Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute

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Vice-President of World Bank (2003–2006)

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Prime Minister of France (2005–2007), Founder of Villepin International

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President of the Czech Republic

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President of Mali (2012–2013)

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High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations

NOAM CHOMSKY
American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, political commentator

GOODLUCK JONATHAN
President of Nigeria (2010–2015)

STROBE TALBOTT
Brookings Institution, President

DJOOMART OTORBAEV
Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan (2014–2015)

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Secretary General of the Council of Europe (1999–2004); Co-founder of the DOC Research Institute

RHODES FORUM 2018
MAKING MULTILATERALISM WORK: ENHANCING DIALOGUE ON PEACE, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM OF THE FORUM

5-6 October 2018
Rhodes Palace Luxury Convention Resort
Rhodes, Greece

DAY ONE - 5 OCTOBER

08:00 - 09:00  Registration

09:00 - 09:30  WELCOME ADDRESSES

09:30 - 11:00  STRATEGIC PANEL SESSION:
Making Multilateralism Work:
Enhancing Dialogue on Peace,
Security and Development

11:00 - 11:15  Group Photo

11:15 - 12:00  Coffee break

11:15 - 12:00  Press conference

12:00 - 13:30  PANEL 1
The Middle Eastern Paradigm of
Conflict: Only One Solution is
Impossible

13:30 - 15:00  PANEL 4
Dialogue in the Digital Age:
Opportunities, Illusions, and
Realities

13:30 - 15:00  Lunch

15:00 - 16:30  PANEL 2
From Deadlock to Solutions:
Towards a Comprehensive
Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Peace
and Security Order

15:00 - 16:30  PANEL 5
The Cultivation of Humanity as an
Unfinished Project: Dialogue Among
Civilisations

16:30 - 18:00  PANEL 3
Economic Inequality and
Democracy: Are They Compatible?

19:30 - 20:30  Dinner

DAY TWO - 6 OCTOBER

09:00 - 10:30  LEADERS CLUB MEETING
Infrastructure Development in
Emerging Economies to Boost
International Cooperation

10:30 - 12:00  SUMMIT ON AFRICA
Engaging Africa in Dialogue: Towards
a Harmonious Development of the
Continent

12:00 - 13:30  Lunch

13:30 - 15:00  Dinner
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

JOSCHKA FISCHER
Foreign Minister and as Vice Chancellor of Germany (1998 - 2005)

DENIS SNOWER
President of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy

DOMINIQUE DE VILLEPIN
Prime Minister of France (2005 - 2007), Founder of Villepin International

JUSTIN YIFU LIN
Economist and Senior Vice President of the World Bank (2008-2012), Honorary Dean at the National School of Development, Peking University

ESSAM SHARAF
Prime Minister of Egypt (2011–2011)

DAVID GORODYANSKY
CEO & Co-Founder of AnchorFree, Inc
STRATEGIC PANEL SESSION

Making Multilateralism Work:
Enhancing Dialogue on Peace, Security and Development

October 5, 2018 (9:30 – 11:00)

Concept Note

After centuries of collective effort, the world is finally entering an age of multilateralism where dialogue is the most efficient and, perhaps, indispensable way of easing tensions and preventing major conflicts between big powers and civilizations. While it is clear that the global community is calling for an alternative to the current world order, the progress needed to make a truly inclusive multilateral system work is hindered by lingering issues. Protracted conflicts continue to inflict suffering on civilians in many regions of the world, intertwined with new forms of terrorist activity that threaten us all. An unwillingness by many international leaders to cooperate with one another on a variety of issues remains, rather than a focus on shared interests and collaboration. In emerging economies, infrastructure is giving hope for such cooperation, however it is evading certain regions, such as the African continent. Inequality persists in both developed and developing economies and in countries with different types of political regimes, prompting the question of what kind of governance is conducive to sustainable and inclusive development. Rapid technological advancements bring great opportunities, unforeseen in decades past, however this also raises the issue of how to ensure that progress in digitalisation and artificial intelligence coincides with the wellbeing of humanity, rather than threatens it. Finally, over the course of history great thinkers from across the world have tried to define human nature and our relationship to society, nature, spirituality, and ourselves. But there has yet to be a holistic and inclusive framework that can help address current crises and navigate the milieu of norms, drawing upon shared human values to bolster inclusivity and enhance dialogue and cooperation.

The 2018 Rhodes Forum, entitled ‘Making Multilateralism Work: Enhancing Dialogue on Peace, Security, and Development’, will address these issues and more, with a focus on how dialogue can help find sustainable solutions for realising a truly multilateral world. Bringing together leaders from academia, politics, and the business community, the Rhodes Forum continues in the tradition of previous years, with a focus on developing practical policy recommendations through dialogue and cooperation.
PANEL I

The Middle Eastern Paradigm of Conflict:
Only One Solution is Impossible

October 5, 2018 (12:30 – 14:00)

Concept Note

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is witnessing the simultaneous development of several differing conflicts, with a number of external actors involved. In Syria, perhaps the most visible conflict in the region, territorial integrity remains fragile, and a de facto fragmentation of the country has already taken place. Regaining IS-held territory does not equal victory over that organisation. Longer-term solutions are also needed to prevent the emergence of new terrorist groups based on similar ideologies. The dynamics of Shia-Sunni relations, both at regional and national levels are key to many of the conflicts in the MENA region. The development of the ‘Kurdish issue’ continues to raise issues of sovereignty and the principles of building stable inter-ethnic relations within different groups. The international community is struggling with how to respond to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Across the region, foreign actors play central roles ranging from economic support to direct violation of state sovereignty. Panel participants will discuss possible development scenarios and alternatives in MENA countries.

Main points for Panel Discussion

1. What are the red lines for interference in MENA states’ internal affairs?
2. Can external actors cooperate?
3. What is the future for the Kurds in Syria, Turkey, and Iraq?
4. What can be done to prevent the spread of Islamic extremism?
5. Can Shia-Sunni differences be settled through inter-faith dialogue alone?
6. What are prerequisites for a new round of attempts to address the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?
7. What needs to be done to see a consensus governance model develop in Syria capable of leading reconstruction, ensuring stability and effecting sustainable development?
PANEL 2

From Deadlock to Solutions: Towards a Comprehensive Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Peace and Security Order

October 5, 2018 (15:00 – 16:30)

Concept Note

These are turbulent times. As the former German Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier noted: the ‘world is in disarray’. This is symptomatic of a world in rapid transition. However, it is unclear what the transformation will achieve. One fact seems clear: The bipolar order is gone, though core elements of the Cold War are still with us. Today the European space has become one of rivalry, in which Russia and the EU are diverging over vital issues. Russia is part of Europe, both in historic and cultural terms, but remains a separate civilisation. A shift in thinking and fundamental structural changes are needed in order to break this deadlock. A Comprehensive European Security and Peace Architecture is needed that would dismantle the problematic narratives regarding Russia and the West. The aim of this panel is to outline the parameters of an inclusive and cooperative pan-European security architecture, and to explore mechanisms though which further deterioration of relations between Russia and the transatlantic community can be avoided and cooperation enhanced.

Main points for Panel Discussion

1. What are the possible starting points and main obstacles to building a new, more inclusive Euro-Atlantic security system?

2. How do perceptions of security differ in Russia and the West? How can this gap be bridged?

3. How can the OSCE extricate itself from political paralysis and become a platform for effective security dialogue and joint action?

4. What are the prospects for a peaceful resolution to existing conflicts in the OSCE space?

5. What mechanisms can be developed to foster cooperation and avoid escalation between Russia and the West on political and military levels?

6. What are the potentials and limits of NATO-Russia cooperation?
PANEL 3

Economic Inequality and Democracy: Are They Compatible?

October 5, 2018 (16:30 – 18:00)

Concept Note

When income inequality expands, it is often said to be an opportunity for greater redistribution that will, in turn, spark economic growth. Democratic governments could be expected to take steps to mitigate income inequality as voters would benefit from a more equitable distribution of wealth and income. But the reality is often different. Acute income inequality undermines democracy and weakens democratic governments. Economically powerful cliques gain political clout, impeding the passage of reforms that would inevitably reduce their influence. The longer this goes on, the more likely a government is to fail, giving rise to either deep and long-lasting instability, or autocracy. Can we prove these hypotheses?

Main points for Panel Discussion

1. How does inequality impact economic growth? Does it lead to social tension or pressure for redistribution that undermines stimuli for growth?

2. In a totally free market would inequality increase, decrease, or reach an equilibrium?

3. Does democracy lead to lower inequality? What does the example of free healthcare (Communist bloc, and the UK) vs private/ co-pay models show us?

4. Why is progressive taxation rejected at the polls in democratic, but unequal countries? How should progressive taxation work?

5. What is the relationship between democracy and equality?
LEADERS’ CLUB MEETING

Infrastructure Development in Emerging Economies to Boost International Cooperation

October 6, 2018 (09:00 – 10:30)

Concept Note

Global economic uncertainty has dominated the post-crisis decade and sparked the appearance of new approaches and measurements in social and economic development. Banks, industries, governments, and societies all required long-term sustainable development programs. Infrastructure projects and initiatives can support economic growth, create jobs, and reduce inequalities at global and regional levels. However, the development of infrastructure will make a very important impact on economy only if it is a part of comprehensive strategic plan for socio-economic development of the country. Otherwise, valuable resources will be wasted. Digitalisation and global environmental protection form additional dimensions of multifaceted and cross-border infrastructure projects. These initiatives bring together actors from public and private sectors in various countries, and enable them to work together not only for economic goals, but also to implement a new model of international cooperation between cultures, nations and civilisations for common peace and prosperity. The new trends and emerging models of funding, governance, development and maintenance of infrastructure projects will be the focus of this panel session.

Main points for Panel Discussion

1. Infrastructure demands and opportunities in developing countries.
2. Corporate social responsibility and green finance as a part of a sustainable investment in transnational projects.
Concept Note

The African Union’s vision of an ‘integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena’ is far from being realised. The success of this vision is nevertheless in the interests of the whole world, because Africa’s problems are not only regional issues; the terror risks are present across the continent, and beyond it. The international community works with African countries as they face the challenges of security and development. Today Africa appears as the chessboard of multi-faceted power struggles, including not only Western countries, but also Asian powers. This also raises the issue of giving a stronger international voice to a continent with 15 percent of the world’s population in international institutions, such as the UN. Hasn’t the time come for African societies to represent a critical facet of the ‘Global South’ at the international level? The aim of the summit is to identify African countries’ priorities and issues holding back these countries.

Main points for Panel Discussion

1. At the 2018 World Economic Forum in Davos, experts argued that the contribution of manufacturing to economic growth has declined in 75% countries around the world. Given this, what sectors or methods emerging markets turn to in order to maintain growth and ensure a trajectory of sustainable development?

2. Can the West credibly claim to understand the specific needs of Africa’s 55 countries, with their heterogeneous historical, economic, social, and political realities, without trying to impose its own standards and visions?

3. How does China’s involvement in Africa impact local communities, and regional economies?

4. What is the right balance between national, regional, and international development for Africa in the coming decade?

5. Can competition between the West and Asia benefit Africa, or is a more collaborative effort needed?
PANEL 4

Dialogue in the Digital Age: Opportunities, Illusions, and Realities

October 6, 2018 (13:30 – 15:00)

Concept Note

The emergence of new technologies has a strong impact on jobs, how we live, communication, security systems, and ethical standards. The Internet of Things, Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Fintech, and Insurtech all offer opportunities for sustainable growth, and could open up access to resources, information, and knowledge. These developments could have profound implications for economic inequality and society. New technologies not only provide substantial benefits, but also pose risks for societies, particularly when it comes to the impact of AI. Technological advances also threaten to dismantle traditional institutions and governance mechanisms, as was discussed at the WEF this year. Therefore, the international community should unite to establish a legal framework that creates a level playing field for the ethical use of AI and big data. The panel will debate approaches and competing concepts to ensure reasonable and appropriate application of new technologies with participation of key stakeholders.

Main points for Panel Discussion

1. Digital sovereignty technologies and cybersecurity in the era of cyberwars and global insecurity.
2. Debating trust in institutions such as banks, governments, global corporations, charities, and the media in the digital age.
3. Challenges and opportunities of digitalisation for political systems.
4. The advances of Artificial Intelligence and the future of societies.
6. How technological change impacts economic inequality and what can be done to use technology for the common good.
7. Mobile communication: the consequences for concentration, memories, analytical and critical thinking.
PANEL 5

The Cultivation of Humanity as an Unfinished Project: Dialogue Among Civilisations

October 6, 2018 (15:00 – 16:30)

Concept Note

Throughout our history, the need to define and contextualise the self, our selves, and our communities has been fundamental to the development of philosophy, religion, and spirituality. The subjectivity that inevitably accompanies this process reinforces our sense of difference, of boundaries between civilizations. The discourse on dialogue among civilisations primarily manifests itself in four dimensions: self, community (social, political and economic fields), nature, and spirituality. At a practical level, there are pressing issues regarding community cohesiveness, from the family community to the global community. Our relations with the natural world are becoming increasingly acute, as human activity and prosperity threatens fundamental ecosystems that support life on Earth. In this polarised age we see both the seemingly relentless spread of religious fundamentalism and inter-faith conflicts, and a dominant rationalist and materialistic culture that eschews spirituality at both religious and philosophical levels. Only by connecting all four dimensions and exploring holistically the human existential condition can we develop a comprehensive approach to addressing the issues facing humanity. This panel will invite great minds from different traditions to explore and discuss how the dialogue of civilisations can be developed into a school of thought that draws on a plethora of approaches to study human nature, its multiple relationships to the world and how to advance humanity's development.

Main points for Panel Discussion

1. How can ‘dialogue among cultures’ be utilised as a critical element of intercivilisational collaboration?

2. Has “reason” has failed us, has instrumental rationality run wild, leaving no space for humanistic values to grow? How can we suggest a constructive way out?

3. What major concepts shed light on human beings’ constructive relationships with nature?

4. How to create positive correlation among digitalization, Hi-Tech development, and ethics to protect humane in human beings.

5. How can we as individuals develop constructive relationships with others and society?

6. From a dialogical perspective, how can we understand life spaces for humanity and foster a “common community of human destiny?”