The submission proposes a model to fully incorporate risk in the UN through a multi-stakeholder advisory mechanism. This mechanism will be open to nations and NGOs and is to be tasked with gathering information about the most important risks for the future, and estimate existing preferences toward these risks. On the basis of this information the mechanism will make clustered comparisons, provide expert guidelines, and formulate democratic acceptability thresholds regarding the risks. Information about the risks and all outputs will be transmitted through the UN system. Benefits include unifying standards for risks, and constructing robust metrics for improving the accountability of global governance institutions. Transparency through a common mechanism also fosters trust between stakeholders. This would facilitate the creation of a consensus on the degree of acceptable risk.
1. Abstract

The defining challenges of modern times (e.g., financial instability, climate change, nuclear risks, etc.) are ultimately a compendium of hazards with the potential to affect (i.e., risks) many across the world (i.e., global risks). Since the ‘global’ part of this conundrum has been and will continue to be addressed in plenty I will focus here on the other oft-forgotten half: Risk (capitalised when referring to the concept rather than a punctual application). Talking about Risk in the context of global governance is imperative because the concept of ‘Risk’ had not been properly developed when the United Nations (UN) system was created. It should thus come as no surprise that despite commendable efforts in the right direction the UN system’s ability to tackle challenges related to Risk is still limited. Hence, I take this essay as an opportunity to open discussion about punctual alternatives to fully incorporate Risk into global governance. In the near-term, through a mechanism for the inclusion of global risk guidelines into existing global governance frameworks. In the long-term, by putting forth a progressive view of global governance able to redefine itself upon changes and/or the understanding of risks.

To design the mechanism, I begin by exploring how some aspects of the UN system are at odds with the nature of Risk. A particularly important consideration in this regard will be the fact that Risk is at source of both the possibility of success and the possibility of harm. This will be seen to be at root of a rather intricate balance: the need to protect both the right to opportunity (so that individuals are able to take the risks needed to succeed) and the pursuit of solidarity (to manage the collective harms that can arise from any and all risks). This is not an easy balance but it can be achieved by acknowledging that in modern society the management of Risk requires more than calculating the likely impacts and probabilities of any given risk. It also requires of democratically negotiating the oftentimes divergent preferences that lead some people to favour risk taking (i.e., opportunity bias) and others to favour caution (i.e., solidarity bias). The mechanism offered here aims to catalyse said democratic negotiation of divergent risk preferences.

To this end, what the essay proposes is a multi-stakeholder advisory mechanism tasked with (1) gathering technical information about the risks considered most important for the future of modernity, (2) democratically gauging the preferences that exist about said risks, (3) unifying both of these into at least three different outputs (clustered comparisons, expert guidelines, and democratic acceptability thresholds), and (4) transmitting the results across the UN system (which includes engaging with countries to assist those who want to uptake guidelines in a bottom-up approach, and with regional and global forums to foster high-level discussions about potential top-down use of some of the guidelines).

All will be developed in detail in the essay, but it is worth mentioning two considerations already. The first is the fact that the mechanism proposed is one of true multi-stakeholder nature. This means that in addition to countries, the mechanism is suggested with the view of allowing the participation of non-governmental actors—akin to how the most robust programmes of global certification are currently managed. The second consideration is that the multi-stakeholder nature of the mechanism does require a modicum of willingness from within the UN for it to be possible. Despite this need from support, however, since the mechanism itself would be an advisory forum rather than a legislative one, the
actual concessions needed seem viable because current UN members would not need to sacrifice any sovereignty.

The Risk mechanism proposed would bring about substantial near- and even long-term benefits. It would immediately improve the level of information available to those making decisions in fields riddled with Risk, with many subsequent benefits (e.g., ability to highlight deviant practices, increased democratic oversight, less room for non-evidence arguments, etc.). It would also immediately raise costs for those that insist on forcing others to bear the risk being created by them (e.g., make it easier to shame free riders, enable the gradual construction of baselines upon which to base reparation claims, etc). In addition, the three outputs generated could directly serve as guidelines for direct action at many levels. As if this was not enough, overtime, the mechanism could be used to construct robust performance-driven metrics that could lead to better accountability of global governance institutions. And finally, since Risk is a concept that evolves overtime upon changes in our context (e.g., technology, culture, environment, etc.), the mechanism also supports a progressive view of global governance able to constantly re-adapt to the challenges of its time.

Much more would be needed for global governance to become truly progressive, but the importance of a mechanism that would improve our ability to cope with Risk in both the short- and the long-term cannot be understated. Because, as frequently noted by Mr. Szombatfalvy and those related to the Global Challenges Foundation, inflexible global governance condemns humanity to using the tools of the past to solve the problems of the present (and even worse, those of the future). A progressive and Risk-aware approach to global governance is, quite literally, the world’s only hope for sustained prosperity.

2. Description of the model

INTRODUCTION

Today, greatly thanks to the United Nations (UN) system, we can realistically aspire for a world of peace and prosperity; we can fathom Utopia. But what is Utopia? An idea to be realised? A source of hope that seeks to inspire? A map to take us there? I argue ‘all the above’, if it can avoid being hijacked by time. Because change is the greatest challenge that all humans face, individually and collectively. I change overtime. You change overtime. We change overtime. And society, too, changes alongside. No human, and certainly no organisation, not even the UN, can remain affix. For, as frequently noted by Mr. Szombatfalvy and those related to the Global Challenges Foundation, failure to change would condemn us to continue using the tools of yesterday to solve the problems of today (and even worse, those of tomorrow). The result would be, inevitably, failure. Not today, hopefully not tomorrow, but certainly, some day.

The challenge of introducing change into global governance is gigantic though. Many civilisations prior to us have failed to change in time. Can we be exceptional? If so, how? It is impossible to know if we can indeed be exceptional. Only time will tell. But this essay is my humble attempt to try and brainstorm on the matter of ‘how’.

The argument is structured in five short sections. The first section will present the concept of Risk as key to understanding the difference between the world of today
and the post-World War II world in which the UN was created. The second section will address the implications that this puts on global governance, and how these implications can help us designing a robust mechanism to include Risk into global governance. The third section details the areas of responsibility of the mechanism proposed to provide a scalable wireframe that enables the implementation of the operative aspects of the mechanism. A fourth section will address the question of the mandate of the mechanism. This discussion is set apart from the operational wireframe because the mechanism can be rolled out as either parallel to the UN (to function as a sort of check-and-balances) or as a multi-stakeholder mechanism within the UN system (to take advantage of the existing framework). Pros and cons of both alternatives are offered and discussion is encouraged. A final fifth section touches on the short- and long-term benefits that the mechanism would bring about.

It needs to be noted that this is not a final manuscript of any sort but, rather, an imperfect brainstorm that aims to build interest on further discussing the ideas proposed.

1 – RISK AS A FOUNDATIONAL DIFFERENCE

To adapt global governance to the new challenges of our time we first need to understand what has remained affix and what has changed since the UN emerged. Similarities, are plentiful and evident. Although no longer the sole centre of authority [1], states still hold the monopoly of power and their sovereignty remains centre place. Related cultural, political, geopolitical, and ideological disagreements abound and state-controlled military resources guarantee devastation in case of general conflict. These similarities are extremely important still today. As a result, we need to be very clear about the fact that the UN, or some very similar state-driven multilateral forum, continues to be necessary (or at least unavoidable). Ergo, as oppose to replacing it whole, the betterment of global governance requires us to think how to improve the existing foundations (and be careful to not hinder them in the process).

Having dully noted the need for the UN, it also needs to be noted that the world has changed since its creation. There is, in particular, one aspect in which our modern world is significantly different to the one that gave birth to the UN. Many of the most significant modern challenges are known to be tightly linked to considerations of Risk [2]. In fact, society as a whole is at least partially driven by Risk, which means that all opportunities, even those found at a local level, are at once sources of harm, even at a global level [3]. This is not to say that risks did not exist prior to the UN. Humanity has always faced risks, and some even believe that the general level of risk in society has diminished overtime [4]. Moreover, given the explosion that risk management techniques have had in the last couple decades, it is also true that the UN has done an incredible effort to incorporate the concept of Risk into its structure. However, although the idea of Risk did exist prior to the creation of the UN [5], it was not until the second half of the twentieth century that the concept of Risk was properly understood. It would be naive to think that a system developed upon foundations other than a thoroughly defined and well understood concept of Risk can fully incorporate modern risk management techniques without major changes. It should try, indeed. One would also hope that, in doing so, it achieves some results. Ultimately, however, since it was not designed for it, there will be lacks that will limit our ability to cope with Risk.
Inter alia, the biggest lack that exists is the UN’s incapacity to reach a consensus answer for the question of ‘what is the acceptable level of risks that global society should take’. This question about the acceptability or risk is truly difficult to answer. I refer to Beck’s words on the matter for considering them the clearest summation of the difficulties involve [6]:

Where and how does one draw the line between still acceptable and no longer acceptable exposures? How susceptible to compromise are the presupposed standards? Should the possibility of an ecological catastrophe be accepted, for instance, in order to satisfy economic interests? What are necessities, supposed necessities, and necessities that must be changed?

In a nutshell, the question of how much Risk is acceptable will always be controversial. No matter the time. No matter the field. No matter the place. There will always be some who will want to take more risks than others. This does not only make it hard to even agree on a specific level of risk upon which to govern but, in addition, it makes it impossible to reliably work upon any agreed level of risk.

This issue of Risk acceptability is a supremely uncomfortable matter when it comes to UN-style multilateral negotiations. This is because whereas the UN was created upon a very strong agreement on the fact that a third world war was utterly undesirable, there exists no such agreement about many of the risks faced by modernity. Think about climate change and the Paris Agreement, for example. Though successful on its own right, the Paris Agreement evidenced that centralised top-down agreements where all countries sign upon the pursuit of one grand global plan are becoming a thing of the past. Instead, the Paris Agreement builds on a bottom-up approach championed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) after the failure of Copenhagen. This would be a little troublesome in and of itself because it is evidence of the fact that UN-style consensus has become so impossible nowadays that even the UN is being forced to walk away from it. But the UN did manage to achieve some sort of result so it criticism on this aspect would be gratuitous. The UNFCCC does deserve praise for managing what many thought impossible. Having said that, the point made above was not per se about the attainment of some results but about the impossibility to reliably work upon any agreed level of risk. The Paris Agreement was met with a lot of criticism from both ecological groups that decried it as ‘too little’ and anti-environmental ones that decried it as ‘too much’. Ultimately, in the United States the latter group turned out to be sufficiently numerous as to eventually vote for an President willing to withdraw from the agreement. As a whole then, whilst the bottom-up approach did enable the UN to partially overcome the challenge of risk acceptability, the lack of consensus about how much risk is acceptable continues to pervade the result.

With so little room for sustained agreement, the idea of effective multilateral negotiations becomes problematic. At worst, because one could fear it will soon become impossible given how difficult it is becoming to even reach agreements. At best, because one should worry that even if agreements are attained, these agreements are bound to be built upon very fragile foundations.

And yet, what we cannot forget is that the reason the UN was necessary in first place was the need to avoid one of the biggest risks faced by humanity: the risk of globally catastrophic war. If one focuses only on one’s own risk preferences,
sooner or later one will be tempted to want to force others into adopt our preferred, perhaps even ‘scientific’, level of risk (it will always be called scientific, we can be sure of that). But that would be contradictory because it would deny the very purpose of global governance. And it would also be incredibly dangerous because forcing others into arrangements that they do not agree with is the one guaranteed recipe for global conflict. As such, whilst it needs to be clear that current UN-style multilateral negotiation is falling slightly short to the needs of our time, it also needs to be clear that we cannot disdain its contribution by calling for recipes that are antithetical to its purpose. Instead, what we need is to increase the likelihood of agreements being reached and sustained. The question is, of course, how?

2 – RISK AS A DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGE

It is helpful to understand well the nature of the challenge faced before moving unto a wireframe with general applicability. Ideal to this purpose is an example given by Adams [7]: “slipping and falling on the ice... is a game for young children, but a potentially fatal accident for an old person... Because old people see the risk of slipping on an icy road to be high, they take avoiding action, thereby reducing the probability”. It makes sense for old people to reduce the risk of falling on ice. For them, falling on ice is an unacceptable risk. But forcing all young people to act alike due to a desire for solidarity with the old would be outrageous. At the same time, however, whilst very few people would argue against a young person skating in a rink (where are no likely harms to anyone else but him) many would frown upon a young person who decides to skate in a walkway with many old people around (as this could cause them to lose balance). Preliminary, this ice-slipping example seems over simplistic to help us tackle global risks. And in a way, it is. When a young person goes skating to a rink, the old is not forced to bear the risk of falling. But when a government insists on building up their nuclear arsenals, nobody is exempt of the risk of them being used (even accidentally). But the simplicity of the ice-slipping example also illustrates the most basic challenge that we face: that any issue related to Risk requires us to ponder if the opportunities of some warrant endangering the reality of others. Or said in a different manner, it highlights that the underlying question to all Risk challenges is the matter of whether we should favour those who wish to seize an opportunity or if we should instead ask them to renounce it in solidarity to others.

This opportunity/solidarity conundrum underlies all modern global governance challenges. For example, a frequent debate in the energy and environment nexus is the issue of whether some should forego certain sources of energy as an act of solidarity toward others. The ratio of people in one or the other side changes. Sometimes, the ‘some’ are a single country reluctant to reduce its dependency on fossil fuels and the ‘others’ are the rest of world. Other times, the ‘some’ are entire societies that need a hydroelectric dam and the ‘others’ are small communities that do not want to be relocated. Regardless of what the ratio of people on one or the other side is, however, the question will always be whether we should favour the opportunities of some or the solidarity required to protect others.

The authoritarian answer to this opportunity/solidarity conundrum will always be a form of justification. ‘Let us sacrifice X opportunities of the rich; for they have too much money already’. Or ‘let us sacrifice the solidarity toward the rest of the world; because we need Y to develop’. But this authoritarian approach is inherently flawed in our current context because of at least three reasons. Firstly, because one of the greatest risks that we face in modern society is that of failing
to co-exist (i.e., war). It just so happens that co-existence requires of at least acknowledging the preferences of others, which makes it fantastically unrealistic to think that the authoritarian imposition of certain preferences will not ultimately become an unmanageable risk itself. Secondly, because it goes against a view of a democratic society in which every individual has equal value. If individuals do indeed have equal value, no one should see his/her preferences as inherently more valid than those of others. Thirdly, and most importantly, because it negates the dual nature of Risk. Because, as already noted, Risk is at source of both the possibility of success and of the possibility of harm [8]. This means that one cannot succeed without risking harm in one way or another, but also, that the possibility of harm exists no matter how well-intended an action is. Trying to develop by negating either the need for taking risks or the need to manage the possible harms associated with them, goes against everything we know of Risk.

In terms of institutional design, then, what all this tells us is that to even be plausible, Risk-aware global governance needs to depart from two pillars of equal importance:

– *There is no better world without opportunity:* the freedom to seize and capitalise on opportunities is foundational to future global governance.

– *There is no better world without solidarity:* a strong communitarian awareness of Risk is necessary for future global governance to be sustainable.

Because of the nature of Risk, no a-priori rules for favouring either opportunity or solidarity should exist. Not even ideologies. Because although many readers will be very unhappy for my implicit framing of ideologies as a derivative form of authoritarianism, the bottom line is that modern left- or right-leaning approaches to global governance do favour either opportunity or solidarity. Instead, we need to accept that there can be no world of unrestrained opportunity nor one of perfect equality. Individuals need to be free to embrace the opportunities available to them, even if that automatically means that society has to accept the possibility of harms (and yes, even if that will also leave some better off than others). However, if the level of Risk being taken by some overly greedy individuals exceeds the threshold of what can be managed, it becomes irrelevant if the risks taken affect the person(s) taking them or not, are immediate or delayed, direct or indirect, ethical or unethical (and so forth); failure will eventually follow.

It is evident, thus, that the inclusion of Risk into global governance needs to begin through some sort of mechanism that aids the negotiation of often conflicting views of how much risk is acceptable. By this I do not mean a forum where actors come to talk of ways to justify their own risk preferences. Instead, I mean a mechanism that actually embraces the preferences of all as at inherently valuable and only then works upon catalysing agreement.

**3 – THE PARTICULARITIES OF A RISK KERNEL**

In very general terms, there are three main challenges that all risk management efforts face. They need to aggregate information about the risks at hand. They need to unify that information in manners that lead to better strategies. And, finally, they need to communicate their suggestions to the other parts of the system. In our case, the first of these steps needs to be further divided in two as the mechanism in question would need to gather data about risks on one hand but also about
democratic preferences about said risks on the other. Operationally speaking, this can be achieved through a flowchart that divides the activities of the mechanism in four: (1) gathering information about risks considered critical to humanity, (2) gauging the democratic preferences about said risks, (3) unifying these into relevant outputs, and (4) transmitting the results across global governance levels. I address each of these areas of responsibility below.

**Area of responsibility #1 – Cataloguing risks.** Risks can be categorised and prioritised at different levels. The forum that makes this competition possible, for example, periodically publishes a report about ‘Global Catastrophic Risks’ [9] that highlights the greatest risks currently faced by humankind. The World Economic Forum’s ‘Global Risks’ [10] report is another highly influential example. At a general societal level, these types of efforts highlight the risks that are most important to modern affairs, such as, for example, nuclear proliferation and climate change. In addition, these reports also highlight the ability to address Risk at different levels depending on the field being addressed. For example, the aforementioned report about Global Catastrophic Risks notes that the main factors affecting the risk of climate change are the release of greenhouse gases such as carbon and methane, the destruction of ecosystems that store large quantities of carbon, our capacity for global coordination, and the lack of complete knowledge about our vulnerability to climate change. And it is also true that even these factors can be broken down further. For example, the release of greenhouse gases can be broken down into the industries that emit most greenhouse gases. Or into companies. And so forth.

The mechanism’s first area of responsibility should be to choose specific areas of human activity to catalogue the associated risks. Given the many fields that could be addressed and the fact that risks could be catalogued at many different levels, this task can seem daunting. However, there are efforts that already walk on this direction so the challenge is also not insurmountable. Moreover, the very same ability to study risk at different levels also means that the mechanism offers a flexible and scalable framework to work with. Work can begin, for example, in a single field of human activity and then incorporate more fields overtime. It can also begin by an initial exploratory insight into a number of fields and then scale up by adding depth.

**Area of responsibility #2 – Gauging democratic risk preferences.** In very general terms, assessments of risk are typically a combination of two factors that add to a final risk level; the impact and the probability of a particular hazard:

\[
r = \text{Impact} \cdot \text{probability} \quad (1)
\]

Normally, the impact of an event is determined “scientifically”. However, as noted above, the importance that any given Risk is given differs across people. Fortunately, this is easy to solve. A simple modification of equation (1) suffices incorporate the possibility of subjective differences in the way different persons, sectors, countries, or groups, look at risk:

\[
r = \delta \cdot \text{Impact} \cdot \text{probability} \quad , \quad (2)
\]

where ‘\(\delta\)’ is a agent-defined weight.
In this manner, rather than a universal measure of risk, ‘r’ becomes a subjective measure of risk.

Let us return to the ice-slipping example for a preliminary illustration of how the addition of a citizen-defined weigh can aid the governance of risk. For the average young person, the impact of falling on ice is small so, scientifically, the final level of risk is also bound to be small. But there can be young people who do not wish to fall on ice due to a number of subjective reasons (e.g., it can be embarrassing). For them, the impact is higher. Since the actual physical impact of falling is itself calculable by the laws of physics we need to admit that the ‘added’ risk results of subjective differences in the way different young people think about ice-slipping. This difference is possible to be accounted for by equation (2) through \( \delta = 0 \) for people that do not care about slipping on ice, and to \( \delta = R \) (a real number, for example) for people that do. In a nutshell, then, equation 2 accepts that there is some sort of measurable probability and impact, but embraces the fact of there being different ways in which these two considerations can be subjectively interpreted by agents. These differences can be accounted for by changing ‘\( \delta \)’.

Nothing said thus far addresses the issue of how to unify the pieces of information that the mechanism would have gathered so far. That part is about to come. At the moment, however, we are solely interested in gathering the information. This is not only logically necessary for any subsequent efforts of improvement but also represents information that is virtually non-existent at this very point in time and is thus a contribution in and of itself.

**Area of responsibility #3 – unifying standards.** The third action area that the mechanism proposed needs to address is that of making use of the data gathered. In very raw terms, this comes to combining the many different individual risk measures that it gathers. In this sense, a distinct advantage of the mechanism is that the combinatorial possibilities are endless. Preliminarily, for example, three very valuable type of outputs seem to be particularly necessary:

- **Clustered comparisons:** By maintaining and constantly updating a comparison of clusters of risk preferences the mechanism can highlight the actual gaps that exist in between supporters of A or B approach (e.g., ideology, politician, culture, geographical position, and so forth).

- **Aggregated expert guides:** Whilst the idea of imposing specific preferences was noted already to be ill-conceived, it is also true that many people voluntarily seek out for expert opinion. The mechanism could facilitate this by highlighting clusters made from the perspectives of people deemed to be authorities in their fields. It is also possible to offer comparisons between these expert clusters and the strategies of some regions, countries, companies, and so forth.

- **Baselines:** Global governance is in dire need of minimum thresholds/floors that separate what is acceptable from what is not. Instead of using legislation to set these floors this mechanism could use a Boolean intersection (and thereby provide a guideline that specifies the minimum everyone agrees with). It could also use quartile or quintiles to highlight the democratic minimums in any given country, region, or even the entire world (and thereby avoid politicians hijacking the entirety of their electoral results as evidence of support for controversial items in their agenda).
The benefits that these example-outputs can bring about will be addressed later in the essay. In the meanwhile, however, it needs to be noted that the three examples are only intended as illustrative. This essay’s objective is to suggest the overarching framework upon which outputs like these can be drawn. Further ideas can surely derive from further combined thinking. As such, as elaborated later in the essay, the mechanism is suggested as a multi-stakeholder forum to ensure that there is a continuous process of creation, evaluation, and re-evaluation of ideas for improvement.

Area of responsibility #4 – Communicating standards and coordinating action. I refer to this mechanism as an informational kernel because, as a whole, its operation comes down to gather numerous inputs, combining them into easier-to-use packets, and then sharing these with the whole of the global governance system. This is more or less what a computer kernel does, a task so critical in an interconnected system that some computer scientists refer to it as the vertebrae of a computer. The need for better ways to gather, analyse, and transmit risk-related information across global governance is such a critical task that the mechanism suggested seems to be warranted even if it did nothing else but to transmit its findings to other governance bodies.

However, the mechanism can do much more than that. It can, for example, engage directly with states willing to improve their risk management practices. This would thereby improve the odds of seeing further and thoroughly-reliable bottom-up agreements. It can also do the same with other actors such as companies, and even allow the use of the data that it gathers for the betterment of the myriad certification efforts that exist around the globe. Moreover, although the mechanism itself cannot be conceived as binding (this would violate the sovereignty of UN member states), nothing forbids countries, regional forums, and or other global governance institutions from sanctioning some guidelines as best practices.

4 – THE MANDATE OF A RISK KERNEL
It is almost certain that the advisory nature of the mechanism proposed may disappoint those who would like to see more authoritative solutions to the problems faced by humanity. In this sense, the first consideration that I want to make is that the question of whether the mechanism should or not be enforceable is secondary to the question of whether it can or cannot be enforceable. At this point in time, it seems ludicrous to think of an enforceable risk mechanism because one such thing would violate the sovereignty of current UN members. This does not mean that enforceability is not conceivable in the future. As just noted, for example, there are avenues for semi-enforceability through the uptake of rules by states and other global governance forums. Likewise, one can imagine that if consensus emerges overtime, either on specific aspects or on general ones, a later discussion about enforceability may be a worthwhile exercise. But any of these possibilities are external to the questions being addressed in this essay. It could not be otherwise because a Risk mechanism able to enforce its own views of Risk would stop being a provider of information upon which agreement can emanate to become judge, jury and executioner.

An advantage brought about by the fact that the mechanism does not require of enforceability is that we can brainstorm a little about the position that it could/should have in global governance. One can imagine this mechanism as an UN-advisory body similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
(IPCC). But one can also imagine it as a multi-stakeholder initiative where non-governmental actors are given a much larger role than the UN would ever give them.

Both options have advantages and disadvantages. A body hosted by the UN would probably make communication easier, but it would also place the mechanism under institutional constraints that, as noted, were not designed for handling Risk. An external mechanism would help to ensure a minimum level of independence from these constraints. This independence would be a massive leap in global governance because it would establish the very first example of a body able to [partially] serve as the global governance equivalent of the Calvinist/Montesquieuian idea of democratic checks and balances. It would, in addition, pave the way for formally including non-governmental stakeholders into the process of global governance. Given the increasingly important role non-governmental stakeholders have, their formal inclusion seems long overdue.

The idea of an external multi-stakeholder body is theoretically valid. This type of multi-stakeholder collaboration has proven key to the success of prior efforts of bettering global governance. For example, the Forest Stewardship Council’s tripartite governing body were economic, social and environmental stakeholders are giving equal voting rights and decisions are passed with a 2/3 majority [11] was key to its ability to succeed in creating the forestry framework that states failed to create at Rio. The mechanism proposed in here cannot be as independent as the Forest Stewardship Council due to the need to engage directly with global governance forums, but we can learn much about the benefits of good multi-stakeholder governance from it.

Despite its many virtues, however, the downside of an external mechanism parallel to the UN is that getting support for it is likely to be slightly more difficult than if it was proposed as an advisory body. In such manner, what I want to suggest is to explore the extent to which the mechanism can be launched in parallel to the UN and, if unviable, default to a subsidiary body where non-governmental actors are still given meaningful representation.

5 – THE BENEFITS OF A RISK KERNEL
The mechanism suggested would rapidly and significantly improve the level and quality of information available for global governance whilst, at once, increase transaction costs for those who externalise risks unto others. This would happen in a variety of manners.

• The comparisons of clusters of preferences would highlight practices that that deviate far too much from benchmarks in their field, thereby making it easier to spot reckless behaviour and taking away justifications from the actors that pursue said strategies.

• Expert clusters would help catalysing agreement for better practices whilst at once highlighting the actual distributions of expert opinions in different fields. This would avoid problems such as what currently happens in climate change, for example, where a few climate denialists who portray themselves as climatology experts are able to justify their views as equally valid to the combined expertise of thousands of real climate scientists across the world.
The thresholds that derive from establishing Boolean intersections and/or using percentile measures would automatically serve as legitimate governance/regulatory floors. Their existence does not guarantee that nobody in the system will act recklessly (in matter these complex laws would neither) but it does provide the data needed for any posterior claims for reparations. Besides enabling reparations, this possibility would also bring about a strong deterrence effect that can help reducing the level of risks being taken as a whole.

These considerations vest the mechanism with the rare virtue of being a viable way of improving global governance in the near-term. But there is also a long-term benefit that stands out.

Although the specifics of gauging and comparing risks can be complex, the core idea beneath this essay is simple and straightforward. The objective is to include Risk into global governance. This objective conceals an aspiration that is revolutionary; the desire for a progressive global governance able to redefine itself to the challenges of any time. Our understanding of risks, and even our need to even worry about some, changes upon context, technology, and myriad other factors (even our personal tastes). A global governance guided by the idea of Risk would build upon a concept that is inherently fluid. In terms of global governance, this would be a leap in terms of global governance that no single civilisation in human history has been able to conquer. A leap that is also mandatory. Because nothing is permanent. Not you. Not me. Not we. Change is our only hope for sustained progress and prosperity; our only path to Utopia.

CONCLUSION
I want to keep the conclusions short because, to be entirely honest, there is nothing to conclude yet. That was never the purpose of this essay. What I hope instead is to having written in a sufficiently casual and engaging manner to now ask you, the reader, to help me improve these somewhat still primitive ideas so that we can, together, act upon them as one. Gaps, areas of improvement, and, why not, even imperfections, are, thus, implied. Criticise it, deconstruct it, build upon it, take the good and leave the bad, it is up to you. But do bear in mind that the core message is not about the punctual examples given throughout—those are merely necessary to communicate the ideas—but rather about our need to ideate ways to thoroughly include Risk into existing global governance frameworks. For this is part of the change that we need to continue building a world we are proud to call our home without the need for exceptions, excuses, or explanations.

3. Motivation

INTRODUCTION
Risk is sometimes considered to be extraordinarily complex so effort was put into giving an argument that anyone could follow regardless of their background or level of education. The downside of one such thing is that although the essay covered all of criteria required for the present competition, it did so in a relatively unstructured manner. I will take this section as an opportunity to address all the criteria in a more orderly fashion.
CORE VALUES (#1)
The essay directly builds upon a view of human beings as equally valuable. Indeed, the very objective of the mechanism proposed is to give all human beings equal influence upon the governance of global risks. In addition, although the need for individual opportunities requires us to accept that some level of income inequality will always exist, the fact remains that this is considered only one of two pillars of equal importance. The other pillar, that of solidarity, seeks to ensure that no abuses are committed by those who blindly pursue gain at the expense of others. Put together, these two pillars guarantee everyone’s right to opportunity and success whilst at once providing a security net to protect the more disadvantaged. In doing so, they ensure that the mechanism works for the good of all humankind.

DECISION-MAKING CAPACITY (#2) & PROTECTION AGAINST ABUSES OF POWER (#7)
It is feasible to think that some countries would want to meddle with the processes of the mechanism to bias the resulting guidelines in their favour. This can be ameliorated by ensuring that the mechanism is launched with strong independence safeguards. Even then, however, there is room for some intromission through activities such as lobbying or corruption. This would go against the spirit of the mechanism but special interests do seem to always find a way to eschew morality. In such manner, rather than merely labelling it as ‘undesired’ the mechanism aims to limit the influence that any-one group can have upon it through being a true multi-stakeholder forum. Provided all stakeholders are indeed given equal representation, this would ensure that no single actor could have preferential access to the entire organisation, which would lessen the effect of these types of activities.

The very same need for strong independence safeguards and due multi-stakeholder inclusion guarantees that the mechanism cannot overstep its mandate. This is because the information kernel suggested cannot, by definition, impose its views unto other parts of the global governance framework. As such, any further influence would be indirect and upon agreement with nation states. For example, the most controversial possibility when it comes to the potential effect that the mechanism could have unto national bodies is the potential use of its guidelines for the purposes of reparations. Even this, however, would ultimately depend on ruling and enactment by national and/or international courts, bodies that are entirely outside of the control of the mechanism proposed.

EFFECTIVENESS (#3), TRUST, INSIGHT (#5) & ACCOUNTABILITY (#8)
One of the biggest problems with global governance today is that many forums have very ambiguous goals. This allows them to say that they are achieving their goals when in fact nobody really knows if they do anything. In contrast, the mechanism proposed in here is tasked with very well-defined responsibilities and the essay even goes as far as to give examples of very specific outputs. Whilst further brainstorming can lead to better type of outputs, the examples given do make for a very strong departure point because the information that they would provide does not currently exist in the system. Therefore, working upon the assumption that information improves our ability to make decisions, the very existence of the outputs is a categorical improvement.

The exact extent to which these outputs can improve global governance does depend on the ways in which they are put to use. To an extent, the mechanism needs to accept that its ability to control such thing is limited. However, the
mechanism can at least partially adjust the ways in which the outputs are introduced into existing global governance frameworks. Stakeholders could decide, for example, that regular conferences are needed so that global actors get a better grasp of the nuances involved. Alternatively, outputs could be made available through a virtual information centre in order to limit potential biases by limiting face-to-face interaction whilst at once maximise democratic accountability. One can even think on a mixed approach. And the idea of training risk managers to help governments implement the shares of advice they choose to uptake is also possible. There are so many avenues of interaction in fact that the issue of enhancing the impact of the mechanism seems to be more an operational concern than one of design. I have thus tried to keep the argument to the minimal necessary to provide the DNA of a truly adaptable mechanism whilst at once leaving implementation and operationalisation in the hands of the stakeholders who would ultimately be the heart of the mechanism.

Having said that, it does seem that the very assumption of multi-stakeholder involvement automatically guarantees transparency. Firstly, because stakeholders do not necessarily trust each other. Some non-governmental organisations, for example, are very sceptical about the way in which governments make decisions (and vice-versa). Ergo, transparency is needed to maximise the trust amongst stakeholders. Secondly, because many of the stakeholders involved in global governance are required transparency by their own audiences. It is extremely unlikely that multi-stakeholder participation could even be achieved if the mechanism is not committed to similar levels of transparency as the stakeholders that it seeks to include.

This need for transparency is, however, also a challenge because excesses could delay action, which could in turn hinder the effectiveness of the forum. Fortunately, there are already examples that show that multi-stakeholder forums can avoid these vices through well-defined internal governance structures such as, inter alia, clear majority rules, limited deliberation periods to ensure that voting happens, straightforward revision mechanisms.

RESOURCES, FINANCING (#4) & FLEXIBILITY (#6)
The essay does not give an exact quote of how much a mechanism like this is likely to cost. This is not a lack, however. In fact, it is an advantage that results from the mechanism’s flexibility and scalability.

As it was noted in the essay, the mechanism proposed can begin as a relatively experimental initiative in one of two manners. It can focus its efforts in a specific field of human activity (e.g., climate change) and later scale up by adding new fields of human activity. Or it can begin with a more general assessment of a number of fields considered critical for the future of humanity (e.g., those in the reports by the Global Challenges Foundation) and then scale up by adding depth to the analysis. Either of these options could be initially pursued with a relatively small team distributed smartly across the world (to interact with local stakeholders). Naturally, the mechanism could also start more ambitiously provided that there are funds available for one such thing. Regardless, the actual bill for the mechanism is very flexible.

Having noted the above, the undeniable fact is that someone is going to have to pay the bill regardless of the level of resources needed. In this sense, the very
same process of stakeholder engagement can set the basis for ensuring that the human and material resources are distributed equitable amongst those behind the initiative, and, even more importantly, that they are diverse in nature. Diversity, in this context, is a key. The reason being that as it scales up, the mechanism will be dealing with a variety of very different risks that no single person or organisation in this world can fully manage by him/her/itself. In this sense, the mechanism is indeed in need of a multidisciplinary engagement at many different levels. In such manner, the multi-stakeholder nature of the mechanism does not only ensure transparency but also enables the mechanism to have sustained access to the human resources and expertise of its stakeholders.

As a result, rather than thinking on a specific number, the wise approach to the matter of the initial scope of the mechanism is to begin by establishing a feasible level of funding upon exploratory conversations with potential stakeholders and then adjust the size of the mechanism to fit the financial possibilities under which it will have to operate.

References

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- Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity, 29.
- E.g., Ism et al., “Global Catastrophic Risks 2017.”