OPENING SESSION

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

| BACKGROUND

| OBJECTIVES



Panelist / Keynote

Kishore Mahbubani

Distinguished Fellow, Asia Research Institute

National University of Singapore
Singapore

A veteran diplomat and a distinguished academic, Dr Kishore Mahbubani is a globally recognised intellectual. He is a prolific writer and speaker who was listed as one of the top 100 public intellectuals by Foreign Policy and Prospect magazines in 2005; included in the Financial Times list of Top 50 individuals who would shape the debate on the future of capitalism in 2009; selected as one of Foreign Policy's Top Global Thinkers in 2010 and 2011; and selected by Prospect magazine as one of the top world thinkers in 2014.

As a diplomat with the Singapore Foreign Service from 1971 to 2004, Dr Mahbubani took on many challenging assignments. For example, he served in Cambodia in 1973 and 1974 during the war when the city of Phnom Penh was shelled, and shrapnel penetrated the walls of his house. He was also posted to Malaysia and Washington, D.C., and served two stints as Singapore's Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) from 1984 to 1989, and 1998 to 2004. He was President of the UN Security Council in January 2001 and May 2002. In Singapore, he was Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs from 1994 to 1998. In recognition of his excellent performance, he was conferred the Public Administration Medal (Gold) by the Singapore government in 1998.

Dr Mahbubani joined academia in 2004 as the founding Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at NUS. The school gained a strong reputation as Asia's leading public policy school during his 13-year tenure. Within five years under his leadership, the school was admitted to the Global Public Policy Network, an elite group comprising the top public policy schools from around the world. Since 2019, he has been a Distinguished Fellow at NUS's Asia Research Institute where he launched the Asian Peace Programme and a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on US-China relations. He was also inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2019.

He has also published articles in globally renowned newspapers and magazines, such as the New York Times, Newsweek, Time, Financial Times, Foreign Affairs, and Foreign Policy, and co-authored articles with other global thought leaders. To date, he has authored and co-authored several books on global geo-politics and governance such as Beyond the Age of Innocence, The New Asian Hemisphere, The ASEAN Miracle, and Has China Won. His 2013 publication, The Great Convergence, was selected by the Financial Times as one of the best books of the year. His latest book, The Asian 21st Century, an open access book, has been downloaded over 3.3 million times since its release in 2021.

Dr Mahbubani has received significant plaudits internationally and has been repeatedly named in lists of top thinkers along with former US President Barack Obama, the late Chairman of the Federal Reserve Paul Volcker, and former Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan. His sterling accomplishments are well summed up in the citation for the Foreign Policy Association Medal he received, which referred to him as "a gifted diplomat, a student of history and philosophy, a provocative writer and an intuitive thinker".