



14th BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM
Nusa Dua, Bali, 9 December 2021

KEY ELEMENTS

Session 2
Democracy for Humanity: Addressing for Inequality

Current Conditions & Challenges

During Panel Discussion 2, countries and experts highlighted some related issues on ways democracy address inequality, as follows:

- Pandemic has exposed the underlying inequality structure throughout the globe. A highly concentrated economy that enriches the few while neglecting the majority of the people. This inequality structure goes both in the within the society in the national border and internationally.
- The inequality in vaccine distribution and access as well as materials for vaccine manufacturing is a stark reminder of how inequality works. Infrastructure challenges in developing countries that amplifies the inequality of vaccine distribution are also visible.
- The issue of health care systems access is also pertinent to highlight, since advanced countries with state-of-art healthcare facilities may experience trouble without equal access to the healthcare systems.
- Education is an enabler for democratic process, however educational development has been disturbed by COVID-19.
- The cumulative debt of the poor and developing countries continues to pile up, while the calls for a debt restructuring faced a lot of resistance from creditors.
- The pandemic has also exacerbated gender-based violence, which has strong linkages with the economic stability of a society.
- The pandemic, while showing the world on the potential and benefits on the use of internet, also exposes the current digital divide, in terms of inequality of access to the internet, as well as inequality of knowledges in how to optimally utilize the internet to its full potential, rather than to fall prey to disinformation and hoaxes.

Way Forward and Recommendations:

The Panelists and discussants shared some common experiences, way forwards, and recommendations to tackle the challenges, as follow:

- International community should avoid the forming of new international order that is controlled by big power and big businesses that gains considerable influence on the society during the pandemic.
- There is a need to undertake holistic and integrated approach of handling the pandemic that answer to the ordinary people, the big majority of the population. In this regard, the healthy democratic institutions can go a long way in building up such environment in the pandemics.
- Inclusive global governance needs to adapt to global needs, especially the vaccine inequity. In this regard, vaccine distribution to the developing countries should not be seen as a CSR practice only, instead it should be prioritized as main agendas for every stakeholder.
- Democratic countries should work together to ensure that vaccine supply chains and critical supplies is well undertaken in full transparency to increase trust and build resilience.
- Sovereign debt restructuring is one of the most pressing needs of the developing countries, which already had a hard time in relieving the pandemic situation for their societies.
- The role of education as an enabler for democratic process needs to be further enhanced. A concerted action to for a technical assistance on equal education access during the pandemic is of paramount importance.
- Digital divide must be addressed through the development of digital tools and increased collaboration on regional and international level. Furthermore, the use of digital tools during the pandemic must run under democratic principles.

Conclusion:

It is concluded that Panel Discussion 2 conveys messages as follow:

- The panel recognized that public health is a public good, and therefore, a balanced relation between the state, people, and private sectors is needed to focus on meeting the demands of the largest population, rather than the wealthiest.
- The panel noted that all international cooperation and national measures for handling and recovering from pandemics should run under the principles of equitability, inclusivity, and sustainability. An equal voice, be it between states in international governance level or between population at the national level.
- The panel also noted the necessity to increase global actions (e.g. establishment of the UN High Level Panel) to face multidimensional problems during pandemic.

- The panel called for a strong global mechanism that should be in place to ensure that the distribution of vaccines, as well as critical supplies, is undertaken in a just and fair manner.
- The panel recognized that the holistic approach of addressing inequality is needed, encompassing whole aspects of social welfare including the equality of gender and education access.
- The panel also recognized the need for an increased collaboration in the regional and international arena by sharing best practice in democratic processes.

