

Media Release

25 March 2013

Mahbubani Predicts Benign Convergence of Civilisations in Latest Book

Dean of LKY School and Singapore's former UN envoy proposes governance reforms in multilateral organisations to reflect shifts in global power today

Singapore..... Prof. Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, published *The Great Convergence: Asia, the West, and the Logic of One World* this February.

In *The Great Convergence*, Prof. Mahbubani paints a striking portrait of the emergence of “one world”, where there is now a greater convergence of world views and values brought about largely by the forces of globalisation; and with it an interdependence and interconnectedness never before seen between civilisations.

Another characteristic of this emerging “one world” is the dramatic rise of the middle class all over the world, especially in Asia. The global middle class is growing at a remarkable rate — from several hundred million in 1990 to approximately 1.8 billion in 2010, a projected 3.2 billion by 2020 and 4.9 billion by 2030.

More specifically, Asia’s ascension to the world stage — with countries like India and China playing larger geopolitical and economic roles — is translating to a shift and re-balancing of power in the world.

To avoid conflicts that have historically accompanied such transfers in global power, the author raises an urgent call for the West to share global power in this new world order. *The Great Convergence* also analyses major geopolitical fault lines and proposes some constructive changes to current global governance structures, particularly those of multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

“The IMF and the World Bank cannot remain in Western pockets. The UN Security Council must reflect contemporary great power configurations. The world order has to be reconstructed. And it can be done,” said Prof. Mahbubani.

“For instance, it is manifestly absurd, as we enter the second decade of the 21st century, that the West continues to insist that the head of the IMF should be European and the head of the World Bank an American,” said Prof. Mahbubani. “No national democracy would disenfranchise 88 per cent of its population. Neither can our world.”

In the case of the UN Security Council, Prof. Mahbubani suggests that the current composition of the permanent members is in fact doing harm to the Council’s future legitimacy. He proposes, “in place of the current 15-member Council, a ‘7-7-7’ formula — seven permanent seats, seven semi-permanent seats and seven elected seats — to reflect not only the great powers of today, but also the great powers of tomorrow.”

For Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, “This new book not only offers in-depth analysis of world challenges today, but also offers fresh ideas on how to improve global order for the 21st century. A must-read for those who are interested in power politics and the future of global governance.”

The Great Convergence is Prof. Mahbubani’s fourth book, following the critically acclaimed *The New Asian Hemisphere*, *Beyond the Age of Innocence* and *Can Asians Think?*.

Enclosed:

1. Book information
2. Cover artwork

Media Invitation:

You are cordially invited to attend the book launch of *The Great Convergence: Asia, the West and the Logic of One World*.

Date: Tuesday, 26 March 2013
Time: 5.30 pm – 7.30 pm
Venue: Acacia/Banyan Ballroom, Level 1
Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore 258351
Guest-of-Honour: Professor Wang Gungwu
Chairman, Governing Board, LKY School of Public Policy, NUS

To confirm your attendance and for further media queries, please contact Ms Francesca Tañada at francesca.tanada@nus.edu.sg.

About Prof. Kishore Mahbubani

Prof. Kishore Mahbubani is Dean and Professor in the Practice of Public Policy at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in the National University of Singapore. Prior to his academic career, Prof. Mahbubani had served at Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1971 to 2004. He served two terms as Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. During his second term, he sat on the UN Security Council while Singapore was a non-permanent member and twice served as the Council's President.

Prof. Mahbubani has been described as the "muse of the Asian century" among *Foreign Policy* magazine's 2011 Top "100 Global Thinkers".

For more information on Prof. Mahbubani's publications, book reviews and tour dates, visit www.mahbubani.net.

About Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

Part of the National University of Singapore, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy was established in 2004 with the mission of educating and training the next generation of Asian policy-makers and leaders.

With over 400 students spanning 50 countries, the School's unique Asian focus allows students to experience public policy education in a distinctively global environment. The School has a number of research centres and institutes, including the Asia Competitiveness Institute and Centre on Asia and Globalisation, and frequently plays host to distinguished speakers and visiting scholars. For more information about the School, visit www.spp.nus.edu.sg.