

**2009 GPPN Student Conference**  
**CRISIS AS OPPORTUNITY**  
**What Policies Do We Need for Sustainable Development Today?**

Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy  
National University of Singapore  
Singapore | 11-13 November 2009



**CONCEPT PAPER**

The world is facing a multitude of crises today. One is the worst financial and economic crisis in recent decades: what began as a housing bubble in the United States has now spread over sectoral and geographical boundaries into the global economy, dampening both worldwide growth and employment prospects. Another crisis, largely due to the overuse of finite natural resources, looms on the environmental front: climate change and global warming endangers ecosystems, natural and human habitats, and the livelihood of millions of people. Finally, a demographic crisis – UN world population estimates range between 8 and 10 billion people by 2050, from just over 6 billion people today – places further stress on energy resources, food and water supply, and questions about poverty, education, and health issues.

***Can we turn this crisis into an opportunity for sustainability?***

The Brundtland Report (as early as 1987) defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In the context of current crises, developing policies ensuring long-term sustainability presents a real challenge. Not only is it difficult to oversee the extent and the depth of each single crisis; the complexities of interrelated challenges on the political, environmental, economic, and social front are not always easy to comprehend.

Policymakers today need to face this array of multifaceted problems, bursting the traditional boundaries of sectoral approaches. The right level of policy formulation and implementation is more difficult to define, considering the increasing impact of local communities and regional activities on global development, and vice versa. The number of stakeholders involved in this process has also increased over the years, including the local and global private sector, and increasingly powerful voices from civil society, NGOs and social entrepreneurs. In the face of truly global problems, international policy negotiations including all of these actors, such as the upcoming COP15 climate conference in Copenhagen, are gaining importance. If this will lead to more sustainability is still widely debated.

The 2009 GPPN Student Conference “**Crisis as Opportunity – What Policies Do We Need for Sustainable Development Today?**” from 11-13 November 2009 invites participants to have a closer look at today’s crises on the political, economic, environmental and social front. This will include understanding the root causes for today’s challenges, what policies are needed both for short-term recovery and long-term sustainability, and what the role of various stakeholders is in the process. Finally, the concept of sustainability itself should be challenged, debated and applied to cases and situations from all over the world, in order to understand what promoting sustainable development in the global context means for today’s policymakers.

The conference’s location in Singapore, as both one of South East Asia’s most important business, education and transportation hubs as well as the setting of this year’s APEC

meeting, presents an excellent opportunity for participants to engage with Asian leaders, policymakers and experts in discussing today's policy issues and share experiences and best practices.

### **Objectives**

- To further participants' understanding on how crisis can be turned into opportunities for sustainable development, through interactions with political leaders, practitioners, academics, and, most importantly, with other interested students.
- To develop innovative and doable policy recommendations and ideas to address global challenges.
- To establish a network for future leaders and public policy students dedicated to being part of the solution to the challenges faced today.

### **Targeted Participants**

Approximately 100 participants will be attending consisting of students and academics of public policy from the Global Public Policy Network (GPPN) – Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (Singapore), London School of Economics (United Kingdom), Columbia University (United States), Sciences Po (France) and Hertie School of Governance (Germany) – and other partner universities such as the University of Tokyo (Japan), Tsinghua University (China), and the University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). A number of prominent public policy figures and leaders from Asia and the world will also be invited to address and debate with the audience; as such, national media coverage can be expected.

### **Expected Output**

- Conference Report – which includes concrete policy recommendations made by participants from each panel discussion.
- Blog or Website – which could serve as a platform for sharing ideas, published work/papers by participants and for online collaboration or discussions prior, during and after the conference.

### **Impact**

- Contribute toward global policy dialogue by creating a platform for students of public policy to exchange ideas and interact with current public policy makers and leaders.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for networking and future collaborations between conference participants, in formal as well as informal alleys.
- Increase the visibility of the GPPN network among relevant public policy stakeholders.
- Become a concrete reference point for future GPPN Student Conferences.

## **Description**

The 2009 GPPN Student Conference “**Crisis as Opportunity: What Policies Do We Need for Sustainable Development Today?**” will be held by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, from 11-13 November 2009.

There will be three plenary sessions on the following dimensions of sustainable development:

- A. **Good Governance as Institutional Sustainability:** Understanding local, state and supranational policy arrangements and their challenges;
- B. **Economic and Environmental Sustainability:** Exploring the possibilities of reconciling rapid economic growth and rising energy needs with the preservation of biodiversity and functioning ecosystems;
- C. **Sustainable Human and Social Development:** Covering topics such as the Millenium Development Goals and the effective delivery of social services, such as water and sanitation, health, and education.

Every plenary session will be followed by two or three simultaneous break-out sessions, consisting of ideally 15-30 participants, where each GPPN partner institution will be allocated with one place to make a presentation on the topic. In these sessions participants can focus on more specific issues related to the plenary session topic. This will be room to present ongoing research, debate various strategies and brainstorm to develop concrete policy recommendations on sustainable approaches to development. Focus should be put on concrete examples of policy formulation and implementation, its evaluation, and opportunities of successful upscaling or replication in other sectors and/or locations. All policy recommendations will be presented in the final plenary session.

Following is an overview of the break-out sessions. We would like to note, though, since this will be a student-led and joint GPPN conference the proposed sessions and discussion questions are tentative. Both the actual sessions as well as their composition will be defined depending on the main interests of participants, as expressed in the summary of their projects handed in during registration.

### **A. Good Governance as Institutional Sustainability**

- **Break-Out Session #1: Global Regimes and Institutional Arrangements**
  - What are examples of important international regimes today? Are existing institutional arrangements effective in promoting sustainable development? Has the international financial regime failed, and how can financial regulation be strengthened? Should it?
  - Are global regimes the right way to address global challenges? What about local, regional, and national stakeholders – from the public, private, and people sector?
  - Can any kind of Copenhagen Consensus be expected? Will it be effective to reverse the trend of increasing greenhouse gas emissions? What is its relevance for international climate protection efforts?

- Break-Out Session #2: Corruption
  - How important is the role of corruption for hindering sustainable development? Or can it help to promote development?
  - What are examples of successful corruption fighting efforts? Do they work on a local, national, or international scale?
  - How can capacity be tapped, strengthened, and built in anti-corruption efforts?
- Break-Out Session #3: Aid Governance
  - What is the current state of Official Development Assistance? Has it failed, as some critics proclaim?
  - Has the Paris Declaration made aid governance more sustainable? Can it? Will it?
  - What about growing players from the non-governmental sectors, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and others?

## **B. Economic and Environmental Sustainability**

- Break-Out Session #4: Sustainable Economics and Energies
  - Is there a need for a “new economics”? What does “sustainable growth” mean today? Does it include environmental externalities? What are the prospects of green growth?
  - How to serve the world’s growing energy needs? What is the “right” energy mix to supply reliable and sustainable energy? How big is the role of renewables?
- Break-Out Session #5: Biodiversity/Ecosystems
  - What are the most urgent biodiversity and natural habitat loss issues to be addressed? What is the role of climate change in this discussion?
  - What policies are needed to prevent further environmental degradation? How likely are carbon market mechanisms going to help in the process?
  - How to combine environmental concerns with economic prerogatives for sustainable growth?
- Break-Out Session #6: Agriculture
  - How to tackle continuing desertification and soil degradation?
  - What is the role of sustainable policies in regulating the agriculture’s immense water needs? What are the technological solutions? What are examples of best practices?
  - Could a more integrated policy, recognizing the connections between agriculture, water, land planning, environmental protection, energy production etc., be implemented to address issues of food and water supply? What would such a policy look like?

## C. Sustainable Human and Social Development

- Break-Out Session #7: Millennium Development Goals
  - What has been reached in regard to the MDGs so far? How likely is reaching the goals by 2015?
  - How sustainable are these goals? Is their focus too wide, too narrow, or just right?
  - What policies would make efforts to achieve the MDGs more effective? Are there actors who need to be more or less involved?
- Break-Out Session #8: Sustainable Cities
  - How can the development of cities be planned more sustainably, regarding the new stresses from expected demographic trends?
  - What are effective examples of reforming supply of public and/or social services, including waste management, water and sanitation, health and education services?
- Break-Out Session #9: Social Entrepreneurs
  - What are successful examples of social entrepreneurship, e.g. Ashoka and others? What kind of goods and services have they successfully supplied?
  - Do they produce especially innovative new solutions, and if yes, what are they? What is the “comparative advantage” social entrepreneurs have?
  - How can social entrepreneurs help to implement sustainable policies? How can policymakers cooperate closer with these new forces for change?

## 2009 GPPN Student Conference

### Crisis as Opportunity:

### What Policies Do We Need for Sustainable Development Today?

11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2009, Singapore

Draft Programme

**GPPN**  
global public policy network

Wednesday, November 11 <sup>th</sup>	
18.00 – 19.00	Welcome Dinner Reception.
19.00 – 21.00	Video Conference with Academics of Columbia University.
Thursday, November 12 <sup>th</sup>	
08.30 – 9.00	Welcome Remarks by Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of LKYSPP.
09.00 – 10.30	<u>Plenary Session 1</u> : Good Governance as Institutional Sustainability. Objective: Understanding local, state and supranational policy arrangements and their challenges.
10.30 – 11.00	Tea break
11.00 – 13.00	Breakout sessions for student's presentations and debate.
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.30	<u>Plenary Session 2</u> : Sustainable Human and Social Development. Objective: Creating awareness on the importance of Millennium Development Goals, the effective delivery of social services, such as water and sanitation, health, and education, and social entrepreneurship.
15.30 – 16.00	Tea break
16.00 – 17.30	Breakout sessions for student's presentations and debate.
18.00	Optional field trip.
Friday, November 13 <sup>th</sup>	
09.00 – 10.30	<u>Plenary Session 3</u> : Economic and Environmental Sustainability. Objective: Exploring the possibilities of reconciling rapid economic growth and rising energy needs with the preservation of biodiversity and functioning ecosystems.
10.30 – 11.00	Tea break
11.00 – 13.00	Breakout sessions for student's presentations and debate.
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.30	Breakout sessions for the elaboration of conference report.
15.30 – 16.00	Tea break
16.00 – 17.30	<u>Plenary Session 4</u> : Reporting Students will present the key points discussed during the breakout sessions.
17.30 – 18.00	Closing Ceremony
18.00 – 20.00	Closing Dinner Reception