



## **Harvard Project for Asia and International Relations**

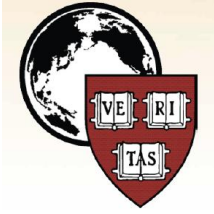
**Conference, Harvard University 2011**

**10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

### **DELEGATE REPORT – HEMANTIKA VERMA**

The report comprises of the following parts:

- 1) Detailed report of the various sessions, panels and the outcome of the same
- 2) Pictures from the various events



## Harvard Project for Asia and International Relations Conference, Harvard University 2011

*10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> February 2011*

### **Conference Report**

I, Hemantika Verma, student of BA (Honours) Economics, Sri Venkateswara College, Delhi University, was selected as a delegate for the Harvard Project for Asia and International Relations (HPAIR) Conference at Harvard University, USA from 10-13<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

The HPAIR is Harvard University's student outpost in Asia- a dynamic and internationally visible forum in which future leaders engage in the most pressing issues facing the Asia-Pacific region. HPAIR 2011 brought together over 150 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 40 countries, to engage in the most important issues affecting Asia today. With the theme of "Looking Back, Forging Ahead: Asia in Pursuit of a Vibrant Future," conference attendees explored pertinent issues concerning the Asia region, including foreign policy, public health, environmental issues, media, and entrepreneurship through plenary sessions, panel sessions, seminars, and case-studies.

In specific, I had been chosen for the panel, 'Public Administration and Public Policy at the Local Level: The Art of Municipal Governance', in recognition of my work in this field. The panel discussions comprised eminent speakers and scholars sharing first hand experiences of having worked at the grass root level to understand and improve governance. This was accompanied by 'case study' sessions which were carried out in the form of a 'Mayoral Campaign'. Delegates were expected to prepare a campaign, as if they were contesting for their city's Mayoral elections-addressing particular problems that the city faced, and proposing, innovative yet realistic solutions.

The conference primarily comprised of:

1. Plenary and keynote sessions
2. Panel Sessions

## **A) Plenary and Keynote Sessions**

### Day 1, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2011

Opening Ceremony – Keynote speeches by:

- Ezra Vogel - Henry Ford II Research Professor of the Social Sciences, Emeritus, Harvard University
- Michael Puett – Professor of Chinese History, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University
- Jay Koh – Head of Investment Funds & Chief Information Strategist, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)

### Day 2, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011

*Plenary Session - I*

#### **International Financial Markets: Asia's Role in Recovery and Reform**

Panelists:

- Dwight H. Perkins – Harold Hitchings Burbank Professor of Political Economy, Emeritus, Harvard University
- Enrico Spolaore – Professor of Economics, Tufts University
- William W. Grimes – Professor, Boston University
- David Dapice – Professor, Tufts University
- Lal C. Chugh – Professor of Finance, University of Massachusetts

Although the world was hit hard by the financial crisis of 2007, many Asian countries managed to avoid the brunt of the damage and are now on their way to recovery. Much remains to be done, however, to ensure the future security of the international financial system. Different nations may have very different priorities: should governments attempt to drive growth via generous stimulus packages or reduce debt through minimizing expenditures? What regulations are needed to monitor and stabilize the present financial system? What is the role of national and transnational institutions in creating these regulations? This plenary addressed these and other critical questions in exploring the future of Asia and the world's financial institutions.

Day 3, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2011

*Plenary Session - II*

**Foreign Policy: Asia's Diplomatic Strategies in International Affairs**

Panelists:

- Erez Manela - Professor of History, Harvard University
- Muret Lutem - Consul General of Turkey in Boston
- Dan Blumental – Commissioner, US China Economic and Security Review Commission
- Robert S. Ross – Professor of Political Science, Boston College
- Charles McClean – Regional Studies, East Asia Program, Harvard University

While the U.S. and a handful of European nations have traditionally decided the course of global affairs, key Asian countries, especially India, China, Japan, and South Korea, have significantly increased their presence in the international realm. During this plenary session, we examined the changing diplomatic trends and strategies of Asia and assessed the region's growing impact on foreign affairs. We discussed how the Asian nations work together for greater international cooperation on a wide spectrum of issues ranging from international security to the global economy.

Day 4, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2011

Closing Ceremony – Keynote speeches by:

- Arthur Kleinman - Victor and William Fung Director of Harvard University's Asia Center; Esther and Sidney Rabb Professor, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University
- Ichiro Fjusakaki – Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to United States of America
- Mark Wu – Assistant Professor of Law, Harvard Law School

**B) SESSIONS OF PANEL - Public Administration and Public Policy at the Local Level: The Art of Municipal Governance**

Panel Moderator: Xiaofei Ying, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Panel Members <Name, Country of origin, College>:

1. Jesus Ambriz, Mexico, Simon Fraser University
2. Ya Cao, China, Central University of Finance and Economics
3. Abhishek Jain, India, IIT Delhi
4. Woo Young Kim, South Korea, Korea University
5. Hannah Lee, South Korea, Duke University
6. Hyunsuk Lee, South Korea, Korea University
7. Miranda Lee, China, Pennsylvania State University
8. Hewen Liu, Japan, University of Tokyo
9. Shufeng Ma, China, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
10. Sabine Rainer, Austria, FHWien
11. Kyoko Sawai, Japan, Georgetown University
12. George Schmircher, Austria, University of Vienna
13. Wimonmat Srichamroen, Thailand, Washington University in St. Louis
- 14. Hemantika Verma, India, Sri Venkateswara College, Delhi University**
15. Shruti Vishwanath, India, BITS Pilani
16. Xuelu Xi, China, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
17. Dao Xiang, China, Renmin University
18. Kyle Acierno, Kosovo
19. Sofia Reza, Kosovo
20. Junyu Xie, China, Renmin University
21. Yu Xin, China, University of Hng Kong
22. Jianlong Xiong, China, Fundan University
23. Si Zheng, China, Peking University

## Day 2, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011

- **Joseph A. Curtatone**, serving his 4<sup>th</sup> term as Mayor of Somerville
- **Monica Lamboy** - Director of Strategic Planning and Economic Development for the city of Somerville.

The Mayor talked about the importance of community participation and citizen empowerment for effective policy formation and implementation-stressing on the fact that if citizen views aren't taken into account while forming policies, there is a big chance that the policy might not work compared to the situation where the citizen feels 'a part' of the policy. Somerville has had a legacy of extremely motivated and visionary Mayors, who have been instrumental in transforming the city from being 'slum ville' to the 'all America city' over the past 2 decades.

The post lunch session saw the delegates from India present their campaign. **I and a fellow delegate, Abhishek Jain from IIT Delhi, presented a model - ME (Mobile Electronic) Governance that we have been working on for about 2 years.** The model involves an amalgamation of mobile and computer technologies to improve the state of governance in New Delhi. The presentation was received extremely well by the Panel moderator and other delegates. This was followed by a Mayoral campaign for the city of Pune, India-highlighting the untapped potential Pune has- in terms of business, industrial activity and tourism which the delegate aimed to systematically utilize through her campaign agenda.

## Day 3, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2011

- **Dr. Ousmane Dore** is a native of Guinea and presently a Mason Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School. He was a former minister of finance and economy in Guinea and Governor of the IMF and World Bank.

His diverse experiences of having dealt with matters, both internationally and domestically, gave delegates valuable insights on matters relating to fiscal decentralization and on how international aid can be used most effectively.

- **Parminder Pal Singh**, Assistant Commissioner, Municipal Corporation Chandigarh, Government of Punjab, India.

He talked about the advantages that Chandigarh, one of most well planned city's of India enjoys compared to other cities in India and what were the challenges he faced while implementing computerization of various departments in Chandigarh.

The post lunch saw 6 delegates from China presenting their ideas about Municipal Governance in the form of Mayoral Elections for Beijing. Several other delegates also presented their ideas and presentations on the panel topic.

Day 4, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2011

- **Yoon Yeong-Seok**, currently a visiting scholar at Beijing University teaching International Relations. He has previously held numerous directorship positions in the government of South Korea and served as Secretary to the Mayor of Seoul from 2000 to 2002.

Mr Yoon talked specifically about certain ambitious projects in the field of infrastructure and green energy that the Seoul had undertaken recently, and the kind of planning that went into making them successful.

- **Huiyao Wang, Director General for the Center for China and Globalisation**

He provided an overview of the Chinese economy in terms of growth, demography and social indicators- and talked about how the 'un democratic' process may not necessarily be counter productive.

The post lunch witnessed more presentations from the panel members. This was followed by an extensive discussion on democracy and personal experiences in the process of governance. In the end, we spent time summarizing the entire panel topic with reference to the diverse experiences that had been shared and discussed upon.

## **Outcome of the HPAIR Conference**

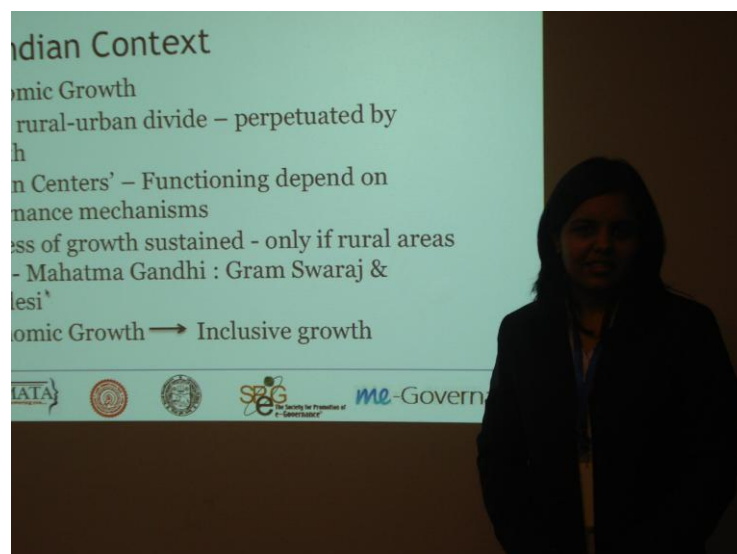
The zest and dynamism with which Mr. Joseph A. Curtatone spoke about his city and people was inspiring. Mr. Parminder, being from India, gave me constructive feedback on the project and Dr Ousmane's experience added to all our knowledge sets. To add to that, Mr. Yoon and Mr Wang we were able to provide insight about important aspects of South Korea and China's economic, political and social condition-two countries we have a great deal to learn from.

The experience of presenting our ideas to the Panel members and moderators was extremely encouraging. All 21 members of the panel gave presentations about a city each. In this way, I also learnt a lot about other nations, and their systems of governance. Such international exposure has broadened my knowledge base, removed set dogmas of democracy & monarchy and improved my understanding of different components of technology and governance.

I, along with Abhishek Jain, received a lot of positive criticism on the presentation on me-Governance. Mr. Curtatone has implemented mechanisms for mobile governance in the town of Somerville and has shown support to share all details with us in order to help us work on our project better. Mr. Parminder's support in sharing his Indian contacts has also been overwhelming. Discussions with people such as Mr. Parminder and Dr. Ousamane helped me understand the complex role of technology in governance – how technology is an important facilitator of existing structures. All this has enabled us to view our project much more pragmatically.

Overall, the conference was an extremely enriching experience, both culturally and academically. It not only gave me an opportunity to understand how models of governance function in different countries, but also to meet people from different nationalities and understand their culture.

## PRESENTATION – me Governance



Day 2 – Panel Session - Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor of Somerville



Day 3- Panel Session - Dr. Ousmane Dore and Parminder Singh



Day 4 – Panel Session - Yoon Yeong-Seok and Huiyao Wang



Panel Members – Discussions and other presentations



