A Summit of Substantial Success: The Performance of the G20 in Washington in 2008

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Introduction

Significance

On November 14-15, 2008, the leaders of the world's 20 systemically significant countries assembled in Washington DC for the "Leaders Summit on Financial Stability and the World Economy." It was the first G20 summit ever held. Building on the work of the annual G20 finance ministers' meeting the previous weekend in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and their annual ministerials held each autumn during the decade before, the Washington Summit showed that the financial and economic crisis gripping the world had become so serious that it needed leaders as well as finance ministers and central bankers to solve. By calling and hosting the summit, U.S. president George W. Bush admitted that America alone could not solve the problem and that it required more than the broadly multilateral International Monetary Fund (IMF) it controlled or even the exclusive G7 or G8 clubs to craft an effective response.

Emerging powers agreed to come to help America, its established G8 partners and the full global community out of a crisis that had been born in the USA, on its many main streets, side streets and Wall Street, where mortgages that had been recklessly issued were now going bust. The G20 gathering substituted for a G8 summit that had failed for several years to deal seriously with finance, macroeconomics and trade (Kirton 2007). But this G20 summit also delved deeply and intrusively into the internal world of countryies' regulatory systems and even firms, dealing with micro matters as detailed as executive pay. The summit's assembly, actions and achievements might mark the birth of a permanent leaders-level G20 institution (sometimes referred to as the Leaders 20 or L20) as the new centre of global economic governance for a 21st-century world where finance was now globalized and driven by the private sector and where power had passed to the emerging economies of Asia and the Americas from the established Atlantic-centred ones of old (Altman 2009).

For shell-shocked citizens watching imploding financial firms and plummeting stock markets, economic growth and employment, and for managers, governors and scholars several key questions immediately arise (Wolf 2008; Rotman School of Management 2008). First, can any intergovernmental forum, no matter how powerful, prescient or propelled by crisis, govern this new complex, uncertain world of globalized private finance? Second, if so, did this G20 at its inaugural summit get the diagnosis, prescription, content and sequencing of decisions, their delivery and the development of a new global economic governance right? Third, did the G20 at least do enough to set the proper principles and start the process, in response to the current, cascading crisis and for the years beyond? Fourth, did adding these diverse and numerous emerging powers as equals and doing so at the leaders' level help or harm in accomplishing these tasks?

Schools of Thought

The sudden, surprising advent of the G20 summit and the urgent importance of its work have given rise to a great debate among several competing schools of thought about the character and causes of its performance at its opening event.

The first school saw the Washington Summit fall well short. Richard Duncan (2008) argued that the cause of the crisis lay in the fact that "the 37-year experiment with fiat money and floating exchange rates has failed catastrophically." According to him, "the time has come to convene a forum of the world's leaders to hammer out and begin the transition to a new rule-based international monetary system predicated on sound money and balanced trade. Current Group of 20 efforts fall well short of what is required."

A second school saw an opportunity lost due to an incorrect diagnosis and even denial of the real causes of the crisis. Kenneth Rogoff argued that "anyone looking for the G20 to issue a mea culpa on the global financial crisis will be sadly disappointed" (quoted in Landler 2008). At the time of the summit, Rogoff observed that leaders "curiously [downplayed] the culpability of the political leadership in the U.S. and Europe."

A third school saw nothing new. Simon Johnson concluded that the Washington Summit was "plain-vanilla stuff they could have agreed on without holding a meeting" (quoted in Landler 2008). He maintained that the G20 was a substitute for the G7. He did, however, note hopefully that newly elected U.S. president Barack Obama might go to the next summit backed by strong American action.

A fourth school concluded "maybe later." Jim O'Neill said the "world will be a better place" if the G20 could accomplish everything on its "large 'to do' list" by March, but meanwhile the G20 statement focused on future plans and lacked specificity as the near-term situation remains grim (Zeng 2008).

A fifth school more forgivingly argued that little could be done before Obama arrived was.[1] According to the *Sunday Times* (2008), despite the G20's good work on restarting the Doha Round and calling for fiscal stimulus, it remained to be seen if the summit would be historic, because the big decisions were easier said than done and would await Obama's arrival on January 20, 2009.

A sixth school saw a disappointing delivery of summit commitments on the part of its participants, particularly on its admirable and badly needed fiscal stimulus and trade

[1] This school is analytically similar to the American leadership model of G8 governance, which argues than an America able and willing to lead is the first necessary condition of summit success (Putnam and Bayne 1987).

liberalization. *The Economist* (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2008d) argued that America and Germany, in particular, did not deliver the swift, substantial, sustained fiscal stimulus they had agreed to and noted that Russia, India and even France immediately violated the commitment to renounce protectionist actions for the next twelve months. Edwin Truman (2009) concluded that although the summit "made an effort" by January 2009 "at least half a dozen countries whose leaders participated … [had] violated the spirit, if not the letter, of their pledge to 'refrain from raising new barriers to investment or to trade in goods and services, imposing new export restrictions, or implementing WTO [World Trade Organization] inconsistent measures to stimulate exports'."

A seventh school saw a green light for growth for leaders who needed one internationally for collective synergies or competitive reasons and domestically for political ones. David Smith and Jonathan Oliver (2008) concluded that although the summit fell "some way short of a global action plan, it did give the green light for countries keen to shield their economies from the worst of the down-turn" through fiscal stimulus and interest rate reductions. Peter Woolstencroft argued that Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper got "a G20 umbrella to protect himself with" should he wish to retreat from previous promises not to run a deficit (quoted in Laghi 2008).

An eighth school saw a step in the right direction toward the required revolutionary global financial regime. Walter Mattli and Ngaire Woods (2008) said that "nothing less than a new global architecture for the regulation of banking and finance is required." They observed that the G20's proposal to establish "international 'supervisory colleges for all major financial institutions'" was "a step in the right direction."

Puzzles

Within these wide-ranging disagreements, these schools contain a core consensus. They agree that substantively the Washington Summit did better on trade liberalization, fiscal stimulus and, perhaps, G20 institutionalization than on exchange rate regimes and financial regulation. They also agree, functionally, that it did better on domestic political management, deliberation, direction setting and developing G20 governance than on detailed decision making and delivery. But both individually and collectively, these quick, largely journalistic accounts present several puzzles.

First, most assess performance against the ultimately unknown and ever changing referent of what the summit should have done according to the authors' idiosyncratic conception of the causes of the crisis and its cadence, consequences and appropriate control, rather than a disciplined analysis of what the G20 summit realistically could have done, what would have happened in its absence or what it did relative to what had been done before. Here the real but largely unrecognized referent is the work of the G8 summit in the past few years, the G7 finance ministers and the IMF at its annual fall meetings, the G20-related Financial Stability Forum (FSF) and the G20 itself, since its start in 1999 (Kirton 2001a, 2001b, 200c, 2005a, 2005b).

Second, none offers a comprehensive account of the G20 summit's performance, covering all its finance, macroeconomic, trade, development and international institutional reform agenda and embracing all the functions that such international institutions perform.

Third, none provides a complete, multilevel, parsimonious conception of the causes of such performance. Indeed these accounts point primarily to personal factors, suggesting psychological denial or the absence of a new leader's arrival in one of the 20 member countries. The two international systemic factors cited — the presence of fiat money and floating exchange rates — are unconvincing explanations for they had produced neither a crisis nor a G20 summit in the previous 36 years, when they had prevailed in global finance.

Fourth, while many of these schools are offered by scholars of economics and political science, none is grounded theoretically, even implicitly, in the scholarly models developed to account for how and why such plurilateral, summit-level institutions work.

Thesis

This study offers such an account, based on an adapted concert equality model constructed to explain the global governance produced by the G8 over the past 34 years. This study argues that the first G20 summit was a substantial success, with achievements across all of the domains of domestic political management, deliberation, direction setting, decision making, delivery and the development of global governance. It acted appropriately and ambitiously to produce immediate decisions in areas directly controlled by government, notably trade, fiscal stimulus and international institutional reform. It simultaneously left the subjects of private sector–driven finance, which it poorly understood, to a process where experts from the public and private sectors could devise solutions that would work in the new world. It thus created an ongoing summit-guided, multilevel process, grounded in the decade-old G20 finance ministers' forum but promising to produce a permanent G20 summit institution as the centre of global financial and economic governance for that new world of globalized, private sector–led finance and economic growth.

This strong but skewed performance is defined by fast, far-reaching success on trade liberalization, fiscal stimulus, reform of the international financial institutions (IFIs) and G20 summit institutionalization, and by slowness on financial regulation and the delivery of its trade and fiscal stimulus pledges. Such performance was driven by those forces that the concert equality model highlights. The first, seen in the initiation, iteration and prospective institutionalization of a G20 summit to govern financial stability and the world economy, was the severe financial shock that exposed the equalized economic vulnerability of all systemically significant countries, and the social and even political stability of some. The second was the failure of American unilateralism, IMF hard law multilateralism, or G8, G7 and even G20 finance governance to cope with a crisis that had begun in America, had spread quickly throughout a globalized world and was characterized by a complexity, uncertainty an consequences beyond the comprehension and control of finance ministries and central banks alone. The third, seen most in the fast move on fiscal stimulus, IFI reform and G20 institutionalization and in the slow start on financial regulation, was the equalization of globally predominant capability within a G20 club that contained a strong majority of the world's money, economy and population, and where a rising, financially closed China, with its US$2 trillion in foreign exchange reserves, rivalled a financially open America rapidly acquiring US$2 trillion in additional government debt.

The fourth force, seen most in the quick success on trade commitment but slowness on financial regulation and trade compliance, was the common purpose arising within this diverse club of 20 members from the dominance of political democracy in all but two or three and the attachment to open markets of virtually all. The fifth, seen again in the speed fiscal stimulus, trade liberalization commitment and IFI reform and in the slowness on financial regulation, was the strong political capital and control, reinforced by the crisis, of the popularly elected or supported leaders whose voters understood government spending and trade and the close association in America with the G20 response of an already-elected, well-advised and stimulus-committed president-elect Obama. The sixth was the still constricted participation in a club of only 20 permanent country members, with a decade of proven process and performance at the finance ministers' level on trade, IFI reform for the Bretton Woods bodies and macroeconomics.

Preparing the Summit

Background: The Campaign for an L20

Preparations for the summit in the domain of intellectual and policy leadership had begun in the campaign of Canadian prime minister Paul Martin in 2004–05 to create an L20. Its core call was to turn the G20 finance ministers forum that he, as Canada's finance minister, had invented in response to the Asian-turned-global financial crisis of 1997–99 into an ongoing leaders-level institution that would deal with any of the most critical issues the global community faced (Kirton and Koch 2008; Martin 2008; Summers 2008; English, Thakur and Cooper 2005). While such a summit did not take place before Martin stepped down as prime minister in early February 2006, his crusade and personal pitches to his G8 colleagues attracted several converts for the concept, including France's Jacques Chirac, if not America's George Bush. Nonetheless, all G8 leaders were familiar with the vision and the underlying argument for its value when the 2008 financial crisis reached a new and more dangerous phase in the autumn of that year.

The G20 Summit Shock and Start

Suggestions for holding a "special" leaders summit started to escalate in the international arena, spurred by plummeting stock prices, collapsing banks and frozen credit. They proliferated after the regular and extraordinary meetings of G7 and G20 finance ministers in Washington in early October. The question was not only whether to hold such a summit but also when, where, with whom, on what agenda and with what level of ambition and achievements in mind.

French president Nicolas Sarkozy was the first to call publicly for a summit to cope with the financial crisis. He suggested a gathering of the G7 or G8, probably with a few select outsiders such as China, India and perhaps Brazil. Sarkozy further called for the summit be held in New York City, on the grounds that that was where the global crisis had begun. His call for a special summit was endorsed by Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper when he met with Sarkozy at the Francophone Summit in Quebec City. United Nations secretary general Ban Ki-Moon offered his New York headquarters as the summit site.

Within days of the Francophone Summit, Sarkozy met Bush in Washington. Immediately following the meeting, on October 18 it was announced that a special summit would be held. It would take place in the U.S. before the end of November. Soon after this announcement, Ban Ki-moon again offered the UN headquarters as a summit site. However, four days later, on October 22, the U.S. announced that it would host the event, that the G20 leaders would be invited, that the meeting would take place in the Washington area and that it would be held on November 15, with a dinner the evening before at the White House. The U.S. also announced that participants would include, in addition to the G20 leaders, the managing director of the IMF, the president of the World Bank, the UN secretary general and the FSF chair. By the end of October, it was announced that the meeting would be held in Washington's National Building Museum.

The meeting was officially named the "Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy." The name accurately indicated what would occupy most of the summit's agenda and the main subject of advice from many well-meaning economists and political scientists about what the leaders should do (Eichengreen and Baldwin 2008; Brookings Institution 2008; Kirton 2008; Rotman School of Management 2008). The participants would review the progress that had been made in addressing the financial crisis in recent weeks. They would identify the underlying causes of the crisis and agree on a set of principles for reforming regulatory and institutional regimes in the global financial arena. They would lay the framework for future actions on a range of topics, most of which would be addressed by the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors at their regularly scheduled November 8–9 meeting in Sao Paulo. These issues included currencies, financial regulation and institutional reform. The participants might also discuss trade, investment and the importance of open, capitalist economies. The Australian and German governments, as well as the World Bank, indicated that they would like to discuss the Doha Development Agenda. Participants would also review a range of proposals put forward by several countries for how best to proceed to tackle the financial crisis. Indeed, some predicted that the meeting would be a "Bretton Woods II." But IMF managing director Dominique Strauss-Khan, among others, said that it was unlikely that such drastic reforms would result from this meeting.

The Competing Conceptions

There remained competing conceptions among the two major founders about what the summit would do. The Europeans, led by France's Sarkozy, sought quick ambitious actions with immediate far-reaching results. They aimed at a comprehensive new international financial architecture, relying heavily on international-level government regulation. In sharp contrast, the U.S. saw the summit as the first step in a process, meant to prepare the ground for future action aimed at stronger intergovernmental co-operation. In this regard the U.S. was supported by Canada, whose prime minister, Harper, said the focus should be on the current financial crisis and not a new economic constitution for the world.

Membership and Participation

G20 leaders soon confirmed that they would attend. The first to do so were Canada, Australia, India, Italy, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Japan and South Korea. Others were more hesitant. China was initially reluctant to accept the invitation, but eventually did. Only Turkey elected to send its second-tier head of government instead of its head of state, President Abdullah Gül. China and Brazil both suggested that they would participate as leading voices for the developing and emerging worlds. This gave rise to a third conception of what the meeting would do — help protect the South from being hurt by the North-created crisis and reform the IFIs to give emerging and developing countries the greater voice and vote they had long sought.

Other leaders who were not included in the initial invitation demanded that they should be. The most insistent was Spain's Prime Minister José Zapatero. Other countries requesting invitations were Venezuela, Poland and the Netherlands. Some soon received support for their requests. Sarkozy declared that France would give up its self-proclaimed "second seat" as rotating president of the European Council so that Spain's Zapatero could attend.

A number of African countries and civil society organizations noted that Africa and other poorer countries would be underrepresented at the meeting. Seven African heads of state mandated Congolese president Denis Sassou Nguesso to attend, even though he had not been invited. Nguesso said that it was "unacceptable" that Africa was not invited to a summit that would consider the future of the global financial system. Sarkozy also apparently invited the Czech Republic's finance minister to participate in the process, as the Czech Republic would take over the European Union presidency from France in 2009. With the Dutch leader added to the French delegation at the last minute, the summit became notably more Eurocentric than the G20 had been since its creation in 1999.

There was speculation over whether the U.S. president-elect would participate in the meeting, which would take place a mere ten days after the election on November 4. It was then suggested that the victor, Obama, would be represented, even if not physically present at the meeting. The White House confirmed that the president-elect was welcome to participate if he so chose.

Several participants took the opportunity to schedule bilateral meetings. Japanese prime minister Taro Aso, South Korean president Lee Myung-bak and Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd, among others, tried to arrange meetings with the president-elect. However, Obama said he would not meet with any of the participants, although his advisors might. Some leaders also tried to arrange meetings with Bush. He, too, announced he would not meet with any leaders on the sidelines of the event. However, there were other bilateral meetings planned, such as Russian president Dmitry Medvedev with the leaders from Germany, China and the United Kingdom.

Each of the leaders were to be accompanied by a personal representative or sherpa. Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh said that he would have Montek Singh Ahluwalia, deputy chair of planning commission, by his side at the closed meetings. Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan would be accompanied by state minister and deputy prime minister Nazım Ekren and state minister Mehmet Şimşek as well as undersecretary of the treasury İbrahim Çanakcı. Australian treasury secretary Wayne Swan was involved in the preparatory process. Finance ministers from China, Japan and South Korea were also scheduled to be in Washington ahead of the summit.

Preparatory Meetings

A number of meetings scheduled to take place before the summit fe into the process. British prime minister Gordon Brown met with his French counterpart at the end of October to work on establishing a common European front for the EU and G20 summits. Brown and German chancellor Angela Merkel planned a meeting to discuss the world economy and financial market reforms. Medvedev talked with Rudd and also met with Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi about the economic situation. Japan's Aso dispatched individuals to the G20 countries, particularly the G8 members, and to emerging countries, such as Indonesia, to prepare for the meeting. Obama spoke by telephone with the leaders of Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Mexico and South Korea to discuss the economic crisis, amongst other topics. An EU-Russia summit was scheduled to take place before the G20 meeting, with Medvedev, Sarkozy and José Barroso, head of the European Commission, in attendance.

Others used the meeting of the G20 finance ministers and central bankers in Brazil on November 8 and 9 to hold bilateral discussions to prepare for the meeting in Washington one week later (Kirton and Koch 2008). The G20 finance discussions fed directly into the G20 leaders' process.

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Beijing in October highlighted a number of issues on the G20 summit's agenda. At the EU Summit on November 7, European countries were able to come to a common agreement on the financial situation, completing a proposal to be tabled at the G20 meeting.

It was expected that the November 14–15 special leaders' economic summit would be the first in a series. There was speculation that the second summit could happen as early as November 21 in New York or sometime between February and April in Paris. The Europeans declared that they wanted to reconvene within 100 days of the initial November meeting. This would mean the second meeting would take place before the end of February 2009, when Obama would have been in office for only a few weeks. The next meetings would likely take place outside of the United States. The principles that would come out of the November 14–15 gathering would be developed further by working groups for consideration at future gatherings, which would likely continue until the global financial crisis was contained.

The leaders' G8 sherpas and G20 finance deputies were able to agree on the draft communiqué one week before the summit. But only on Thursday, November 13, did an agreement on a college of supervisors for the world's biggest international banks take shape. The passages on trade liberalization remained routine. And it was on November 13, too, that FSF chair Mario Draghi and IMF managing director Dominique Strauss-Kahn resolved their disagreement about the role and relationship of their respective institutions in the new global financial architecture that the G20 summit would put in place (Engelen 2008). In essence, the lightly institutionalized FSF would set the new standards, but the organizationally powerful IMF would then monitor and enforce compliance with them.

On Friday, November 14, beginning in the early afternoon, the deputies met and hammered together the final communiqué and action plan. Work was thus already well advanced once the leaders started dinner that evening. The deputies' drafting session saw the IMF heavily involved, given that much of communiqué read like a work plan for the organization. The IMF thus had to to ensure that what the IMF was tasked to do could be delivered.

The Leaders' Discussions

The G20 summit began with a working dinner on the evening of Friday, November 14. Its working portion began with statements from Strauss-Kahn, the World Bank's Robert Zoellick, Ban Ki-moon and Draghi. Each was given five minutes, although Strauss-Kahn spoke for a little longer.

Strauss-Kahn made four points. The first was that the crisis was far from over. Advanced economies would face negative growth and emerging markets were being severely hit by the drying up of financial flows and weakening demand. The situation was continuing to deteriorate and the risk was that it would get worse.

The second point was that the time was now to take policy actions to support growth. G20 members should use all possible appropriate tools at their disposal. Inflation was no longer a risk in the biggest economies. In several there was room for additional monetary easing and substantial fiscal easing. At the highest political level, members should resist the temptation of protectionism, which could be strengthened in this environment.

Nothing could be worse for growth. Furthermore, wherever possible there had to be room for additional fiscal expansion. Strauss-Kahn offered to meet with each country to outline specific actions on fiscal and monetary policies they would and should take. IMF analysis showed that co-ordinated fiscal stimulus would improve the process of addressing the crisis, but that not everyone should do same the same thing all the time. However, progress would be more effective if trading partners simultaneously pursued nationally appropriate measures in each economy.

Strauss-Kahn's third point was a plea for money. The financing needs of emerging markets had to be addressed urgently. Market financing was scarce or nonexistent. Thus decisive and rapid action was needed to support those emerging markets. The IMF had sufficient lending capacity, as it had lent out only US$50 billion of its total US$230 billion. But the situation could change rapidly: demands would escalate in the next few months. World leaders needed to ensure that the bodies created to provide countercyclical lending had adequate resources at any time. It was time to think about how the international community could expand the IMF's resources. Strauss-Kahn thanked Aso for Japan's intention to make US$100 billion available to the IMF. He then asked the rest of the leaders at the table who would be next. In bilateral meetings, he would make it clear how much money each could provide to the IMF for lending to emerging countries.

The fourth point was that work needed to begin for a new architecture for global collaboration for early warning and for appropriate policy responses. There was a need for enhanced regulatory and supervisory rules. The IMF was the place to build and operate more robust regulations and early warning systems. There needed to be a commitment to action by policy makers when the warning system suggested action was needed.

Strauss-Kahn's call for action was echoed by many around the table. There was strong support for fiscal stimulus by those countries that had the room to do so. Many countries indicated they would move forward with programs in the coming days and weeks. The IMF stood ready, with action plans already drawn up, to help them determine how how to maximize their effectiveness.

Ban Ki-moon gave a speech, apparently written by the UN's Department of Economic Affairs, slanted toward the South. It repeated what others said. He tried to position the UN to have seat at the table, and repeated his offer to serve as host.

The working sessions took place on Saturday, November 15. Only country leaders' spoke. Throughout the sessions, especially at lunch, leaders intervened forcefully to demand that the communiqué passages on trade be strengthened. The result was ambitious, detailed language on an anti-protectionist pledge for the following year and on concluding a modalities agreement by the end of 2008 to finally get the long overdue Doha Development Agenda finally done.

Some countries added little to the discussions. Argentina's Cristina Fernández de Kirchner arrived late for the group photo, to the visible irritation of the always punctual George Bush. Spain, with a crumbling economy, property sector and employment, added nothing, apart from Zapatero securing a short meeting with Bush. The Netherlands, whose prime minister had to return home for a personal matter as soon as he landed in Washington, added nothing, too.

Many leaders had come to the summit eager to tell Bush directly that he had caused this problem. This was Kirchner's intention according to the Argentinean media. It was thus in some respects a vindictive summit, with no one expressing regrets at Bush's imminent departure. Nonetheless, all recognized the seriousness of the problem they collectively faced.

The Summit Results

The first G20 summit was a substantial success, with achievements across all the domains of domestic political management, deliberation, direction setting, decision making, delivery and development of global governance. It appropriately and ambitiously acted to deliver decisions in areas directly controlled by government, notably trade, fiscal stimulus and international institutional reform, while leaving private sector–driven finance — which its leaders poorly understood — to the realm of experts from the public and private sectors. It thus created an ongoing summit-guided, multilevel process grounded in the decade-old G20 finance ministers' forum but promising to produce a permanent G20 summit institution as the centre of global financial and economic governance for the new world of globalized, private-sector–led finance and economic growth.

Domestic Political Management

The G20 leaders used the summit to manage their domestic politics back home. Their very presence in Washington showed their voters that they were personally concerned with the crisis and trying to solve it. Simply being there was a matter of high politics and prestige in a Spain hit hard by the housing collapse and in a Netherlands whose collapsing banks needed bailouts to survive.

The summit also allowed leaders more easily to alter previous positions, especially where fiscal stimulus was concerned. Britain's Brown was able to set aside his longstanding two "golden rules" of fiscal sustainability to introduce a major stimulus package, using an earlier G7 as well as the G20 consensus as justification for the move. Similarly, Canada's Harper, who had just won a federal election on October 14 — after a campaign in which both he and his opponents had promised never to put Canada into a fiscal deficit — was able to use the G20 as justification for his deliberate post-election move to do just that. Indeed, on November 19, 2008, the Speech from the Throne referred explicitly to the G20 summit, but not to the earlier G8 one.

The G20 summit also helped spark or sustain an increase in public approval in several countries. Bush, as host, received a boost (see Appendix A). Britain's Brown led here, but Canada's Harper and Germany's Angela Merkel benefited too.

The leaders also seemed to like the summit. India's Mohamman Singh, on his return home, spoke of his initial scepticism that the summit would accomplish anything, but said he had been won over by what it did.

Deliberation

In the realm of deliberation, the summit also performed well. To be sure, it was very short, lasting fewer than 24 hours from the opening dinner on Friday evening through to its conclusion and news conferences on Saturday's early afternoon. This was less than half as long as the 2008 G8 Summit, which lasted at least 48 hours over three days and had only nine leaders present, compared to more than 26 participants at the Washington meeting (see Appendix B).

Nonetheless, the summit produced two documents, totalling 3,635 words (see Appendix C). This output compares favourably with the first G8 summit (with six leaders) in 1975, which generated one concluding document of only 1,129 words. However, it falls below the G8's annual average of about 9,000 words between 1975 and 2008.

The G20 summit documents covered a comprehensive range of issues (see Appendix D). The focus was, in order of the number of words devoted to them in the communiqué, on finance, the economy, trade, development and IFI reform. But it also briefly went far beyond, declaring: "We remain committed to addressing other critical challenges such as energy security and climate change, food security, the rule of law, and the fight against terrorism, poverty and disease" (G20 Leaders 2008). This was a list that extended through global or transnational issues into the political-security domain. Although it did not directly state that the leaders would address these issues through their G20 summit, their call was reminiscent of the statement of the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors at Montreal in 2000 that there was potentially no issue that the forum would not take up.

The discussions were also marked by a high degree of personal involvement, passion and spontaneous combustion. Nowhere was this greater than on trade. Here a wide range of leaders intervened over the morning session and at lunch to warn of the dangers of protectionism. As a result, the passages on trade were much stronger and more detailed than the draft declaration's had been.

Direction Setting

The G20 also did much to set new principled and normative directions. It did so most comprehensively and specifically in its section of the communiqué on principles to guide the decision making still to come on financial stability and regulation and economic growth. It was striking how the declaration arbitrated the debate between government regulation and free markets by highlighting the benefits that open markets would bring. Even more striking was how the G20's affirmation of consensus principles extended this emphasis on openness into the political domain, with an explicit call for democracy and freedom. Moreover, in a revival of the Montreal consensus of 2000, the leaders declared that they remained "committed to addressing other critical challenges such as energy security and climate change, food security, the rule of law, and the fight against terrorism, poverty and disease" (G20 Leaders 2008). The call for ecological and human security was clear.

Decision Making

These principles carried over into high performance on collective decision making in the form of specific, future-oriented commitments made. There were no complaints of the sort that surround the G8 that this G20 summit should not act as a *directoire*.

Despite its emphasis on offering principles and work plans to guide the decisions that would come only in several months' time, the G20 summit made 95 commitments. Those commitments largely dealt with macroeconomics and finance, with some on trade and one on development. There were more commitments made at Washington than by the G20 finance ministers and central bankers in Sao Paulo the week before, although there were less than the 296 made by the G8 leaders in Japan, with a much broader agenda, in July (see Appendix C). The G20 leaders' 95 commitments were vastly more than the mere four made at the first G20 finance ministerial in 1999. At the summit level, the G20 was transformed from primarily a forum for discussion and direction setting to a decision-making one.

Delivery

There was a good chance that these decisions would be delivered. The leaders were very well aware of the importance of their credibility and quick delivery. That was the key reason they decided to demonstrate their personal commitment by holding another summit by the end of April — a short three-and-a-half-month interval that was quicker than the period between the first and second G7 summits in 1975.

A further promising sign was the very tight timeline they set, with a deadline of March 31, 2009, for putting into place many of their short-term decisions. In the G8, setting a timetable of one year or less for delivery is one of the most powerful catalysts for getting members to comply. Indeed, the G20's 95 commitments were laden with 139 of the G8-proven compliance catalysts: 39 on a short-term timetable and 14 on reference to a core international organization, compared to only 13 to other international organizations (a catalyst that tends to reduce compliance) (see Appendix E).

Some of the commitments were complied with almost immediately, such as the pledge to hold the next summit by April 30, 2009. But some were violated almost immediately, as Russia and India raised import duties on automobiles, France changed its plans for the Common Agriculture Policy and the U.S. imposed labelling requirements on meat imported from Canada in violation of the anti-protectionist pledge. And the courageous commitment to secure a modalities agreement by December 31, 2008, was not fulfilled, as ministers could not even agree to hold a meeting by that time.

Development of Global Governance

The Washington Summit also did much to develop global economic governance, both inside the G20 and outside. Not only was it the first G20 summit, but, by agreeing on a second one so soon, it suggested that an ongoing G20 summit institution would be born. It also called for a new gathering of G20 trade ministers, to replace the G7's old trade ministers quadrilateral and to extend beyond the trade caucus of developing states formed at the WTO's 2003 ministerial at Cancun (and also referred to as the G20). It further led to the G20 finance ministers and central bankers meeting more frequently, and new G20 official-level working groups to be formed.

Outside the G20, the Washington Summit gave clear instructions to the G8-created FSF to expand its membership and otherwise reform. It did so also to the Bretton Woods bodies and to a host of other international regulatory and supervisory bodies such as International Organization of Securities Commissions and the International Accounting Standards Board. It identified the relationships among these institutions in the new global financial architecture. And it moved to invent new bodies, such as a college of supervisors for each global bank. Its new task forces were told to engage in multi-stakeholder "downreach" with civil society experts, but only on a functional, epistemic community model, rather than a fully democratic one. Most of those affected by the crisis were given no place.

Causes of Summit Performance

This strong but skewed performance, defined by fast, far-reaching success on G20 summit institutionalization, trade liberalization commitments, fiscal stimulus and IFI reform and by slowness on financial regulation and trade liberalization delivery, was driven by those forces highlighted by the concert equality model.

Shock-Activated Vulnerability from Inside America

The first such force, seen in the initiation and institutionalization of a G20 summit to govern financial stability and the world economy, was the severe financial and ensuing shock that exposed the equal economic vulnerability of all systemically significant countries, and the social and even political stability of some. In an era of financial hegemonic decline, financial crises start on the periphery, as happened with the debt crisis among developing countries in 1982, the 1994 peso crisis in Mexico and the 1997–99 Asian-turned-financial crisis (Arrighi and Silver 1999). Indeed, the shock was felt first and most strongly in America, Europe and Japan, rather than the G20's major emerging members of China, India and Brazil.

Established International Institutional Failure

The second cause was the failure of American unilateralism, IMF hard-law multilateralism, or G8, G7 or even G20 finance governance to cope with a crisis that began in America but spread quickly throughout a globalized world. It was striking how much G8 summits had failed to deal seriously with finance, economic or trade matters, or even specific issues such as hedge funds during the previous several years (Kirton 2005c, 45; Kirton 2007, 70–71).

The Expansion of Predominant Equalizing Capabilities

The third force, seen most clearly in the fast move on fiscal stimulus, IFI reform and G20 institutionalization and in the slow start on financial regulation, was the equalization of globally predominant capability within the G20 club. It contained a strong majority of the world's money, economy and population. Its rising but financially closed China with its US$2 trillion in foreign exchange reserves rivalled a financially open America rapidly acquiring US$2 trillion in additional government debt.

Common Purpose of Economic and Political Openness

The fourth force, evident in the quick success on trade commitments but in the slowness on financial regulation, was the common purpose among these diverse 20 members from the dominance of political democracy in all but two or three and the attachment to open markets of all. On trade delivery, the first defection came from Russia, the G8's newest democracy, and a G20 member not bound by the WTO's international rule of law.

Crisis-Created Political Capital and Control

The fifth cause, seen again in the speed of fiscal stimulus, trade liberalization promises and IFI reform and the slowness on financial regulation, was the strong political capital and control, reinforced by the crisis, of the popularly elected or supported leaders whose voters understood government spending and trade and the close association with the G20 response in America of the well-advised and stimulus-committed president-elect.

Constricted Participation in a Proven Club

The sixth was the still constricted participation in a club of only 20 permanent country members, with a decade of proven process and performance at the finance ministers' level on its core mission of financial stability, IFI reform for the Bretton Woods bodies and macroeconomics.

In the end, Spain and the Netherlands were there only as part of the EU or French delegation. There is no evidence that their presence did any damage or made any difference at all beyond simply being present for the benefit of the voters back home.

Conclusion: Toward the Second Summit

On April 1–2, 2009, the leaders of the world's 20 systemically significant countries will assemble in London for their second summit on financial stability and the world economy. It promises to be a historic event. It will be hosted by British prime minister Gordon Brown, who, relative to George Bush as host of the first summit, is a leader with a longer political future and extraordinary experience as a finance minister and co-founder of the original G20 finance forum in 1999. It will be the first G20 summit attended by American president Barack Obama, who brings a fresh vision for fundamental change and a strong political mandate for the next four years. It will be carefully prepared over four and a half months through a well-defined process that builds on the proven performance of the first summit.

Based on that first summit's mandate and a comprehensive, detailed report from the G20 finance ministers to be delivered by March 31, 2009, it should make the big decisions that will shape the state of the world's financial system and economy in the coming years. G20 leaders will also define the new global finance and economic governance architecture for decades ahead. They will do so with a comprehensive, interconnected agenda that covers regulation and supervision of banks, securities, accounting, credit ratings, derivatives, hedge funds and private equity firms. It embraces fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policy, and extends to the liberalization and financing of trade, investment and infrastructure. It will advance key issues such as creating a college of supervisors for global banks and an early warning system to help prevent financial crises from striking again. It will add new issues such as climate change. Above all, it will define the process for future G20 summits, probably bringing to life a new permanent centre for global financial and economic governance to stand alongside the old G8 and its important work outside the financial and economic domain.

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Appendix A: Leaders' Public Opinion Approval

Country	Leader	Polling Company	Pre-Summit	During Summit	Post-Summit	Difference
Australia	Rudd					
Brazil	Da Silva					
Canada	Harper					
China	Jintao					
France	Sarkozy					
Germany	Merkel					
India	Singh					
Indonesia	Bambang					
Italy	Berlusconi					
Japan	Aso					
Korea	Lee					
Mexico	Calderon					
Russia	Medvedev					
South Africa	Motlanthe					
United Kingdom	Brown					
United States	Bush	Gallup	28	29	32	+4

Appendix B: Participants

G20 Leaders

Argentina: Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, President
Australia: Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister
Brazil: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President
Canada: Stephen Harper, Prime Minster
China: Hu Jintao, President
France: Nicolas Sarkozy, President
Germany: Angela Merkel, Chancellor
India: Manmohan Singh, President
Indonesia: Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President
Italy: Silvio Berlusconi, President
Japan: Taro Aso, Prime Minister
Korea: Lee Myung-bak, President
Mexico: Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, President
Russia: Dmitry Medvedev, President
Saudi Arabia: King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz
South Africa: Kgalema Motlanthe, President
Turkey: Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister
United Kingdom: Gordon Brown, Prime Minister
United States: George W. Bush, President
European Union: José Manuel Barroso, President, European Commission

International Organizations

Financial Stability Forum: Mario Draghi, Chair
International Monetary Fund: Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Managing Director
United Nations: Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General
World Bank: Robert Zoellick, President

Others

As part of the French delegation for the European Union:

- *Netherlands* (representing the European Union): Jan Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister [forced to return to the Netherlands on the evening of November 14 for personal reasons]

- *Spain* (representing the European Union): José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, President

Appendix C: G20 Summit Performance

Table 1. G20 Leaders' Performance

Year	Domestic Political Management	Deliberation				Direction Setting	Decision Making	Delivery	Development/Reform of Global Governance
		Words	Sentences	Documents	Days				
2008	1 mention by Canada's Stephen Harper on November 19 in the Speech from the Throne	3,635	123	2	2	4 paragraphs in Declaration identify common principles (2,8,9,12)	95 commitments	139 catalysts; 39-1YTT (+), 14-CIO (+), 13-OIO (-)	G20 leaders, G20 trade ministers, reform of Financial Stability Forum, reform of International Monetary Fund, college of supervisors

Notes:
IYTT = time table of one year or less
CIO = core international organization
OIO = other international organization

Table 2. G20 Finance Ministers' Performance

Year	Deliberation			Dec	Del	Development of Global Governance															
										Other Institutions Noted at Meetings											
	Par	Words	Doc			G20I	G20B	Dep Mtgs	Work-shops	BWI	IMF	WB	WTO	FSF	FATF	UN	BCBS	OECD	IFI	IEF	Other
1999	5	402	1	4		2	1	1	NA	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2000	38	2,455	1	8		0	0	2	NA	0	12[a]	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
2001	16	1,631	2	24		0	1	2	1	0	4[a]	3	2	3	8	6[a]	1	0	2	0	2
2002	11	958	1	2		0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2
2003	9	1,185	1	6	42%[a]	1	2	2	1	0	6	3	1	0	2	1	0	1	2	0	1
2004	11	1,392	1	10		2	0	2	3	0	4	4	0	0	5	1[a]	0	2	0	0	0
2005	18	1,683	2	8		0	0	2	3	15	8[a]	4	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0
2006	29	2,048	1	9		1	0	2	3	1	13	10[a]	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
2007	19	2,236	1	20		1	0	2	3	3	10[a]	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2008[b]	5	259	1	4		0	0	-	-	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2008	17	1,744	1	27		5	0	2	3	3	8	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Total/ Average	156	13,990	11	91	42%[a]	12	5	19	18	24	69	37	8	6	17	10	1	4	8	1	14

Notes:
Deliberation:
- Par = number of paragraphs in G20 documents from the annual meeting.
- Words = number of words in G20 documents from the annual meeting, excluding page numbers, titles and subtitles.
- Doc = the number of documents from the G20 annual meeting.

Dec = Decisional:
Number of total commitments made by the G20 for the year in question, including commitments as they relate to the G20 as a whole and excluding country-specific commitments.

Del = Delivery:
G20 countries' compliance with commitments for the year in question.

Development of Global Governance:
= number of times an international institution is mentioned in the G20 documents for the year in question, excluding titles or subtitles. One unit of analysis is one sentence. If more than one institution is mentioned within a sentence, each institution is accounted for; if one institution is mentioned more than one time in a sentence it is only counted once.
- G20I = references to G20 as an institution.
- G20B = references to G20 official-level bodies, including seminars.

- Dep Mtgs = deputies meetings.
- Other Institutions Noted at Meetings:
  BCBS = Basel Committee of Banking Supervisors
  BWI = Bretton Woods institutions
  FATF = Financial Action Task Force
  FSF = Financial Stability Forum
  IEF = International Energy Forum
  IFI = international financial institutions
  IMF = International Monetary
  OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development
  UN = United Nations
  WB = World Bank
  WTO = World Trade Organization.

a. Includes only the United States, Japan, Canada, Russia, China, Korea, Australia, India, Indonesia and South Africa, with 6 commitments measured.
b. Represents the emergency meeting held on October 11, 2008.

Appendix C: G20 Summit Achievement by Issue

Topic	Domestic Political Management	Deliberation	Direction Setting	Decision	Delivery	Development/Reform of Global Governance	Total
Financial Regulation							
College of supervisors	-	2	-	2	ST	1	8
Early warning systems	-	1	-	1	ST	-	5
Clearinghouse for derivatives	2	1	-	-	-	-	3
Accounting standards	1	5	-	8	ST, MT	-	19
Banking capital/liquidity	1	2	-	2	ST, MT	-	10
Rating agencies registered	-	2	-	3	ST, MT	-	10
Executive pay guidelines	-	1	-	1	ST	-	5
Hedge funds	-	1	-	1	ST	-	5
Macroeconomic Policy							
Fiscal stimulus package	2	1	-	1	ST, MT	-	9
Monetary policy co-ordination	-	1	-	0	-	-	1
Exchange rates	-	0		0	-	-	0
International Financial Institutions							
Financial Stability Forum	-	8	1	7	ST	1	20
International Monetary Fund	3	12	1	8	ST, MT	1	30
World Bank	3	6	-	4	ST, MT	-	18
Trade							
Anti-protectionist pledge	2	2	2	3	MT	-	11
Doha Development Agenda	1	1	-	1	ST	1	7
Development							
Support for poorer exporters	-	1	1	0	-	-	2
Development assistance	1	2	-	1	MT-LT	-	7
TOTAL	16	49	5	43	53	4	170

Notes:

- Domestic Political Management = refers to issues mentioned in host's statement on the summit.
- Deliberation = refers to issues mentioned in the Declaration and Plan of Action from the November 15 meeting.
- Direction Setting = refers to issues explicitly covered by the 'common principles' identified in the Declaration, i.e., paragraphs 2, 8, 9, and 12.
- Decision = refers to the number of commitments made in the Declaration and Plan of Action from the November 15 meeting. There were a total of 95 commitments in the two documents.
- Delivery = deadline as referred to in the Declaration and Plan of Action from the November 15 meeting.
  ST=short term (by March 31, 2009). MT=medium term; LT=long-term.
  In the Total, LT=a score of 1, MT=a score of 2 and ST= a score of 3.
- Development/Reform of Global Governance = refers to the number of bodies/institutions reformed or created at the November 15 meeting. Other bodies or institutions that should be considered but do not fit in the above categories are as follows: finance ministers and central bankers, who continue to meet; working groups, which have been be commissioned to work on the recommendations made at the November 156 meeting and will work on other recommendations introduced at the London Summit; and the G20 leaders, who will reconvene on April 2, 2009.

Appendix E: Compliance Catalysts

Documents	Name	Total	TT1Y	CIO	OIO	SA	IL	SM	G8/ 20 Body	TA	$	Remit	Min
Declaration													
2008-1	Restore growth	0											
Actions Taken and to Be Taken													
2008-2	Policy Response	0											
2008-3	Stable financial system	0											
2008-4	Fiscal stimulus	0											
2008-5	Help emerging and developing economies	0											
2008-6	IFIs have funding	4		1	1	1					1		
Common Principles for Reform of Financial Markets													
2008-7	Reforms to avoid future crisis	0											
2008-8	Cooperation among regulators	0											
2008-9	Regulators	0											
2008-10	Strengthen transparency and accountability	1				1							
2008-11	Enhancing sound regulation	0											
2008-12	Oversight of credit rating agencies	1					1						
2008-13	Regulatory regimes	0											
2008-14	Transparent assessments of national regulatory systems	0											
2008-15	Promote integrity in financial markets	0											
2008-16	Information sharing	0											
2008-17	Reinforce international co-operation	1				1							
2008-18	Cross-border flows	1				1							
2008-19	Crisis prevention and resolution	1				1							
2008-20	Reforming IFIs	1			1								
2008-21	FSF expansion	2		1		1							
2008-22	IMF and FSF to identify vulnerabilities	2		1		1							
Tasking of Ministers and Experts													
2008-23	Implementation	0											
2008-24	Finance ministers to apply timeline	2	1										1
2008-25	Mitigate pro-cyclality	2				1							1
2008-26	Align global accounting standards	2				1							1
2008-27	Strengthen resilience, transparency of credit derivatives markets	2				1							1
2008-28	Review compensation practices	2				1							1
2008-29	Review mandates, governance and resource requirements of the IFIs	3			1	1							1
2008-30	Define scope of systemically important institutions and appropriate regulation or oversight	3			1	1							1
2008-31	Financial systems reform	3	1						1			1	
Commitment to an Open Global Economy													
2008-32	Avoid over-regulation	0											
2008-33	Reject protectionism	1	1										
2008-34	Refrain from new export restrictions	1	1										
2008-35	Refrain from implementing WTO-inconsistent measures	2	1	1									
2008-36	Doha Development Agenda	3	1	1									1
2008-37	Global trading system	0											
2008-38	Millennium Development Goals	1			1								
2008-39	Critical challenges	0											
TOTAL		41	6	5	5	13	1	0	1	0	1	1	8

Documents	Name	Total	TT1Y	CIO	OIO	SA	IL	SM	G8/ 20 Body	TA	$	Remit	Min
Action Plan													
Strengthening Transparency and Accountability													
2008-40	Guidelines for valuation of securities	2	1			1							
2008-41	Address weaknesses in accounting and disclosure standards	2	1			1							
2008-42	Enhance required disclosure of complex financial instruments	2	1			1							
2008-43	Governance of international accounting standards	2	1			1							
2008-44	Private pools of capital/hedge fund proposals	4	1	1		1							1
2008-45	Global standard	1				1							
2008-46	High-quality accounting standards	1				1							
2008-47	Risk disclosures	1				1							
2008-48	Accurate accounting	1				1							
Enhancing Sound Regulatory Regimes													
2008-49	Recommendations to mitigate pro-cyclicality	3	1	1		1							
2008-50	Report on structure and principles of regulatory system	0											
2008-51	FSAP report	0											
2008-52	Review differentiated nature of regulation	1				1							
2008-53	Review scope of financial regulation	1				1							
2008-54	Review resolution regimes and bankruptcy laws	1				1							
2008-55	Harmonization of capital definitions	0											
Prudential Oversight													
2008-56	High standards for credit rating agencies	2	1		1								
2008-57	Review credit rating agencies' compliance to standards	3	1		1			1					
2008-58	Adequate capital	2	1			1							
2008-59	Reduce risks of credit default swaps and OTC derivatives	2	1			1							
2008-60	Support exchange-traded platforms for credit default swaps	2	1			1							
2008-61	Expand OTC derivative market transparency	2	1			1							
2008-62	Ensure infrastructure support for growing OTC volumes	2	1			1							
2008-63	Registration of credit rating agencies	1				1							
2008-64	Liquidity supervision for cross-border banks	1				1							
Risk Management													
2008-65	Enhanced guidelines to strengthen banks' risk management practices	2	1			1							
2008-66	Implement procedures for financial firms to better manage liquidity risk	2	1			1							
2008-67	Ensure financial firms measure risk concentrations	2	1			1							
2008-68	Reassess risk management models	2	1			1							
2008-69	Study the need for and help develop stress-testing models	2	1		1								
2008-70	Incentives to promote stability	2	1			1							
2008-71	Effective risk management	2	1			1							
2008-72	Ensure regulatory policy makers can respond rapidly to innovation	1				1							
2008-73	Monitor substantial changes in asset prices and implications	1				1							
Promoting Integrity in Financial Markets													
2008-74	Enhance regulatory co-operation between jurisdictions	2	1			1							
2008-75	Promote information sharing	2	1			1							
2008-76	Review business conduct rules	2	1			1							

Documents	Name	Total	TT1Y	CIO	OIO	SA	IL	SM	G8/ 20 Body	TA	$	Remit	Min
2008-77	Sanction regimes for cases of misconduct	1	1										
2008-78	Ensure national and international measures protect global system	1				1							
2008-79	FATF	2			1				1				
2008-80	Promote tax information exchange	2			1	1							
2008-81	Address lack of transparency and failure to share tax information	0											
Reinforcing International Co-operation													
2008-82	Supervisory college	3	1			1			1				
2008-83	Comprehensive discussions of activities and assessment of risks	3	1			1			1				
2008-84	Simulation exercises	2	1			1							
2008-85	Convergence in regulatory practices	1				1							
2008-86	Measures to restore stability and confidence	1				1							
Reforming International Financial Institutions													
2008-87	Expand FSF	2	1	1									
2008-88	IMF and FSF strengthen collaboration	2	1	1									
2008-89	IMF should take the lead	2	1	1									
2008-90	Review resources needs of IMF, World Bank, other MDBs	4	1	1	1	1							
2008-91	Restore emerging and developing countries' access to development	2	1			1							
2008-92	Ensure arrangements support countries with good track record	2	1			1							
2008-93	BWIs must be comprehensively reformed	2		1		1							
2008-94	Surveillance reviews	2		1	1								
2008-95	Formulation and implementation of new regulations	3		1	1	1							
Total		98	33	9	8	43	0	1	3	0	0	0	1
Grand Total		139	39	14	13	56	1	1	4	0	1	1	9

Notes:

- Compliance catalysts = words, phrases or factors that are embedded in and guide a commitment. They instruct how to implement, proceed or comply with the commitment. More than one catalyst will appear can appear in a commitment .
- TT1Y = refers to a one-year time table for completing the commitment.
- CIO = invocation of a relevant core international organization in the area, for example, the World Health Organization for a health-related commitment.
- OIO = invocation of an international organization other than the core one for that issue.
- SA = invocation of a specified agent, such as an organization, country or figure.
- IL = refers to international law.
- SM = includes a self-monitoring component for countries to monitor their progress.
- G8/G20 Body = invocation of a G8/G20-created body, such as the Financial Action Task Force.
- TA = refers to a specific target, such as a 50% reduction.
- $ = refers to a money mobilized, such as a commitment of $50 million.
- Remit = refers to future assessment, most often at a future summit.
- Mins = refers to a ministerial-level body, such as the finance ministers.
- Other abbreviations:
  BWIs = Bretton Woods institutions
  FATF = Financial Activity Task Force
  FSAP = financial sector assessment program
  FSF = Financial Stability Forum
  IFIs = international financial institutions
  IMF = International Monetary Fund
  MDBs = multilateral development banks
  OTC = over the counter
  WTO = World Trade Organization