

Forum 7: Multilateralism and Global Cooperation

Forum 7 of Singapore Perspectives 2021 touched on the topic of Multilateralism and Global Cooperation. The panel was moderated by Associate Professor Eugene Tan from the Singapore Management University's School of Law, and included speakers Professor Jared Diamond, Professor of Geography at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and Professor Joseph Liow, Tan Kah Kee Chair in Comparative and International Politics at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University.

The panel's discussants were Professor Dale Fisher, professor in the National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and Senior Consultant at the Division of Infectious Diseases at the National University Hospital Singapore, and Ms Tan Yee Woan, Dean of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Academy.

Professor Diamond shared the lessons learnt from COVID-19 pandemic, how the pandemic is both old and new at the same time, and stressed the importance of preparedness and multilateral cooperation in tackling global risks such as COVID-19, climate change and other issues.

Professor Liow spoke about the benefits of multilateralism in promoting security, economic cooperation, and a sense of transnationalism. He warned that transformations in global power, mode of production and information are new concerns that warrant global cooperation.

Discussant Professor Fisher highlighted the asynchronous effects of COVID-19 on people and how the lack of government cooperation and nationalism have inhibited the global fight against the pandemic. While scientific cooperation has produced results, concerns over populism and pre-emptive blaming by political leaders could be counter beneficial.

Ms Tan highlighted the ever-increasing importance of global cooperation as problems become more complex. While multilateralism is far from perfect, she stresses the importance of mandates and efforts that are enshrined in international organisations. Many organisations also need reform to tackle new issues arising.



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