

Shaping an equitable post-COVID world: the role of Global South think tanks

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Opening Plenary

Shaping an equitable post-COVID world: the role of Global South think tanks (Draft Concept Note)

Tuesday November 9, 2021

9 am UTC-5 (New York), 3pm UTC+1 (Paris), 8pm UTC+6 (Dhaka)

Description

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how interconnected and interdependent are the societies around the world. At the same time, serious gaps were seen in the multilateral response. Almost two years into the pandemic, the outlook remains uncertain. While some countries have eased restrictions and are on track to achieving vaccination targets, some remain significantly behind, particularly in Africa. These divergent paths of recovery may have long-lasting impacts, with some nations being able to get back on track, while others risk being left behind. And within countries inequalities may also become even more acute.

Think tanks, with their capacities to inform policy with evidence and to convene diverse actors to sit in the same table, can respond to the crisis by creating opportunities for systemic change. In this context, think tanks from the global South may play a critical role, particularly in ensuring that the recovery measures taken forward at the national and global levels promote equity and inclusion.

This session will provide a framework for subsequent sessions, gathering insights from high-level stakeholders on challenges and opportunities for a rebalancing of power with the help of southern insights. First, it will explore what are the critical areas of policy action if we aim for an equitable recovery. Then, it will delve deeper into the role of think tanks and other knowledge organisations in ensuring responses focus on the needs of the most vulnerable. And finally, it will explore how we should work differently, if we want to ensure we learn from the crisis and build from this experience.

Chair

Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya is a Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD); Chair, Southern Voice network of think-tanks; Member of United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP); Member of Governing Board BRAC International; Non-Resident Fellow, Center for Global Development (CGD). Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to WTO and UN Offices in Geneva; Special Advisor on LDCs to Secretary-General, UNCTAD; Former Executive Director, CPD. Studied in Dhaka, Moscow and Oxford.

Panelists

H.E. Jigmi Yoeser Thinley

H.E. Jigmi Yoeser Thinley served as the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Bhutan from April 2008 until July 2013. Thinley received a Master's degree from The Pennsylvania State University. He served as head of his country's civil service commission, education department and later as Minister of foreign affairs and home affairs. His diplomatic experience includes appointments as Permanent Representative to the UN, New York 1987 and as Permanent Representative in Geneva and Ambassador to several European countries in 1994. He was Prime Minister twice prior to democracy in Bhutan, first from July 1998 to July 1999, and again from August 2003 to August 2004. Thinley is a member of the Club of Madrid, SNV Netherlands Development Organization's International Advisory Board and Chairman of the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Centre in Bhutan. He is a strong advocate of holistic, sustainable development and his country's GNH model that is based on a multidimensional set of indicators. Thinley holds several honorary doctoral degrees and received his country's highest civilian award for public service.

Volker Türk

Volker Türk is Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General. Previously, he served as Assistant High Commissioner for Protection at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. From April 2008 to September 2009 he was Director for Organizational Development and Management. Before that he had several UNHCR assignments in various parts of the world. From 2000 to 2004 he was Chief of the Protection Policy and Legal Advice Section.

Ragnheiður Elín Árnadóttir

Ragnheiður Elín Árnadóttir is Director of OECD Development Centre. Ms. Árnadóttir served as Minister of Industry and Commerce in Iceland from 2013-2017 and was an elected Member of Parliament for the Independence Party from 2007-2016. Before being elected to Parliament, she was successively a political advisor to the Minister of Finance, the Minister

of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister. She also worked for the Trade Council of Iceland both in New York and in Reykjavík.

Yose Rizal Damuri

Yose Rizal Damuri is the Head of the Department of Economics, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia and T20 Indonesia Co-Chair. His research activities focus on international trade, regional integration and globalization of the value chain. He is active in several research and advisory networks both in Indonesia and in East Asia, such as Indonesia Service Dialogue (ISD) and Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT).

Yose also teaches International Economics courses at the Faculty of Economics University of Indonesia. In addition, he occasionally writes in local and national newspapers. He received his Bachelor of Economics from the Faculty of Economics, University of Indonesia. He continued his study at the National Centre for Development Studies, Australian National University (ANU), Canberra and got his Master of Economics of Development (MEcDev). He received his PhD in International Economics from the Graduate Institute of International Studies (HEI), Geneva, Switzerland.