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# 2017 Global Go To Think Tank Index Speech

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# 2017 Global Go To Think Tank Index Speech

## **Abstract**

Prepared opening remarks from James G. McGann given as part of the launch of the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Global Go To Think Tank Index Report ([available here](#)).

## **Disciplines**

International and Area Studies | Social and Behavioral Sciences

2017 Global Go To Think Tank Launch  
Think Tanks in an Era of Digital and Political Disruptions

James G. McGann

Welcome and thanks to all of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to participate in today's program.

We are gathered here today to launch the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Global Go To Think Tank Index Report which identifies and indexes the over 7500 think tanks in the world. We will also explore the question, "Why Think Tanks Matter?"

I am pleased to report that over 170 organizations in 100 cities around the world have joined together to host locally produced programs that explore Why Think Tanks Matter in an Era of Digital and Political Disruptions.

Over 60 think tank presidents and senior vice presidents will be participating in the Washington, DC Program including the new presidents of the Brookings Institution, Center for New American Security and the Heritage Foundation. The New York Program will include Former Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd.

While all the programs are locally produced I have asked each organization to make the case for why think tanks matter and how they make a difference in lives of the people in the countries where they operate. I believe think tanks are critically important but to remain relevant and competitive they will need to adapt and transform their strategies, structures and operations. Producing high quality, policy relevant research will remain the central mission of think tanks but they will need to embrace new business models and harness new technologies so they can deliver a range of content offerings and products to a diverse set of target audiences.

The TTCSP's research, rankings and national, regional and global think tank summits and forums are designed to create a global community or alliance of think tanks that can share ideas, best practices and effective strategies for meeting the organizational challenges facing think tanks and the policy challenges facing policymakers and the public.

I want to express my deep gratitude to our 170 partners around the world who are hosting programs today and helping make the global community of think tanks a reality. As many of you know, the TTCSP operates without a full time staff or dedicated budget. In the coming year we hope to secure funding that will enable us to make the Go To Think Tank Index more accessible and user friendly. We are also planning to launch a global effort to help think tanks meet the challenges and opportunities that are presented by the ever changing policy and funding environment.

Finally, I want to call your attention to two issues we are highlighting in this year's Go To Report. One is the sustainability challenge facing think tanks in Africa and other regions of the world and the looming food and water crisis.

In closing I want take a moment to thank my research interns at the University of Pennsylvania and other colleges and universities for their ideas, inspiration and hard work. A special thanks to my colleagues at the Lauder Institute for their help and support over the years.

Thanks once again for participating in this year's program and we look forward to hearing the results of your discussions of Why Think Tanks Matter.

## **TTCSP Quick Facts**

Over 106,000 downloads of the 2016 TTCSP Global Think Tank Index Report from the University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons site alone. The #1 downloaded research paper on the site.

Over 65,000 individuals and institutions are on the TTCSP listserv and now follow the Go To Indexing Process and its findings.

Close to 4,000 individuals participated in the 2017 Global Go To Rankings Process.

170 institutions in every region of the world have agreed to host a Why Think Tanks Matter Event on January 30, 2018 involving 100s of institutions and scholars.

1000s, of think tank scholars and executives have participated in the national, global and regional think tank summits organized by the TTCSP in partnership with think tanks around the world.

### **Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP)**

The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute University of Pennsylvania conducts research on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world. TTCSP was established in 1989. The Program maintains a database and network of over 7,500 think tanks in 181 countries. Often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank,” TTCSP examines the evolving role and character of public policy research organizations. Over the last 29 years, the Program has developed and led a series of global initiatives that have helped bridge the gap between knowledge and policy in critical policy areas such as international peace and security, globalization and governance, international economics, environmental issues, information and society, poverty alleviation, and healthcare/global health.

These international collaborative efforts are designed to establish regional and international networks of policy institutes and communities that improve policy making while strengthening democratic institutions and civil societies around the world. TTCSP works with leading scholars and practitioners from think tanks and universities in a variety of collaborative efforts and programs. TTCSP produces the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index that ranks the world’s leading think tanks in a variety of categories. This is achieved with the help of a panel of over 4000 peer institutions and experts from the print and electronic media, academia, public and private donor institutions, and governments around the world. TTCSP has strong relationships with leading think tanks around the world and its annual Think Tank Index is used by academics, journalists, donors and the public to locate and connect with the leading centers of public policy research around the world. TTCSP’s goal is to increase the profile, capacity and performance of think tanks and raise the public awareness of the important role think tanks play in governments and civil societies around the globe.

Since its inception in 1989, the TTCSP has focused on collecting data and conducting research on think tank trends and the role think tanks play as civil society actors in the policymaking process. In 2007 the TTCSP developed and launched the global index of think tanks which is designed to identify and recognize centers of excellence in all the major areas of public policy research in every region of the world. To date TTCSP has provided technical assistance and capacity building programs in 94 countries. The TTCSP is now working to create regional and global networks of think tanks in an effort to facilitate collaboration and the production of a modest yet achievable set of global public goods. Our goal is to create lasting institutional and state-level partnerships by

engaging and mobilizing think tanks that have demonstrated their ability to produce high quality policy research and shape popular and elite opinion and actions for public good.

