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Final comment. The question is how global institutions should be governed

Although we can not expect that an international regulatory framework can solve all of these challenges, it is important to see how we can use global cooperation to address climate change, write Björn-Ola Linnér and Roger Pielke Jr.

We are pleased that Szombatfalvy, Wallström and Rockström agree with us that authoritarian approaches must be avoided (DN-debatt 2/10). In times when commentators advocate a “climate Dictator” (Tendens 2/10), it is extremely important that the representatives of Global Challenges Foundation are clear about what they mean by a new political order. In particular, how we should respond to a failed climate policy - which according to them is in part due to politicians focused on re-election, media coverage and a public lulled into a false sense of security and which does not realize its own good. Periodic elections, a free press, and each individual’s inherent dignity and autonomy are the cornerstones of a liberal democracy.

We share several views with debaters, such as that climate policy to date has had meager success and that poor people are most at risk with a changing climate.

We also value the positive role that can be made by global institutions as we have elsewhere pointed out the importance of global cooperation. But the question is not whether we should have global institutions – we do and we should – but rather, we must ask can they be organized and controlled and what is possible politically to agree on.

The example of a successful global institution that Szombatfalvy, Wallström and Rockström provide, is illustrative. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was successful because it was relatively easy for political representatives and industry to accept it, since technological alternatives were either on the market or were on the verge of commercialization. The agreement could be used to accelerate a technology shift that was already on its way. It was also a more limited issue than climate change, which affects so many parts of society.

Climate change, energy and poverty issues are tremendous challenges; there is no miracle cure. Although we can not expect that an international regulatory framework can solve all of these challenges, it is important to see how we can use global cooperation to stimulate the development of a variety of options, both in the short and long term, while at the same time supporting democratic governance.

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