Managing Global Turbulence and Transitions: The Role of Think Tanks

Global Think Tank Summit Skeletal Agenda
11-13 December 2019
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Wednesday, December 11th, 2019
Hilton Rio de Janeiro Copacabana
Av. Atlântica, 1020 - Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, Brazil

Check-in to Hilton Hotel
16.00 – 17.00 Summit Registration at the Hilton Hotel
17.00 – 18.00 Welcome Remarks
18.00 – 19.30 Opening Plenary
Managing Global Turbulence and Transitions: National, Regional and Global Perspectives
A panel of senior think tank executives from around the globe will discuss how think tanks are helping policymakers and the public understand the economic, technological, geopolitical and social transitions and transformations that are disrupting politics around the world. They will share how their institutions are grappling with the policy and strategic and operational challenges they face in these turbulent times. The Panel will also explore and foreshadow the central themes of the Global Summit while connecting national and regional trends to ones that have become global issues or trends.

19.30 – 21.00 Welcome Dinner, Followed by “A Tribute to João Gilberto, the Brazilian Bossa Nova Legend”

Thursday, December 12th, 2019
FGV Headquarters
Praia de Botafogo, 190 – Rio de Janeiro – RJ, Brazil

8.30 – 9.00 Welcome Coffee and Registration
9.00 – 9.30 Keynote Address
9.30 – 11.00 Plenary Panel I
Navigating the New World Order: How to Avoid the Sirens of Conflict and Chaos in World Politics
This session will explore the challenges posed by the sea of change that is taking place in global politics and how to navigate the new world order that is emerging. More importantly, it will explore how to avoid the conflict and chaos that has marked periods of transition throughout history. As such, this panel of think tank scholars and executives will examine the promise and peril of a new world re-order.

11.00 – 11.15 Coffee Break
11.15 – 12.45  Plenary Session II
The ‘We’ Movement: Popular Discontent, Democracy and Dictators in an Age of Insecurity and Digital Disruptions
This session will attempt to examine the rise of social and political protests that are sweeping across the globe in attempt to capture the issues and interconnections between some of these mass movements and what might be driving them.

12.45 – 14.00  Lunch

14.00 – 15.30  Plenary Session III
Global Food and Water Security: How to Avert the Coming Crisis
Food and water insecurity are not just a future problem, but rather are serious crises that our world is presently facing. In 2016, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reported a total of 815 million chronically undernourished people in the world. In addition, the World Health Organization reported in 2015 that there was a total of 2.1 billion people who lacked access to safely managed drinking water. There are many contributing factors to food and water insecurity, such as climate change, poverty, gender inequality, and macro-economic trade policies—each of which are complex issues that require comprehensive research. This research gap can and should be filled by think tanks that can then take a prominent role in addressing these causes of food and water insecurity. Think tanks have a unique position in food and water security research and can address interdisciplinary and trans-boundary concerns, facilitating critical knowledge exchanges, and generating overall issue awareness. Despite the clear intersect between these two crises, institutional and disciplinary silos inhibit the development of creative policies and programs to address the problem. A panel of scholars will examine the coming crisis and suggest some ways of addressing it.

15.30 – 15.45  Coffee Break

15.45 – 17.15  Breakout Session (Five Concurrent Sessions)

1. The Climate Change Emergency: No Longer Chicken Little
Climate change poses some of the most pressing and intractable problems confronting policymakers and the public today. As the effects of climate change grow, the costs increase, and policy choices narrow. A critical examination of alternative policies, paradigms and public engagement strategies is required. There is an urgent need for innovative policies and strategies that can mobilize support from a range of political constituencies and provide creative integrated strategies that address climate adaptation, mitigation, and sustainable development. A panel of senior thought leaders and executives from the leading think tanks working on this issue will discuss and propose new and innovative ways to address this clear and present danger.

2. The Peril and Promise of Artificial Intelligence
The 4th Industrial Revolution is a game-changer. While it is similar to the industrial transformations of the past, it will be fundamentally different. Artificial Intelligence (AI) will create massive, creative and destructive disruptions that will reverberate in the years to come. Therefore, it is essential that we understand AI and prepare both for the opportunities and the challenges it poses. The new reality is that AI accelerates the speed of change, increasing the velocity of information and policy flows in business, politics, and society. AI can enable humans to work smarter, faster and better than ever before, but it can also create major disruptions and dislocations in society. This panel will explore the impact on the economy, society and national, regional and global governance.
3. Can You Hear Us? Strategic Communications for Think Tanks
The popularization of new media has created a massive untapped pool of resources for knowledge to be shared with a new and wider audience. However, the unchecked nature of new media also results in a lack of quality control and oversaturation of content for readers to filter through. In an age of shorter attention spans and the paradox of choice, think tanks must navigate these waters to retain their appeal to changing demographics. This session aims to identify best practices for optimizing the use of new media, social networking and other platforms for public engagement and shaping policy, as well as examining which platforms we are all using to the greatest impact. More specifically, how can think tanks creatively harness these new tools beyond standard marketing purposes while being discerning about the quality, effectiveness of various platforms, and how they align with think tank’s mission to inform policymakers and the public about key policy issues?

4. New Faces and New Ideas: Diversity and Innovation in Think Tanks
Both business and anthropological literature have shown strong correlations between organizational innovation and diversity. This panel will feature young scholars and think tank executives who will discuss the importance of diversity in their organizations and emphasize the important connection between diversity and innovation. The panelists have been asked to address the following questions: why did you choose to work at a think tank?; what obstacles did you encounter in the hiring process and advancing your career at a think tank?; what perspectives on policy and organization innovation do you bring to your think tank and the issues facing your country; and what specific recommendations would you suggest to improve the role and impact of think tanks? Finally, and most importantly, what recommendations would you make to improve the careers of ethnic and racial groups, women, young scholars and executives?

5. Trade Wars or Trade Winds: Which Ways are the Winds Blowing?
The lingering effects of the 2008 economic crisis and the blowback from the uneven and unfulfilled promise of globalization has helped give rise to populism, nativism and protectionist sentiments in many countries. The costs of free trade -- closed factories, unemployed workers and the effect it has on local economies and communities -- are easy to see. Less obvious are the benefits in lower prices, higher quality goods, more choices and a better standard of living. The uneven distribution of these benefits of the liberal economic order and free trade are raising questions about the fairness and viability of free and fair trade around the world. The prospects of a trade war between the US and China, Europe and the US has served to intensify these debates. With this backdrop in mind, the panel will explore the current trade environment, the impact of trade disputes will impact growth and the global economy.

17.15 – 17.30 Summit Group Photo
19.30 – 21.30 Dinner at Restaurante Assador Rio’s
A Taste of Rio and Carnival in December
An Evening of Networking: Building Global Knowledge and Policy Partnerships
Friday, December 13th, 2019
FGV Headquarters
Praia de Botafogo, 190 – Rio de Janeiro – RJ, Brazil

8.45 – 9.15 Welcome Coffee

9.15 – 11.00 Plenary Session IV
Thinking about the Future of Think Tanks in an Age of Insecurity and Instability
At a moment when both think tanks and experts are being questioned, significant policy and technology disruptions have called into question the value and efficacy of policy advice. Within that context, the TTCSP has launched a major national and global initiative to explore the future of think tanks and policy advice. A panel of think tank executives and scholars will explore: How have innovations in technology, communications, big data and data visualizations impacted the work of think tanks?; how has increased fragmentation, polarization of politics and changes in political parties and congress changed the nature of our public discourse and policy advice?; and how have the changes in the sources, types and duration of funding for public policy research impacted the quality, independence and integrity of the research and the ability to maintain the basic operations of a think tank?

9.15 – 11.00 Coffee Break

11.00 – 11.15 Coffee Break

11.15 – 12.45 Plenary Session V
Multilateralism in a Multipolar World: Conflict and Chaos, or Peace and Prosperity?
Consciously or inadvertently, the new world order is taking place. Alliances are shifting, conflict and mass migration of people is continuing, and sustained economic and development is remaining elusive. The 2019 Global Tank Summit is taking place at a truly extraordinary historical moment in history and world politics. The post WWII economic, political and security orders are being challenged and redefined by national and regional tectonic shifts in domestic and international politics. The panel will discuss these changes and the role of multilateral institutions in a multipolar world.

12.45 – 13.30 Closing Plenary Session
The Power and Potential of Think Tank Partnerships
A closing panel of think tank scholars and executives will provide analysis and commentary on the major conclusions, strategies and actions generated by the summit.

13.30 – 13.40 Closing Remarks

13.40 – 14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 17.30 Tour to Sugar Loaf (Optional)