

# OXFORD GOVERNMENT REVIEW

NUMBER 1 / AUGUST 2016



CONFERENCE  
ADDENDUM



# CONTENTS

- 5 About the Challenges of Government Conference
- 6 Panel summaries**
- 7 The new geopolitics: is Europe irrelevant? *Ivaylo Iadjiev*
- 8 The collapse of trust in government: will democracy survive? *Dorkina Myrick*
- 9 How to build cohesive and diverse societies *Diptasri Basu*
- 10 A world in crisis? The challenges of Government and leadership lessons *Dominica Zavala*
- 11 Who has the real power in the digital age *Sasha Mathew*
- 12 Can we innovate our way to flatter, faster, smarter Government? *Alice Budisatrijo*
- 13 Innovating to build government in fragile states *Rose Macharia*
- 14 Delivering and implementing Government reform *Alice Budisatrijo*
- 15 Unleashing new forces for good: increasing social impact *Alyssa Fitzpatrick*
- 16 Transforming leadership and performance in the public sector *Sushant Jain*
- 17 Looking ahead: prospects for better Government? *Diptasri Basu*
- 18 Challenges of Government Conference 2016 speaker list

# ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

**T**he Challenges of Government Conference is the Blavatnik School of Government's annual high-level conference.

Since 2011, the Challenges of Government Conference has been bringing together a global, multidisciplinary and cross-sector audience to Oxford. From rapid urbanisation to citizens activism, the Conference brings together the brightest minds in government, the private sector, and academia to discuss policies, strategies, and ultimately real-world solutions to some of the world's toughest challenges.

Our guiding principle is an understanding that all sectors can learn lessons from each other. At the Challenges of Government Conference leading academics, economists, CEOs, government experts and civil society leaders from around the world sit next to the future leaders currently studying at the School.

The 2016 Challenges of Government Conference debated and discussed the reinvention of public policy and of government itself. It centred on government reform, how to best meet citizen's needs, and what can be done to restore integrity and values in government.

This addendum contains summaries of, and key lessons learnt from, the panel discussions which were had over the course of the two days; each has been written by a Master of Public Policy or DPhil in Public Policy student.



## PANEL SUMMARY

# THE NEW GEOPOLITICS: IS EUROPE IRRELEVANT?

IVAYLO IADJIEV

In the best traditions of the Blavatnik School of Government, the conference kicked off with a provocative high-level panel on a topical issue: is Europe irrelevant? At just a month prior to the UK Brexit referendum, this was bound to provoke discussion among participants, who came from a mix of academic disciplines and included policymakers from the national and EU levels. The panel largely focused on the external role of the EU in a global world, and the internal political and economic challenges it currently faces.

In terms of the global context, there was widespread agreement that in the face of globalisation the EU remains a very useful platform for cooperation among governments. As Marietje Schaake, Member of the European Parliament from the Netherlands, pointed out, whatever the internal divisions, Europe should not lose sight of its shared values, and the challenge of preserving the quality of life within Europe in an increasingly competitive geopolitical environment. In particular, she called for a more active global role for the EU, especially in relation to neighbourhood countries, and the pooling of military and defence resources to back up Europe's soft power. Her words were echoed by Baroness Helena Kennedy, Principal of Mansfield College, who warned against Britain and others retreating from their commitments to internationalism as the response to globalization; 21st century challenges, such as migration and climate change, require cooperation, not nationalism. Indeed, as she pointed out, while far-right parties might romanticise the nation-state, the original European vision was to build peace and justice after the excesses of such nation-states led to war and destruction.

However, it was the internal challenges of the EU that stimulated the most debate among the panellists and the audience. Many of the panellists saw the European commitment to an "ever closer union" as going beyond what was necessary, and leading to self-defeating decisions, such as the euro, which has become a straightjacket. This was certainly the view of Professor Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School, according to whom such dreams do not correspond to the structure of identity in Europe. Indeed, he provocatively warned that the fundamental characteristic of failed states is precisely a mismatch between the structure of identities in society and the structure of (centralised) power. From a slightly different perspective, Professor Robert Tombs, Professor of History at the University of Cambridge,



argued that such policies were a result of elite-driven European integration that has downplayed democracy, and which is unlikely to change given the economic need for more integration generated by currency union. These views were not uncontested, as both panellists and audience pointed out that democracy in the EU can and should be enhanced, whereas EU and national identities need not be mutually exclusive. Indeed some questioned whether the EU is being used as a scapegoat by democratic national governments, who are facing troubles delivering on their commitments.

### Key takeaways

Thus, the main takeaways from this session can be summarised as follows:

1. The EU is a highly successful platform for cooperation between governments. Indeed, as challenges increasingly cross borders, it can still serve a positive function in stimulating cooperative solutions.
2. The EU is risking irrelevance through self-inflicted wounds. The euro experiment offers a cautionary tale about for putting economic integration before social preferences or democratic accountability.
3. The EU is at a critical juncture where it needs to re-invent its governance, but the direction of change and its capacity to do so are unclear at present. ●

**Ivaylo Iadjiev**, a DPhil student, who has held positions within the Bulgarian government, studies the impact of the global financial crisis on the politics of financial sector development in emerging markets.

# PANEL SUMMARIES

## PANEL SUMMARY

# THE COLLAPSE OF TRUST IN GOVERNMENT: WILL DEMOCRACY SURVIVE?

DORKINA MYRICK

“70% of national populations surveyed do not trust their governments. Problems such as corruption flourish, which further weaken the fabric of democracy. So how can government leaders rebuild trust, integrity, and values in government?” This was the question posed to Bjarne Croydon, Director of the McKinsey Centre for Government, Dr Heather Marquette, Reader in Development Politics at the School of Government and Society, University of Birmingham, Professor Bo Rothstein, Professor of Government and Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, and Stephan Shakespeare, Chief Executive Officer and Founder at YouGov.

But in order to consider the ways in which government can regain integrity, we must first consider what contributes to a decline in trust, and the reasons why this matters.

Breakdown of trust in government leads to a vicious circle that interferes with government operations. Typically, the cycle begins as a government fails to deliver on promises. These promises could fall into a variety of categories, but are mainly campaign promises associated with service delivery and ensuring a decent, and affordable, standard of living for citizens. This standard of living is typically represented by the availability of jobs that enable citizens to achieve a decent and affordable standard of living, and suitable, affordable housing. The vicious circle occurs due to a lack of trust, lack of accountability, corruption, and/or an inability or failure to remedy these problems due to the initial, inherent lack of trust. Lack of trust occurs in both developing and non-developing nations and across socioeconomic strata.

Citizens in democratic countries are also distrustful of their governments, and often fail to hold them to account. The panellists also discussed possible reasons that have contributed to an apparent crisis in democracy because of government distrust, including increasing visibility of government leaders and their activities, public perception, and the rise of social media.

Finally, they proposed several solutions for problems associated with government distrust:

1. Government should treat their citizens well, providing them with the support they need for a decent quality of life (jobs, housing, economic opportunity).



2. Meritocracy should be the goal, in that people should be afforded the opportunity to earn their success under fair and equal terms. Accordingly, gender equality is a worthy goal toward which all nations must strive to achieve fairness and equality in societies.
3. We should select and train government leaders who are mindful of the people they serve. They should not enter politics or government service for self-serving reasons. Instead, they should ensure that they are genuinely assuming responsibility for the needs of the people they serve. ●

**Dorkina Myrick**, a MPP student, is a physician scientist who has served as a Senior Health Policy Advisor in the United States Senate, and worked in the House of Representatives.

## PANEL SUMMARY

# HOW TO BUILD COHESIVE AND DIVERSE SOCIETIES

DIPTASRI BASU

The concept of diversity is like a double-edged sword, began Nazir Razak, Director of the Board of Directors at Khazanah Nasional Berhad in Malaysia, it is often used to blunt tensions while the edge is sharpened for greater productivity. He highlighted Singapore as a country that manages diversity efficiently, and places it as a top priority within both the public and private sectors. Nazak believes that diverse societies have immense potential, but are difficult to create and hold together as diversity goes against the natural instinct of people – the instinct to choose to interact with someone like themselves. He shared his experience at the bank, where he observed that diverse teams perform better, and therefore as a formal policy, the company has implemented practices to prevent homogenous teams.

However, drawing on a Malaysian example, he noted that 73% of minorities feel that the economic system is unfair; diversity policies have to be constantly reviewed in order to remain relevant. Policies on vernacular schools in Malaysia, which were meant to strengthen community identities, ultimately led to children growing up without any interaction with people from other backgrounds. He therefore stressed the need for a robust legal framework to counter racism, and to unite diverse communities, for the benefit of a unified nation. Finally, he stressed the need to take affirmative action by calling for restrictions on pro-ethnicity or religion-based political parties which seek to divide communities.

Sabariah Hassan, Secretary General for the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development in Malaysia, provided a brief outline of women in politics and government, and the ways in which diversity paves the way for a thriving and motivated community of leaders who are ultimately more creative and effective in nation building.

The former Minister of State Planning and Development Affairs and Member of Parliament in Kuwait, Dr Rola Dashti, contributed a unique personal perspective on the challenges that women in government and politics face; she noted that there is currently only one female Cabinet member in Kuwait. She highlighted that religion plays a large role in hindering women's political rights, fuelled by the dominant mainstream media, education system and cultural practices. Women who dared to exert their political choice or opinion are often labeled as 'agents of the West'; she therefore stressed the need to utilise education to promote women's political



rights. As an elected member of the Kuwaiti Cabinet, she fought a long battle towards having women represented in the judiciary. Dr Dashti finished by stressing the need to promote discussion around women's political participation.

The concluding panel member, Professor Miles Hewstone, Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Oxford, began by providing research on diversity and its correlation with trust, negating the oft-held belief that diversity breeds mistrust within organisations and institutions within governments. He believes that contact breeds a positive association within the diversity paradigm; he drew on examples from schools with a diverse student population that exhibited higher acceptance and trust towards fellow classmates.

Social cohesion is not just about sharing social space, but also building social capital and institutions need to commit much more than just opening up spaces for diverse communities. There needs to be active steps towards encouraging and rewarding diverse organisations, and designing political institutions that promote inclusion, ultimately leading to the alleviation of tensions between democracy and diversity. ●

**Diptasri Basu**, a MPP and qualified lawyer, has acted in directorial positions for a number of initiatives and non-profits focused on policy transformation.

## PANEL SUMMARY

# A WORLD IN CRISIS? THE CHALLENGES OF GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP LESSONS

DOMINICA ZAVALA

What are the main challenges facing today's world governmental leaders, and what skills do these leaders require to overcome these challenges?

Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, Member of Parliament for Sheffield Hallam and former UK Deputy Prime Minister, and Baroness Catherine Ashton, former High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, addressed the challenges faced by governments both at the international and domestic level. They claimed politicians are unable to deal with the dark side of globalisation, citing the migrant crisis and international banking regulation as the two main areas in which European governments have failed. As governments have been unable to deal with these issues efficiently, citizens have felt vulnerable and scared. Today's leaders are primarily blocked from addressing these global problems due to the myopic outlook of politicians, caused by political noise and the presence of strong vested interests, which undermine the capacity to execute and implement efficient policy.

Nick Clegg focused on the skills that today's domestic leaders require, claiming that once you have identified your key policy project, it is critical to have the ability to draw from the experience and success stories of other countries. Then, one must build the political space for the project and ensure it delivers. It is also essential to have a clear idea on the way forward, and to mobilise both financial and political support.

At the international level, Baroness Ashton argued leaders need a strong belief in their mission and team. Believing in mission is especially crucial in a context of substantial political noise. It is vital to have a measured approach, and to figure out operational aspects of a mission, and move quickly. She claimed a good leader must understand the process and structure of difficult situations, and know how to build lines of collaboration and trust; this was her experience at the Iran P5+1 talks, and during other international negotiations. ●

**Dominica Zavala**, an MPP student, worked for the Sovereign and International Public Finance Group covering Latin America at Standard & Poor's, and has undertaken research and policy projects for think tanks.



## PANEL SUMMARY

# WHO HAS THE REAL POWER IN THE DIGITAL AGE

SASHA MATHEW

The initial hope behind developing technology was that it would create an open and democratic space. However, large data pools are changing this narrative; data seems to only help those who already possess the power of information, such as governments, multinational corporations, and even radical organisations like ISIS.

This question brought together key players in the technological space: Fadi Chehadé, Chairman and CEO of Chehadé & Company, Antony House, Director of Policy Strategy for EMEA at Google, Sarah Wilkinson, the UK Home Office's Chief Technology Officer, and Colin MacDonald, New Zealand's Government Chief Information Officer.

Digital technologies are changing how power is held and distributed in the 'digital' era. However, the key question is who possesses the expertise and skills to use and manage big data, rather than who owns it.

While the private sector may have much of the money and expertise in regards to emerging digital technologies, it doesn't write the rules; the rules are written by governments who appear to be challenged by digital technology, and don't understand how to effectively craft them. On the other hand, citizens who are often passive spectators in the digital arena need to rise above questions of privacy and nudging, and push for transparency and accountability, ultimately lobbying for exposure of the ways in which their data is used and managed.

The age we live in is an "age of ubiquity" – both ubiquitous access and ubiquitous power – and digital is increasingly horizontal, permeating everything. Digital service delivery is both a challenge and an opportunity for government; it is an opportunity to build trust with citizens, and construct multi-stakeholder digital agencies at a national level that inform all parts of government. It is useful to think about this "age of ubiquity" in terms of three loci of power: public, private and civic, and build innovative open spaces to bring these voices together on an equal platform.

The need of the hour therefore, is to create a democratic, multi-stakeholder-driven space to govern transformative digital technologies, while also ensuring equitable access to these technologies in order to eradicate the divide between the digital 'haves' and 'have nots'. ●



**Sasha Mathew**, a MPP, worked as part of the campaign strategy team for the current Indian Prime Minister during the 2014 general elections.

## PANEL SUMMARY

# CAN WE INNOVATE OUR WAY TO FLATTER, FASTER, SMARTER GOVERNMENT?

ALICE BUDISATRIJO

It is often believed that the public sector is unable to be innovative due to the political implications of failure. But Peter Ho, Senior Advisor at the Centre of Strategic Futures, Singapore, Professor Victor Bekkers, Professor of Public Administration and Public Policy at the Erasmus University, and Dr Elizabeth Linos, Vice President and Head of Research and Evaluation at the Behavioural Insights Team, challenged this assumption with their ideas on how governments can experiment, and be creative, in finding solutions to modern problems.

Peter Ho was forced to be innovative from Singapore's inception in 1965, recalling how its history forced it to "sink or swim." But now the city state's challenge is to continue innovating amidst the fast-changing society. Do we want civil servants to always innovate? He suggested that only a small number needed to do so, while the rest could continue working from within the bureaucracy.

On a similar note, Victor Bekkers pointed out that bureaucracy did not have to frustrate innovation. He recognised the challenge posed by a public that had an increasingly low tolerance for government failure, but suggested that there could be room for trial and error in government if it invested in its learning capacity.

Elizabeth Linos added that while governments may not be apt for making large-scale, high-risk changes, "there needs to be a culture of trying to do things better." How to persuade politicians to become comfortable with the possibility of failure? Try low-hanging fruit first – get a success story. Then go for an issue where you can claim that you don't have a choice. Tax collection in a crisis period is an example where the responsible thing for the government to do is to find new ways to bring in more money. Failure to innovate will be seen as doing nothing.

But all three panelists agree that many people are opposed to change, and to get civil servants to embrace change, one needs to get the whole bureaucracy to accept it; so how can the organisational mindset be transformed?

Ho said it had to be internalised, and he touted the success of the PS21 change movement in the Singapore public service, a programme which aims to empower public servants to share their ideas on improving services, and obliges the organisation to investigate whether they are implementable.

Such programmes are increasingly made possible thanks to digital technology, which allows the crowdsourcing of ideas and feedback from citizens and public service employees.



However, Dr Linos noted that just because more people were involved, it would not automatically make public service more effective. What technology does allow, though, is to make government services more transparent, or at least appear to be, ultimately increasing people's trust in government.

An alternative idea to internalise innovation is to create a civil service structure where people move between agencies, and are encouraged to learn from one another, spread innovation, and to adapt to different domains. Professor Bekkers said such a system would be "good for mobility and create civil servants who act as ambassadors for innovation." ●

**Alice Budisatrijo** worked on corporate advocacy for the Human Rights Campaign in Washington prior to becoming a reporter and producer for the BBC in Jakarta.

## PANEL SUMMARY

# INNOVATING TO BUILD GOVERNMENT IN FRAGILE STATES

ROSE MACHARIA

Conflict, displacement, shifting global patterns, and changing models of aid and intervention necessitate new ideas on building resilient communities and strong governments in fragile states. The panellists, Sheikh Mohammed Abuloum, Chairman, Justice & Building Party, Yemen, Dr Nematullah Bizhan, an Oxford-Princeton Global Leaders Fellow, Professor Stefan Dercon, Chief Economist of the Department of International Development (DFID), and Dr Kathryn Nwajaku, Head of the Secretariat of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, considered the role of international actors in post-conflict reconstruction, enabling growth through government legitimacy and state stability, and the need to reinforce a dialogic approach in post conflict peace and state-building.

There was consensus among the panellists that state building is a progressive but sometimes slow endeavour. Professor Dercon was critical of quick-fix solutions that prioritise stability over legitimacy. He was of the view that, in order to create the context for favourable growth and development, it is vital to generate policies that enhance government legitimacy. In most fragile states, strengthening the civil service is often underrated, but is one of the most critical components of government. He gave examples of Ethiopia, Rwanda, Bangladesh and Lebanon as countries that carefully built government legitimacy, enabling them to move from fragility to growth.

Dr Bizhan was of the view that there is a need to adopt a holistic approach to post-conflict re-engagement by considering both internal and external factors inducing fragility. He was emphatic that militarised responses undermine state legitimacy, and deny communities a chance to restructure and pursue peace and stability. He was however keen to note that there isn't a post-conflict engagement blue-print. Different contexts call for differentiated responses.

Sheikh Mohammed noted that internal efforts are often complex but necessary. Different actors within the country have different interests that should be considered and engaged to build mutual trust. Internal peace-building mechanisms require introspection and countries ought to adopt conscientious measures that are tailored to work with context, in the short and long-term.

Dr Nwajaku reinforced the common theme of context. She added that at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness



in Busan, South Korea, fragile and conflict-affected states, development partners, and civil society agreed to work together to improve current development policy and practice in fragile states, in a framework dubbed the New Deal. The New Deal emphasises a shift from donor-to-recipient transfer development cooperation, to equal partnership between governments, development partners and local communities, based on dialogue and collaboration. She was, however, concerned about the declining international commitment to this new approach. She re-emphasised that aid by its very nature, is political, and political processes are complex and time consuming; communities should therefore be fully engaged in the reconstruction of fragile states to achieve immediate impact. ●

**Rose Macharia**, a MPP, was called to the bar in 2011, and has since worked as a Legal Researcher and Law Clerk at the Supreme Court of Kenya.

## PANEL SUMMARY

# DELIVERING AND IMPLEMENTING GOVERNMENT REFORM

ALICE BUDISATRIJO

**G**overnment reform and improving public-service delivery is one of the toughest challenges for policymakers.

Dato' Sri Idris Jala, Chief Executive Officer of the Performance Management and Delivery Unit in Malaysia, opened the discussion with a story from Malaysia. A strategy, with the aim of transforming the country's economy into a high-income one by 2020, was created by bringing together the best and brightest minds from the government, private sector and civil societies. They were "locked in a room"; they were required to discuss and agree on priorities and targets, which were then published, bringing accountability and public pressure to deliver.

Dr Gerald Lan, Professor of Public Management and Director of Beijing Center for Organizational Learning and Urban Governance Innovation at Tsinghua University, said China's reforms stemmed from the ambition of many generations of Chinese leaders to restore the nation's imperial glory. The result was the quadrupling of China's economy between the late 1970s to the end of the 1990s. Millions came out of poverty, but new problems of pollution, corruption, and controlling citizens' voice ensued.

He admitted that China's biggest challenge is: "how to maintain central control while encouraging local freedom, and how to discipline the system while still keeping the ability to perform."

Professor Christopher Hood, an Emeritus Fellow at All Souls College, University of Oxford, highlighted the need for government to use data to improve service, by measuring current performance, and setting targets for improvement; this data can then be used to rank nations, local municipalities, and service providers.

He noted that successive governments in the UK have tried to use data to set targets and learn about public service delivery. However, in today's political environment, media often latch on to areas where targets are not met, or corners are cut, so as a result it would be difficult to fight negativity bias. With the help of data, many governments also set up delivery units to be responsible for implementing a reform agenda.

When asked how policymakers could carry out reforms whilst also cutting spending, the panellists highlighted



accountability and transparency as key. They noted, do not be obsessed with headcount, and focus on what happens to the money. ●

**Alice Budisatrijo**, a MPP, worked on corporate advocacy for the Human Rights Campaign in Washington prior to becoming a reporter and producer for the BBC in Jakarta.

## PANEL SUMMARY

# UNLEASHING NEW FORCES FOR GOOD: INCREASING SOCIAL IMPACT

ALYSSA FITZPATRICK

**I**n times of austerity, governments are looking to new financing models to fund the provision of essential public services. Social impact bonds present an intriguing solution. Chaired by Professor Ngaire Woods, the panel drew on the insights of Sir Ian Cheshire, Government Lead Non-Executive and Chairman at Debenhams, Professor Jeffrey Liebman, the Malcolm Wiener Professor of Public Policy at Harvard's Kennedy School, and Hidehiko Yazaki, Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan, to consider the potential and challenges for alternative models of social-impact financing in different settings.

The discussion centred around the interface between the public and private sector in delivering essential community services. Key themes included the potential for the private sector to improve its efficiency of delivery and increase funding opportunities, the need to focus on practical impact, to tailor programmes to their unique social setting, and the challenges of evaluating the reach and impact of established social impact bonds. Professor Liebman highlighted the malleable nature of the social-impact sector, noting difficulties in estimating the number of people who would be affected by the programme. This generated a fruitful discussion on how social-impact models can be designed to provide evidence-driven, practical outcomes.

The key messages from the session were:

1. The importance of considering how (and which) outcomes will be measured. Professor Liebman highlighted that the number of years, and sample size, needed to obtain measurable results should be considered when designing pay-for-performance contracts. He also highlighted difficulty in anticipated cost-effectiveness where the population reached can be difficult to estimate. He advocated selecting a minimum number of measurable outcomes, and ongoing active management of the contract, to achieve workable results.
2. The role of the private sector. Sir Ian Cheshire highlighted the role of the private sector in collaborating with government in the delivery of public services. He emphasised the benefits of engaging the private sector in stimulating innovation, calling the government to account, and in ensuring a practical focus.



3. Where communication can fail. However, Sir Ian also poignantly expressed the disconnect that can occur between the practical application of projects and their attractiveness to the public in communication campaigns. Small incremental changes are not as readily communicated as ambitious policy visions, but can be the most effective – and government should support their implementation.
4. Connecting the policy and the project. Hidehiko Yazaki built on these themes to highlight that, in many cases, the goals of the policy and the aligned project can be very different. The project may be geared towards reaching key performance indicators, yet this may not ensure that the policy goal is achieved. He highlighted the need for the culture of government to be focused on performance to bridge this gap.

The panellists touched on the interplay between public and private sector, performance targets and policy goals to weave together a compelling look at the power of alternative models of social financing to achieve the public good. It appears that social impact bonds have significant potential, but further work is needed to maximise their effectiveness. ●

**Alyssa Fitzpatrick**, a MPP, has completed a Bachelor of Medicine / Bachelor of Surgery, and has worked as an Obstetric Resident Medical Officer, and volunteered as a medical student in rural Vietnam.



## PANEL SUMMARY

# TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

SUSHANT JAIN

How to improve performance in the public sector is a question that concerns both high- and low-income countries alike. Leadership and performance improvement has become more relevant due to the public's access to knowledge and technology with respect to government and public sector's performance. The panel comprised, in the words of the chair, Nick Lovegrove (U.S. Managing Partner at Brunswick Group), "Titans in the field of leadership in government" (as well as an academic working in the field of performance in the public sector).

Three important takeaways emerged: the need for measures for increasing transparency and accountability, the need for immersive leadership from government (and not just bureaucracy), and to use training and performance data to improve motivation.

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Hodge MP pointed out that lack of accountability is a key issue hindering performance in the public sector, and politicians and bureaucrats must achieve consensus around increasing accountability and transparency. Those implementing policy do not hold themselves accountable as they have often not written the laws, therefore closer collaboration between law-makers and the officials implementing them is required. Recruitment and promotion mechanisms, which are currently not performance based, also need to be re-structured in order to effect improved ownership. The aforementioned steps need to be complemented with increased transparency around policies and performance.

One effective way of driving effective change in public services is to have government leadership 'immersed' in implementation. Charles Clarke, former UK Home Secretary, cited three ways of achieving this immersion: understanding and setting the agenda and direction of the change, clearly communicating to both internal and external stakeholders the chosen direction and the intended outcome, and taking important decisions (as opposed to leaving them to bureaucrats). This immersive involvement will lead to more effective and long-lasting improvement in performance.

Drawing lessons from her own experience, Baroness Simone Finn, Special Advisor at the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, highlighted the need to attract the best people to public services, and develop their skills. Professor Donald Moynihan, Epstein Professor of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison, remarked that reforms in the public sector are not



carried out with the same rigour as other policy reforms where extensive research and trials are conducted before embarking on a particular path to reform. His research has shown that the majority of people working in the public sector are motivated by a sense of duty, with motivation decreasing as number of years in the sector increase. An effective way of sustaining motivation could be to introduce skill improvement programmes, or by improving performance measurement. It was also noted that a key objective of performance-measurement data is to enable learning, hence metrics should be devised keeping the end-user in mind. ●

**Sushant Jain**, a MPP, began his career at Bain & Company, and has since worked for the Ethiopian Agricultural Agency and with the State Government in Uttar Pradesh.

## PANEL SUMMARY

# LOOKING AHEAD: PROSPECTS FOR BETTER GOVERNMENT?

DIPTASRI BASU

Lord Browne of Madingley opened the conversation by commenting on how it may be easy for governments to commit to development and reform, but it is sometimes difficult to control the context and deliver services in a timely manner. Therefore, effective management lies at the heart of leadership in relation to good governance and progress.

Dr Rola Dashti, former Minister of Planning and Development Affairs in Kuwait, began the discussion by addressing the issue of bridging governance gaps through engaging citizens in participative policymaking, stressing the need for governments to be proactively inclusive. She highlighted the importance of tracking and monitoring growth across nations, and noted that, if governments want to remain inclusive and credible in the long run, they must examine the primary beneficiaries of that growth. Providing opportunities to citizens to own and invest in public infrastructure, and to engage with the public sector on key reforms, would be valuable in forging trust and credibility. Ultimately, the key to leadership lies in accountability and responsiveness of individual governments towards citizens' needs and expectations.

Persio Arida, Executive Chairman of Asset Management of BTG Pactual in Brazil, delved into discussing various performance indicators that could be utilised to measure the effectiveness of governments across the world. He suggested devising KPIs that suit the demands and needs of the public sector and called for consolidated public-sector accounting to provide a robust direction for governance reforms. Documenting objectives and goals in order to facilitate greater accountability and ease performance, was one of the key tools suggested by him. He raised the example of the dearth of public sector journals to lament the need for government communication with its citizens to keep them engaged and invested in policies, and he concluded by suggesting the option of adopting best practices from across nations globally, to help achieve growth and better standards of performance and outcomes.

Senior Advisor for the Centre for Strategic Futures in Singapore, Peter Ho, highlighted the value of respecting the unique cultures within various governments, while formulating metrics of performance and delivery. He provided the example of Singapore where government officials are trained to deliver and perform according to set benchmarks of integrity and excellence, which provides individual officials with a standard and ensures a cohesive and strong culture of



performance among the public sector. Mr Ho also pointed out that it is critical to select the right leader for devising and implementing reforms, especially those that aim to deliver long-term growth and sustainability. He called the process a 'Darwinian' one, that aims to evolve with the complex needs and current priorities and one that remains relevant at all times. A test of a leader, according to Ho, rests on her ability to make tough and unpopular decisions and manage large organizations with conflicting interests and commitments. He stressed the need to prioritise tackling unprecedented change, a phenomenon that governments across the world are grappling with and one that needs to be addressed in order for policies to remain ahead of human development needs. He concluded by pointing out the need to move out of traditional policymaking and comfort zones, towards an open approach of experimentation and thought leadership.

The concluding panel member, Professor of Social Psychology at Oxford University, Miles Hewstone, began with providing research information on diversity and its correlation with trust, negating the oft-held belief that diversity breeds mistrust in organisations and institutions within governments. He believes that contact breeds a positive association within the diversity paradigm and draws in examples from schools with a diverse student population that exhibited higher acceptance and trust towards fellow classmates.

Social cohesion is not just about sharing social space but also building social capital, and institutions need to commit much more than just opening up spaces for diverse communities. There needs to be active steps towards encouraging and rewarding diverse organisations and designing political institutions that promote inclusion – ultimately leading to the alleviation of the tension between democracy and diversity. ●

**Diptasri Basu**, a MPP and qualified lawyer, has acted in directorial positions for a number of initiatives and non-profits focused on policy transformation.

# CHALLENGES OF GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE 2016 SPEAKER LIST

**Sheikh Mohammed Abulahoum** Chairman, Justice & Building Party, Yemen

**Rafat Ali Al-Akhali** Fellow of Practice, Strategic Projects, Blavatnik School of Government

**Dr Persio Arida** Executive Chairman of Asset Management, BTG Pactual, Brazil

**Baroness Catherine Ashton** Former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

**Professor Victor Bekkers** Professor of Public Administration and Public Policy, Erasmus University, The Netherlands

**Dr Nicola Bellé** Assistant Professor, Department of Policy Analysis and Public Management, Bocconi University, Italy

**Lord Browne of Madingley** Executive Chairman, L1 Energy

**Dr Nematullah Bizhan** Oxford-Princeton Global Leaders Fellow, Global Economic Governance Programme, University of Oxford

**Fadi Chehadé** Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Chehadé & Company

**Sir Ian Cheshire** Government Lead Non-Executive and Chairman, Debenhams

**Charles Clarke** Former Home Secretary and Member of Parliament, Norwich South, UK

**Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP** Member of Parliament for Sheffield Hallam, UK, and former Deputy Prime Minister

**Professor Sir Paul Collier** Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Bjarne Corydon** Director of McKinsey Centre for Government, McKinsey & Company

**Dr Rola Dashti** Former Minister of Planning and Development Affairs and Member of Parliament, Kuwait

**Professor Stefan Dercon** Professor of Economic Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Baroness Simone Finn** Special Advisor, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, and Peer, House of Lords, UK

**Andrew Grant** Director and Global Leader of McKinsey's Public Sector Practice, McKinsey & Company

**Dato' Sabariah Hassan** Secretary General for the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia

**Professor Miles Hewstone** Professor of Social Psychology, University of Oxford

**Peter Ho** Senior Advisor, Centre for Strategic Futures, Singapore

**Rt Hon Dame Margaret Hodge MP** Member of Parliament for Barking, UK

**Professor Christopher Hood** Emeritus Fellow, All Souls College, University of Oxford

**Dr Anthony House** Director of Policy Strategy for EMEA, Google

**Dato' Sri Idris Jala** Chief Executive Officer, Performance Management and Delivery Unit, Malaysia

**Dr Emily Jones** Associate Professor in Public Policy (Global Economic Governance), Blavatnik School of Government

**Amitabh Kant** Chief Executive Officer, National Institution for Transforming India

**Baroness Helena Kennedy** Principal, Mansfield College, University of Oxford

**Dr Gerald Z Lan** Professor of Public Management and Director of Beijing Center for Organizational Learning and Urban Governance Innovation, Tsinghua University

**Dr Clare Leaver** Associate Professor of Economics and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Professor Jeffrey Liebman** Malcolm Wiener Professor of Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

**Dr Elizabeth Linos** Head of Research and Evaluation, Behavioural Insights Team, North America

**Nick Lovegrove** U.S. Managing Partner, Brunswick Group

**Colin MacDonald** Government Chief Information Officer, New Zealand

**Dr Anandi Mani** Associate Professor in Behavioural Science and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Dr Heather Marquette** Reader in Development Politics, School of Government and Society, University of Birmingham

**Calum Miller** Chief Operating Officer, Blavatnik School of Government

**Professor Donald Moynihan** Epstein Professor of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Geoff Mulgan** Chief Executive Officer, Nesta

**Professor Mthuli Ncube** Professor of Government and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Dr Kathryn Nwajiaku** Head of the Secretariat of the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

**Dato' Sri Nazir Razak** Chairman, CIMB Group

**Professor Bo Rothstein** Professor of Government and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Marietje Schaake** Member of the European Parliament, Netherlands

**Stephan Shakespeare** CEO and Founder, YouGov

**Dr Thomas Simpson** Associate Professor of Philosophy and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Professor Robert Tombs** Professor of History, University of Cambridge

**Dr Maya Tudor** Associate Professor of Government and Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government

**Ed Vaizey** Minister of State at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, UK

**Sarah Wilkinson** Chief Technology Officer, The Home Office, UK

**Lord Wood of Anfield** Fellow of Practice, Blavatnik School of Government

**Professor Ngaire Woods** Dean, Blavatnik School of Government

**Hidehiko Yuzaki** Governor, Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan



**OUR VISION IS OF A WORLD BETTER LED,  
BETTER SERVED AND BETTER GOVERNED.**

**OUR MISSION IS TO INSPIRE AND  
SUPPORT BETTER GOVERNMENT AND  
PUBLIC POLICY AROUND THE WORLD.**

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk)

 [@BlavatnikSchool](https://twitter.com/BlavatnikSchool)