



15th BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM

Nusa Dua, Bali, 8 December 2022

KEY ELEMENTS

Discussion Session 1: Fair and Equitable Access for Global Public Goods: Democratic Response

The world where we stand today is a dynamic place, with new challenges every year, every day. COVID-19 which we have been facing for almost 3 years now, is something new compared to a decade ago. One crisis in one part of the world affects and even creates another crisis that could quickly reverberate and affect other parts of the world. Likewise, the challenge of democracy is always new.

With many restrictions during the pandemic time, along with many compelling democratic events in the past few years, it seems like democracy is declining. However, to assess democracy's performance and legitimacy, we could assess it through its capacity to guarantee people's fair and equitable access to public goods. In securing the provision and access of global public goods such as public health, affordable energy, and sufficient food.

Thus, the question arises of whether Democracy's performance and legitimacy could guarantee people's fair and equitable access to public goods? What is the best practice for a democratic response to this?

Discussion and Way Forward

The Panelists and discussants shared their experiences, suggested way forwards, and made recommendations as follows:

- There is an ever-growing need for democracy to keep reinventing itself in order to give answers to contemporary problems.
- Democracy in itself is a global public goods, since democracy, development, and peace go hand in hand. Without functioning democracy, we cannot achieve development goals, since it is the foundation of an emancipated society.
- The effectiveness of democracy itself has been tested during the pandemic, where a well-functioning democracy can deliver the basic necessities of the people and strike a balance between public safety concerns and maintaining civic space.

Empirical research also suggests that increasing the index of democracy in a country correlates with the provision of global public goods, including the decrease in its emission level at the given time.

- Though in general democracy is better performing than autocracy, for it to work we need to make sure that democracy is fair and equitable. Furthermore, democracy in itself might not be enough. It needs to be equipped with clear tools for assessment, policy and budgeting discussions, and general good governance practices.
- The advancement of the internet and digital sphere has pushed a massive number of democratizations. Nevertheless, it doesn't necessarily translate into the democratization of ideas and talent. Ideas are being polarized, driven by design with digital algorithms. The pool of talents being held back by a patronizing oligarchy, rather than adopting the meritocracy.
- Meanwhile, economic capital is still being controlled by advanced economies, while developing economies are struggling to raise them. This is contrary to the essence of democracy which is not only about distributing powers, but also distributing public goods to the many, and capital is an essential resource to democratize public goods.
- The global Pandemic shows us that we basically live in a global village. All issues and actors are interconnected and heavily affected each other. It is paramount to uphold the principles of leadership and solidarity, both nationally and globally, so everyone can go further, together.
- Some way forwards discussed are as follows:
 - Developing a joint plan of action for the path to democracy, peace, and development.
 - Shaping fair international trade and financing regimes which play a crucial role in countries to get fair and equitable access to global public goods, including climate financing.
 - Ensuring that democracy protects the most vulnerable groups in society, including refugees and migrant workers.
 - Rule of law needs to work together to counter the modern threat to democracy and fend off polarization, to combat disinformation and misinformation, election abuse, and systemic attempts to pressure public participation.
 - Capacity building on the state's and related stakeholders' ability to apply rule of law as the important principle of democracy.
 - Collaboration among developed and developing countries, to tackle the pressing situations on health, and climate, Work together among nations in tackling energy crises. Most advanced vaccines are manufactured in democratic countries. Democracy can find a balance between public safety and the freedom of citizens.
 - Walk the talk and take concrete actions.

Discussion Session 2: Democracy at the Crossroad: Shaping Governance in the New Global Landscape

The current global landscapes are characterized by a fragmented global architecture, weakening multilateralism, the rise of “me-first” foreign policy, the rivalry between major powers, and multifaceted crises.

According to WHO, the number of people in hunger has risen since 2020, almost 10% of world’s population. Energy prices are expected to remain in steep spikes, longer than anticipated. The World Bank predicts lower global output by a cumulative 0.8 percent by 2023. The worrying data goes on and on.

This session further explored the performance of democracy and global governance. How democracy guides and strengthens leadership and enables solidarity to support the functions of global governance? What are the lessons we have learned to shape stronger institutions?

As Bali Democracy Forum has been trying to build democracy architecture in the region for the last 15 years; What to expect from BDF in the future?

Discussion and Way Forward

The Panelists and discussants shared their experiences, suggested way forwards, and made recommendations as follows:

- Equal participation and dialogue are critical for a strong democracy. Democracy must deliver. Democracy’s core is shown through a loving leadership. BDF is important to keep providing aspirations on democracy to nations in the region.
- The world needs to stand together, with common principles such as international law and the UN Charter. Emphatic leadership is needed to build trust. Encourage people from the universities to talk more on issues.
- The consequence of changing global political landscape, as a premiere system of governance, democracy faces new challenges from within and from without. It has to compete with the authoritarian approach to prove which is more efficient and effective in delivering public welfare in the broadest sense of the world.
- There is a consensus that the erosion of democracy is happening worldwide, not only in advanced industrialized countries that have established democratic institutions but also in emerging democratic powers and developing countries.
- Some of the causes of democratic decline are caused by the rise of nationalism, extreme right-wing ideologies, and populism, including rising illiberal democracy caused by abuse of elections that strengthen the authoritarian tendency of leaders and eliminate constitutional checks and individual rights.
- The decline in democracy must also be seen against the backdrop of globalization and how new technologies heighten the impact of markets and bring fast technological changes that are disruptive to labor markets.

- Democracy must survive by facilitating trust and transparency, strengthening democratic governance and institution, promoting and protecting human rights that allow freedom of expression, and promoting the rule of law.
- Participation and dialogue are essential for governance and must transpire to the international rule-based order and diplomacy.
- The UN must remain the system countries turn to when seeking solutions to global issues by strengthening support from regional institutions and increasing the representativeness of all nations, especially those affected and vulnerable by climate change.
- Democratic principles and the UN Charter have assured equal rights for all men; thus, global solidarity and actions must be taken to address the world's problems, including war.
- Practical deliveries of democracy to counter the wave of populism and attention must be made to youth as the future generation that will determine whether democracies are still needed in governing.
- Some way forwards discussed are as follows:
 - The global institutions must close the gap of being distant from the current global reality and the people's lives by being more representative, accountable, and transparent, thus will stop undermining the core values of democracy being upheld at the regional and national levels.
 - Addressing the corrosive influence of misinformation and disinformation by working together to strengthen the resilience of democratic institutions and civil society.
 - Utilizes universities to reach out to youth and other institutions that support freedom of thought and debate and foster critical thinking.
 - More studies to understand what drives democratic decline from top to bottom, including finding a way to build the middle ground by also understanding the voice of extremism that is corrosive to democracy.
 - To make a conscientious effort to promote democracy by not only preaching by continue practicing democratic norms and delivering to the people.
 - Improve practical cooperation, sharing experiences, and best practices, including through the BDF, are needed by countries aspiring to democracy.
- There is an increase in the sense of ownership in the BDF process among various stakeholders that formed the democratic architecture in the Asia-Pacific region.
- BDF will focus more on monitoring and evaluating all recommendations and proposed actions generated from the BDF outcomes. Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia plans to convene the BDF biennially.