Global Governance Futures
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The New (Dis)Orders: Envisioning the Complex Futures of Geopolitics

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

About the Program

The Global Governance Futures program (GGF) brings together young professionals to look ahead 10 years and think of ways to better address global challenges. Building on a decade of successful rounds of the GGF program, GGF 2030 convened 27 fellows from Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Africa, and the United States (three from each country). Over the course of 2018 and 2019, the fellows participated in four dialogue sessions, which took place in Washington, DC, New Delhi, São Paulo, and Paris and Berlin.

The GGF 2030 fellows – selected from the public, private and non-profit sectors – formed three working groups, each focusing on one key global issue. For this round, they focused on the futures of global order, the global migration and refugee challenge, and the role of cities in global governance.

Using strategic foresight instruments, including scenario planning and risk assessment, the working groups produced scenarios for their respective issue areas. Based on their findings, the fellows put together a range of products that outline scenarios of potential global governance challenges of the coming decade and ways to address them.

In addition to learning about and implementing the scenario planning methodology, our fellows met with leading policymakers and experts from each participating country, whose insights helped shape the scenarios.

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the organizations they work for.

Introduction

Global order refers to the systems and mechanisms of interaction between states and non-state actors based on power, strategic interest, cooperation, and competition.

FOCAL QUESTIONS

- How will economic development and inequality play into the global order in 2030?
- How will technology and multinational companies transform politics between nation states?
- To what extent will geography, regional politics and/or identity politics influence global order in 2030?
- What will be the new institutional framework of a shifting global order (which sees tensions between the Western-led, neo-liberal, multilateral institutions and emerging parallel institutions)?

Key Variables

THE RELEVANCE OF BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS: A weakening of the existing order due to the decline of Western power, which leads to an emergence of new actors (the rise of parallel/competing institutions, such as the New Development Bank[1], the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, or the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement).

RACE TO MEET RESOURCE DEMANDS (FOOD, WATER AND ENERGY): Potential conflicts fueled by competition for resources, movement of people, disruptive technology, climate change, the growing role of multinational companies, etc., leading to contagion and spillover effects.

IMPLICATIONS OF DOMESTIC POLITICS IN THE G20 COUNTRIES: 'Black swan' leaders, changing national policy, and dissent over existing orders fuels nationalism/populism – with spillover effects domestically, regionally, and internationally.

TECHNOLOGY AS A MAJOR DISRUPTER: Big data, artificial intelligence, robotics, and drones contribute to both the diffusion and centralization of power, depending on domestic contexts.

DECLINING DOMINANCE OF THE US ECONOMY: The decline of the US dollar as a reserve currency, the rise of alternative systems (such as the China International Payment System, China Union Pay, and cryptocurrencies), the rise of new financial centers and credit rating companies (e.g., the Universal Credit Rating Group).

1 See https://www.ndb.int/

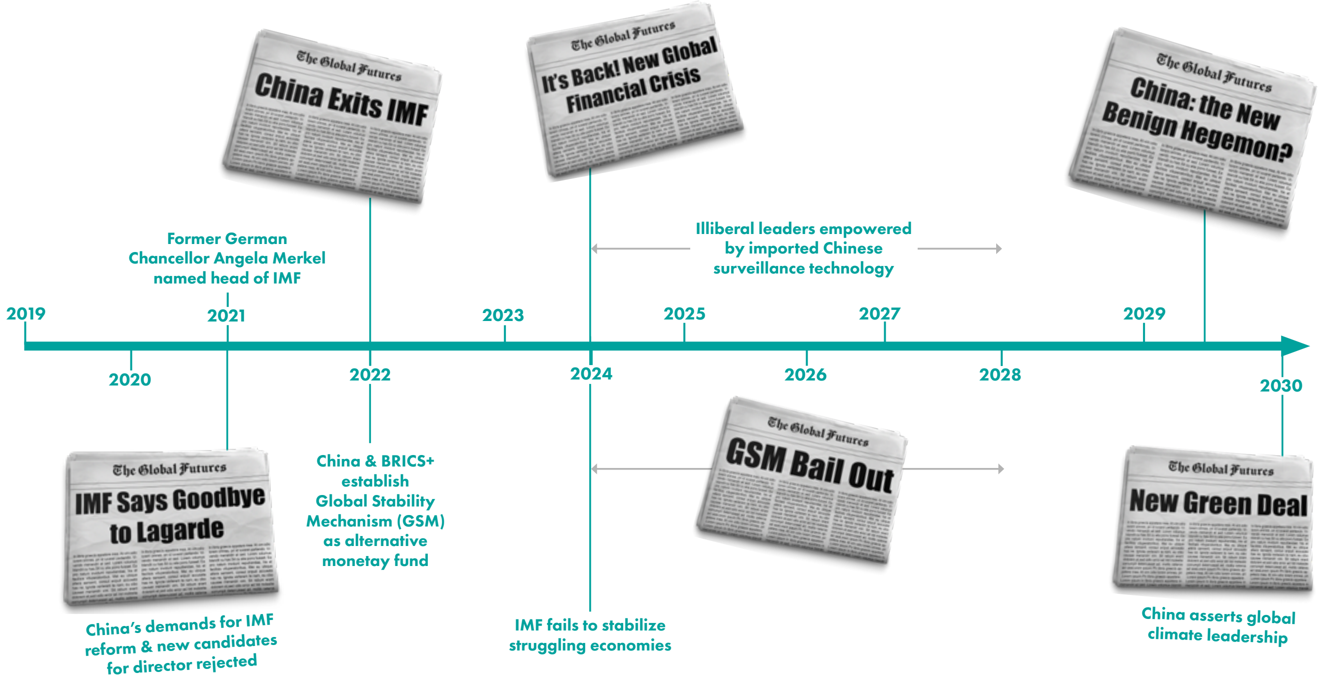
Scenario 1: The Aftermath of China's Death Kiss to the IMF and the Dawn of a New Bipolar Order

A China-led versus US-led political and economic order emerges in 2030: China is viewed as the world's economic and financial center,[2] as well as the leader in fighting climate change, spearheading the New Global Green Deal negotiations. It all started in the early 2020s, when China exited the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Like-minded countries and distressed economies followed its exit, and joined the China-led monetary fund: the Global Stability Mechanism (GSM). With China creating its own parallel set of global institutions, there was further decline of Bretton Woods institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

But GSM loans were handed out without strict governance conditionalities, which in turn empowered illiberal regimes and authoritarian leaders throughout these regions. In parallel, the Chinese were successful in spreading their governance model based on tech-authoritarianism combined with a state-led capitalist system.

2 Enda Curran, January 8, 2019, 'These Could Be The World's Biggest Economies by 2030,' *Bloomberg*, available at https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-01-08/world-s-biggest-economies-seen-dominated-by-asian-ems-by-2030?cmpid%3D=socialflow-twitter-economics&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_content=economics&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social

As a response to China's rising economic and political dominance, the US pressured its allies to choose sides. But the US-led attempt failed as the relationship between the US and its allies had been severely damaged by years of volatile and reckless US international policy under the Trump era.



History of the Future

China's exit from the IMF, which took place in 2022, and the emergence of a bipolar political and economic order resulted from a decade-long dispute between China and the US over the global economic governance structure. In the years prior to 2022, China's economic power became stronger and more influential, with its share of global GDP rising significantly.[3] China's corporations active[4] in key strategic sectors, such as high-tech, IT, data management, and the 'green economy', have been the domestic drivers pushing the Chinese government to forge ahead with its dominance of the global financial system. Leveraging its growing economic influence, China demanded significant reforms to the IMF's structure, including a revised quota system, changes to the candidates considered for the job of the body's director, and a change in its assistance programs to rely less on market-based reforms and equal treatment. However, the Chinese demands were repeatedly rejected by key IMF member states, most notably the US.

3 Statista, 2019, 'China: share of global gross domestic product (GDP) adjusted for purchasing-power-parity (PPP) from 2012 to 2023,' available at https://www.statista.com/statistics/270439/chinas-share-of-global-gross-domestic-product-gdp/

4 European Chamber of Commerce in China, 2017, 'China Manufacturing 2025,' available at http://docs.dpaq.de/12007-european_chamber_cm2025-en.pdf

Although China managed to come out stronger from the trade war started in 2018[5] by former President Trump (through further diversifying its market access and ensuring a greater role for the Yuan in global trade), the commercial dispute further enhanced the economic and political animosity between the US and China. In reaction to the trade war, China reduced its holdings of US treasuries, which in turn decreased its economic exposure to the US dollar. Combined with that, a number of initiatives have been implemented to decrease the dollar's dominance (such as an alternative to the SWIFT payment system), which led to the strengthening of the Yuan as an international currency.

In 2021 former German Chancellor Angela Merkel was named Managing Director of the IMF. This nomination was perceived by the Chinese as a major political defeat since Beijing had spent a great-deal of political capital lobbying for a Chinese candidate. The IMF's move symbolized the tipping point in the competition between the US and China over the governance of international financial institutions. Having previously expanded the reach of the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) beyond its founding members (Brazil, India, Russia and South Africa), China chose the 'death kiss option': in 2022, it announced its exit from the IMF as well as the establishment of an alternative monetary fund based on the BRICS CRA, called the Global Stability Mechanism (GSM). By doing so, China not only strengthened an ecosystem of China-centered organizations but it also greatly weakened the role of the Bretton Woods organizations.

In 2021, former German Chancellor Angela Merkel was named Managing Director of the IMF, a nomination that was perceived to be a major political defeat by the Chinese. Source: European Council

5 Dorcas Wong and Alexander Chipman Koty, May 6, 2019, 'The US-China Trade War: A Timeline,' *China Briefing*, available at https://www.china-briefing.com/news/the-us-china-trade-war-a-timeline/

Against the background of major global economic turmoil, a series of like-minded countries and Belt and Road Initiative[6] (BRI)-dependent stakeholders – including a significant share of Latin American nations (Mexico, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Argentina) as well as Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Iran – were the first set of states that agreed to side with China. Over the course of 2022 and 2023 these countries exited the IMF and became members of the GSM. In 2024, a new global financial crisis erupted, driven by global debt unsustainability,[7] a series of ill-conceived financial deregulation policies in the US, super-inflated "Tether's valuation,"[8] and the burst of the cryptocurrencies bubble. The IMF, which was weakened by the exit of countries that followed China, did not have the economic resources or political weight to bail out economies hit hard by the 2024 crisis. The distressed economies – including Brazil, Italy, Spain, South Africa, Nigeria, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia – turned toward China and its GSM for economic assistance.

Starting in 2024 and for the next few years, the GSM bailed out distressed economies without setting a framework of specific conditionalities, such as good political governance, plans for poverty reduction, public account transparency, or improvement of financial operations.

While GSM loans provided short-term financial relief to distressed economies, in the medium-to-long term, the lack of good governance conditionality and social distress strengthened various populist and authoritarian leaders rise to the political scene.

In parallel, Chinese technologies that function as platforms for data collection, surveillance and internal repression were increasingly exported to other illiberal regimes. As a result, these states' leaders have become deeply intertwined with China for their hold on to power. A new, and seemingly effective governance model of tech-authoritarianism and state-led capitalism has emerged, challenging the Western model of liberal democratic market economy.

In retaliation against the new bipolar economic order that emerged after China's exit from the IMF, the US demanded that its allies – among them the UK, Canada, France, Germany, and Japan – refrain from any affiliation with the GSM. Moreover, the US asked that they join forces to counter China through a political and economic containment strategy. Scholars call this dynamic the new 'Velvet Curtain'.

However, disappointed and distrustful of the US after years of volatile and reckless international policy under former President Trump,[9] the allies remained ambiguous and in a hedging policy against or in support of the US and China.

In 2030, China has managed to secure a breakthrough on how it is perceived by outside actors. It announced the so-called New Global Green Deal, which is hailed as one the most important initiatives of the last decade that helps reverse the global warming trend. Domestically, since 2018 China has been making a significant shift towards renewable technologies[10] and low carbon investments. Having been labeled as the top CO2 emitting country in the late 1990s and the 2000s,[11] this shift has been positively acknowledged by Western civil society actors.

The New Global Green Deal, behind which China is the leading force, serves as the positive example that puts into question the US-held idea that China is the adversary of the West and of Western values. By providing investment capacity in renewable technologies[12] and green infrastructures, supported by technologies made and sold by Chinese companies, the narrative has begun to change in favor of China. In 2030, experts are raising the question: is China the new benign hegemon in international affairs, succeeding the United States in providing common goods to the international community?

Since 2018, China has been making a significant shift toward renewable technologies and low carbon investments. Source: Hahaheditor12667 / Wikimedia Commons

6 The World Bank, March 29, 2018, 'The Belt and Road Initiative', The World Bank, available at https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative

7 Matt Phillips and Karl Russell, September 12, 2018, 'The Next Financial Calamity Is Coming. Here's What to Watch,' *The New York Times*, available at https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/09/12/business/the-next-recession-financial-crisis.html

8 Sylvain Ribes, 'Tether's hold on Bitcoin's liquidity: A risk assessment,' *Medium*, https://medium.com/@sylvainartplayribes/tethers-hold-on-bitcoin-s-liquidity-a-risk-assessment-c677c9eb5c3c

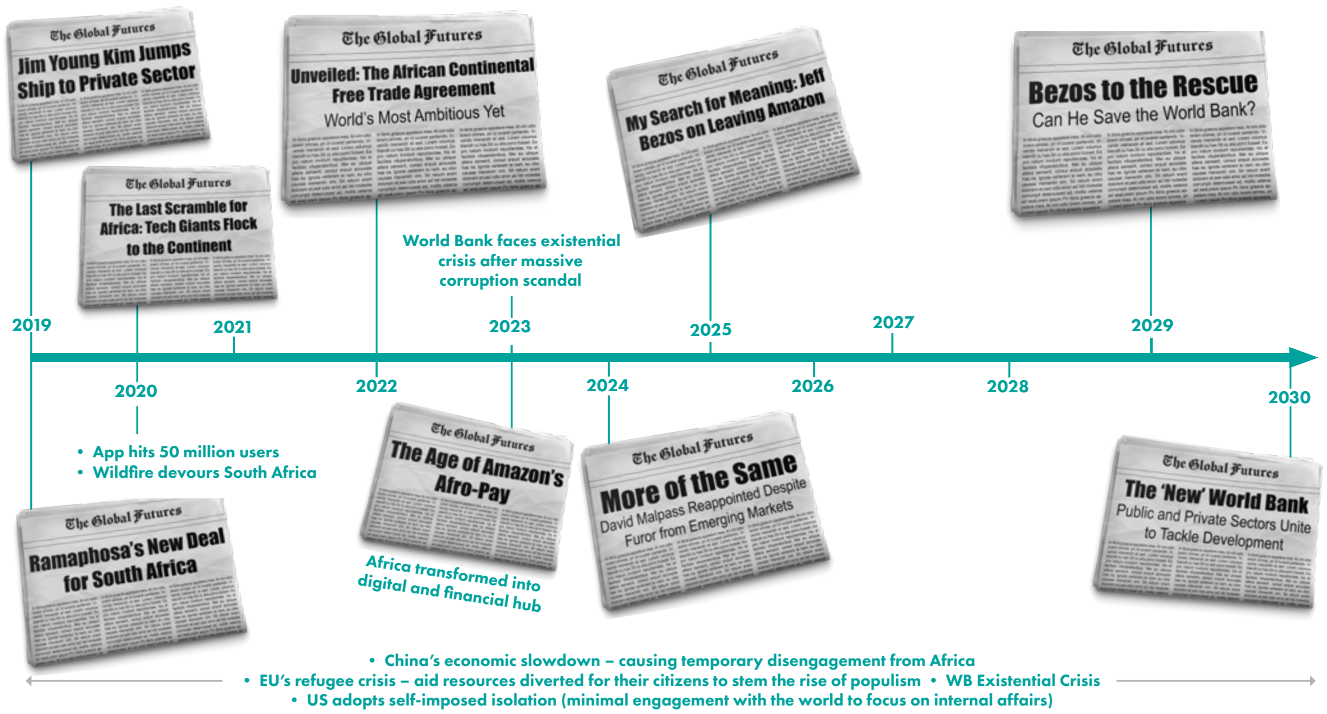
9 Nick Wadhams, David Wainer and Toluse Olorunnipa, September 27, 2018, 'How an Isolated Trump Insulted Allies and Dismissed the World at UN,' *Bloomberg*, available at https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-27/isolated-trump-insults-allies-dismisses-the-world-at-un-meeting

10 Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), January 6, 2017, IEEFA Report: China Set to Dominate U.S. in Global Renewables Boom; $32 Billion in Overseas Investments in 2016 Alone,' IEEFA, available at http://ieefa.org/ieefa-report-china-set-dominate-%E2%80%A8global-renewable-energy-boom-expands-lead-u-s/

11 Robert Rapier, July 1, 2018, 'China Emits More Carbon Dioxide Than The U.S. and EU Combined,' *Forbes*, available at

12 Tim Buckley and Simon Nicholas, 2017, 'China's Global Renewable Energy Expansion,' Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), available at http://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Chinas-Global-Renewable-Energy-Expansion_January-2017.pdf

Scenario 2: A Grand Development Bargain



History of the Future

THE NEW "NEW NORMAL"

The trade war between the US and China has put a significant drag on China's economy. China's GDP growth slowed down from 6.6 percent in 2018[13] to 4.1 percent in 2022. Private consumption, which generated approximately 40 percent of GDP in 2017,[14] decreased by one quarter in 2020 due to the rising price of imported goods and stagnant wages. Following the US mid-term elections in 2018, Democrats took control of the House of Representatives[15] and kicked off a protracted impeachment effort against Trump. The US increasingly withdrew from the world, leaving a huge vacuum in the global order. Dealing with a continuing refugee crisis and in an attempt to stem the rise of populist candidates, European countries decided to cut development aid for Africa by 70 percent, with the funds to be redirected to their own citizens.

AFRICA RISING

Cyril Ramaphosa's election as South Africa's president in 2019 heralded a new era for the country: his radical economic transformation plan, already initiated ahead of his inauguration, created an investment-friendly environment. As South Africa looked to increase its value-added trade profile, it targeted high-tech firms. Google, long having struggled to get a foothold in the country due to the difficult enabling environment and political instability, heralded the new policy as "a big win for the country and the continent" while announcing the opening of its southern global headquarters in Cape Town, and predicted a flood of investment from other global firms into the country and the continent.

At the same time, developments in other parts of Africa spurred further investment from tech giants. The continent had one of the highest rates of connectivity in the world, largely due to its burgeoning youth who are early adopters and heavy users of technology (and whose share of the population had increased by 42 percent in 2030). An innovative, multi-purpose, mobile-based application merging e-commerce, e-payment and other financial and public services on one platform called Wildfire – invented by software developers from Kigali and backed by Google – spread across the continent due to its ease of use. This further facilitated the integration of personal, economic, and social data of the whole continent's population into a single platform. Within a few years, these tech giants were sitting on big data with unparalleled insights into the habits and preferences of nearly every single African who is connected to the internet (at 1.7 billion people, they represent almost 20 percent of the world's population).

In Lagos, a start-up biotech company successfully developed a low-cost technology that reverses declining agricultural productivity in Nigeria, which was Africa's largest rice importer[16] until several years ago. Investment started to pour into Africa from all over the world to tap into this new technology and scale it to a global level.

13 Huileng Tan, January 20, 2019, 'China's economy grew 6.6% in 2018, the lowest pace in 28 years,' *CNBC*, available at https://www.cnbc.com/2019/01/21/china-2018-gdp-china-reports-economic-growth-for-fourth-quarter-year.html

14 Martin Wolf, May 29, 2018, 'Consumption to replace investment as key to China growth,' *Financial Times*, available at https://www.ft.com/content/627ab75c-4256-11e8-97ce-ea0c2bf34a0b

15 BBC, November 7, 2018, 'Mid-term elections: Democrats win House in setback for Trump,' *BBC News*, available at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-46120373

16 Ruth Olurounbi, November 14, 2018, 'Nigeria Seen as Biggest Rice Buyer in 2019, Behind China,' *Bloomberg*, available at https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-11-14/usda-sees-nigeria-rice-imports-increasing-to-3-4m-tons-in-2019

SCENARIO 2: A GRAND DEVELOPMENT BARGAIN

In 2022, President Kenyatta of Kenya, the acting chairman of the African Union, announced the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, allowing for free movement of goods, services, capital, and people across the continent. Migration flow from Africa to Europe slowed down significantly due to new opportunities across the continent. Long suffering from the restrictive nature of trade in goods and services, the private sector welcomed the announcement. The private sector has always viewed African countries as its 'last frontier' with significant future potential growth, considering demographic trends and the sheer size of the continent.

In 2023, Amazon announced the creation of Afro-Pay, an e-payment platform for Amazon's business across Africa. In addition to e-payment technology, Afro-pay also provided credits to its consumers in an effort to increase financial inclusion. Within two years, top e-commerce platforms all over Africa, including Wildfire, Jumia, Kilimall, Takealot, Konga, Bidorbuy, and many brick-and-mortar businesses, began to use Afro-pay as the main form of payment. Africa, the last frontier of global capitalism, had been transformed into the new digital and financial hub of the South.

In Lagos, a start-up biotech company successfully developed a low-cost technology that reverses declining agricultural productivity in Nigeria.

THE WORLD BANK'S EXISTENTIAL CRISIS

In 2019, Jim Young Kim announced his resignation from the World Bank Group (WBG) to join a private infrastructure investment firm, three years ahead of the end of his term. In a note to the staff, Kim mentioned that working with the private sector "is the path through which I will be able to make the largest impact on major global issues like climate change and the infrastructure deficit in emerging markets." Kim's abrupt departure triggered a soul-searching journey for an institution that had long struggled to maintain its legitimacy and relevance within an expanding universe of development banks. His successor, nominated by the Trump administration, lacked broad-based support from key stakeholders. In 2024, despite strong advocacy for substantial reforms in the Bank's internal governance – particularly its voting structure – by China and other developing countries, the Board of Directors re-appointed David Malpass who insisted on doing business as usual.

In 2023, there were a series of unprecedented cyberattacks against the Bank, which resulted in a leak of 20 million confidential documents detailing in myriad ways how top officials at the World Bank had embezzled $100 million in development aid intended for fragile and conflict-affected countries. Faced with unrelenting criticisms and calls for its dissolution, the management of the World Bank Group was determined to ensure that the institution would become relevant again by embarking on the most ambitious reform initiative undertaken in its history.

RISE OF THE TECH TITANS OF DEVELOPMENT

In 2020, Jeff Bezos announced the establishment of the Amazon Foundation with an initial endowment of $75 billion, making it the largest private foundation in the world. Bezos, in his announcement, highlighted the ongoing big data revolution on the African continent, which could be harnessed to generate actionable insights for public goods, as a key driver for this initiative.

"Tech companies are sitting on a mountain of big data that has the potential to transform Africa into a poster child of what's possible when development is driven by big data. Previous development efforts have failed partly because of the lack of big data. The big data now driving the strategies and operations of most global value chains is the missing link that will turbocharge development impacts by ensuring development interventions are tailor-made and laser-focused." The amount of available digital data was projected to increase by 40 percent annually. This approach stood in stark contrast to the one-size-fits-all development policy prescriptions employed by many multi- and bilateral development partners.

The Amazon Foundation was focused on ensuring financial inclusion for the poor in Africa. For example, in 2025 real-time feedback from users of Afro-pay (such as late payment or default) in Lagos provided the Foundation with early warning on financial distress among its consumers, which enabled it to provide relevant assistance just in time. The success of this new development model led other mega private foundations (such as Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative and Google Foundation) to flock to Africa in the ensuing years. These tech foundations were acutely aware that ensuring Africa's prosperity and continued development was in line with their strategic interests (and those of their corporate parents). A prosperous Africa was not only an effective public relations campaign but also a necessary precondition for their corporate parents' bottom line. Having noticed the outsized role of these new titans of development, the African Union unveiled a new Public-Private Partnership for Development to pool the resources of these private foundations under a common development agenda.

NEW WINE IN AN OLD BOTTLE

At the World Bank's Spring Meeting in 2030, Jeff Bezos, the WBG's new president who retired from Amazon in his quest for a new challenge, announced that a major reform proposal that was submitted to the Board of Governors a year later had been unanimously approved. The Bank's Articles of Agreement, which were last amended in 1989, divides the majority power between governments and the private sector, both of which constitute a supermajority. No major decisions can be undertaken without the consent of either party. All powers of the Bank are vested in the Board of Governors, who delegate its duties to 25 Executive Directors: 12 directors shall represent member countries, 12 directors shall represent the private sector, and 1 director shall represent non-governmental civil society. Bezos, as quoted by the *Washington Post*, said: “Development without big data is impossible. To truly make an impact, the public and private sectors need to be an equal partners, not an estranged couple.”

The five largest sovereign shareholders (calculated as a share of capital contributions) each appoint an executive director, while other member countries are represented by executive directors elected every five years. The private sector provides an equal amount of capital contribution with member countries, thus effectively doubling the WBG’s capital. The five largest capital contributors from the private sector (led by the tech companies) each appoint an executive director while the remaining executive directors will be elected by the remaining private sector representatives. The civil society representative acts to provide checks and balances while ensuring the interests of other relevant stakeholders are taken into account. The executive director representing civil society organizations is elected by all participating civil society organizations at five year intervals.

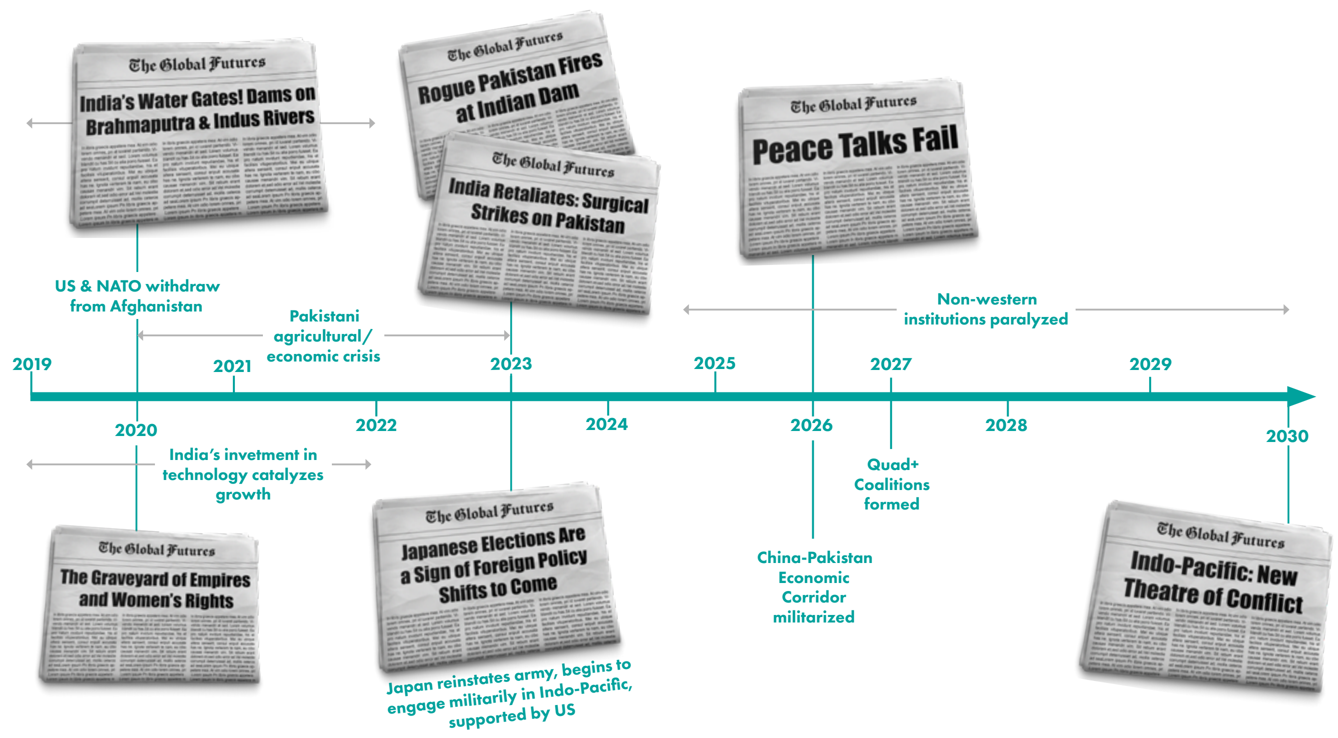
For the first time in the history of the Bank, the private sector is on an equal footing with governments in driving the development agenda. The ‘New’ World Bank Group has been reborn with the scale, capacity, and resources to match its ambition.

The Bargain

	Private Sector (Led by Tech Companies)		World Bank
+	Access to WBG Policymaking	+	Access to Big Data
+	Prestige & Legitimacy	+	Bigger Development Impact
−	Data Sharing	−	Board Seats

Scenario 3: The Indo-Pacific and the New Great Game

In this scenario, we foresee a clear shift toward militarization and conflict across Asia due to uncertain patterns of economic, political, and military multi-polarity, combined with a divergence in opinion on the ‘appropriate’ distribution of power in the region and multilateral fora. The traditional alliance system is challenged, with fewer treaty-based, legally binding agreements and a proliferation of makeshift security, political, and economic relationships. Water conflict in South Asia turns up the heat on a new great game with Asian countries (e.g., the India-Pakistan nexus, China, and Japan) as the primary protagonists.



The Indo-Pacific is a Military Theater for the India-China Rivalry

Investments in cybersecurity, combined with accelerated domestic development and overseas investments in raw commodities across Africa has made India the world's second largest economy, after China. From Bangalore to Hyderabad, Mumbai to Chennai, India has harnessed tech hubs to drive growth, expand jobs, and increase access to education and healthcare, as well as become the global pioneer of technological innovations in the defense sector. China's domestic growth rate has slowed but its overseas investments, particularly in construction, have sustained economic growth and domestic consumption. With the increased economic parity between India and China, regional tensions flare and each country's involvement in third countries in the Indo-Pacific lead to military standoffs, such as over water disputes in Pakistan and China's military use of the port in Sri Lanka. An arms race between China and India has escalated, both in cyberspace and conventional arms.

Stalemate of 'Reformed' Multilateral Institutions

After significant lobbying efforts, India assumed a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council – as have Germany, Brazil and Japan. The so-called G4 nations supported each other's bids for a permanent seat, with the support of the United Kingdom, France, Russia, and the United States. They also fractured the so-called Uniting for Consensus coalition, once composed of regional rivals to the G4. India has also significantly increased its quotas in Bretton Woods Institutions, not enough to block votes on its own, but enough to align with other countries to block projects proposed by China in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). In the IMF, India increased from three percent of all voting shares in 2019 to ten percent in 2023, thus reducing the shares of countries in Europe (Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Poland) and the Western Hemisphere (Canada, the Caribbean Islands, and even the United States – though the US remains the largest single shareholder). As a result of the more inclusive governance, as well as the regional rivalries concentrated in Asia, international institutions and multilateral negotiations result in more acrimony than achievements. Growing distrust between India and China paralyzes even non-Western blocs, such as the New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Opportunities for consensus are limited to those few geographic areas and issue areas that fall outside their respective spheres of interest.

Balancing Powers

A preponderance of power concentrated in either India or China's hands threatens the economic and security interests of high-income countries, each of which pursue piecemeal negotiations and partnerships on a case-by-case basis. Accordingly, the United States, Australia, Japan, France, and other countries in the European Union (especially Germany) have prioritized continued parity between China and India. In lieu of multilateral fora, bilateral engagements and military exercises among a narrow sub-group of countries like the Quad 4 (Japan, Australia, the US, and India), have become the primary modus operandi of cooperation. Simultaneously, other groups of countries have emerged (like China, Russia, Pakistan, and Iran). Outside the Indo-Pacific, the United States, the European Union, Japan, and India engage in joint 'development cooperation' projects across sub-Saharan Africa, which often yield more publicity than concrete results when compared to Chinese investments. Meanwhile, Russia has searched for opportunities to partner with India or China to secure new energy and defense contracts for Russia's own state-owned companies. Russia acts in concert and competition with the United States, the European Union, Australia, and Japan (who also compete against one another). Despite their former roles on the world stage, as well as their continued political and economic strengths, the United States, the EU and Russia display neither the capacity nor the political will to play a decisive role in resolving the proxy conflicts that flare in Asia, given the critical roles of India and China.

History of the Future

Pakistan secured economic and military assistance from China, and Beijing has entered the India-Pakistan nexus by 2030. China formalized its security partnership with Pakistan in 2026, thereby militarizing an economic partnership, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). With Chinese boots on the ground, Pakistan called for – and received – greater investment in construction from China; enclave cities of skyscrapers emerge in Pakistan's remote southwestern province of Balochistan. (As many of these skyscrapers lack occupants, a Pakistani woman publishes a novel about the province's new "Ghost Cities" before being exiled to London.) To stabilize the region for further development, China has engaged in trilateral cooperation with Pakistan and defense initiatives in Afghanistan, filling the void left by the United States as it withdraws from the region's most conflict-ridden areas. In 2023, a rogue Pakistani group attacked Indian dams on its eastern border, ostensibly to secure the water necessary for farming. In response, India conducted narrow, surgical attacks along Pakistan's borders. For the preceding three years, an extended drought combined with a financial crisis paralyzed Pakistan's agriculture, the second largest sector of its economy. Between 2019 and 2022, India built elaborate dams on the Indus River, upon which Pakistan's agriculture depends, thus compromising the Indus Water Treaty[17] that had secured a fragile peace since 1960. At the same time, China has sponsored and built dams on the Brahmaputra River, which originates on the northern side of the Himalayas in Tibet and flows through China, India and Bangladesh. To halt the escalation of conflict over water resources across the region, the World Bank (which brokered the original Indus Water Treaty) advocated for a

17 See https://www.britannica.com/topic/Indus-Waters-Treaty

renewed treaty and peace talks between the Pakistan and India, but all attempts failed by 2026. *The Times of India* and *Dawn* repeatedly publish articles entitled "Water Wars," warning of imminent nuclear escalations, as well as the dire environmental consequences of the dams on the agriculture (and economies) of South Asia.

To fulfill his pledge during his re-election campaign, newly re-elected President Trump drew down the US presence and NATO investments in Afghanistan in 2020. Widespread intra-tribal violence and violence against women and girls in that country has escalated. *The New York Times* published Nicholas Kristof's column on Afghanistan entitled, "The Graveyard of Empires & Women's Rights." As part of "regional rebalancing," and to encourage India to play a more active role in Afghanistan, President Trump, with Russia's support, agreed to increase India's voting shares in the World Bank and IMF; both countries advocated for and secured India's permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, as well as the other members of the G4 (Germany, Brazil and Japan).

After securing a coveted seat on the UN Security Council, Japan's newly elected government in 2023 succeeds in abolishing the restrictions on its military. Diverse political parties – the Liberal Democratic Party, the Japan Restoration Party, the Democratic Party, the People's New Party, and Your Party – worked together to amend Article 9 of the constitution by leveraging popular anxiety over China's expanding military and economic presence through the Belt and Road Initiative, particularly Chinese investments in South Asia. With support from its closest ally, the United States, Japan has proactively engaged in military operations across the Indo-Pacific region and strengthened security partnerships among so-called Quad nations. Based on these emergent security ties, makeshift Quad+Coalitions formed in 2027; France often invites Germany and other members of the European Union to participate in joint exercises. Even as India formally maintains its 'non-alignment' posture, the Quad+Coalition does not engage in combat but does conduct joint military exercises in the Indian Ocean, from Djibouti to Timor-Leste. Amid a public backlash to Chinese investments in sub-Saharan Africa, India also sought to partner with select Quad+ countries to secure lucrative contracts to natural resources. In 2025, Sri Lanka's *Daily Times* ran an article entitled, "India Signals to China Across the Bow."

From 2019 until 2030, India has worked with European countries and Japan to block any World Bank projects involving Chinese state-owned construction firms, while China continues to veto India-sponsored resolutions in the United Nations. Governance reforms have simultaneously increased participation but curtailed opportunities for consensus; the United States and European countries question the value and effectiveness of multilateral fora. In turn, high-income and low-income countries alike bandwagon with China and India on a case-by-case basis, signing limited bilateral defense and trade agreements. In order to describe their continued relevance but increasingly peripheral roles in the Indo-Pacific, analysts describe the USA, the EU (and its member countries) and Russia as 'balancing powers'.

From Scenarios to Policy Projects

Scenarios are used to make possible future developments imaginable and to define the plausible range of what could happen. Foresighting the futures of global order – however interesting and insightful – was not an end in itself. Our ultimate aim was to create concrete policy projects which prepare for the future by avoiding or mitigating future threats and working towards realizing opportunities that are not yet clearly visible. Our policy projects are ideas about how to make policy intervention happen by identifying key sponsors, partners, and resources, and creating the political mobilization to make change happen.

Policy Project 1: Cape Town Safer Tech Initiative

The deliverable of this policy project is the Safer Tech Index, a governance index for the good use of technology, a new and innovative global monitoring and measuring tool.

Intervention

As a first step, the project proposes the establishment of the Safer Tech Initiative, led and managed by a coalition of three powerful foundations (the Musk Foundation, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, and the Obama Foundation). The mandate of this coalition is aligned with the core missions of the three groups:

› **The Musk Foundation** (created in 2002) is respected for science and engineering education.
› **The Mo Ibrahim Foundation** (created in 2006) is already recognized for the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, and focuses on good governance in Africa;
› **The Obama Foundation** (created in 2014) focuses on next generation education and global challenges.

Partners

The initiative also relies on support from a broad group of stakeholders: like-minded states, NGOs, think tanks, universities, leading tech companies, innovative start-ups, and venture capital funds.

Examples of key partners in each category are:

› **States** (France, the US, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Australia, Singapore, South Africa, Colombia);
› **NGOs** (Privacy International, Transparency International, Influence Watch);
› **Think Tanks** (The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Council on Foreign Relations, Brookings Institute, Centre for European Policy Studies);
› **Tech companies** (Microsoft, Google, Apple, Facebook, IBM);
› **Start-ups** (Ever AI, Faceter);
› **Venture Capital funds** (Charles River Ventures (CRV), Qualcomm Ventures, Sequoia, Tencent Holdings).

As a second step, a group of multi-stakeholder actors (political, private, and civil society) participate in the Safer Tech Convention, held in Cape Town. The convention is organized and funded by the three foundations and major tech companies.

The primary goal of the convention is to raise awareness of the issue, at a global scale, and create a set of incentives for states to adopt shared standards and best practices for the good use of technologies.

Moreover, the Cape Town Convention represents a 'Track 1.5' dialogue platform to discuss parameters for the good use of technology and to lay the groundwork for the development of a new global governance index on the good use of technology.

As a third step, the Safer Tech Initiative creates the **Tech Intelligence Unit**, composed of an independent group of world-leading technology experts and scholars. The group is responsible for producing and publishing the annual Safer Tech Index.

While the purpose of the index is new and innovative, its general structure and framework is based on existing models of governance indexes, such as the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators.[18]

Deliverables

The Safer Tech Index becomes the global reference measuring and evaluating states' governance on the good use of technology within a short period of time. As such, it plays the role of a global standard for the good governance of the use of technology. And although a few illiberal democracies contest its validity and relevance, the Safer Tech Index serves as a key reference point and is included in countries' ratings.

Moreover, the index serves as an important incentive for states' policymakers to develop policies that encourage the good use and governance of technologies at a domestic level. By doing so, states meet their goals in being highly rated in the Safer Tech Index.

The Tech Intelligence Unit also provides capacity-building trainings in several countries for the good governance of the use of technology, establishing a scholarship scheme for public servants and students from interested countries to apply so they can pursue academic projects on subjects relevant to this field.

18 See https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#home

INTERVENTION	SAFER TECH INITIATIVE led by coalition of global foundations >> TECH INTELLIGENCE UNIT
DELIVERABLES	SAFER TECH CONVENTION SAFER TECH INDEX (published annually) CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME
OUTCOMES	RAISED AWARENESS INCENTIVE TO DEVELOP POLICIES THAT ENCOURAGE GOOD USE & GOVERNANCE OF TECHNOLOGY
IMPACT	BETTER USE & IMPROVED GOVERNANCE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Cape Town Safer Tech Initiative in a nutshell.

Policy Project 2: Democratizing Policymaking at the World Bank Group Through Diversity

This policy project is designed to capitalize on the opportunity to revitalize the Bretton Woods institutions (particularly the World Bank Group) through a more inclusive management structure and more democratic policy-making. Management reform of the World Bank is critical to increase the representation of low- and middle-income countries within the Bank's staff composition in order to reshape the Bank into a more inclusive, accountable and responsive institution that better reflects the changing global order.

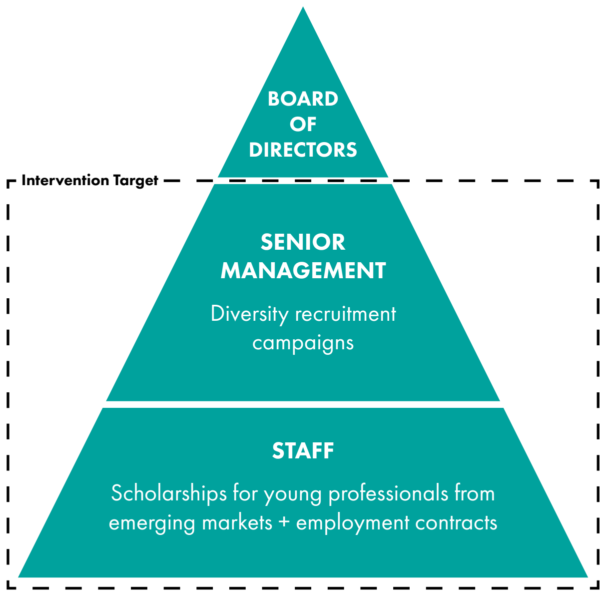
Objectives

Reform of the World Bank Group (WBG) has long been a contentious issue. Middle and low-income countries have been seeking greater representation and influence in the Bank's lending and development policy making since they are the Bank's core clients and therefore most affected by its decision-making.[19] Yet, previous reform efforts have been hampered by political economy

19 The New York Times Editorial Board, May 17, 2015, 'Past Time to Reform Bretton Woods,' the New York Times, available at https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/17/opinion/sunday/past-time-to-reform-bretton-woods.html

constraints within the Bank: countries owning the largest voting shares (and thereby policymaking power) within the institution have been reluctant to cede control to other member countries since doing so could potentially undermine their strategic interests. However, failure to reform the institution will further alienate the Bank from its core clientele, rendering the institution irrelevant, and will ultimately threaten its sustainability.

Many of the WBG's reform proposals have been aimed at its governance structure, voting power allocation, and capital contribution. Due to entrenched interests and intense politicization, many of these proposals have not had much success. This policy project is aimed at increasing the representation of middle and low-income countries within the Bank staff to foster a more inclusive, accountable and responsive institution that better reflects its client base without amendments to its governance structures. Contrary to other reform proposals, this policy project will focus on affecting change at the Bank at the senior management and staff level, rather than at the board level. This intervention will be financed by a multi-donor trust fund sponsored by developing countries paired with a matching contribution from the Bank's budget and is two-fold:



› **Middle of the pyramid:** Launch diversity recruitment campaigns for senior management (manager-level and above) with a target of increasing the percentage of managers from emerging markets (particularly from Sub-Saharan Africa) from 43 percent in 2018 to 60 percent by 2025.

› **Bottom of the pyramid:** Provide scholarships for young professionals and recent graduates from emerging markets to acquire a postgraduate degree at their top national and regional universities combined with an employment contract with the Bank.

Intervention

Promoting change at this scale requires a sustained commitment from the top, which involves securing buy-in from the Bank's board of directors, president, and senior management. Its implementation will also require establishing a solid partnership between key stakeholders, such as the Bank's human resources (HR) vice-presidency unit, its staff association, the WBG's country offices, and developing countries' finance/central bank ministries. The Bank has undergone major internal reforms that were primarily imposed from the top and resulted in discontent, mistrust, and resistance from staff. To avoid a similar fate, the board, led by senior management, should conduct a genuine consultation process with key stakeholders to create an effective implementation strategy, which ideally will include a thorough review of current HR policies and practices, SMART (specific, measurable, agreed-upon, realistic, and time-based) targets, concrete diversity parameters (nationalities, gender and skills), and an annual monitoring and evaluation process.

Partners

The approach to implementing this policy project is three-pronged: first, directly engaging with key policy makers at the WBG; second, identifying and partnering with natural allies within the Bank (e.g., the staff association); and thirdly, raising awareness through public advocacy.

Key policymakers at the World Bank Group: Several of the Bank's executive directors, representing countries that are more naturally inclined to support the proposed changes and put forward the proposal to the Board, should be strategically engaged. Potential executive directors will include those representing Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) and Scandinavian countries – all of whom have generally supported reform efforts within the WBG in the past.

World Bank Group staff association: The Bank's staff association will be a key partner in promoting the proposal internally.

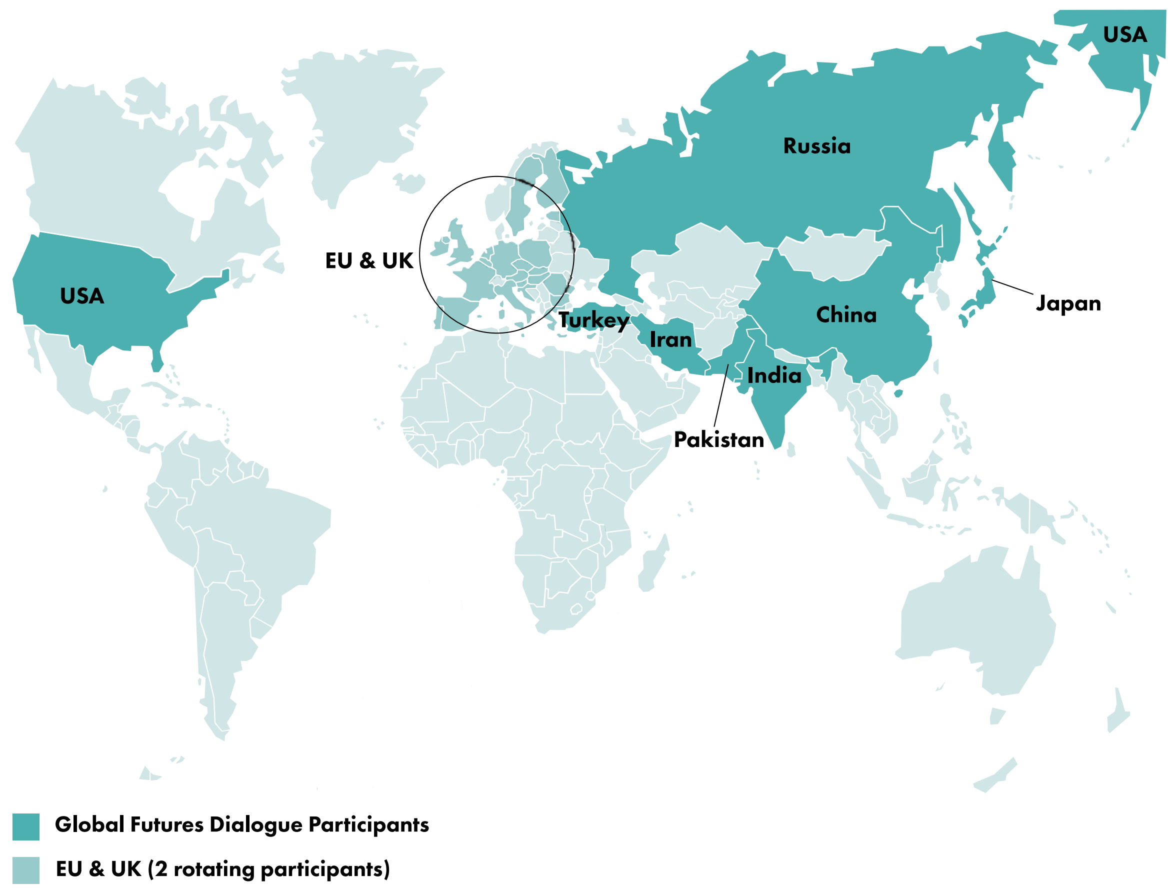
Public advocacy: The policy proposal will be disseminated to the relevant audience in the public sphere (through policy papers and op-eds) to establish a coalition among external stakeholders, such as civil society, academics, and the media, who will then pressure the institution from the outside and promote this proposal.

Proposed management reform of the World Bank Group in a nutshell.

Policy Project 3: Global Futures Dialogue

This policy project is designed to mitigate the threat of sub-regional conflicts with global spillover effects, which exacerbate disagreements over power distribution on the world stage. More concretely, the project addresses the risk of conflict between India and Pakistan triggered by environmental factors (water scarcity), which would require a sustained engagement with key global players (such as Iran, Russia, the EU, and the US). A critical missing link to prevent or minimize such conflict is trust and social capital among diverse actors relevant to the regional conflict in South Asia, who currently lack opportunities to engage.

This policy project aims to create an annual, multilateral dialogue platform among emerging leaders from government, the private sector, academia, and non-governmental organizations, organized by an independent, non-profit think tank with financial support from diverse funding sources. The aim is to bring together young leaders from countries that carry considerable weight on the global stage but currently interact with each other in limited, narrow ways. The Global Futures Dialogue (GFD) policy project will be a platform facilitating dialogue among emerging voices from conflicting countries and sub-regional groups, which directly impact the global order. Participating countries should include: China, India, Iran, Japan, Pakistan, Russia, Turkey, the United States, and two countries selected from across the European Union and United Kingdom. Initial topics could include: climate change, humanitarianism, and natural resource management.



The Global Futures Dialogue (GFD) policy project will be a platform facilitating dialogue among emerging voices from conflicting countries and sub-regional groups, which directly impact the global order.

Objectives

1. **Cultivate dialogue on pressing geopolitical issues among ten countries that lack track I and II level engagements.** The professional network will help mitigate the threats of mistrust born of **limited people-to-people ties** between significant, relevant countries across volatile geographic regions. In theory, building these connections will reduce the likelihood of conflict in the future, by creating more obstacles and voices advocating for peace and caution before violence erupts. Currently, there are insufficient voices within the participating societies advocating for cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution across the countries in question, particularly pertaining to natural resources.
2. **Empower diverse young leaders with concrete forecasting tools to apply future cooperation on issues of shared concern.** Young leaders will draw on their GFD experiences to influence foreign policy, if not in the immediate time frame, then in the long term. This may not be quantitatively or readily apparent.

A Pakistani fellow may pick up the phone to have a conversation with an Indian fellow in a moment of crisis, or a Swedish fellow may apply forecasting tools to consider the potential consequences of a tense multilateral negotiation on the Arctic.

3. **Provide professional development opportunities to cultivate concrete skillset of growing importance**, including: communication (oral and written); intercultural engagement; and problem-solving. Young leaders will be able to exert greater influence in their respective societies if they refine these skills. Partners in Iran, Turkey, China, or Pakistan may be reluctant to support any dialogue with the select countries, but framing the dialogue as a professional development opportunity – as opposed to an official exchange of ideas – could encourage diverse actors to participate.

Format

Over the course of four week-long dialogue sessions in five countries, thirty fellows in GFD will form three working groups focused on natural resource management, green technology, and climate change negotiations. Consistent with past practice, the fellows will meet in four dialogue sessions, where they will have the opportunity to challenge each other, exchange ideas with experts and policymakers, and develop scenarios of the future of global governance. The three GFD working groups will each be supported by a senior fellow who will mentor the fellows by providing expert input and analysis, acting as an intellectual sparring partner, and help translate scenarios into policy relevant outputs. Each year, the organizers will identify four cities in four countries to host the fellows.

Partners

The program will rely upon think tanks, universities, multinational companies, and media houses as partners to recruit participants. These partners will also provide venues, bring in expert views, plan activities for the fellows, and provide a platform for the exchange of ideas. Moreover, multinational companies and foundations interested in global issues and peace initiatives may be interested in financially supporting the dialogue – **including, for example, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Gates Foundation, the Clinton Foundation, the Obama Foundation, the World Bank Group, and the Tata Group.** For its inaugural session, GFD can learn from best practices from the Global Governance Futures dialogue, as well as solicit ideas, projects, and applicants from the alumni network.

Proposed Dates

Inaugural dialogue: 2021-2022 Global Futures Dialogue 2031 (Japan, Turkey, Germany, India)

Follow-up dialogues: 2022-2023 Global Futures Dialogue 2032 (Spain, China, USA, Pakistan); 2023-2024 Global Futures Dialogue 2033; 2024-2025 Global Futures Dialogue 2034; 2025-2026 Global Futures Dialogue 2035

INTERVENTION	ANNUAL MULTILATERAL DIALOGUE PROGRAM AMONG EMERGING LEADERS
OUTCOMES	EXPANDED, SUBSTANTIAL ENGAGEMENT AMONG DIVERSE RELEVANT ACTORS
IMPACT	REDUCED THREAT OF SUB-REGIONAL CONFLICTS WITH GLOBAL SPILLOVER EFFECTS

The Global Futures Dialogue in a nutshell.

Methodology

What are the most pressing global challenges in the coming decade that we need to think about today in order to avoid surprises, mitigate risks, and make use of opportunities? In search of the answers, GGF fellows collaborate in developing new and better ways to think about a future that they themselves will help to shape.

The GGF method supports the fellows in this ambitious task by providing an intellectually challenging framework that enables structured communication and rigorous thinking. The fellows use a variety of strategic foresight instruments, including scenario planning and risk assessment, to constantly create a better understanding of future challenges. GGF fellows combine their insights on possible future developments with their distinct normative convictions about the shape and role of global governance.

The GGF method provides a platform for intercultural exchange. Fellows are exposed to different national and professional viewpoints. They can safely challenge one another's ideas while reflecting on their own assumptions, and they can learn about the strategic interests, options, and opportunities for policymaking for uncertain futures. The results reflect the shared understanding between nine countries and five world regions, while at the same time highlighting the divergences that global governance must overcome in order to jointly confront global challenges.

At the end of the program, GGF fellows are encouraged to turn the knowledge they have gathered over the course of their GGF experience into individual and/or collaborative products that provide recommendations to policymakers at the national and international levels.

Working Process

To better understand a wide range of global policy challenges of the future, GGF fellows divide into three working groups, each examining a particular topic. The fellows of GGF 2030, the latest round of GGF, looked ahead to the year 2030, focusing on the futures of global order, of global migration and refugees crises, and of the role of cities in global governance. The working process was structured in four parts and corresponded to the four GGF dialogue sessions that took place in five of the GGF participating countries in 2018 and 2019. During each session, the fellows engaged in intense discussions within their respective working groups, participated in workshops with experts, and conducted meetings and interviews with policymakers, academics, and private sector representatives.

Acknowledg-ments

GGF is made possible by a broad array of dedicated supporters. The program was initiated by GPPi, along with the Robert Bosch Stiftung. The program consortium is composed of academic institutions, foundations, and think tanks from across the nine participating countries. The core responsibility for the design and implementation of the program lies with the GGF program team at GPPi. In addition, GGF relies on the advice and guidance of the GGF steering committee, made up of senior policymakers and academics. The program is generously supported by the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

FELLOWS OF THE FUTURES OF GLOBAL ORDER WORKING GROUP

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