

The Performance of the G20 Brisbane Summit

John Kirton

Co-director, G20 Research Group

December 4, 2104

A systematic assessment of the eight dimensions of summit performance shows that Brisbane was a summit of substantial if selective success. Of the nine G20 summits, Brisbane ranked third in its communiqué compliments, second in the number of leaders' documents issued, third in the number of commitments made and first in the number of accountability commitments produced (see Appendix A). However, it came last in attendance, third lowest in the number of words in its communiqués, last in its democratic and human rights principles affirmed, third lowest in its development of global governance inside the G20, and the second lowest on developing international institutions outside.

Domestic Political Management

On the first dimension, domestic political management, as measured by the leaders' attendance, Brisbane was a small success (see Appendix B-1). Two of the 19 country leaders — those of Saudi Arabia and Argentina — did not attend at all. Those of nearby Indonesia and distant Mexico skipped the second day. Russia's Vladimir Putin left before the final session. This was the lowest level of leaders' attendance of the nine summits to date.

In the communiqué compliments issued in its four main leaders' documents, ten were issued to eight countries or 40% of the total members (including the European Union) (see Appendix B-2). This was the third highest of the nine summits, below the 15 issued at St. Petersburg in 2013 and the 11 at Cannes in 2011. At Brisbane, India led with two, followed by Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and the United States with one each.

In the domestic public approval of its host, the summit failed. A Newspoll survey taken on the summit weekend of November 14–16 showed Australian prime minister Tony Abbott trailing the opposition Labour party by 10%, with Abbott's party having only 45% in the two-party preferred preference, compared to Labour's 55% (Hudson 2014). The earlier poll on October 31–November 2 had showed Abbott's Coalition behind by only 8%. In the primary vote Labour now beat the Coalition by 39% to 36%, whereas the Coalition had led 38% to 36% in the earlier poll. On who would be the better prime minister, Abbott lost his earlier lead, now trailing Labour's Bill Shorten by 6%, at 37% to 43%.

Other leaders did better (see Appendix B-3). In the United States, President Barack Obama saw his approval rate rest at 45%–46% in early November, but rise to 48% as he began his Asian tour. With the occasional dip it remained at that level until four days after the Brisbane Summit, when it dropped to 46%–47%.

In Canada Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservatives, who had gained for seven weeks in the Nanos Party Power Index, held their new high, just three points behind the Liberals at 56, with a margin of error of three percent (Nanos Power Index 2014). As the preferred prime minister, Harper led Liberal leader Justin Trudeau by three points. Among the salient issues for Canadians, jobs remained first but war/terrorism/security took second spot from health care.

Deliberation

In its public deliberation, performance was strong. Brisbane issued five documents in the leaders' name, the fourth highest to date. They contained 9,111 words, the third lowest to date. They were distributed as follows: the communiqué of 3,069 words, the Brisbane Action Plan of 3,765 words, the Note on Infrastructure of 1,482 words, the Statement on Ebola of 600 words and the G20 Principles of Energy Collaboration of 195 words. In addition, the three-page communiqué had a two-page appendix listing the many other documents prepared by others in the G20 that the leaders endorsed.

Direction Setting

In its principled and normative direction setting, performance was very small (see Appendix C). There was only one reference to democracy, in the form of transparency in a political context, and none to human rights or the rule of law.

Decision Making

In its decision making, performance was significant (see Appendix D). The 213 commitments in the five main documents were the third highest number in the nine summits, following Cannes with 282 and St. Petersburg with 281, but ahead of Los Cabos with 180. The commitments were made in each document as follows: the concluding communiqué had 91, the accompanying Brisbane Action Plan had 61, the Ebola statement released the first day prior to the others had 32, the Note on Infrastructure released at the end had 15 and the G20 principles on Energy Collaboration had 14.

By issue area, as far as decision making was concerned Brisbane was a health and economic summit. The most commitments came on macroeconomic policy and on health, with 35 each. They were followed in turn by infrastructure with 29, development with 20, labour and employment with 19, and accountability and energy with 17 each. Then came trade with nine, climate change and financial regulation with seven each, microeconomic policy with six, and reform of international financial institutions (IFIs), gender, and crime and corruption with four each. Decision making had broadened well beyond, and indeed was dominated by, subjects other than the economic issues addressed at Washington in 2008.

Delivery

In its delivery of these decisions, prospects were promising. Of the 17 commitments on accountability, four were in the communiqué and 13 in the Brisbane Action Plan. This was the highest total of any G20 summit thus far. Yet only one, on growth strategies, saw leaders themselves specifically commit to reviewing progress “at our next meeting.” Preliminary evidence from the 109 G20 commitments assessed for compliance suggests that commitments will have higher compliance if there is immediate iteration, that is, if the same or a similar commitment is made at the next summit. However the broad agenda for the 2015 Antalya Summit outlined by its host, Turkish prime minister Ahmet Davutoglu at the G20 pre-summit conference at Griffith University in Brisbane, indicated that leaders would return next year to deal with the subjects of most of Brisbane’s commitments, including climate change.

Some commitments were complied with immediately, notably “We reaffirm our support for mobilising finance for adaptation and mitigation, such as the Green Climate Fund” (G20 2014). In Brisbane on November 14 U.S. president Barack Obama pledged \$3 billion and Japanese Prime minister Shinzo Abe \$1.5 billion. In his concluding news conference Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper announced that that Canada too would give, a reversal of his joint position with Australian prime minister Tony Abbott from the previous year. At the pledging conference in Berlin on November 20, the United Kingdom, Germany and France each pledged about \$1 billion, while lesser contributions came from G20 members Korea and Mexico, EU members the Netherlands, Denmark, Luxembourg as well as the Czech Republic, Norway and Switzerland. Canada donated \$300 million, the usual 10% of what the U.S. had. In all \$9.3 billion of the \$10 billion target was raised by the due date of the end of 2014.

The communiqué commitments to use macroeconomic policies to support growth, to strengthen demand and “use all policy levers to underpin confidence and the recovery,” were implemented quickly too (G20 2014). On November 21 China’s central bank lowered its policy interest to spur demand and the European Central Bank signalled it might broaden the unconventional measures in which it was engaged.

Development of Global Governance

In its development of global governance performance was small (see Appendix E). Brisbane’s 39 references to four institutions inside the G20 was the lowest save for the first two summits. The 45 references to 12 institutions outside the G20 was the lowest in number and spread since Washington in 2008.

Distinctive Mission Done

In getting the G20’s distinctive mission done, Brisbane’s performance was solid. On the G20’s first mission of promoting financial stability, Brisbane did well in advancing financial regulation and reform. However, the absence of collective discussions on Ukraine left it blind to the possible financial crisis that could be brewing in Russia, given

the run on its banks by its citizens and the collapse in the ruble the week before the summit's start.

On the G20's second mission of making globalization work for the benefit of all, performance was mixed. It did very well by making commitments on Ebola and health, and affirmed inclusiveness, inequality reduction and improving women's participation in the workplace (cf. Bracht and Kulik 2014). Yet its 35 macroeconomic policy commitments far exceeded its 20 development ones. Moreover, its 1,000 measures in the Brisbane Action Plan were estimated to raise the growth of G20 members by 2.1% but those outside by only an additional 0.5%. On this central achievement, the G20 governed far more itself than for all.

Deaths Delayed

In deaths delayed, performance was poor. Its innovative and expansive actions on Ebola and health promised to prevent more deaths than the counted 4,000 who had already died of the Ebola virus. However, Brisbane entirely ignored the war in Ukraine, where more than 4,000 had died, and ISIL, which had claimed a similar toll, as well as the 200,000 who had perished in Syria's civil war over the previous three and a half years.

References

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Appendix A

G20 Overall Performance, 2008–2014

Summit	Grade	Domestic Political Management			Deliberation			Direction Setting			Decision Making		Delivery	Development of Global Governance			
		Attendance	# compliments	% compliments	# days	# documents	# words	Democracy	Individual Liberty	Total	# commitments	# decision documents	Compliance	# internal references	Spread	# external references	Spread
2008 Washington	A-	100%	0	0%	2	2	3,567	10	2	12	95	1	0.53	0	4	40	11
2009 London	A	100%	1	5%	2	3	6,155	9	0	9	88	1	0.42	12	4	116	27
2009 Pittsburgh	A-	100%	0	0%	2	2	9,257	28	1	29	128	1	0.28	47	4	117	26
2010 Toronto	A-	90%	8	15%	2	5	11,078	11	1	12	61	1	0.28	71	4	171	27
2010 Seoul	B	95%	5	15%	2	5	15,776	18	4	22	153	2	0.5	99	4	237	31
2011 Cannes	B	95%	11	35%	2	3	14,107	22	0	22	282	3	0.54	59	4	251	29
2012 Los Cabos	A-	95%	6	15%	2	2	12,682	31	3	34	180	2	0.56	65	4	143	22
2013 St. Petersburg	A	90%	15	55%	2	11	28,766	15	3	18	281	3	0.44	114	4	272	32
2014 Brisbane ^a	TBD	90%	10	40%	2	5	9,111	1	0	1	213	5	N/A	39	4	45	12
Total	N/A	N/A	56	N/A	18	37	101,388	145	14	159		18	N/A	506	36	1,347	217
Average	N/A	95%	6.2	20%	2	4.11	12,673.5	16.1	1.56	17.7		2	0.44	56.22	4	168.38	24.11

Notes: N/A = not applicable. TBD= to be determined. Compiled by Julia Kulik, November 20, 2014.

Domestic Political Management: 100% attendance includes all G20 members, including at least one representative from the European Union, and excludes those invited on a summit-to-summit basis. “# compliments” includes all explicit references by name to the full members of the summit that specifically express the gratitude of the institution to that member. “% complimented” indicates how many of the 20 full members received compliments in the official documents.

Deliberation refers to the duration of the summit and the documents collectively released in the leaders’ name at the summit.

Direction Setting: the number of statements of fact, causation and rectitude relating directly to open democracy and individual liberty.

Decision Making: “# commitments” in all official documents as identified by the G20 Research Group in collaboration with the International Organisations Research Institute at the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow. “# decision documents” refers to the number of documents used to identify commitments.

Delivery: compliance score is measured on a scale from -1 (no compliance) to +1 (full compliance). A commitment is fully complied with if a summit member succeeds in achieving the specific goal set out in the commitment.

Development of Global Governance: “# internal references” refers references to G20 institutions in official documents; “spread” indicates the number of different institutions within the G20 system; “# external references” refers to references made to institutions outside the G20; “spread” indicates the number of different institutions mentioned.

^a Coding for Brisbane is ongoing. Numbers refer to those in the communiqué, statement on Ebola, Brisbane Action Plan and the note on infrastructure.

Appendix B

G20 2014 Brisbane Summit: Domestic Political Management

Appendix B-1: Attendance = 90%^a

Member	Representative	Title
Argentina	Axel Kicillof, Hector Timerman	Minister of economy, minister of foreign affairs
Australia	Tony Abbott	Prime minister
Brazil	Dilma Rousseff	President
Canada	Stephen Harper	Prime minister
China	Xi Jinping	President
France	François Hollande	President
Germany	Angela Merkel	Chancellor
India	Narendra Modi	Prime minister
Indonesia	Joko Widodo	President
Italy	Matteo Renzi	Prime minister
Japan	Shinzo Abe	Prime minister
Mexico	Enrique Pena Nieto	President
Russia	Vladimir Putin	President
Saudi Arabia	Salman bin Abdulaziz	Crown prince
South Africa	Jacob Zuma	President
South Korea	Park Geun-hye	President
Turkey	Ahmet Davutoglu	Prime minister
United Kingdom	David Cameron	Prime minister
United States	Barack Obama	President
European Commission	Jean-Claude Juncker	President
European Council	Herman Van Rompuy	President

Note: ^a Attendance rate is based on leaders only; Argentina and Saudi Arabia are thus excluded. The presidents of Mexico and Indonesia left after the first day of summit deliberations.

Appendix B-2: Communiqué Compliments

Document	Total	Argentina	Australia	Brazil	Canada	China	France	Germany	India	Indonesia	Italy	Japan	Korea	Mexico	Russia	Saudi Arabia	South Africa	Turkey	United Kingdom	United States	European Union
Communiqué	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Action Plan	8	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Ebola	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0

Appendix B-3: Approval Ratings for Barack Obama, November 2014

Date	Total Approval	Total Disapproval
1-Nov-14	46%	52%
2-Nov-14	45%	53%
3-Nov-14	45%	53%
4-Nov-14	45%	53%
5-Nov-14	46%	52%
6-Nov-14	46%	52%
7-Nov-14	48%	51%
8-Nov-14	48%	51%
9-Nov-14	48%	50%
10-Nov-14	48%	50%
11-Nov-14	48%	51%
12-Nov-14	47%	52%
13-Nov-14	48%	51%
14-Nov-14	48%	50%
15-Nov-14	48%	51%
16-Nov-14	46%	52%
17-Nov-14	48%	50%
18-Nov-14	48%	51%
19-Nov-14	48%	50%
20-Nov-14	46%	53%
21-Nov-14	47%	52%

Note: Compiled by Julia Kulik, November 21, 2014.

Appendix C G20 2014 Brisbane Summit: Direction Setting

Communiqué

Reference	# references	Reference	# references
Transparent	1	Rule of law	0
Open	0	Rights	0
Transparent	0		
Good governance	0		
Accountability	0		

"We commit to improve the **transparency** of the public and private sectors, and of beneficial ownership by implementing the G20 High- Level Principles on Beneficial Ownership Transparency."

Brisbane Statement on Ebola = 0

Brisbane Action Plan = 0

Note on the G20 Global Infrastructure Initiative and Hub = 0

13. The Hub will report to the G20 including via the relevant G20 working groups. The Hub will be open and transparent in its operations.

Appendix D G20 2014 Brisbane Summit: Commitments

Commitments by Issue

	# by Issue	Percent
Macroeconomic policy	35	16%
Health	35	16%
Infrastructure	29	14%
Development	20	9%
Labour and Employment	19	9%
Accountability	17	8%
Energy	17	8%
Trade	9	4%
Financial regulation	7	3%
Climate Change	7	3%
Microeconomic policy	6	3%
IFI reform	4	2%
Gender	4	2%
Crime and Corruption	4	2%
Total	213	100%

Total Commitments by Document

Communiqué	91
Brisbane Statement on Ebola	32
Brisbane Action Plan	61
Note on Infrastructure	15
Principles on Energy	14
Total	213

Appendix E

G20 2014 Brisbane Summit: Development of Global Governance

Inside		Outside	
G20 Institution	# References	Other Institution	# References
COMMUNIQUÉ			
G20 ministerial	1	International Monetary Fund	5
G20 summit	1	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	2
G20	7	Multilateral development banks	1
		World Bank	1
		United Nations	3
		Financial Stability Board	3
		World Trade Organization	3
		International financial institutions	1
Total	9		19
BRISBANE STATEMENT ON EBOLA			
G20 members	1	International Monetary Fund	2
		Economic Community of West African States	1
		African Union	1
		World Bank	2
		United Nations	2
		World Health Organization/World Health Assembly	3
Total	1		11
BRISBANE ACTION PLAN			
G20 ministerial	2	International Monetary Fund	4
G20 summit	2	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	6
G20	8	Multilateral development banks	1
G20 members	1	United Nations	1
		World Trade Organization	1
		International Labour Organization	1
Total	13		14
NOTE ON THE G20 GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE AND HUB			
G20	12	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	1
G20 ministerial	2		
G20 members	2		
Total	16		1
Grand Total	39		45