



The 15th Bali Democracy Forum

Concept Paper

Democracy in a Changing World: Leadership and Solidarity

Background

The current state of democracy globally is seen as either declining, stagnating, or even retreating. The rise of elected authoritarians and the reemergence of populism are arguably challenging the norms and functioning of democracy. There is also a growing perception that in dealing with various crises – the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity, energy crises, and other public goods scarcity – democracy is seen as not better than its alternatives.

Democracy should be nurtured from its social roots and rejuvenated through people's legitimacy and governance practices. Thus the 15th Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) aims to reflect, share, and rethink possible responses to the abovementioned dynamics. Instead of questioning and disenfranchising democracy, the forum will reflect more on the merits of subscribing to democracy despite all the uncertainties.

Theme

Changing World

The world is changing dramatically and affecting the foundations of democracy and even humanity. A crisis in one part of the world could quickly reverberate and affect other parts of the world.

The health crises bring consequences to other basic human needs--rising unemployment, the decreasing quality of education, and the worsening provision of food and nutrition. On the other hand, the energy crisis affects people's health quality and their capacity to provide food for their families.

Collective and institutionalized responses are needed to address the current global challenges. It is necessary because the world is being fragmented along the state's interests and geopolitics/economics strategic calculations. In the case of COVID-19 pandemic, instead of supporting global responses, some countries defer their financial contributions to international

institutions. They prioritize their citizens for vaccines, and refuse to share the knowledge for generic kinds of vaccines in the name of property rights.

In this changing world, the world energy crisis is viewed from countries' short-term strategic calculations. When renewable energies are considered to disaccord their interests (short-term) and shift the strategic power to their disadvantages, those countries would disengage and detach from renewable energy initiatives. Crisis related to global access to food and nutrition is also viewed along the logic mentioned earlier. Foods are perceived as commodities to be produced, traded, and accumulated. The food crisis affecting other humanity is not considered a fundamental human rights issue but to be balanced by other considerations.

Democracy Revival

Can democracy be revived in the fragmented and weakening global governance? What are the roles of collective leadership? Why is international solidarity so important? These are the main ideas to be discussed in the 15th BDF.

Ideally, democracy can be examined through its capacity to deliver its promises in securing global public goods. Can democracy provide and secure access to global public health in crises? Can democracy advance the food security agenda into food sovereignty and food justice? Can democracy balance the provision for public needs for current energy and, at the same time, invest in future energy renewal? What should global leadership's role be in ensuring public health, food availability, and energy security? To what extent does solidarity ensure the delivery of global public goods?

Democracy can be revived by strengthening global governance to ensure equal access to global public goods as well as through institutional practices grounded in solid principles. Shaping governance democratically means making international institutions functions to serve people's rights, ground equality, and bring justice. When global governance performs by enshrining democratic principles, democracy manifests in institutional practices. At the same time, this will enable democracy to harness legitimacy and revive through practices. The practices of democracy require a transformation of roles of leadership and immersing democratic values through the course of solidarity. Leadership and solidarity are two missing middle ways in reviving and rejuvenating democracy.

Democracy and Leadership

Leadership is a form of relationship between leaders and followers to attain particular objectives. In most literature on democracy, leadership is aimed to guarantee public needs in the form of public goods grounded in principles of liberty, equality, and justice secured through democratic institutions and democratic processes.

At the global level, this conception of leadership is becoming less straightforward and often facing dilemmas. In certain situations, the interests of the state, the nation, and global humanity are often not in line and are contradictory. How should leaders solve this conundrum? Can democracy provide new bases for leaders to harmonize national and global leadership?

The questions of the leaders' new roles in balancing national and global leadership should also be expanded to include both the civil society, economic actors, as well as a variety of movements. The complexity of issues grows to the question of who should represent specific or sectoral issues. Could non-state actors represent the public voices and aspirations in their countries? What if the positioning among those actors and institutions is not in line? What does democracy mean in terms of representing people's aspirations and voices?

Democracy and Solidarity

Solidarity could be expressed through symbolism, voices, sharing resources, and collective responses. In most literature on democracy, solidarity manifests in supporting other humanity to achieve liberty, equality, and justice. In practice, the manifestation of solidarity is taking the form of support to attain basic needs through the fulfillment of public goods like health, energy, and food. It will be argued below that solidarity is also translated into efforts and actions to shape the emerging global governance (both institutions and processes) that guarantee secure access to public goods. The emergence of global governance is grounded in the values of liberty, equality, and justice.

Sub-themes

Sub-theme 1

Fair and Equitable Access of Global Public Goods: Democratic Responses

As elaborated above, democracy's performance and legitimacy would be assessed first on its capacity to deliver its promises. The promises of democracy guarantee people's fair and equitable access to public goods. At the global level, these promises take the form of fair and equitable provision of global public goods.

In securing the provision and access of global public goods such as public health, affordable energy, and sufficient food, democratic and non-democratic responses can be differentiated clearly. In securing access to public health, non-democratic responses would emphasize the availability of the services. Whether most citizens, particularly the vulnerable groups, could afford the benefits will not be the priority. On the other hand, democratic responses will primarily consider the rights of citizens to access quality health services. Equality and justice considerations would be applied to expand health services to vulnerable groups and the most remote areas. In guaranteeing the services, public voices are heard, and public engagements are celebrated.

Leadership and solidarity, as aforementioned, are the most salient mechanisms to enable fair and equitable access to public goods. However, who should have the right to be prioritized for access to public goods (such as health services, food, and energy)? The political constituents, the vulnerable groups, or those who are well-endowed? The political constituents to be prioritized are politically justified, the vulnerable groups to be prioritized are morally right, and those who could pay to be prioritized are economically fair. Leadership is the ability to provide

judgments on ethical dilemmas. Solidarity is the ability to provide judgments on when the social and moral empathies are justified.

These questions will be discussed in the session in sub-theme 1 in the forum on *Fair and Equitable Access of Global Public Goods: Democratic Responses*. The further challenges are to enable democracy to function in practices (by guaranteeing fair and equitable access to public goods) and then to enable itself to revive. Democratic responses would harness its effectiveness, create trust, and rebuild legitimacy.

Sub-theme 2

Democracy at the Crossroad: Shaping Governance in the New Global Landscape

Democracy's capacity to deliver its promises to guarantee people's fair and equitable access to public goods would be determined by the quality of global governance. Global governance is a delicate structure that functions for a variety of reasons. There are no authorities legally above the nation-states. To operate, global governance navigates among the interests of the nation-states and the dynamics of geopolitics and geoeconomics.

The current global landscapes that are essential in shaping today's global governance are characterized by a fragmented global architecture, weakening multilateralism, the rise of ultra-nationalism, the rivalry between major powers, and multifaceted crises.

In governing global health, international authorities were under-resourced to handle unprecedented health crises as massive as the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergence of new transnational regimes for global health faced the challenges of countries practicing "vaccine nationalism." In governing global food, food was not viewed as basic needs and public goods but commodities to be traded, accumulated, profited, and politized. In managing energy sectors, weak and ineffective international authorities are ill-equipped to transform fossil-based energies into more renewable ones.

Leadership and solidarity are supposedly significant to enable democracy to strengthen global governance. In strengthening global governance, democracy is at a crossroads. Hence, which road should we choose? Which path could lead us to democracy and global governance that fully support all societal elements? In the political realism of contemporary world affairs, how do we build a strong and resilient global governance? How will democracy guide leadership and enable solidarity to support the functions of global governance?

These questions will be discussed in sub-theme 2 of the forum on *Democracy at the Crossroad: Shaping Governance in the New Global Landscape*. Then, this theme is also deliberating on how democracy revives through national and global governance.

In sum, democracy can be rejuvenated through institutional practices. Shaping democratic governance means making global institutions functions to serve people's rights, promote equality, and bring justice. When global governance performs by enshrining democratic

principles, democracy manifests in institutional practices. This will enable democracy to harness legitimacy and revive itself.

Outline of the forum

The Forum's main objective is to provide a platform for sharing experiences among state actors and invited stakeholders to share knowledge, insights, and understanding of the democratic values of leadership and solidarity in a changing world. At the same time, it aims to share experiences and lessons learned on enabling democracy secure fair and equitable access to global public goods and shape governance in the new global landscape.

The 15th BDF will be convened in a hybrid format to expand the forum's reach. Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF), as the pillar of BDF, will be conducted in a separate early discussion as an attempt to discuss the main theme for this year's BDF.

The BCSMF is intended to engage the civil society, media, and academic communities to share diverse experiences and views on the theme and assess the policy choices in responding to the challenges. The Forum will be attended by participants from various backgrounds, such as community leaders, NGO activists, academicians, researchers, journalists, and public figures from the region and globally.

The 15th BDF Opening Session will be attended by participants and observers of the BDF in situ and virtually, as well as the representatives of BCSMF. The Session will consist of the opening remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia followed by sub-theme discussions.

Following the Opening Session, there will be two sub-theme Discussion sessions. The sub-theme discussion would be expected to inspire the dialogue, illuminate new insights, and provoke further assessments of possible solutions to the topics as follows:

1. Fair and Equitable Access of Global Public Goods: Democratic Responses
2. Democracy at the Crossroad: Shaping Governance in the New Global Landscape

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