building knowledge and relationships across regions, “bridging continents”, and reconfiguring networks for an emerging international order. The same logic applies to issue-based coalitions that cross geopolitical divides. Their value lies precisely in bringing actors together because they share an objective, rather than because they belong to the same camp.

The Paraty Dialogues provided a small-scale demonstration of this principle. Participants repeatedly identified the diversity of geographical, political and professional perspectives as one of the gathering’s principal strengths. Discussion moved noticeably away from some of the more fatalistic assessments of the international system toward a more constructive appraisal of the possibilities for cooperation.

Future initiatives should therefore deliberately optimize for useful disagreement: bringing together actors with different diagnoses and interests while anchoring discussion in shared questions and practical objectives. In an international environment threatened with fragmentation, the capacity to sustain such conversations is part of the infrastructure required for cooperative multipolarity.

4

Map and activate underused authorities within existing institutions

Before pursuing treaty or Charter amendment, governments and experts could identify provisions, procedures and precedents within existing multilateral institutions that are currently underused. The General Assembly offers a particularly important field for such experimentation. Debate over structural UN reform, including the possibility of a Charter Review Conference under Article 109, should not obscure the considerable room for action that already exists under current rules. Mechanisms for responding politically to Security Council paralysis, scrutinizing veto use or mobilizing the wider UN membership can be explored more assertively.

5

Use the Secretary-General selection process to debate the kind of UN leadership the present moment requires

Rather than allowing the selection process to revolve principally around individual candidacies, governments, experts and civil society could use it to articulate substantive expectations for the office: independence, coalition-building capacity, commitment to the Charter, mediation skills and willingness to take calibrated risks. Past Secretaries-General used the political space available to the office rather than treating institutional constraints as absolute.

6

Create systematic channels between negotiators and implementers

International negotiations are frequently conducted at some distance from the actors responsible for implementing their outcomes. Creating structured feedback mechanisms between these communities could significantly improve the quality of international cooperation.

Climate diplomacy provides an immediate testing ground. Governments could more systematically incorporate input from cities, businesses, development banks, scientists, civil society and implementing agencies before negotiating positions are finalized. This would help identify which financing mechanisms, regulatory conditions and international agreements are actually necessary to create a positive implementation ecosystem.

7

Catalogue, communicate and scale successful implementation models

International cooperation does not always require designing new commitments. Multilateral and plurilateral forums could devote greater attention to identifying initiatives that are already producing results, understanding the conditions that enabled them and facilitating their adaptation elsewhere.

This could include repositories of implementation practices, peer-learning mechanisms and regular exchanges among governments and non-governmental implementers. In climate governance, such an approach could complement negotiations by making successful policies and institutional innovations more visible and transferable. The objective would be to shift part of the multilateral conversation from **“what should countries agree to do?”** toward **“what is already working, why is it working, and how can it be replicated or scaled?”**

8

Broaden participation beyond diplomatic communities

Existing multilateral initiatives can incorporate academia, science, business, civil society and subnational actors without waiting for major institutional reform. This can be achieved through greater multisectorialism, noting that the impact of these actors increasingly extends beyond governmental mandates and that their engagement could contribute to a more durable multilateral system.

Recent climate diplomacy offers a model. The mobilization of civil society around COP30 was an example of broader participation that could inspire other areas of international cooperation. The same principle can be extended to peace and security, technological governance and development as well as adherence to international law itself: where actors already possess expertise, resources or implementation capacity, international institutions should develop mechanisms for incorporating those capabilities while preserving appropriate standards of accountability.

9 Develop a more effective communications strategy for multilateralism

Multilateral institutions and their advocates should communicate achievements alongside failures and make opportunities for action visible. **Repeatedly presenting international law and multilateralism as broken can undermine citizens' sense of agency** and inadvertently strengthen actors who pursue the erosion of constraints on power. The climate community offers useful lessons: despite persistent shortcomings, climate communication has often been effective at conveying what has already been achieved, what remains at stake, and where action is still possible.

The experience of Rio-92 provides a useful illustration of how political narratives can evolve. Brazil hosted the conference at a time when it faced significant international criticism over deforestation, yet the process contributed to repositioning the country as a convener of global environmental cooperation. The major international frameworks associated with that period continue to shape environmental governance decades later.

The lesson is not to communicate optimism at the expense of accuracy. Rather, multilateralism needs a narrative capable of holding three ideas together: **international cooperation has produced consequential achievements; those achievements and institutions are under genuine threat; and political choices can still determine what happens next.** "Selling the failure" without identifying where action remains possible can itself narrow the political space for action.



The broader lesson from Paraty is therefore straightforward: **do not wait for systemic reform before beginning systemic renewal.** The transition toward a more cooperative multipolarity will be shaped not only by major institutional bargains, but by the accumulation of smaller decisions about which rules are defended, which institutions are activated, which actors are mobilized and which forms of cooperation can be most meaningful in the promotion of peace and sustainable development.





Communications & Media

Communication around the Paraty Dialogues included original content across CEBRI's digital channels, alongside media outreach and coverage in leading Brazilian outlets.



Media Coverage

5 placements in leading national outlets

O Globo

Paraty reúne especialistas internacionais para discutir futuro da cooperação global.



READ HERE

Valor Econômico

Paraty Dialogues quer Brasil como polo de debates sobre geopolítica, clima e governança global.



READ HERE

Valor Econômico

Encontro de geopolítica aposta em "perspectiva tropical" para debate no Brasil.



(Printed edition only)

O Globo

'O período de transição para um mundo multipolar é inerentemente instável', diz o cientista político britânico Samir Puri.



READ HERE

Folha de S. Paulo

Mundo precisa pensar no dia seguinte a Donald Trump, diz ex-conselheiro da ONU.



READ HERE

Social Media

24 original videos

Content included interviews, conversations and highlights from the Paraty Dialogues, distributed across CEBRI's digital channels.

 **27.7K** Instagram viewers

 **34.6K** LinkedIn impressions

 **1.5K+** YouTube views

Data collected as of September 15, 2026

CEBRI Website

First edition of the Paraty Dialogues discusses the challenges of the international agenda.





Access the full
collection of
Paraty Dialogues
videos on CEBRI's
YouTube channel

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Trustee at CEBRI and currently serves as CEO of the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30). An economist with a PhD in Political Science, she has extensive experience in climate policy, sustainable development, philanthropy, and public policy advocacy. She previously served as Brazil's National Secretary for Climate Change, Executive Director of the Institute for Climate and Society (ICS), and has held leadership and board positions at organizations including Greenpeace International, the Ford Foundation, ActionAid Brazil, and several national and international institutions focused on sustainability, transparency, and environmental protection.



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Humanitarian diplomat, lawyer, and Lecturer on Law and Global Affairs at Yale University. She leads initiatives on science, technology, arms control, and international law at GESDA and Lex International, and previously spent nearly a decade at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), working on humanitarian diplomacy and legal engagement in major conflict settings.



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Founder and President of Center for China and Globalization (CCG), ranked 64th among global think tanks by the University of Pennsylvania and accredited with UN NGO "Special Consultative Status". Dr. Wang is a former Counselor to China's State Council (China's cabinet); a global thought leader on China and globalization, global governance, international trade and investment, global migration and talent flows, China's international relations and China-U.S. trade relations, with more than 100 publications in both Chinese and English.



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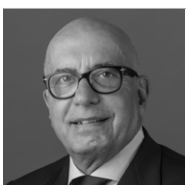
CEO of CEBRI, Brazil's leading think tank on international relations, and the first woman to hold the position since the institution's founding. She also serves on the Advisory Board of ISPI (Italy), chairs the Board of Piemonte Holding, and is a member of the boards of Elea Digital, FIESP's Superior Council of Foreign Trade (COSCEX), the Rio de Janeiro City Council, and the Burle Marx Institute. She has nearly three decades of experience in international relations, public affairs, and institutional leadership.



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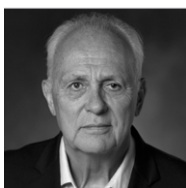
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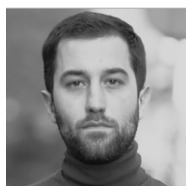
A global human rights and development leader who served as Secretary General of Amnesty International (2010–2018). He previously led the United Nations Millennium Campaign and was Chief Executive of ActionAid, with extensive experience in human rights, social justice, poverty reduction, and global governance. His current research focuses on democratic governance and resistance to authoritarianism.



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About CEBRI

Founded in 1998, the Brazilian Center for International Relations (CEBRI) is an independent think tank dedicated to examining Brazil and the major issues on the global agenda from the perspective of the country's national interests.

We are a non-partisan, non-profit forum for forward-looking reflection, with institutional autonomy and a plurality of perspectives.

With a wide network of experts, we are especially dedicated to developing projects in sectors essential to society in the 21st century, such as the climate transition and digital transformation, which drive economic growth and social prosperity.

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About Open Society Foundations

The Open Society Foundations, founded by George Soros, are the world's largest private funder of independent groups working for rights, equity, and justice.

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