The submission proposes a global vote. This would entail the UN organizing referendums on a key issue for humanity, especially those included in the action plan provided by the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. Referendums will be held in the respective countries. Each member state would support the election with its own existing officers and infrastructure. The result of the vote could be formally presented as a draft resolution at the UN General Assembly. The idea is to spark public engagement and bring public pressure on policy makers in international fora.
1. Abstract

This work introduces three ideas and a proposal. The first idea is that a substantial portion of the most pressing global problems have already been successfully identified and even addressed by humankind in the last few decades, in which process the United Nations (UN) has played a very important role. Two recent documents combine a clear vision and an action plan on the topic: the 2015 Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030, both of which were, at least formally, well received by the international community.

The second idea is that implementing an alternative governance system is desirable and even inevitable, but it may take time and the problems we are dealing with today are of such magnitude that we must also consider immediate solutions.

The third idea is that it is necessary to articulate an immediate governance solution that will give impetus to and supplement any future, more structural solutions.

The solution we propose is to organize a global vote. Humankind would have the opportunity to take a stand on an issue that must be implemented immediately, but for some reason is currently blocked for lack of political will. The goal is to spark citizen engagement and put social pressure on political decision makers that gets some action into many of the initiatives that are currently left to the realm of ideas. To formally put the spotlight on public pressure, which is often not felt in global forums, since they represent the national governments and not the individuals directly.

This vote would be coordinated by an appropriate UN agency. The most appropriate would be the UN Development Program (UNDP), and each state would implement the vote as a national election with its existing resources.

The vote would be on April 22, Earth Day, and its goal would be to answer a question such as the following: “Do you agree to commit 1% of annual military expenses to eradicating hunger in the world?” The goal of zero hunger, UN Sustainable Development Goal #2, is simple enough to understand that it can be used for a worldwide consultation without the need for a complex preliminary training process, and it is a cornerstone for human survival in a world of abundant resources but unequal distribution. The question would be connected to disarmament because it would use existing government resources and avoid adding another financial burden to the citizens.

This vote could be formally presented as a draft resolution at the UN General Assembly. The least developed countries, which are most of the member states in the UN, would be expected to support it, given the potential benefits to be obtained from a global redistribution of resources.

The draft resolution will plan the creation of a Global Voting Committee based on geographic criteria (one member per region) and chosen by lot, with one candidate selected per interested country. This Committee would decide on issues by majority vote, and would review the voting results of each country, whereas
each State would oversee the voting process. The Committee will be in touch with the appropriate voting organizations regarding observers and voting support. Its main role will be to compile the results from each country. The structure would be minimal and it would not require a large expenditure, considering that each local government would use their own resources and be responsible for the voting arrangements, including counting votes and submitting the result.

Arranging the vote completely online is not feasible, as the most vulnerable sectors, which are the most relevant actors in this proposal, are precisely the ones that have the least access to such technology. If a government has the resources to use this type of voting system, it could make that decision.

This type of vote would be directly based on the will of the people, which would be expected to consider the good of all humanity. It would also give a voice to each person, regardless of social standing or country of origin. Also, the proposal presupposes immediate action and immediate results, an interesting starting point that will stimulate deeper, long-term commitments.

Since aspects such as financing are essential, this proposal submits an analysis of how the potential benefits outweigh the actual costs and could influence the member states to decide to organize the vote. The proposal is flexible in its formulation and the possible dynamics of implementation. What matters is not the result, but the opportunity to give a worldwide opinion, as a united humanity, on a topic that affects all of us. This decision is expected to help us develop greater awareness of the enormous power we have when we decide to align our collective will in a particular direction – in this case, in the direction of a just cause. Will the authorities of the time be able to sidestep the meaning of such a decision? Will the voters forget that their decision is supposed to lead to a change in the institutions? Will this be the necessary spark to catalyze the changes the world cries out for? We have an opportunity to find out.

2. Description of the model

INTRODUCTION

Humankind is going through a time of vital importance for its future and the future of the planet. We live in a global community in which the challenges we face not only concern those in our immediate vicinity, but have clear effects around the world. Today there are unprecedented opportunities in terms of problem resolution potential, while at the same time it is imperative that we solve these problems if we aspire to leave the planet to future generations in as good a shape as it is today, or even better.

This globalization of opportunities and challenges logically necessitates that the solutions we put forth have global reach and be global in reach and nature, and that we channel them through proper mechanisms. As we consider how to implement solutions, we observe current forms of governance, such as Nation States and their integration mechanisms, the UN, the Bretton Woods system and global capitalism.
This work introduces three ideas. The first is, that a substantial portion of the most pressing global problems have already been successfully identified and even addressed by humankind in the last few decades, in which process the UN has played a very important role. Two recent documents articulate this clear vision: the 2015 Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030, both of which were, at least formally, well received by the international community.

The second idea is that implementing an alternative governance system is desirable and even inevitable, but it may take time and the problems we are dealing with today are of such magnitude that we must also consider immediate solutions.

The third idea is that it is necessary to articulate an immediate governance solution that will give impetus to and supplement any future, more structural solutions.

As we contemplate the situation in the world, we observe a paradox: most of the world population seems to support the fundamental goals that would ensure a sustainable planet and meeting everyone’s basic needs, and the UN and other global governance mechanisms have clear plans for how to accomplish this. However, the targets are not met. Consequently, there is a disconnect between the ideas that are successfully expressed and the practical reality. This work is about covering that gap.

How can we cover that gap and work towards a more inclusive agenda that will protect the interests of the underprivileged? The proposal is to hold a vote at the world level, for example on Earth Day (April 22), to determine whether there is agreement on implementing an emergency program to implement such measures under the coordination of the UN. This will be a global renaissance for democracy that will create momentum and add visibility to the paths that we know lead to solutions but which are not applied. The protagonist will no longer be a particular country, but humanity as one.

**THE CHALLENGES HUMANKIND FACES**

We will not discuss whether these challenges exist or not, but will assume a priorit that they do. For the purposes of this proposal, they are considered to be sufficiently documented and substantiated in documents such as the Brandt Report, the Stiglitz Report, UNCTAD documents, and above all, the 2015 Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 mentioned in the introduction.

All in all, it could be useful to remember the challenges summarized in 2017 as Sustainable Development Goals [1]:

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning
• Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
• Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all
• Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
• Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
• Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
• Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
• Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
• Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
• Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
• Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources
• Goal 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss
• Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies
• Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

We sometimes overlook that though writing these Goals may have required difficult diplomatic negotiations, their reality and validity are clear to all citizens of the planet. This means these Goals are also very current, and therefore that any person on the planet is already qualified to determine, for instance, whether to fund eradicating hunger or the fight against desertification before spending money on defense, information security, the war on terrorism or financial rescues, to name some examples.

In other words, the clarity and simplicity of these goals is the basis for enough legitimacy for any person to decide on them, or, more specifically, vote on them. Also, the fact that they have been adopted within the framework of the UN gives them an unparalleled legitimacy. Why, then, haven’t they been attained? At what point will the member states and the UN see their actions come together?

THE UNITED NATIONS: LIMITED INFLUENCE

The UN has a broad structure with important points of insertion and outreach in every country of the world. It also has a decision-making mechanism and a worldwide funding system that is second to none in international organizations. There is no doubt that it is the most effective, representative and extensive international governance organization the world has today.

It is true that the UN has not been completely effective in carrying out the Goals expressed in the Charter and later foundational documents, especially keeping international peace and security. In that sense, there is consensus that the veto of the permanent members of the Security Council makes it difficult to decide on foundational issues, such as financing, implementing punitive measures or reforming the Charter.

At the same time, we have an existing organization with ongoing projects of great importance for today’s world. It would be very difficult to replace this organization in the short term, even if there were a better alternative. An immediate solution to the world’s problems cannot ignore the fact that there is
already a functional structure with worldwide reach, support and membership. Developing an alternative system runs the risk of losing the ability to implement issues immediately, and for the proposal to become an abstract issue, as a daring reform proposal might not have the support of the most powerful countries on the planet. In fact, several of the most powerful countries in the world (the United States, Russia, China, France and the United Kingdom) have influence in today’s UN written into the Charter itself, which raises doubts as to their willingness to move and be part of another system, and even as to the possibility of reforming the current one.

On the other hand, at this time, the UN is going through a difficult time in its history for two main reasons:

- Lack of sufficient funds to fully carry out its mission, with no way to make the member states contribute the necessary funds, while the world population is unaware of or disconnected from the issue.
- The decision-making system suffers due to the use of vetoes, which may block conflict resolution. Today, Syria is the clearest example of this.

At times, even applying a veto has not kept certain member states from carrying out unilateral action, as happened with the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the triple veto by permanent members of the Security Council (China, France and Russia).

Some questions we should ask are, therefore: Should the UN have sufficient support to carry out its goals? And if so, would it be useful to have the explicit support of the entirety of the world population? Would the member states that do not comply be just as comfortable if they had to be accountable for their actions not only to the UN, but also to their domestic population and even to the whole world?

GLOBAL VOTE: A SPARK FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

A starting point for a complete proposal is the reality that humanity is one, and that in an increasingly globalized world it is necessary to listen to global demands and provide global solutions. From a holistic perspective, are current solutions in harmony with the demands humanity is making? How could we verify this? The answer we suggest is to let people express themselves and do so in the most classic and well-known way: by voting. This, however, would not be a national vote, which would only be heard by one government, but a global vote, which would resonate throughout the world and reflect the desire of all humankind in its entirety.

So why not dedicate a day to making decisions in a united way on issues that concern us, not as individual nations, but as a united humanity? We must set a date to vote on issues that would be a priority among the many challenges that face humanity. It could be Earth Day, April 22, given its ecumenical nature.

The technical side of this vote would be that humanity would go to the ballot booth according to processes established by each government in coordination with the local UN office. The votes would be counted nationally, but thereafter the world would be considered as a single district, and the result would be a global result on a global issue.

It is quite possible that the priorities and needs of some regions of the planet might not align with the needs of others, but we must remember that this is simply a
matter of listening to the voice of humankind in a unified way for the first time in history [2]. This would have an impact beyond the vote itself. It would lead to effective mobilization for a just cause.

**Voting: what, how and what for?**

If we will consider a global vote, we must consider the fundamental issue of what to vote on, what issue billions of people will go to the ballot box to decide on.

There are at least three intimately connected possibilities, which we will examine separately for proper analysis:

a) Formulating the question  
b) The process of adopting the issue  
c) Cost and dynamics of implementation

Later we will analyze the main risks and challenges to implementing the proposal. First, we will focus on these three issues.

**a) Formulating the question**

If we could ask humankind only one question about its future, what would it be? How could it be asked so it would contribute to improving global governance?

What question would be sufficiently acceptable, inspiring and disruptive to be worth organizing a world survey? Obviously, one that is not controversial, that is just, and that generates consequences.

Controversy is obviously unavoidable, but there would probably be less of it if the issue is one that is fundamental to life, such as eradicating hunger, which has been approved as a Sustainable Development Goal by the UN. The same could be said for the justice aspect.

What consequences might there be? Possibly three:

- Direct commitment by the citizens and moral commitment by the member states: a gesture that clearly shows involvement in one’s own reality and the reality of one’s neighbor.

- Greater awareness of the dire situation experienced by other members of the human family who may benefit from contributions that might be considered irrelevant in the developed world.

- Social pressure. This factor must not be underestimated. What would happen if people voted and what was decided by an overwhelming majority was not done? This would uncover a great failure in the functioning of the international system, which often operates in an ivory tower, far from contact with the people. A promise requires fulfilment, and if the whole world votes, the world will require that the promise be fulfilled. A worldwide active and attentive electorate would introduce great social pressure, unprecedented in history.

There are countless possibilities as to what the question should be. It is also difficult to articulate it. We must consider that a significant segment of the world population does not know how to read and write, and an undetermined but possibly greater number does not know about issues such as the GDP, empowerment, resilience or sustainability.
However, everyone understands hunger, lack of safe drinking water, and lack of housing. These realities affect life directly, and are so basic that in the developed world they are often taken for granted. According to UN data, today 815 million people are hungry. Close to 1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water, and at least 1.8 billion drink water from sources that are contaminated with fecal matter. Lastly, for the sake of completeness, we estimate that 828 million people live in slums [3].

Though these issues are known, the truth is that solutions are not being implemented as quickly as possible. If we take the view that we are a human family that shares Planet Earth, we can see that some people die simply because of the indifference or inaction of others. Is this really the decision most of humanity has made? Or is there a critical mass of people willing to make a change, who have not been given a chance to participate? In this case, a vote would allow this participation, sending a clear message to the governments of the world.

If we accept the possibility of having a worldwide consultation on certain topics, which should we choose? In this proposal we suggest dealing with the issue of hunger first, for several reasons. First, because it is the basis of life itself and of the quality of human growth. Second, because contrary to what one might expect, food stability contributes to reducing the size of the population, one of the structural problems we deal with in the 21st Century. Third, because today there is overproduction of food, and redistribution could have an immediate impact, facilitating more structural changes that could come later.

We could thus formulate the following question:
“Do you agree with allocating 1% of what the world spends on defense to eradicating hunger in the world?”

The question focuses on hunger, and the implementation is a transfer of existing resources from one government sector to another without creating additional financial burdens for citizens, while supporting worldwide disarmament.

The underlying objective is to support the Sustainable Development Goals until 2030, wherever necessary, with proportional contributions from each government. The emphasis would be on Goal number 2, “to end hunger.

What is involved in providing resources to eradicate hunger from the world? It will mean that each State will direct their national budget to the fight against hunger, and allocate the excess to another country in need. The resources would be important, since, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in 2016 the military budget was 2.2% of the world GDP, or USD 1.686 trillion [4].

The sharing of resources would need to be regulated, a task that could be handled by the UN, an organization that is representative in nature. As the issue is the fight against hunger, a central role could be occupied by the FAO. At the same time, each government must accelerate its own existing plans, something that the vote will incentivize powerfully. It would also contribute to worldwide disarmament.

We must keep in mind that it is not simply a matter of coming up with new solutions, but also of implementing existing ones. For example, Latin America, Africa and Asia
have strategies to eradicate hunger by 2025. This process could be accelerated if there were political will. Who better to contribute it than the people? [5]

b) The process of adopting the vote and the question to be voted on

The process must be organized efficiently, with mechanisms that already exist or can be incorporated quickly. The mechanism for adopting the question to be voted on must also have sufficient legitimacy and reach to have worldwide impact.

Organizing the vote through the member states seems the most feasible path. Currently, all nations carry out some type of election and have systems for doing so, at times calling for the support and observation of international organizations.

Regarding worldwide reach and impact, the UN seems the most appropriate environment, specifically by adopting the question through a resolution in the General Assembly, the representative body par excellence of the UN (and hence of humankind) today.

This issue is covered by the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of the United Nations, specifically Articles 13, 14, 15, 20 and related provisions [6]. In this case, a member state of the UN is required to submit a draft resolution to the General Assembly. The topic would be debated and adopted after a vote. It could be sent to debate at a lower level such as the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee). The decision would not be binding in any event, i.e. it would not create an obligation to comply, either by organizing the vote or by abiding by its results, but it would create a moral obligation due to the direct involvement of the citizens.

The Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly of the United Nations require that draft resolutions be submitted by Member States. A draft resolution can have coauthors, which provides greater consensus before the adoption process.

Hence, as an adoption tactic, it would be desirable to first develop basic consensus among a few member states with a leader for each region. This diplomatic process is commonplace, though not necessarily simple.

Given that this proposal will benefit people in the least developed countries, reaching initial consensus within the Group of 77 and China could be part of the consensus strategy. This group currently has 134 members and is the most active group for South-South dialog.

What country or countries would promote the issue? This would require diplomatic negotiations from civilian leadership, preferably by high-level authorities (presidents or prime ministers) who could carry the proposal, obtain political approval and launch the process.

The resolution should also create a Global Voting Committee, which would work under the oversight of the UNDP, to be established by lot according to national proposals with equitable geographical representation. The committee’s decisions would be made by majority vote, and its role would be to decide, in coordination with available resources at the UN and regional organizations, how to send support missions and observers to elections. It would also oversee the worldwide count of the voting results and develop a final report.
c) Cost and dynamics of implementation

Would countries be willing to spend money on the process? In principle, we would expect so, for two reasons. From a humanitarian perspective, because they would join a global process benefiting all humankind. From a more practical perspective, because most countries would benefit directly if the vote activated mechanisms for practical assistance after the process.

Costs are not easy to determine. According to specialized studies, the cost of organizing an election varies greatly depending on the country, ranging from USD 1 per person in the electorate to over USD 20 per person [7]. The reason for these differences is that apart from the operating cost (distribution of ballots, mail, logistics, and computation) there are additional costs, such as observers, experience with democracy, transparency controls or domestic peace.

The average value per country and population could be USD 2.67 per person, or nearly USD 13,216 million, considering a voting population of 4,950 million people, with approximately 7,550 million total world inhabitants [8].

The final cost would be obtained based on the data of each country, depending on the voting age and elective costs. In this case, World Bank data indicates that 65.45% of the world population is between 15 and 64 years old.

To obtain the average cost per person in USD, four countries with a large population are considered: in India it is USD 1; in Brazil, USD 2.3; in Mexico, USD 5.9, and in the US, USD 1.5, averaging USD 2.67 between the four countries. When we multiply the population of 4,950 million people by the estimated cost of USD 2.67, the total is the USD 13,216 million mentioned above.

As for organizing the vote itself, the only possibility available today is for each country to set up its voting process as transparently as possible. Negotiating additional international standards beyond those that already exist at the national level could delay the proposal or even drown it in red tape.

Would other countries recognize the results of an election held in a different location? They do it on a regular basis, as they recognize current governments. In this case, the difference would be that the results obtained in each country would be partial, and the total results would be coordinated by an agency of the UN such as the UN Development Program (UNDP) and, within it, the Global Voting Committee.

If the decision were adopted in the 2018 General Assembly sessions, voting could be carried out on Earth Day of 2019 or the year after adoption.

The result of this process would very likely lead to an overwhelming “yes” response. What could be done with this enormous worldwide impetus to share? As previously stated, this mandate would imply a moral commitment by all world governments, not only to their people but to all the peoples of the world. The result would be reevaluated at the General Assembly. If there was sufficient will, a new resolution could be adopted, commending the results. If not, the responsible UN agency could simply issue a report with the national results and the composite results as a worldwide survey, without taking a position on the voting process. The result, as far as the world is concerned, would be the same: strengthening and disseminating the results of a global decision.
SOME OBJECTIONS TO CONSIDER
There are at least six important objections that could be made to this initiative, which we list below:

a) Elections in territories where sovereignty is disputed or where there is war.

b) The weight of countries with large populations in a per-person vote.

c) The situation of the minority when the majority wins.

d) Lack of momentum for the draft resolution.

e) Possible amendments that might water down the text.

f) Opposition of powerful countries.

a) In the first place, carrying out elections today is an act of sovereignty, and therefore it could bring up sovereignty disputes between member states. Considering that part of the world is always subject to sovereignty disputes, we suggest applying the following disclaimer, based on the text used by the UN: “Votes in disputed territories and/or by groups acknowledged by the UN will be carried out with prior written agreement by the parties involved indicating that this vote will not affect the status of the dispute in any way.” With no written agreement, the votes would not be counted. Territories in war zones might not have a vote given their exceptional situation.

b) Second, it is clear that, if each person has one vote, some member states such as India, the United States or Brazil would have significant weight in the decision. This could be accepted as a reality, or a regional system of vote summation could be designed (for example, counting votes based on integration mechanisms recognized by the UN, such as CELAC, NAFTA, ASEAN, the African Union and the European Union), and for groups that are informally recognized by the organization through diplomatic practices (such as the Latin American group and the Arabic group, among others).

c) Third, one country may make a different decision than the rest of the world. Should a member state that prioritized a different result not only respect but also contribute resources to implementing the decision of all humankind? In this case, since the topic is an issue as fundamental as hunger, this would be a reasonable expectation.

d) There is a risk that author countries may be indifferent to promoting the draft resolution. To avoid this, it would be important to bring the proposal to a country that understands the ethical issues and identifies with it at the highest (presidential) level.

e) It is also possible that the draft could be presented but later amended [9], with the terms modified and the text “diminished”, which would make it so innocuous that its implementation would be futile. The diplomatic work of reaching consensus is critical. Alternatives such as “date to be set at an appropriate time” should not be accepted. The text must include both the call to a vote on Earth Day and the question submitted, as well as the creation of the Global Voting Committee.

f) Finally, developed member states, especially the United States and the European Union, can be expected to be reluctant to the process because of the financial commitments it could entail. We could ask whether the people of the United States
and Europe share this opinion. What would the social pressure be if the citizens voted to share and the member states refused to do so?

China is a special case, since its political system does not include holding elections. In this case, voting through the Internet could be considered, if the Chinese government allowed it.

**POSSIBLE USE OF SOFTWARE**

From a certain point of view, the option of using software (similar to sites such as Avaaz, Change, Loomio or DemocracyOS) to coordinate and implement changes on a worldwide scale could be very useful and inclusive. However, since today 20% of the world population lacks access not only to the Internet but even to electricity [10] this option is far from realistic. That is precisely the sector of humanity whose participation is most critical, and we need to listen to and include them the most. Therefore, this proposal does not consider using software as the sole means of participation.

Since the member states do not currently have the technology to count a vote that is not given in person (as opposed to online), the software option should be left open for member states that decide to use it.

**CONCLUSION**

In this document we have examined how carrying out a global vote on eradicating hunger could help the people of the world increase social pressure and commitment, strengthening the worldwide coordination role of the UN. We have considered how it could be organized in each country and how the costs would be less than the expected future benefits. The flexibility of the proposal was also emphasized, given that the question could be modified but the mechanism is the component that must remain intact.

The power structure in place today will not allow the creation of binding obligations, no matter how necessary they may be. There is no political will for it. A vote could provide this conclusively and without a shadow of a doubt, giving the impetus to make decisions that affect special interests, which are generally attached to the status quo, which is what has led us to the current worldwide crisis.

It should also be noted that global vote is a temporary decision, not a structural one. In other words, a global vote is not in itself sufficient to make the world a more just and more sustainable place, but it should be a spark that starts an accelerating process of decisions that lead to structural changes in the world.

What decisions would be necessary? What kind of world order is currently required? This proposal focuses on making it possible to establish solutions, not simply imagining them. However, we must not deny that there are solutions, and there are many. There are solutions at the UN level, such as the clearly stated Sustainable Development Goals that would change the world in a few years if they were implemented with full commitment. At the state level, many countries and groups have submitted proposals to restructure the architecture of world finances and politics. At the level of the civil society, there are several groups and actors for change who quietly have submitted ideas or are carrying out advanced drafts. In every case, if there were a high level of moral, financial and political commitment,
all these ideas would come to fruition as if by magic. The key, therefore, is not that ideas exist, but that there is an impetus to manifest them.

Later, groups and ideas could be empowered, but it is most likely that this will follow the current pattern, without a defined center. Here and there, with spontaneous decentralized group organization, groups and projects will be empowered. Eventually, their efforts will add to each other’s and maybe in a few decades they will produce a defined world order. Trying to control the whole process would probably only slow it down.

We should not fool ourselves. Neither this solution, nor, possibly, others, will address all the problems we deal with. However, starting in our area of responsibility, we must add links to the chain, act promptly and effectively, and confidently advance toward the future that we so desire and need.

### 3. Motivation

**1. Core Values**

We are facing a unique, great decision: a global vote. What is the good of all humankind? How to know whether a decision will take it into account or not? It is clear that the decision that would be adopted would be based directly on the will of the people, and so it is fair to allow humankind decide, as a collective consciousness, what is in its best interest.

Of course, we run the risk that the vote might not consider the good of humanity, if a “No” vote wins in answer to the question of eradicating hunger. But there is a catalyzing potential: if the result is affirmative, it would be a genuine expression of the wish of most of the people on the planet. It would be a genuine expression of justice and compassion from the human heart. There is no doubt this would give the decision and its consequences a profound ethical component.

Regarding equality, this proposal would give a vote to each person who is qualified to vote according to the standard of each country, in the interest of effectiveness and organizational simplicity. There might be people who would vote for different answers to the question. When voting for the most basic needs of humankind, we believe that it is acceptable to make a decision based on the will of the majority, not on the basis of unanimity.

**2. Decision-Making Capacity**

In this model several critical issues could lead to incapacitating delays during the process of adopting the proposal, and they have been dealt with specifically in another section. They are:

Elections in territories where sovereignty is disputed or where there is war. The weight of countries with large populations in a per-person vote. The situation of the minority when the majority wins. Lack of momentum for the draft resolution. Possible amendments that might water down the text. Opposition of powerful countries.
The draft resolution would be adopted by the UN General Assembly, which is not subject to the veto power of any State. Once the decision is made, it would be a simple question of trying to implement the vote in the different countries, since at that point there would be no further underlying decisions to make. The operational decisions will be worked out by a simple majority vote of the members of the Global Voting Committee.

The process could be affected by the decision of certain member states to not join the initiative, but that would not keep the vote from happening and it would be possible to obtain a high percentage of participation.

3. EFFECTIVENESS
As we can see in other sections, this proposal is formulated to support the effectiveness of other models through greater empowerment and popular commitment, putting pressure on powerful actors, mainly states. We expect the decision to bring attention to the issue of hunger as part of the Sustainable Development Goals, resulting in greater effectiveness in their implementation. Transferring resources from the defense sector would also contribute to global disarmament.

4. RESOURCES AND FINANCING
Not many additional human resources would be needed, since each member state would support the work with its own existing officers and infrastructure.

The Global Voting Committee (as suggested, under the supervision of the UNDP) will determine how to help countries that are not able to organize their elections entirely on their own. More specifically, it will decide, in coordination with available resources at the UN and regional organizations, whether to send support missions and observers to elections.

It is possible to consider a greater volunteer involvement in this global vote than in national or local votes, since it would be an unprecedented and worldwide event. It would be necessary to have the support of the media, social networks, leaders from the world of the arts, sports, the environment, and others.

Financing is undoubtedly a critical aspect. How to persuade a member state to organize an election that costs money? It is not possible to consider a financial commitment by the UN, since that requires a complex process and it would only delay the plan. Opening a channel for donations administered by the Global Voting Committee is feasible but it should not be the only option.

Perhaps the best way to approach the issue would be to show the potential benefits, the resources and the social pressure that would be available to meet the goals. Would the member states invest money if they knew that the vote could start a chain of solutions to issues such as hunger, and perhaps activate political and economic decisions that were never made? Would they take part if other member states did so? What if the whole world agreed to disarmament to achieve this goal?

In countries that might provide resources, the key would be to obtain popular commitment, first to implement the vote, and later to activate the necessary transfer of resources. The more developed member states are involved in the
transfer, the lighter the burden will be for all, which will be an encouragement for others to get involved.

5. TRUST AND INSIGHT
Clearly, the population must have confidence that the process, the implementation and the result will be genuine. One reality we must deal with is that the election mechanisms vary significantly between member states, which have different concepts of transparency. A system that is considered trustworthy in Central Asia could seem antidemocratic or not transparent in Europe. Regardless, member states hold elections on a regular basis and their results are acknowledged beyond their borders.

It is therefore to be expected that requiring more transparency than we currently have would only delay the initiative to an uncertain date. The most practical process would be to move ahead with the structures that each member state currently has and allow a transparent process to develop based on national rules and citizen participation.

As for knowledge of the power structure and the decision-making process, the election systems used would be ones that already exist and are known. The election dynamic would also be relatively easy to explain, since a large part of the world population is familiar with the voting process. In the same way, the question is easy to understand and deals with a topic everyone is familiar with, such as hunger. The only new aspect would be the process of compiling of information by the Global Voting Committee, a task which is intuitively comprehensible and can be made public through official channels and through the web.

6. FLEXIBILITY
The vote would be flexible when it comes to the question put forth, which could be modified, and when it comes to the process of adoption, in which the support of a varying number of member states could be obtained. In each case, the result of the vote would produce a global political impact.

The member states that desire to do so could explore organizing the vote on-line.

7. PROTECTION AGAINST THE ABUSE OF POWER
Since this is a single event, there would not be a risk of systematic abuse. As for the legal aspect of the vote, since this would be an internal issue for each member state, it would not be appropriate in principle to issue an opinion. The Global Voting Committee would have the power to send observers to countries as it considered appropriate, in coordination with the UNDP and regional organizations.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY
In seeking worldwide commitment, it would doubtlessly be natural to allow humanity to decide regarding its future. It is difficult to imagine that those in government would be able to sidestep this expression of will, the decision of millions, and not expect negative consequences. Both aspects of responsibility, that of the voter and that of the person in charge of formal decisions, would be strengthened.
Given that a global vote is not *per se* a solution to the challenges we face as a world community, but a catalyst for change, it will be essential to combine this effort with other solutions that can benefit from this impetus. Many are on the table and need simply to be adopted. Others may not have been presented as they should have been. In any event, there will be pressure from citizens and states, both national and international.

**References**

- Document A/RES/70/1
- Similar, but less far-reaching, was the "My World 2015" initiative, organized by the United Nations. See https://sdg-action.org/
- For the regional programmes see:  
  http://www.fao.org/americas/perspectivas/apoyo-iniciativa/es/ (Latin America and the Caribbean)  
- The latest version of the regulation is contained in document A/520/Rev.18.  
- Some sources to consult on the topic are:  
  http://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/core/crb/crb03  
  http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/p050.pdf  
  http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/corepublicolor_2.pdf  
  https://datos.bancomundial.org/indicador/SP.POP.1564.TO.ZS?view=chart  
  https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/  
- Amendments in the General Assembly are adopted by majority.  
- It is about 1.4 billion people; see http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/energy/ and http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/