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2016 Global Think Tank Summit: Responding to Globalization and Its Discontents: The Role of Think Tanks

James G. McGann

University of Pennsylvania, jmcgann@wharton.upenn.edu

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All requests, questions, and comments should be directed to:
James G. McGann, Ph.D. Senior Lecturer, International Studies Director Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program The Lauder Institute University of Pennsylvania Telephone: (215) 746-2928 Email: jmcgann@wharton.upenn.edu

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2016 Global Think Tank Summit: Responding to Globalization and Its Discontents: The Role of Think Tanks

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GLOBAL THINK TANK SUMMIT III

2016 SUMMIT REPORT

RESPONDING TO GLOBALIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS: THE ROLE OF THINK TANKS

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RESPONDING TO GLOBALIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS:
THE ROLE OF THINK TANKS
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INTRODUCTION

The 2016 Global Think Tank Summit brought together nearly 100 leaders from 85 think tanks across 50 countries to discuss the challenges facing think tanks.

The conference proceeded under the Chatham House Rule in order to encourage free and productive discussion. Accordingly, this report does not attribute remarks to individual participants but summarizes the conference's themes, ideas and main conclusions.

The report details the discussion of major themes:
• changing operating environment due to discontent with existing social, political and economic outcomes of globalization; and
• understanding and responding to the rise of populism, nationalism, nativism and protectionism around the world.

Additionally, the conference addressed the four thematic challenges of think tank governance and management in this operating environment:
• best practices for raising funds;
• recruiting key staff;
• harnessing new and innovative technologies to effectively engage policy makers and the public as a response to increased public scrutiny and discontent; and,
• ensuring quality, independence and integrity.

PLENARY SESSIONS

In the opening sessions, speakers and participants identified major changes that think tanks are facing, highlighting how the current forces of globalization have changed the operating environments in which think tanks bring knowledge to bear on policy and practice. The process of globalization has led to at least two changes immediately affecting think tanks: first, the expression of public discontent with the outcomes of globalization itself, and thus pushback against the typically pro-globalization policies of think tanks; and second, a lack of trust in institutions, and an accompanying sense of injustice, because of the decentralization of information.

OPENING PLENARY SESSION: THE RISE OF POPULISM, NATIVISM AND PROTECTIONISM AND THEIR IMPACTS ON POLITICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

A central theme of the opening session was the growing evidence of discontent in civil societies around the world because of the perceived uneven distribution of the costs and benefits of globalization, and the rise of protectionism and nativism in response.

The forces of globalization continue to contribute to a more complex global governance policy space, characterized by more actors, greater exchange of ideas and greater linkage between issues such as immigration, economics and security. However, these processes and outcomes of globalization are increasingly countered by discontent taking the form of nationalism, nativism and protectionism that has manifested at every level of political and social organization — regionally, nationally and globally. Summit participants gathered to discuss how think tanks, which generally advocate pro-globalization policies, might address or respond to these frustrations that increasingly take the form of anti-immigration policies, nativism and economic protectionism.

Symptoms of Discontent and Institutional Distrust

The panel spoke of the “Trump phenomenon” as a tangible example of the political and social responses to globalization cropping up in countries throughout the world, and emphasized that this unexpected rise of populism was neither an isolated incident nor particular to the United States but a global phenomenon. Framing the summit in terms of unprecedented and radical populism underscored the important roles that policy
makers and think tanks play now and will in the future as they continue their conversation about their role in shaping policy.

There was general agreement on the link between public lack of trust in government and global governance institutions, or “elites,” and the discontent with globalization. One panellist noted that understanding popular discontent and addressing its symptoms and consequences will require a nuanced understanding of globalization as experienced in the developing world, which has a perspective distinct from the developed world.

The participants recognized that think tanks share in the lack of public trust that other government and policy institutions currently face and identified it as part of the greater trend of a deepening cleavage between elite and public thinking. Although this public distrust represents a challenge stemming from global discontent, many participants chose to view it as a positive opportunity for think tanks to re-evaluate and redesign their model of public engagement and communication moving forward.

Participants noted that the cleavage between elite and public thinking rests on a gap in understanding or belief about which issues are pressing or important. While think tanks and policy makers have generally focused on the big-picture nature of policy solutions, the public addresses these issues based on their immediate experience and the issues’ impact on their jobs or security.

The ongoing democratization of information made possible by the advent of the Internet, 24-hour news, social media and alternative news platforms continues to challenge the model of communication and information dissemination by which think tanks have traditionally exercised their expertise. The changing media models have compounded this distrust, as a public with open access to information has become increasingly dissatisfied with the traditional concept of experts controlling a one-directional flow of information. The evolution of information consumption and dissemination has effectively overturned this one-direction model of communication in favour of a two-way, information-abundant environment characterized by decentralization of institutional power and a public no longer persuaded by the authority of institutional expertise alone. In the context of this growing institutional distrust among the public, participants discussed the way forward for think tanks to engage the public.

Discussing the impact of the globalization of diminishing institutional trust and the democratization of information highlighted the need for think tanks to adapt to their new environment and contemporary communication methods. Participants discussed the need for information dissemination to evolve both in terms of style and target audience. Participants were firm in their conviction that effective communication and public engagement are think tanks’ best central response to growing nationalism and anti-globalization sentiments. The panel insightfully concluded that dismissing nativists, protectionists or nationalists as products of populist leaders or misinformation reflects a failure to take a holistic view of society and imposes a value judgment on segments of society. For think tanks to remain effective as institutions of public policy, they must actively bridge the gap between the experts and the public, adopting the processes of outreach and the language of engagement to disseminate information into the general knowledge pool and to link complex issues to the immediate concerns of the public.

Discontent with globalization is changing the policy-making space and for think tanks to remain relevant, they must engage with the public, which holds an increasingly powerful role in the information distribution and policy-making process. A key conclusion of this session was that to remain relevant as institutions, think tanks must remain actively in tune with the interests and concerns of the public, because only then can they be relevant to information consumers — and the people who are going to fund their research, which remains a practical concern for relevance.
PLENARY SESSION II: RESPONDING TO GLOBALIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THINK TANKS, POLITICS AND THE PUBLIC

Panellists and participants sought to identify concrete and actionable responses to their changing operating environments. The failure of most think tanks and policy experts to anticipate the success of Donald Trump in the 2016 US presidential election or to predict the forces driving the Brexit vote reflected a failure to predict the momentum of the populist movements fuelled by discontent. This failure indicated a need to reassess the model of operations or strategies think tanks apply in terms of research and information dissemination, and panellists and participants both spoke to a variety of practical changes and concerns they faced.

A central theme of the session was finding the balance between institutional mandates and the growing drive to engage a wider audience. Participants noted that spending resources on additional channels of communication, such as social media platforms, could potentially shift the strategy too far away from their central mission of targeting elites seeking policy analysis and recommendations. Although widening their audience could address the question of public engagement, it forces think tanks to consider whether information dissemination is only a means to an end, namely, greater visibility, or whether it should be an objective of the institution itself.

Model of Communication

The participants discussed practical means of bridging the gap between think tanks and the public as a shift from a model of policy making by “insiders” or elites to a model where wider communication reflected the reality of wider participation in governance. Participants discussed how the language and terminology they used in their outputs could show that think tanks and policy makers are not part of an isolated elite or government model that speaks only one language or caters to one demographic, but instead leaders capable of communicating with a myriad of communities, in a myriad of languages and, consequently, on a myriad of issues. Thus, the session sought to identify the strategic changes that could contribute to stronger networks. Investing resources in new models of communication was generally agreed to be an effective strategy for bridging the distance between the public and institutions. One participant noted that while think tanks were seeking to expand their audiences, that aim did not necessarily suggest they should distance themselves from the “elite” identity, because that identity was a result of the very expertise and knowledge they had developed and sought to share. Rather than trying to maximize their social media presence, think tanks should instead find and engage the networks of people interested in the issues and the information think tanks can provide.

The final conclusion of the session was that any evolution in strategy will require new institutional or organizational capacity, such as administrative personnel and communication professionals who can help the researchers and experts maximize the effectiveness of their outreach. Ultimately, if the expertise of think tanks or the ideas they generate are not accessible to an increasingly vocal and active public, these institutions will no longer be relevant to the policy-making process. Reconciling the tension between creating content and communicating quality content when the demand for information flow is constant forces think tanks to design multi-faceted strategies for identifying and communicating with their target audiences.
PLENARY SESSION III: USING TECHNOLOGY AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS TO EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE POLICY MAKERS AND THE PUBLIC

Contemporary news platforms have created a new environment of information abundance and diverse media content that represents a significant departure from the traditionally controlled production and distribution of information that gave institutions like think tanks authority in the past. The changing methods of information production and distribution mean that mixed-media companies other than think tanks are effectively engaging both the public and policy makers on a range of issues, forcing think tanks to consider how they will harness new technology to remain relevant and effective in the competitive new media ecosystem.

Keeping the institutional mandate was central to the discussion of adopting new technology for maximum effectiveness. The general consensus was to be wary of attempting to replicate mass media organizations and to focus on creating innovative, in-depth content specific to the institution's target audience. One participant specifically called for think tanks to perform the exercise of "calling your shots," that is, to articulate precisely what the goal is and how to achieve it. Achieving precision in dissemination and a finely tuned media strategy is an exercise in calibration that will maximize think tanks' resources and is viable precisely because of the intellectual rigour and credibility that think tanks bring to their research. Rather than competing with mass media or shifting institutional resources to provide general knowledge pieces or justify policy decisions to the public, think tanks can encourage strategic partnerships with journalism platforms and universities to best leverage the comparative advantages of each group.

A participant shared how their organization was able to maximize the resources concentrated on research by piggybacking on the infrastructure of other institutions to disseminate information, but highlighted that because organizations can have competing or alternative agendas, think tanks need to ensure their intended message remains true to their institutional mission, regardless of the method of dissemination. One participant from a think tank operating adjacent to intelligence and security community issues noted that, despite the mainstream shift to digital technologies, within their organization there was still significant emphasis and preference for traditional conferences and gatherings over digital communication. Developing different strategies for different content and for engaging different audiences is part of the challenge and opportunity presented by new technologies, and developments in mass media organizations can aid think tanks in the development of their own communication and information technology practices.

Strategically harnessing new technology and establishing symbiotic partnerships with new media platforms to direct the general audience to think tank experts can help think tanks engage a wider audience and attract potential donors to support further research. A central question of the session was whether the new media ecosystem and new methods of operation and mass communication were compatible with traditional methods of information dissemination, or whether the digital evolution was, in fact, a zero-sum game. The discussion of possible new practices and strategies additionally highlighted a need for a new set of skills in think tank management and experts alike, so that they could be equally prepared and geared toward creating and disseminating their research projects.

The central conclusion was a call for each organization to identify its comparative strengths and weaknesses, and to take advantage of its partnerships with other organizations to meet its institutional mandate.
PLENARY SESSION IV:
THE NEED FOR THINK TANKS TO INNOVATE: CATALYSTS FOR IDEAS, INNOVATION AND ACTION

The increasingly abundant information environment and the shortage of core funding support for think tanks have increased pressure on institutions to produce content, programs and policy analyses that are both innovative and relevant to potential funders and the public. The summit was an opportunity for participants to discuss some concrete practices and actionable policies that think tanks have implemented in response to these pressures in the context of growing competition. The panellists discussed the categories and ways in which think tanks can tangibly improve their performance and the challenges associated with articulating precisely what innovating and improving in this changing environment means. One panellist mentioned the growing demands on think tanks in terms of the sheer range of issues they are expected to engage in. Additionally, each partnership with a different public or private organization presents its own set of challenges and unique conditions and requirements — another reflection of the increasing need for flexibility and greater organizational and structural capacity.

The range and diversity of strengths and weaknesses among the think tanks represented in the session facilitated productive discussion on the practical steps that think tanks can take to provide support to one another. A participant from a small think tank called for older and more established organizations to share the organizational and management lessons of their experience with growing think tanks, citing the benefit of mutual growth and interdependence.

In addition to discussing innovation in external policies and processes, participants considered how changes in internal practices could contribute to improved effectiveness. A central theme continued to be the nature of the relationship between think tanks and the media — specifically, whether or not think tanks should adopt policies encouraging experts to pursue additional methods of public engagement outside of their institutions. The range of options available to think tanks seeking to widen their audience or increase range of output created opportunity for innovation within the organizations themselves, particularly in terms of fostering creative development and communications teams specially equipped to facilitate publication and maximize effectiveness of output. A participant noted that effective communication and coordination among think tanks’ experts and staff can facilitate the dissemination of research to the target audience and thus increase the impact of work. This situation creates an opportunity for management and administrative personnel to play an increased role at their institutions, and thus reveals the importance of engaging management and board members who have the ability to support or realize changes necessary for these structural and organizational shifts.

PLENARY SESSION V:
CLOSING PANEL

In this final session, participants considered the many perspectives, issues and ideas discussed during the three days of the summit, to generate conclusions and recommendations, as summarized later in this report.

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada

“The Power of Inclusion”

The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada, detailed the power of globalization as a positive force for international cooperation in a keynote address aptly titled “The Power of Inclusion.” The speech called on think tanks to remain at the helm of intellectual exchange that advocates for and embodies the values of globalization. The speech pushed back against growing movements of nativism, nationalism and protectionism around the world as intolerant and counterproductive to both national and international stability. The speech touched on the strong practice of inclusion in Canada and emphasized the importance of immigration as the
keystone of a diverse society. The speech reflected a firm commitment to the economic, social and political inclusion central to a harmonious and prosperous society, and called on the think tank community to reflect on its role in responding to the divisive policies and values represented by anti-globalization and populist movements.

Gillian Tett, US Managing Editor, Financial Times

“A Post-truth World? The Crisis of Trust and Democracy Today”

This keynote address by Gillian Tett examined the factors contributing to the dramatic rise and popularity of populist leaders, as exemplified by Donald Trump’s ascension in the 2016 US presidential election. The speech touched on the democratization of information and access to various social media platforms as key elements to understanding how issue-based voters were able to self-select their sources of information and rally together into “tribes.” The discontent with the status quo and lack of trust in government institutions and policy experts combined to create an unpredictable and untrusting electorate, more likely to vote based on the recommendations of their immediate experiences and peers than on the judgment of experts. The speech called on think tanks to challenge tribalism and populism by rebuilding the credibility of institutions and experts in the eyes of a skeptical and disengaged public.

Nicolas Véron, Senior Fellow, Bruegel, and Visiting Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics

“Standing Up for the Power of Ideas”

Nicolas Véron made a compelling case for the power of ideas in a modern political economy beset by narratives that are becoming increasingly driven by emotion. It is clear that the Brexit vote, as with the rise of Donald Trump in the Republican primaries, showed a shifting political reality. In this context, Véron noted that certain policy proposals being advanced may have major future economic implications, without — at least seemingly — being fully thought through. As the global political landscape shifts, ideas, credible research and thoughtful analysis will be more important than ever.

Anu Madgavkar, Partner, McKinsey Global Institute (Mumbai)


The summit’s final keynote presentation, by Anu Madgavkar of the McKinsey Global Institute, provided an opportunity to discuss how the processes and outcomes of globalization have produced a generation frustrated and discontent with the status quo. The presentation emphasized that discontent reflects attitudes about the perceived failure of global governance structures to deliver on the promises of globalization, as well as the gap between expectations and outcomes in terms of economic progress and development. The session underscored the recurring theme of pessimism surrounding globalization, specifically in developing countries, where individual expectations have continued to rise, outpacing economic progress, which has stagnated, relative to only a generation ago.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

On the second day of the summit, attendees had the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions discussing policy challenges and organizational challenges that think tanks face in the context of globalization and growing public scrutiny:

- The policy challenges included economic protectionism and free trade, immigration and the European refugee crisis, populism in the context of economic inequality and populism as a challenge to traditional global governance structures.

- The organizational challenges sessions focused on the quality, independence and integrity of think tank research; how think tank research can evolve alongside technological changes and big data; the
challenges associated with public scrutiny; and the best practices for recruiting and retaining think tank scholars and executives.

Each breakout session provided a smaller forum for discussing the major themes of the summit, as well as for identifying actionable solutions and policy recommendations.

**BREAKOUT SESSION ONE**

**Group I: Free Trade, Dead or Alive? Economic Nationalism vs. Economic Internationalism**

This session sought to address the growing tension between the competing forces of global integration and the rising tide of economic nationalism. Post-World War II, a dominant narrative emerged that drove global integration in both security and economic spheres. Through this process, global institutions emerged that have formed a dominant part of the global governance landscape for the past 60 years. The value of this paradigm and the institutions that it created, particularly in relation to international trade and economic integration, is now being questioned at a fundamental level. The most glaring example is the Brexit vote — which has taken apart a portion of the European Union — but there are others joining it in what participants noted as a growing trend.

**Group II: Waves, Walls and Workable Solutions: Meeting the Challenge Posed by the Refugee and Migration Crisis**

The session began with a discussion of the current refugee crisis in Europe and examined how skepticism in Europe regarding the ability of the state to manage the crisis has fuelled populist movements in several countries across the continent. The participants discussed the parallel between the populist response to the refugee crisis in Europe and the rise of Donald Trump in the United States as a response to the perceived or imagined threat of illegal immigrants, and noted that walls were not just hypothetical rhetoric but had actually been erected in Europe. The discussion further expanded to include a South American perspective, which emphasized immigration as a predominantly male phenomenon in South America.

The participants developed several questions they felt would help further explore the relationship between migration and the rise of populist leaders, which would contribute to a roadmap to use in addressing or solving this issue:

- Are migration and globalization inseparable issues?
- Are the movements of populations an inevitable part of globalization, or a product of specific conditions coinciding with the processes of globalization?
- How can we reconcile the notion of a contemporary welfare state with increasing labour movement?
- As academics and decision makers, do we lack adequate categories to address or speak about the situation facing?

The participants specifically mentioned the overlapping or indistinct language generally used to discuss the issue and the possible implications that the blending of terminology (such as migrants, refugees and immigrants) had on the discussion of the issue in the popular narrative.

The session noted that a central challenge when addressing the challenges of migration is the largely informal nature of regional migration, making it difficult to develop a basic blueprint response to the various conditions and regions in which it occurs. The general consensus was that to be effective, any response to migration and refugee crises is necessarily regional, as the burden of an effective solution cannot be shouldered by individual states. Participants noted the role think tanks could play in developing possible policy solutions and facilitating regional cooperation and partnerships between states impacted by migration.

**Group III: If You Aren’t Part of the Solution, You Are Part of the Problem: Why Quality, Independence and Integrity Matter**

Think tanks have met the growing levels of public scrutiny of and skepticism about institutions, generally,
and think tanks, specifically, with a renewed focus on the importance of ensuring and demonstrating the integrity and quality of their work. The panellists discussed possible policies and practices to adopt that could preemptively prepare institutions for assaults on the integrity of their research or policy recommendations. A panellist noted that public skepticism often stems from the belief that money or funding equals influence, forcing think tanks to publicly prove or demonstrate their independence. The importance to the public of independence from external influence was a running theme throughout the session, and the discussion centred on the actionable policies and key initiatives that could help think tanks ensure institutional legitimacy.

The consensus was that while think tanks might benefit merely from having in place the policies that ensure independence, integrity and quality, publishing or sharing these existing policies would go a long way to establishing trust and credibility with the public. Think tanks must consider the degree of transparency they are willing to adopt and the steps they can take to publicly declare reduced dependence on funders. Participants concluded that preserving integrity and navigating relationships with donors to ensure independence were central steps to ensuring institutional longevity and surviving public scrutiny. The panel emphasized that quality of research will never be able to compensate for compromised integrity and thus framed maximum transparency as a given standard or norm. Think tanks that do their utmost to provide the public with information about their policies and processes, and that set clear expectations for donors and funders, can bridge the crucial gap in trust between institutions and the public. Pursuing the three standards of quality, independence and integrity is an effective way for think tanks to alleviate public skepticism and participate in the policy-making process with legitimacy and effectiveness.

**Group IV: Big Ideas, Big Data and Small Tweets: Think Tanks, Technology and Policy Advice**

The big data and technology session was oriented around the potential uses and challenges associated with large data sets, particularly the technical logistics of processing big data within a think tank. One of the key points made by the chair was the need for tools, including in-house training and technical know-how, to help researchers overcome their reluctance to work with big data. This point opened the discussion to developing programs that would target certain staff and experts for training in how to manage big data and use it as an asset when developing research and engaging with audiences. The session highlighted the possibilities that big data presents to future research and the importance of mitigating reluctance or fear of working with it.

**BREAKOUT SESSION TWO**

**Group I: Economic Inequality and the Rip Currents of National, Regional and Global Globalism Populism**

This session focused on the relationship between globalization, economic inequality and the largely unanticipated rise of populism in countries across the world. The co-chairs opened the session by highlighting that while the traditional thesis argues populism is the result of inequality caused by globalization, think tanks pursuing research exploring this relationship have largely disproved it. Given the inadequacy of the traditional thesis, what other factors or explanations might account for the rapid growth and formidable strength of the populist movement? The panellists emphasized that the current rise of populism is a reflection of increasingly negative attitudes regarding the future and people's growing discontent because their concept or vision of a just society is being violated by the status quo. Thus, it is the sense of injustice or relative inequality rather than the absolute material conditions or income level of the people that is the source of discontent.

An additional point raised by the session was a tendency when discussing populism to put too many issues into a single box labelled with the abstract term of “populism.” Think tanks and experts seeking to understand and develop policies that counter populism should focus on the variations within populist movements. Attendees agreed that populism was being harnessed by political candidates as a method of mobilizing people and did not represent legitimate policy options or solutions.
for the problems of society. Additionally, the discussion 
emphasized that many people voting for populist parties 
are not actually voting in support of those parties 
but in protest against established parties and leaders. 
The session acknowledged that this protest vote was 
essentially against the status quo in government and the 
policy-making community and thereby included the 
think tank community. Participants concluded that the 
populist movement was fundamentally a challenge to the 
status quo and called on think tanks to challenge their 
conceptions of how society and policy making should be 
organized moving forward.

**Group II: Does Populism Signal the End of 
Global Governance and Intergovernmental 
Organizations, or a New Beginning?**

The populism movement and accompanying rise 
of nativism, nationalism and protectionism have 
challenged the stability of existing global governance 
structures and the balance of power embodied in 
global intergovernmental organizations. In this session 
participants assessed the events that have exposed the 
weaknesses in global governance structures and discussed 
possibilities for reform that would preserve institutions 
while resolving the aforementioned flaws and frustrations. 
The session opened with a review of the failure of several 
previous reform efforts in both regional and global 
governance structures, and emphasized the democracy 
deficit within the global governance structure itself 
as a primary and persistent source of discontent with 
globalization.

The participants discussed possible solutions or reforms 
that would make intergovernmental institutions more 
effective at fulfilling their mandates and created an 
opportunity for a critique of the problem from the 
perspectives of both the Global North and South. One 
participant held up the Brexit vote as an example of the 
changing balance of global power and called for the 
countries of the Global South to play a greater role in the 
emergence of new structures that would allow for stronger 
regional partnerships. Think tanks have traditionally 
engaged in the critique of individual institutions and 
structures of global governance and could now play a 
greater role in developing a coherent vision of the global 
governance system itself. The discontent with the status 
quo represents an opportunity for think tanks to develop 
a “big think” or collaborative vision of what the future 
global architecture should look like if it is to avoid the 
i ssues of the past.

**Group III: Transforming Policies and 
Perceptions in the Face of Increased Public 
Scrutiny**

This smaller session adopted a round-table format to 
discuss the impact of public scrutiny in an environment 
of increased information, increased expectations and 
increased discontent with globalization and the status quo. 
The session provided an opportunity for participants to 
describe their immediate experiences with public scrutiny 
and their initiatives for productive engagement with the 
public. A general concern articulated by the panel was the 
potential for skepticism and public scrutiny to become 
embedded within an anti-establishment movement, and 
participants agreed that think tanks seeking to positively 
impact public policy could not afford to be part of the 
mainstream public distrust movement. A positive note 
emphasized that public scrutiny is so high because the 
work of think tanks and policy experts can have a direct 
and immediate consequence on people’s lives, thus 
inviting a heightened degree of rigour or ethics.

A participant suggested that such high levels of public 
scrutiny require pre-emptive transparency and active 
efforts to maintain a broad base of funding and support, 
and to prevent external influence by using internal 
safeguards on conflict of interest. Think tanks must 
integrate transparency into their operations and processes 
while maintaining the highest quality of work, and must 
be as transparent in terms of the policies and ethics 
of research as they are on the question of funding and 
donors. Think tanks can continue to improve by sharing 
best practices and remaining accountable to one another. 
The session raised key questions:

- Is there legitimacy to the claim that the more 
diversified the funding base, the more independent 
or balanced the institution’s output and policy 
recommendations?
- Is the issue of public scrutiny potentially overstated, or 
are think tanks truly losing credibility on such a large 
scale?
Responses to these questions were inconclusive, with participants determining that it was better to adopt policies that safeguard against speculative scrutiny than to risk integrity or public trust.

**Group IV: Best Practices for Recruiting and Retaining Think Tank Scholars and Executives**

The session on best practices for recruiting think tank scholars and executives provided an opportunity to discuss the importance of the individuals who represent the human element of these institutions. The panel discussed that the core strength of each institution is the cumulative sum of the people working there, which implies that a core force for realizing impact is the ability to recruit and retain the best talent. The panel discussed environment as a major factor in recruiting and retaining staff and experts, and that beyond the financial incentive of working at the institution, it was important to provide an attractive work culture, atmosphere and room for growth within the organization. Creating an organization where hires have room for growth and where work is experienced as training for eventual mobility was cited as central to successfully retaining productive and satisfied scholars and staff. A participant noted that facilitating partnerships between younger and more experienced researchers was an important aspect of cultivating motivation and growth within the organization. Think tanks can develop policies and practices that motivate and encourage researchers and staff to do their best work, thus contributing to the effectiveness and success of not only those individuals but also the institution itself.

**CONCLUSIONS**

As the traditional environment in which think tanks operate shifts, due in part to the unexpected rise of populism and the public’s growing distrust of “elitist” thinking, this year’s summit provided an opportunity to re-examine the role think tanks play in shaping policy.

Across the sessions, participants considered the challenges for think tanks in the context of these growing nationalistic and anti-globalization sentiments and recognized that the discontent with the status quo represents an opportunity for think tanks to develop a collaborative vision of the future global architecture. An area of key focus for action was the improvement of think tank governance and management. Participants agreed that effective communication and public engagement were the central response that think tanks should embrace to address institutional distrust among the public. More specifically, they must balance efforts to harness agile and audience-specific communications methods to link complex issues to the immediate concerns of the public — while also appealing to future donors — with the need to ensure independence, transparency and integrity.

The 2016 Global Think Tank Summit provided a constructive forum for colleagues to share examples and best practices that aim to bridge the gap between knowledge, policy and current public thinking. The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) looks forward to future discussions on successful engagement in this new operating environment through the ongoing support of the think tank community.

**RECOMMENDATIONS (ACTIONABLE LIST)**

Find practical steps that think tanks in the network can take to provide support to one another through:

**Governance and Management**
- Highlight internal best practices that have contributed to innovative thinking and action within the organization and led to increased effectiveness. In addition, have more established organizations share management lessons with maturing think tanks.
- Share concrete practices and actionable policies that have been implemented in response to the pressures to remain relevant to future donors and the public in the context of growing competition.

**Communication and Public Engagement**
- Share successes in the use and adaptation of new technologies for maximum effectiveness.
- Highlight effective partnerships with journalism platforms and universities.
**APPENDIX 1: AGENDA**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>WELCOMING REMARKS</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00–17:30</td>
<td>OPENING PLENARY SESSION</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Rise of Populism, Nationalism, Nativism and Protectionism and Their Impacts on Politics and Public Policy</td>
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<td>A dynamic panel of journalists and senior policy makers will explore the central themes of the summit. These panellists shape elite and popular opinion; wrestle with global policy issues on a daily basis; and understand the rise of, and challenges to, a globalized world order.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18:15</td>
<td>OPENING RECEPTION, FOLLOWED BY DINNER (OFF-SITE)</td>
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<td>19:15</td>
<td>KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CANADA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Power of Inclusion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of Foreign Affairs, will explore some of the key current foreign policy challenges and discuss how think tanks can help policy makers and the public understand and respond to policy challenges at the regional and global levels.</td>
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**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:30–8:30</td>
<td>INFORMAL NETWORKING BREAKFAST</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30–9:00</td>
<td>THE GLOBAL THINK TANK COMMUNITY: THE ROLE OF NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL NETWORKS</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00–10:30</td>
<td>PLENARY SESSION II</td>
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<td>Responding to Globalization and Its Discontents: Bridging the Gap Between Think Tanks, Politics and the Public</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Most think tanks did not anticipate or fully understand the issues driving the Brexit vote or the popular support for it. Think tanks, journalists and political pundits also failed to predict the rise of Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, and the issues and policy proposals that have since come to define the 2016 US presidential campaign. These disruptive candidates and movements pose a clear challenge to conventional thinking and politics, and a clear threat to global institutions and global governance. What is not clear is the response that think tanks will — or should — take and how to address the discontent driving populist movements around the globe.</td>
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</table>
Using Technology and Strategic Communications to Effectively Engage Policy Makers and the Public

In the digital environment it now seems that almost everyone has an opinion on almost everything. In an era of information dominance, how do think tanks maintain their position as trusted sources of analytical rigour, research acumen and policy expertise? How do think tanks, usually somewhat formal and hierarchical institutions, best engage in a new media space that thrives on nimble organizations?

A Post-truth World? The Crisis of Trust and Democracy Today

Keynote Address: Gillian Tett, US Managing Editor, Financial Times

Policy Challenges

I. Free Trade, Dead or Alive? Economic Nationalism vs. Economic Internationalism

II. Waves, Walls and Workable Solutions: Meeting the Challenge Posed by the Refugee and Migration Crisis

Organizational Challenges

III. If You Aren’t Part of the Solution, You Are Part of the Problem: Why Quality, Independence and Integrity Matter

IV. Big Ideas, Big Data and Small Tweets: Think Tanks, Technology and Policy Advice
15:30–16:30  BREAKOUT SESSION TWO

Policy Challenges
I. Economic Inequality and the Rip Currents of National, Regional and Global Populism

II. Does Populism Signal the End of Global Governance and Intergovernmental Organizations, or a New Beginning?

Organizational Challenges
III. Transforming Policies and Perceptions in the Face of Increased Public Scrutiny

IV. Best Practices for Recruiting and Retaining Think Tank Scholars and Executives

16:30–17:00  BREAKOUT SESSION — CHAIR REPORTS AND DISCUSSION

17:15–22:35  RECEPTION, KEYNOTE AND DINNER (OFF-SITE)

Standing Up for the Power of Ideas

Keynote Address:  Nicolas Véron, Senior Fellow, Bruegel, and Visiting Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

7:30–9:00  INFORMAL NETWORKING BREAKFAST

9:00–9:30  KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Income Inequality in Advanced Economies: The Social and Economic Impact of a Generation Growing Up Poorer Than Their Parents

Keynote Address:  Anu Madgavkar, Partner, McKinsey Global Institute (Mumbai)
9:30–10:30  PLENARY SESSION IV

**The Need for Think Tanks to Innovate: Catalysts for Ideas, Innovation and Action**

The session is intended to demonstrate how think tanks are responding to the article in *The Washington Post* — “Think Tanks Must Innovate or Die” — with a specific focus on policy innovation and impact. A shortage of core funding support and the growth of an information-rich environment require think tanks to be innovative and deft. This panel will examine how think tanks are delivering innovative policies, programs and policy advice in the face of a changing operating environment.

10:30–10:45  HEALTH BREAK

10:45–12:00  PLENARY SESSION V

A closing panel on ideas and conclusions generated by the summit.

12:00–12:30  CONCLUSIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS — SUMMIT ORGANIZERS

12:30  CLOSING LUNCH
## APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alili, Ahmad</td>
<td>Head of School of Public Policy</td>
<td>Center for Economic and Social Development</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allon, Yoram</td>
<td>Content Curator</td>
<td>Columbia International Affairs Online</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrés Pérez, Francisco</td>
<td>Projects Office Coordinator</td>
<td>ELCANO Royal Institute</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Babanoury, Claire</td>
<td>Director of the French Language and Culture Program</td>
<td>Lauder Institute — University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balsillie, Jim</td>
<td>Founder and Chair, Board of Directors</td>
<td>Centre for International Governance Innovation</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barnes, Joe</td>
<td>Research Fellow</td>
<td>Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy</td>
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<td>Bausch, Camilla</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Ecologic Institute</td>
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<td>Benke, Rafael Tiago Juk</td>
<td>Chairman of the Board of Trustees</td>
<td>Brazilian Center for International Relations</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>Borkhuu, Gunsen Sharaid</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>Elbegdorj Institute</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
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<td>Bricker, Darrell</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>Ipsos Global Public Affairs</td>
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<td>Bröning, Michael</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung</td>
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<td>Burek, Josh</td>
<td>Director of Global Communications and Strategy</td>
<td>Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>Burke-White, William</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Perry World House</td>
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<td>Calvin Venero, Claudia</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Mexican Council on Foreign Relations</td>
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<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>Fundación Alternativas</td>
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<td>Carver, Tom</td>
<td>Vice President for Communications and Strategy</td>
<td>Carnegie Endowment for International Peace</td>
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<td>Chan, Thomas</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td>Asia Competitiveness Institute, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>Chicoma, José Luis</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Ethos Public Policy Lab</td>
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<td>Clark, C. Scott</td>
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<td>Centre for International Governance Innovation</td>
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<td>Clemens, Jason</td>
<td>Executive Vice President</td>
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<td>Conley Tyler, Melissa</td>
<td>National Executive Director</td>
<td>Australian Institute of International Affairs</td>
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<td>McKinsey Global Institute</td>
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<td>Cordeau, Jeff</td>
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<td>Cox, Michael</td>
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<td>LSE IDEAS</td>
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<td>Dann, Matt</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
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<td>de Groen, Willem Pieter</td>
<td>Research Fellow</td>
<td>Financial Institutions and Prudential Policy Unit, Centre for European Policy Studies</td>
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<td>Dekel, Udi</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
<td>Institute for National Security Studies (Israel)</td>
<td>Israel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deo, Neelam</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations</td>
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<td>Dion, Hon. Stéphane</td>
<td>Minister of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Government of Canada</td>
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<td>Driss, Ahmed</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Centre of Mediterranean and International Studies</td>
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<td>Institute for Security Studies</td>
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<td>OCP Policy Center</td>
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<td>El Gomati, Anas</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Sadeq Institute</td>
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<td>Elkamel, Hussein</td>
<td>International Cooperation Senior Advisor</td>
<td>Egyptian Council For Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>Fox, Graham</td>
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<td>Institute for Research on Public Policy</td>
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<td>Fukai, Hiromu</td>
<td>Research Management Officer, Planning and Coordination Division</td>
<td>Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization</td>
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<td>French Institute of International Relations</td>
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<td>Greenhill, Robert</td>
<td>Senior Fellow at CIGI; Executive Chairman of Global Canada</td>
<td>Centre for International Governance Innovation</td>
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<td>Montreal Economic Institute</td>
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<td>Centre for International Governance Innovation</td>
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<td>Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis</td>
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<td>Kim, Kang Soo</td>
<td>Director and Vice President of Department of Land and Infrastructure Policy</td>
<td>Korea Development Institute</td>
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<td>Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute</td>
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<td>Korea Institute of International Economic Policy</td>
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<td>Associate Fellow</td>
<td>Energy, Environment and Resources Department, Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>Perry, David</td>
<td>Senior Analyst</td>
<td>Canadian Global Affairs Institute</td>
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<td>Director of Fiscal Policy</td>
<td>Center for Social and Economic Research</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Center for the Opening and Development of Latin America</td>
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<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
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<td>Salih, Wisam</td>
<td>Founding Director</td>
<td>Council on International Policy</td>
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<td>Executive Vice President</td>
<td>Woodrow Wilson Center</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>Setrakian, Lara</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>News Deeply</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>Shin, Dong-ik</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
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<td>Shull, Aaron</td>
<td>Chief of Staff and General Counsel</td>
<td>Centre for International Governance Innovation</td>
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<td>General Director</td>
<td>Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<td>Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie</td>
<td>Government of Quebec</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Sta Maria, Rebecca</td>
<td>Senior Policy Fellow</td>
<td>Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
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<td>Sultangaliyeva, Alma</td>
<td>Advisor to the Director</td>
<td>Institute of World Economics and Politics under the Foundation of the First President of Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tassinari, Fabrizio</td>
<td>Head of Foreign Policy Studies and Senior Researcher</td>
<td>Danish Institute for International Studies</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Tett, Gillian</td>
<td>US Managing Editor</td>
<td>Financial Times</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>Tripp, Spencer</td>
<td>Director of Communications &amp; Digital Media</td>
<td>Centre for International Governance Innovation</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Véron, Nicolas</td>
<td>Senior Fellow at Bruegel and Visiting Fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics</td>
<td>Bruegel &amp; PIIE</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>Wang, Huiyao</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Center for China and Globalization</td>
<td>China</td>
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<td>Whyel, Mary Beth</td>
<td>Vice President for Operations and Strategic Initiatives</td>
<td>Center for Strategic and International Studies</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>Wong, Stephen Yuen Shan</td>
<td>Deputy Executive Director and Head of Public Policy</td>
<td>Our Hong Kong Foundation</td>
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<td>Xu, Jian</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>China Institute of International Studies</td>
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<td>Xu, Longdi</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>China Institute of International Studies</td>
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<td>Yakymenko, Yuriy V.</td>
<td>Deputy Director General — Director of Political and Legal Programs</td>
<td>Razumkov Centre</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu, Bokhwan</td>
<td>Deputy Dean (Capacity Building and Training and Special Activities)</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank Institute</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3: SUMMIT ORGANIZERS, HOSTS AND PARTNERS

2016 Global Think Tank Summit Planning Committee

Our sincere thank-you to the leaders of the following think tanks for their valued contribution to this year’s summit agenda and presentations.

Asian Development Bank Institute (Japan)
Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) (Spain)
Brookings Institution (United States)
Bruegel (Belgium)
Carnegie Middle East (Lebanon)
Center for China and Globalization (China)
Centre for Social and Economic Research (CASE) (Poland)
Center for Strategic and International Studies (United States)
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Consejo Argentino para las Relaciones Internacionales (CARI) (Argentina)
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Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute (JICA Research Institute) (Japan)
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Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) (Kenya)
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Mexican Council on Foreign Relations (COMEXI) (Mexico)
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Summit Organizing Committee
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ABOUT TTCSP

TTCSP examines the evolving role and character of public policy research organizations. Over the last 26 years, the TTCSP has developed and led a series of global initiatives that have helped bridge the gap between knowledge and policy in critical policy areas. Often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank,” TTCSP produces the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index that ranks the world’s leading think tanks in a variety of categories.

ABOUT CIGI

We are the Centre for International Governance Innovation: an independent, non-partisan think tank with an objective and uniquely global perspective. Our research, opinions and public voice make a difference in today’s world by bringing clarity and innovative thinking to global policy making. By working across disciplines and in partnership with the best peers and experts, we are the benchmark for influential research and trusted analysis.

Our research programs focus on governance of the global economy, global security and politics, and international law in collaboration with a range of strategic partners and support from the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, as well as founder Jim Balsillie.

À PROPOS DU CIGI

Au Centre pour l’innovation dans la gouvernance internationale (CIGI), nous formons un groupe de réflexion indépendant et non partisan qui formule des points de vue objectifs dont la portée est notamment mondiale. Nos recherches, nos avis et l’opinion publique ont des effets réels sur le monde d’aujourd’hui en apportant autant de la clarté qu’une réflexion novatrice dans l’élaboration des politiques à l’échelle internationale. En raison des travaux accomplis en collaboration et en partenariat avec des pairs et des spécialistes interdisciplinaires des plus compétents, nous sommes devenus une référence grâce à l’influence de nos recherches et à la fiabilité de nos analyses.

Nos programmes de recherche ont trait à la gouvernance dans les domaines suivants : l’économie mondiale, la sécurité et les politiques mondiales, et le droit international, et nous les exécutons avec la collaboration de nombreux partenaires stratégiques et le soutien des gouvernements du Canada et de l’Ontario ainsi que du fondateur du CIGI, Jim Balsillie.
"Helping to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy"

Researching the trends and challenges facing think tanks, policymakers, and policy-oriented civil society groups...
Sustaining, strengthening, and building capacity for think tanks around the world...
Maintaining the largest, most comprehensive database of over 8,000 think tanks...

All requests, questions, and comments should be directed to

James G. McGann, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer, International Studies
Director
Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program
The Lauder Institute
University of Pennsylvania
About TTCSP

Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program
The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania conducts research on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world. Often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank,” TTCSP examines the evolving role and character of public policy research organizations. Over the last 30 years, the TTCSP 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 and 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.

The TTCSP works with leading scholars and practitioners from think tanks and universities in a variety of collaborative efforts and programs and 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 1,900 peer institutions and experts from the print and electronic media, academia, public and private donor institutions, and governments around the world. We have strong relationships with leading think tanks around the world, and our 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. Our goal is to increase the profile 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 policy-making process. To date TTCSP has provided technical assistance and capacity building programs in 81 countries. We are 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.
The Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies

The Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies offers an M.A. in international studies and conducts fundamental and policy-oriented research on current economic, political, and business issues. It organizes an annual conference that brings academics, practitioners, and policy makers together to examine global challenges such as financial risks, sustainability, inequality, and the future of the state.

University of Pennsylvania

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) is an Ivy League school with highly selective admissions and a history of innovation in interdisciplinary education and scholarship. Its peer institutions are Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Brown, Dartmouth, and the University of Chicago in the US and Oxford and Cambridge in the UK. A world-class research institution, Penn boasts a picturesque campus in the middle of Philadelphia, a dynamic city that is conveniently located between Washington, D.C. and New York, New York. Benjamin Franklin founded the University of Pennsylvania in 1740 to push the frontiers of knowledge and benefit society by integrating study in the liberal arts and sciences with opportunities for research and practical, pre-professional training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Penn is committed to meeting the full-demonstrated need of all undergraduates with grant-based financial aid, making this intellectually compelling integration of liberal and professional education accessible to talented students of all backgrounds and empowering them to make an impact on the world.

TTCSP Recent and Forthcoming Publications:


