



**PROGRESSIVE
ALLIANCE**

**Progressive Alliance Conference 2022:
Asia's Social Democratic New Deal for**

Peace, Democracy, Recovery, Sustainability (working title)

Asia's Social Democratic New Deal for Peace, Democracy, Recovery, Sustainability

Preserve peace and security; pushback against despots' hijacking of democracy; towards recovery and building back a better, more sustainable and equitable future

Organiser: Progressive Alliance

Host: Democratic Action Party, Malaysia , Network of Social Democracy Asia

Date: arrivals 24th June 2022 (friday) - Conference proper 25th & 26th June 2022

Location: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

All eyes are on the war waged by Vladimir Putin and his army on the Ukrainian people. It has thus far proven to have far and wide reaching consequences from triggering another humanitarian crisis, escalating the global food and energy security volatility skyrocketing food and fuel price world wide, even as far as calling to question the very architecture of global security.

Whilst many choose to pin the blame of the current tumult as a 'post-pandemic hangover', the undeniable truth is that the Putin invasion has compounded on the global socio-economic long COVID. This not only sabotages global socio-economic recovery, it is providing inspiration and a launchpad for conservative forces to invade democratic spaces and undo long fought for progressive norms.

We are seeing- especially in the Asia Pacific region- kakistocrats, kleptocrats and autocrats using their ill begotten wealth to buy and occupy the electoral and democratic landscape in their increasingly often successful bid to return to power and their wicked ways.

Despite Duterte's earlier ascension to the Philippines' Presidential palace, and Malaysia's then 60 year long undefeated kleptocratic regime, the period of 2017-2020 saw the uprising of progressive forces in the Asia Pacific region against a long history of being known as 'the club of despots'.

Jokowi was re-elected despite a strong counter movement from the traditional establishment, New Zealand Labour pulled off an awe inspiring victory, the Malaysian people ushered in a new dawn after 60 years of the same regime, the Thai Future forward party came out of nowhere and gained unprecedented traction amongst Thai citizens and gained positively shocking and huge political representation at many levels. It was an inspiring time being a progressive in the region- seemed as though the Asia-pacific region was finally set to realise our own democratic and progressive golden age.

But the excitement, responsibility and opportunity to work towards reversing the institutionalised rot created political blindspots for the progressives. The conservatives doubled down on the back of their defeats. They plotted and schemed to circumvent the mandates gained by democratic forces.

The turning point was the start of the pandemic in early 2020. Whilst progressives in the region were putting all hands on deck to save lives and livelihoods, the Conservatives went into full throttle in fanning hatred and division- sabotaging all efforts to contain and fight the virus- with the end game of robbing and stealing power at a time of universal crisis.

The military junta in Thailand retook the Thai State by force and banned the future forward party and even persecuted its leaders. Myanmar is in a state emergency racking an unprecedented civilian death toll under the military junta and there's no end in sight. The Philippines have seen the resounding return of the Marcos-Duterte dynasty, largely due to the large amount of money and resources poured into misguiding the electorate with misinformation and outright lies. Malaysian Kleptocratic leaders in partnership with ethnonationalist, and religious bigots launched an assault on democracy by collapsing the democratically elected government and subsequently suspending democracy through declaring a state of emergency.

It seems that the conservative forces are hell bent on not only taking back power, but to discredit and nullify the very legitimacy of democracy itself- through hijacking democracy. Their long periods of being in positions and their corrupt puppeteering of key levers of power means they can still command and control outside of democratic mandates through deep states. It is through this that they can and have returned from the ashes; and it is with this and their own delusions that they are able to project the illusion of grandeur and divine right to rule.

What is at stake, is that not only Conservative forces will once again occupy the seats of power to siphon the wealth of the masses into their own coffers, and the poor and marginalised will be forced into submission to their whims and fancies. It will be a turbo charged version of the old world order of oppression, suppression and exploitation aided by the very tools and technology that was supposed to peacefully usher in a new world order of freedom, justice, solidarity and democracy.

With the progressive and democratic golden age barely gotten off the starting blocks, the Conservatives peddles the false notion that the rise of Progressives and 'over-democratisation' was what brought on this unprecedented pandemic triggered socio-economic depression world over. They present themselves as the divinely anointed saviour of the world by exploiting the deep rooted turmoil and emotional scars sustained during the pandemic.

The very notion of democracy itself is being framed as a plague and failure ridden hegemony, and being juxtaposed against the pre pandemic, undisrupted, imperfect yet prosperous world order that worked. DEMOCRACY itself is at stake.

As a progressive family, we must unite all forces globally willing and able to preserve peace, push back against the democratic rollback, and enact progressive policies to get back to work towards building a sustainable, equitable, just future for all of humanity.

This conference- the first fully physical PA conference after the opening of borders in most of the world- endeavours to gather internationalist leaders from the progressive family to discuss and deliberate the path and actions moving forward, with the depth and intensity than only physical contact enables, that the pandemic has denied us over the past two years.

The new norms imposed on us by COVID19 and its multifaceted collateral damages on the socio-economic and political order the world over requires a new approach, a new plan, a new deal; and there is a unique opportunity to build back better. This opportunity must be seized by we progressives, countering the conservative despots' opportunistic hijacking of democracy to remould the future in accordance to their agenda.

How are we to push back against the fake news, misinformation and exploitation of victimhood among the masses that serves the conservative agenda?

How do we ensure the economy that we build back from the current ruins, can be one that will ensure equitability, sustainability, decent work and livelihoods for all?

How can we halt the advances of the increasingly successful occupation of democratic spaces by despotic, kleptocratic, dynastic agents and leaders of conservatism?

How do we reignite the spirit of internationalism in galvanising and organising progressive forces worldwide, whether political parties in and outside of government, NGOs, unions, thinktanks and individuals alike, to formulate and implement policies of hope and progress?

How do we win the battle of disarmament and peacefully ensure global security, and push back against the ethnonationalists, the fear mongering theocratic bigots and extremists, the colonial imperialists?

How do we speed up and ensure net zero transition can be achieved inclusively and equitably, whilst creating environmental and clean jobs and mainstreaming the green economy?

How do we preserve peace and security; pushback against despots' hijacking of democracy; towards recovery and building back a better, more sustainable and equitable future?

These are some of the questions we will discuss up close and personal for the first time since the pandemic, in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.