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REPORT ANNUAL
FORUM 2018

GLOBAL RACIAL POLARISATION AND THE RISE OF RIGHT-WING POLITICS

common action forum

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Presentation

The Common Action Forum (CAF) is a transnational non-profit organization based in Madrid, Spain, collaborating to establish a global network of prominent and emerging experts from a range of backgrounds, including academia, politics, media, civil society and culture. This network combines international experience and global strategies through mediation, research, advisory and projects, seeking active solutions that channel justice and progress.

The CAF Forum series was officially launched in Madrid on December 5th and 6th 2015, with a roundtable conference entitled **Steps of Progress in Times of Crisis.** The following year, on November 5th and 6th of 2016, the CAF Annual Forum contemplated the various origins and repercussions of the refugee crisis, orienting the conversation with the question, **The Rise of Global Fear: Why is the World Becoming Less Tolerant and More Radical?** In light of these preceding dialogues, CAF then celebrated its third Annual Forum in Madrid, on November 3rd, 4th and 5th of 2017: **The Limits to Inequality: seeking a sustainable society.**

Finally, most recently, CAF 2018 took place in South Africa, marking the 100th anniversary of Mandela's birth. In this conversation, panellists examined how countries are increasingly becoming antagonistic towards immigrants and minorities for a number of socio-political and economic reasons. There has been a rise of radical anti-immigration and right-wing movements across Europe, in particular. Meanwhile, in Africa, tribal tensions are once again emerging, and threatening development throughout the continent. Unfortunately, various African politicians and leaders are readily taking advantage of those situations as they occur. Furthermore, the continued flows of Africans across the Mediterranean in search of a better life in Europe has brought attention to how Africa must address desperately needed economic opportunities. Additionally, the conflict in Syria, regarded as one of the greatest catastrophes of our time, has had a tremendous impact on the plight of refugees. Moreover, as geographical borders get redrafted across the globe, there are thousands who find themselves internally displaced and stranded, without relief.

And so, in light of the 100th year since the stalwart politician Nelson Mandela was born, South Africans must consider their important role and position in the Global South. Fort this reason, electing South Africa to host the CAF 2018 Annual Forum is significant. Furthermore, the South African political miracle was by and large due to its ability to navigate delicate tribal and racial political trappings. Since 1994, at various levels, the country has assisted in a political discussion involving multi-culturism and non-racial politics across the globe. When the majority black South Africans had convincing reasons to embrace Black Nationalism, they instead opted for an inclusive, non-racial politics. Therefore, as the world continues to deal with racial polarisation and the rise of right-wing politics, the South African experience becomes indispensable.

This summary captures a two-day programme of presentations, panel discussions and interactive dialogue addressing **Global Racial Polarisation and the Rise of Right-wing Politics,** which took place from 10-11 November 2018 in Rosebank, Johannesburg. The event brought together around 60 people from the ruling party in South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC), as well as international academics, activists, and civil society. Discussions centered on the issues of deadly migration to Europe and the rise of right-wing politics, populism and the future of politics from a youth perspective, and non-racialism and multi-culturalism, a dream deferred.

introduction

On 10 November, Common Action Forum 2018 began with opening remarks made by **Wadah Khanfar,** Common Action Forum (CAF) President and former Director-General of Al-Jazeera, as he inaugurated a Gala Dinner given in honour of all the speakers and participants.

Mr. Khanfar highlighted the need to address antagonism towards immigrants and minorities by Western countries, for several socio-political and economic reasons. He lamented the fact that there has been a rise of radical anti-immigration and right-wing movements across Europe in particular. Commenting on the rise of nationalism in Germany, USA and Brazil, he called on all progressive minds to join together in search of a better solution for the world. Mr. Khanfar pointed out that in Africa, tribal tensions are once again emerging and threatening development on the continent. He also spoke about the ongoing conflict in Syria and Yemen in particular. Both ongoing wars have wreaked havoc in the Middle East and created countless refugees.

Concerning the Arab Spring revolutions, Mr. Khanfar argued that they were the best effort ever to bring democracy to the Middle East. The Arab World forsook a golden opportunity to bring democracy to the region. The Spring brought together people from different backgrounds, across sectarian divides, both Sunni and Shi'ah, in a common agenda that fought for democracy. Moreover, Mr. Khanfar decried the plight of journalists in the Middle East. He explained that currently, journalists in the region are fighting for the freedom to no longer remain silent. Journalists are continuously either forced to work for the state machinery or they do not have a voice. At this juncture, Jamal Khashoggi was sombrely remembered.

As someone who has lived in and still considers South Africa his home, Mr. Khanfar remarked on the role and position of South Africa in the Global South. In conclusion, he reiterated that the concept of diversity entails a future of shared values. Given advances in technology, we are enabled to organise ourselves around one common agenda. Globally, young people are mobilising to fight for their rights. As the current capitalist system has lost currency, a new system is sought, an age that goes beyond the old age of ideologies.

After this keynote, over the following day, the Forum held interactive panel discussions, presentations and briefings on topics of interest related to the main theme of the conference "Global Racial Polarisation and the Rise of Right-wing Politics." It included presentations of real world cases, describing new and noteworthy initiatives relevant to the conference theme, specifically on how to deal with the rise of nationalism in the USA and right-wing politics in Europe, brought about by immigration from Africa and the Middle East. Each session consisted of a first half of speeches from participants with special expertise in that theme, followed by questions from the audience.

opening session

Sami Zeidan, award-winning Senior Presenter with Al Jazeera English, presided as Master of Ceremonies over the course of the November 11 conference day, and began by introducing the day's keynote speaker, Parks Tau. Mr. Tau is President of United Cities and Local Governments (UCGL), Chairperson of South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Gauteng Provincial Treasurer of the South African ruling ANC party and the former Mayor of Johannesburg.

discussion

Parks Tau began his address by reminding participants that we live in an era of growing urbanization, with increased migration across the continent from rural areas to urban centres. While the Global North has a majority elderly population, the South is experiencing a rise in the youth population. This in turn tends to put pressure on the limited resources available in cities. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that we plan for an urbanism that seeks to harness all available opportunities. Mr Tau acknowledged the rise in xenophobic or Afro-phobic attacks in South Africa, and attributed them to colonial planners' exclusionist policies, which sought to exclude most people from access to urban areas. He explained that there should be inclusive economic opportunities for all. Mr. Tau enjoined that there is need to build platforms for people to participate in economic activity. By way of example, there are pockets of the wealthy who usurp municipal land to build their so called "gated communities," to the detriment of the poor and the rest of the population, as roads and other municipal amenities meant for everyone are no longer available. In conclusion, Mr. Tau argued that people must be given the opportunity to remake themselves. Inclusive urbanism remains linked with inclusive political participation, and a municipality is not complete without communities. Therefore, if we afford the people these and other opportunities, the kind of migration that Africa is experiencing would surely be abated.

> **There is a right to developmental service delivery whereby citizens, residents and migrants are active participants in ensuring that there is efficient service delivery. In this way, citizenship entails active participation, as community members participate and partner in the delivery of services.**
>
> **Parks Tau**

Deadly immigration into Europe and the rise of right-wing politics

1st session

This discussion was moderated by **Layla Dean-Verity**, barrister in England and Wales. She began by pointing out that EU policy on migration is incoherent in its present form and there is therefore a need to re-align it in order to reflect international trends and dynamics. She emphasized the need to take the dictates of international law into consideration. Meanwhile, Europe has sought to define refugees as economic migrants occupying space and taking away employment opportunities, and with this rhetoric it has facilitated a rise in nationalism and right-wing politics.

> **There needs to be very solid policies to ensure that the marginalized, irrespective of race and religion, receive the aid and the support that they need. I think if Malaysia can pursue these policies and avoid the wealth concentration occurring in middle-income economies, it can lead to a global realization that good governance can reorient the trajectory of a country.**
>
> **Aasil Ahmad**

Panel Observations

The first panel presenter, **Aasil Ahmed,** provided an overview of his Malaysian experience, as he has served as advisor to Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy-Prime Minister of Malaysia. He drew lessons from the rise of nationalism amongst ethnic Malays. Mr. Ahmed pointed out that there is a popular belief that if Malays lose power, the Chinese will take over. In his view, there were a number of ugly incidences which may have contributed to this rhetoric. Intolerance was displayed in the form of Muslim, Christian, and Chinese clashes. However, the recent elections ushered a multi-ethnic coalition into power, which hopefully signals a new era of cooperation.

The second panel speaker, **Nazinine Moshiri,** served as a UN member of the Somalia and Eritrea Panel of Experts. She chronicled the perspectives of young African migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. Ms. Moshiri argued that opening up borders in Europe will create wealth, rather than deplete it.

Former South African Ambassador to Libya, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, **Mohamed Dangor,** spoke about Libya before the uprising and how Libya was a magnet for migrants seeking employment. However, after the uprising, Libya descended into chaos. There was a rise in tribalism and nationalism, which Ambassador Dangor attributed to foreign powers, including countries in the West and regional Arab rivalries. He argued that the West was aware of what was going on in Libya but chose to ignore it. For example, to justify the NATO bombing of Libya, the BBC promoted a narrative of African mercenaries attempting to help Gaddafi, which was not the case. He posed the question: "Is the Arab League able to promote democracy in the Arab World?" The answer, he opined, was negative. Ambassador Dangor held that Libyans should be encouraged to engage among themselves under the auspices of the African Union (AU). He stressed a need for an African solution in Libya, a type of resolution that was rejected by Western countries. He insisted that as a result, the dignity of the African migrants in Libya has been trampled upon. In conclusion, Ambassador Dangor pointed out that, in the South African context, once again, if an othering of migrants continues, there will be further eruptions of xenophobic attacks.

The fourth speaker of the panel, **Ayo Obe,** was a legal practitioner and partner at Olasupo Shonibare, Lagos Nigeria, as well as Chairperson of the Goree Institute, Senegal, and a Trustee of the Brussels-based think tank, International Crisis Group. She informed the panel that so far, about 10,000 Nigerians have died in the Libyan deserts and on the Mediterranean Sea routes in an attempt to reach Europe. Ms. Obe provided an account of the different perceptions surrounding migrants fleeing to Europe. In conclusion, she explained that Africans should try to find answers to these problems and many other issues affecting African youth, and should seek genuine solutions to the causes of migration.

We are living in an interconnected world. The UN estimates that 258 billion people live outside their origin country, an almost 50% increase since 2000. We can't deny this, we can't stop this and we can't prevent this: it's going to happen whether we like it or not.

Nazinine Moshiri

Panel Conclusions

Polarization as a tactic for power

In contemplating the rise of the right-wing politics, one must consider the active attempt by leaders and groups to create divisions in order to assume their own power. For example, this type of manoeuvring is manifested by groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS, in how they specifically attempt to drive a wedge between Muslims who live in Europe and the rest of the community. Or, as the theme of the conference highlights, another example includes the way in which right-wing parties seek to gain votes by rendering immigrants as "the other." Nationalisms and regionalisms are manipulated in a manner akin to tribalism, with co-option and even fabrication of identities in order to maintain power.

Especially in light of right-wing parties, a reoccurring theme throughout these discussions, there is a move to outflank their extremism and popularity, and in doing so, a general drift toward the extreme right occurs, from all sides of the spectrum. Instead of addressing the social and cultural issues that underlie this polarization, there are attempts to gain attention and following with increased extremism and division.

Coalitions to prevent polarization

As extremist and right-wing politics prevail throughout various corners of the world, there is still an opportunity to reverse the situation. Instead of a focus on phenomena like Brexit, we can look to examples of how to overcome polarization and division. Australia provides a hopeful example in how it eliminated its whites only policy, and began to open its doors and borders to its Southeast Asian neighbours while making efforts towards assimilation and accommodation. Moreover, in Malaysia, there has been an attempt to create parties that crosscut ethnic ties, in an effort to build coalitions avoiding ethnic divisions and the harmful rhetoric that encourages further tension.

It is especially important to be mindful of the forces that engender these divisions. Polarization can be more insidious and less obvious than authoritarian governments stepping in or terrorist organizations attempting to create cleavages. Instead, it can take place more subtly, with blame and accusation for economic or social problems levied on an outsider or more vulnerable group. There are those that capitalize on the backlash against failed establishment policies. Throughout this, it is important to remain aware of the ways in which we dehumanize others or deny them access to the common good, solely in order to protect selfish interests. Instead, we should seek solutions for society as a whole, and work towards collaboration that overcomes such tendencies.

> **Every city now seeks its own interest, while every municipal political leader similarly seeks only their city's and their own interests.**
>
> **Mohamed Dangor**

"Unfortunately, in recent times. we've seen that people striving for a more peaceful existence are met with barriers, walls, fences and barbed wires; the deadliest of which are because of how the EU policy which is incoherent: boats are being turned back, forced back."

Layla Dean Verity

The common good: migration as a human right

In speaking of the common good, migration arises as a reality and timeless phenomenon that has pervaded our society. In considering migration, it is no debate that asylum-seekers are afforded protections in human rights norms. However, we must consider the fact that other types of movement should also be embraced and sanctioned. The movement of poor people to rich countries are underpinned by a similar asylum-seeking intention effort, albeit economic asylum. We should remain more open to the range of reasons for migration, including climate change, and how we can adapt our policies in order to accommodate migration flows with human dignity.

It is an exercise of human autonomy to enter a country and spend time there, and it draws from the universally declared human right to freedom of movement, association and occupational choice. Instead of searching for ways to prevent such human autonomy, we should look to how we can alleviate the situations that caused the migration in the first place. This should be considered with the common good of all communities in mind, rather than solely the interests of a few.

Everyday acts of decency and kindness towards fellow human beings are now either at risk of being forgotten. Or worse, they are subject to active vilification by not only mean-spirited individuals, but also from elected government representatives.

Ayo Obe

Populism and the future of politics: A youth perspective

2nd session

The second panel discussion was moderated by **Simon Allison,** the Africa Editor at Mail & Guardian. He is also a researcher and consultant for the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). Before joining the Mail & Guardian, Simon worked as an African correspondent for Daily Maverick.

> **And it's reached the point where the status quo must be challenged. The continent's future lies with the youth, but unfortunately most popular movements have used youth as catalysts for change, not drivers of changes. This is why we have catastrophic failures of populist movements, because this significant societal constituency is being marginalized.**
>
> **Soud Hyder**

Panel Observations

> I question what it's going to take to have a more centrist, globally aware, intellectual world. I would recommend some type of training or political education for aspiring leaders, or a pathway that allows encourages people to think about the role they have to play in government.
>
> Faith Abiodun

The first panellist, **Soud Hyder,** was Data and Insight lead at TRT and a member of the founding team of AJ+. He had a background in Computer Science and Economics, with wide-ranging experience in technology and business. Mr. Hyder traced the rise of populism from the 1910s to the present day in the USA. In his view, the use of social media exacerbated the spread of populism and racism. He gave an example of growing up in Kenya during the President Mwai Kibaki era, and how at that time the biggest proponents of reform in Kenya were Europe and the USA. Now, in light of what is occurring in the UK with Brexit, it seems that these old calls for reform are no longer present. As an African youth, he believed it was time to provide African solutions to African problems. He concluded that there is no government model suited to the 21st century, and for that reason, youth need to innovate and produce a functioning and relevant model.

The second speaker, **Faith Abiodun,** was an international affairs analyst and a writer. He called for a definition of the word "populism," and noted that he felt populism emboldens the extremists of society while terrifying pacifist reformers. At the same time, he explained it could be used for positive gains, including in contributing to the rise of activism. Still, he continued, it can lead to the perpetration of skepticism and can stifle participation. In a manner similar to Mr. Hyder, Mr. Abiodun argued that there were no credible government models or pathways into politics in many African countries, thus obstructing young people from political involvement. Concerning media coverage, he insisted that the media needed to steer narratives in very different directions in order to achieve change.

Fatima Muneer, a research analyst at Canadian government consulting firm Earnscliffe Strategy Group, talked about the need to involve young people when discussing issues such as employment and politics, which very clearly had implications for youth. She insisted on promoting youth involvement in decisions about the future, rather than marginalizing or dismissing them.

The fourth speaker, **Chumani Maxele,** was a South African political activist best known for his leadership in the #Rhodesmustfall movement. He emphasized that while "populism" often inspired negative connotations, it did not have to be understood as negative per se. For example, he cited Mandela as a populist. Concerning the future of politics in Africa, Mr. Maxele argued that "the old must die and the new must be born." He believed that older generations were unwilling to relinquish power to the younger. By way of example, he described how representatives in South African parliament would sometimes sleep during debate. He believed that when a young person in Africa raises an issue with government, they are killed or arrested. He concluded that populism could be used as a vehicle with which to confront issues with African governments.

Panel Conclusions

"How do those energies, how do those fears and frustrations of the youth that are not satisfied with their lot in life, how do they manifest on the political space?"

Simon Allison

New tools for old hegemonies

New technologies were at first utilized to organize people and give rise to ideas that challenge the status quo. Now, however, they are being appropriated in order to create division and govern with right-wing policies. These extremist movements and governments, sometimes with authoritarian or fascist tones, are using the same tools that were used in the past by legitimately elected, democratic governments. It is important to examine how we allowed this transition to occur, and in what way these tools can be reclaimed and used once again for societal improvement rather than consolidation of power.

As technology and globalization advances, it is key that politics and methods of governance develop in keeping with this change. As demonstrated in the recent Cambridge Analytics scandal, politicians and leaders have little understanding of how these developments significantly affect society. There needs to be increased awareness and knowledge sharing regarding how these news tools can be leveraged for improved governance of societies.

As a young person, I would like if all of us here could think about what we can do in our business, newsroom, think-tank or political office that might contribute toward a better political future. We cannot wait for others to take action, we have to take the initiative ourselves.

Fatima Muneer

Fighting populism with centrist compromise

One very real outcome of populism is that it practically eliminates centrists, and people who attempt to remain in the center are either drawn to the far right or silenced and ostracized due to their less abrasive or visible manner of advocacy. Extremists are emboldened, and people are manipulated with polarization and the tactic of fear to pursue narrow-ended objectives. Meanwhile, large constituencies of our populations are being ostracised as these extremist factions take control.

It is evident that in order to combat these divisions, centrism and a drive towards compromise is necessary. One way to give voice to the more passive or less vocal, yet moderate of our society, would be for the media to change how it covers extremism. Rather than providing a platform for these extremist factions to continue pushing their agendas, the media should avoid giving extra attention to these movements and instead look towards providing objective and reasoned information to the people. This will avoid further contributing to a frenzied social reality.

Motivating participation and youth as a catalyst for change

There is a temptation to accept meagre or symbolic gestures on the part of governments or those in power as sufficient progress. Instead, there needs to be active participation on the part of the citizenry for true change. It is evident that populism has caused renewed participation, as seen in recent elections, including that of Brazil. This energy calls for a counterbalance, as experienced in the recent US midterms, which saw a record turnout by youth in response to the populism that has surged in the past few years.

Indeed, youth have adopted activism in some ways, including via social networks and fleeting activism, in the form of hashtags and soundbites. It would be useful to move beyond such superficial movement and engage youth in a more thoughtful, educated way that allows them to understand the roots of the problems and issues our societies face, and how to realistically provide solutions, rather than solely causing agitation and frustration with no true change.

> **I take the position that the poorest of the poor must be brought to the mainstream of the economy, they must participate in the mainstream of our politics...we must address and redress the historical injustice of the past in order heal.**
>
> **Chumani Maxwele**

Non-racialism and multiculturalism

3rd session

The third panel discussion was moderated by **Rafael Heiber,** Executive Director and Co-Founder of CAF. In his opening remarks, he explained how there was a need to think beyond old paradigms in order to find solutions to the issues central to the conference. He emphasized that now that we are equipped with new technologies and developments, and benefit from the work of those who came before us; essentially, we are better prepared than ever to achieve a new level of consciousness and understand humanity's role on this planet.

> **Because change in a society doesn't occur due to a few firebrands with the best ideas. It is a result of the fire and the litmus test we were subjected to as communities. The reason why some of us live and survive today is because these communities embraced these ideas and and made them their own.**
>
> **Cheryl Carolus**

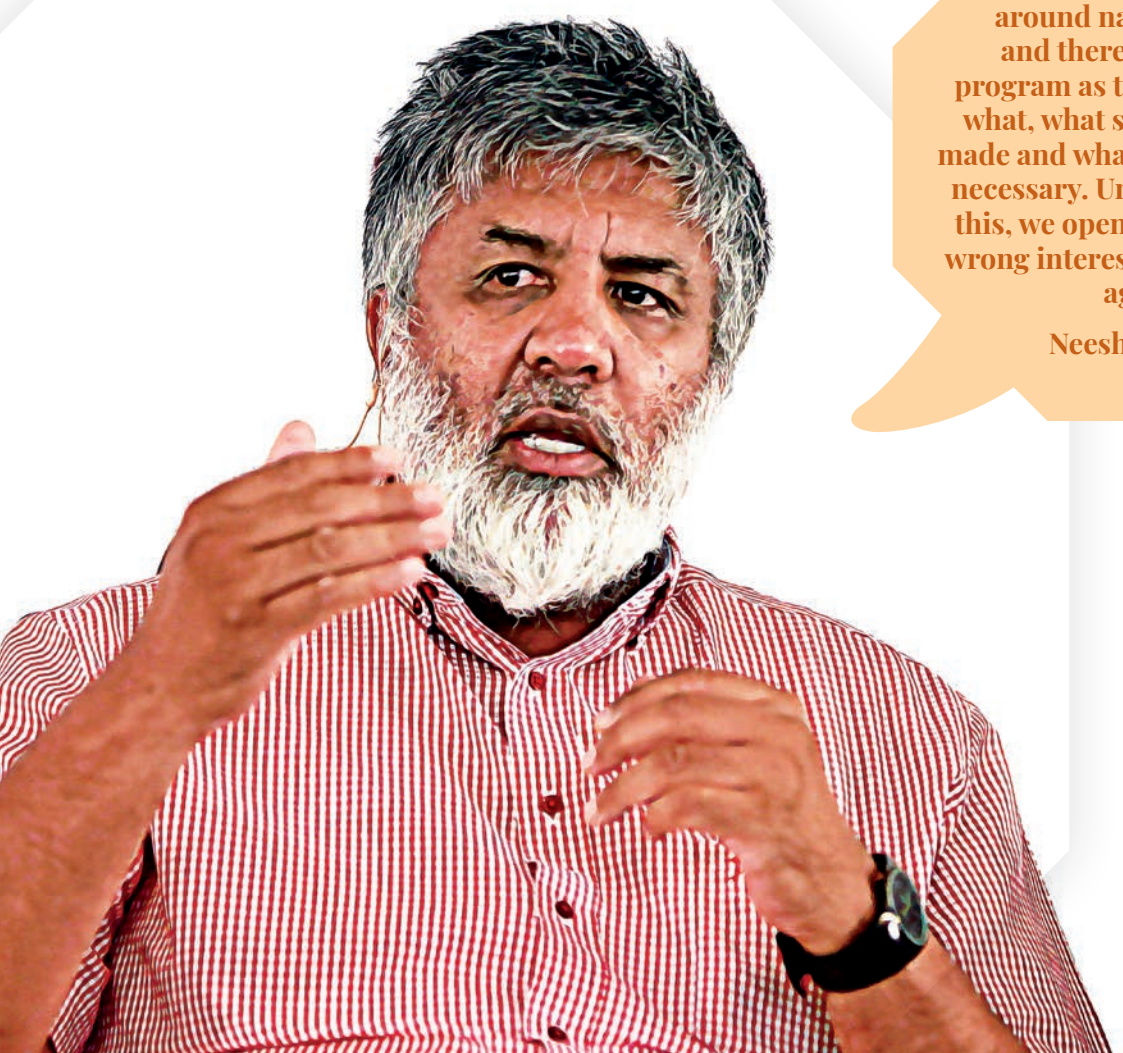
Panel Observations

The first speaker, **Cheryl Carolus,** was former South African High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. She chronicled the history of apartheid in South Africa and the journey South Africans have underwent in their quest to build a non-racial and multicultural society. She pointed out that everyone, from activists, academics and students, participated in this struggle. However, racism seemed to be surging again, 24 years after freedom. She emphasized the need to keep shaking the house and ensure the complete eradication of racism from society.

The next speaker, **Neeshan Balton,** Executive Director of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, an organisation dedicated to fighting racism in South Africa, pointed out that the eradication of racism in South Africa was at one point a reality. The ruling African National Congress (ANC) decided in its formative years that the fight against racism was going to be a collective effort by all South Africans. He argued that this crusade must be diligently engaged in and go forward with voluntary supporters, rather than being imposed on the people.

Ambassador **Mohamed Dangor** then stressed that separatist movements in themselves are opportunistic and should be avoided at all costs. He encouraged a narrative of non-racialism, non-sexism and anti-tribalism in order to achieve the objectives of the Forum. In his conclusion, Mr. Dangor called for avoidance of division and pursuit of unity.

Finally, **Michael Amoah,** Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics, argued that nationalisms remained a reality. At the same time, he felt it could be assuaged if the original ills that created division were addressed. For example, he insisted that in order to achieve inclusivity, multiculturalism and non-racialism, the errors and mistaken systems that fomented division in the first place need to be rectified.



There's no coherent program around nation-building, and there's no coherent program as to who needs to do what, what sacrifices must be made and what contributions are necessary. Unless we recognize this, we open up spaces for the wrong interests to determine an agenda.

Neeshan Balton

When we look at issues we need to look at the international sphere, break it down, and bring it to the regional and local sphere. Furthermore, we must be careful and be vigilant that fear is not used to manipulate that people, and that we promote non-racialism, non-sexism and democracy.

Mohamed Dangor

Panel Conclusions

Remaining committed to local community

In engaging with local networks, it is imperative that there is a recognition of the community, but also of the differences within the collective. Without recognizing difference, various interests can manipulate these differences as cleavages and abuse them for their own political ends and agendas. These agendas often supersede local communities and are the agendas of national or supranational powers without a commitment to the people.

Commitment to the needs of local populations and examining policy and change on a local scale is one way in which to address the global. Local level proccesses can promote engagement in which citizens are not passive consumers but instead active participants in the creation of a common space. These processes can be promoted via social and civic encounters, allowing for mobilization and attending to individual and group interests at the micro level. When truly focusing on and attending to the interests at the local level, and gaining success in managing communities in that sphere, we can then align these practices with policies that cater to larger collectives and transnational social space.

A discussion of pluralism that gives way to improved policies and societal harmony

Inclusivity, multiculturalism and non-racialism has been encouraged at length in recent decades. Meanwhile, there is a resurgence of othering taking place. Understanding race or ethnicity in a way that does not engender further division is key in preventing further cleavages and falling pray to racism, xenophobia or classism. To date, models of multiculturalism have failed in many countries, precisely due to a lack of understanding.

Despite the recent rise in minority rights and a universalistic human rights discourse, attempts to support minorities have met with backlash that have only worsened their marginalization. This can be corrected via renewed efforts in both academic and policy spheres in order to achieve policies that take into account past failures. Instead of a policy of non-recognition of race, or recognition of race and diversity, which has created further divisions, it would be important to instead focus on non-discrimination while acknowledging the pluralism in our societies.

Examining existing power structures and visualizing a new future

Globally, there is a stark imbalance in the allocation of resources. A small percentage of beneficiaries enjoy all the progress our society has achieved so far, while the rest of the population becomes isolated, marginalized and frustrated by the inequalities that they see growing rapidly and that they also experience personally. Meanwhile, institutions and old power structures fail to translate advances in technology and globalization in a manner that aids the totality of the population.

With a mind to reorienting this situation, it is first important to examine what went wrong with the institutions in the first place, and why the same hegemonies keep resurfacing with the same elites. From that point on, coherent change can only be affected by reinventing the system and perhaps completely rethinking it. Notions of equity and equality must be discussed in a global conversation, so as to truly understand how they work and how to implement them. A new future should negate inequalities and social injustice, with an aim towards the common good of society.

So as much as we human beings do to encourage inclusivity, multiculturalism and non-racialism, the original ills need to be rectified. Without this, there is no way to satisfy constituents.

Michael Amoah

"The world is currently not working towards solidarity based on commonalties. And so here at the Forum, we of course describe our work as "common action" because we attempt at collective action. At the same time, the title also seeks to generate awareness of the "commons." What we achieve does not result from our efforts alone; we benefit from the many who came before us."

Rafael Heiber

Vote of thanks

Thembisa Fakude, CAF Deputy Chair and event organizer, addressed the Forum with closing thoughts and thanks. After thanking the CAF Board and staff, the Mail and Guardian, Al Sharq Forum and the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, he proceeded to provide some final reflections to the gathering. He explained how education and organized movements for effective change is possible, reminiscing about a past anti-littering campaign in South Africa. He encouraged this type of proactive, educational movement for change, as demonstrated by the activities and collaborations of CAF. Moreover, he enjoined the audience to remain constantly vigilant in the face of problematic issues in today's society, including those of right-wing extremism, racism, xenophobia and divisive nationalisms. Complacency and lack of education, he argued, is why we confront the problems that the Forum discussed.

As such, he asked for commitment to continue to remain active and engaged is seeking progressive solutions to the problems at hand, with an awareness and conscious education that can truly serve as a vociferous opponent to the right-wing extremism and polarization plaguing the world today.

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