

DEBATE

Masood Ahmed, President of the Center for Global Development, former Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department of the IMF

Thank you. Thank you very much. Of course, every politician that tries to price externalities finds that they run into immediate political difficulties. I guess the question for us is also going to be to what extent are the political systems in our countries, particularly the rich countries, capable now of taking the decisions both nationally and internationally that everyone here is saying are essential?

To what extent are the roots of the international economic disorder actually a national political dysfunctionality in so many countries?

I want to take two questions, and in the strictures from Madame Touré, I want to go to the people who are underrepresented on this panel, which is young people.

Aminata Touré, former Prime Minister of Senegal

And women.

Masood Ahmed

One over there, and also here.

Basile Cotte, High-Ranking French official currently employed at the European Commission, within the DG COMP

Thank you.

Masood Ahmed

Please be precise and concise, if you can.

Basile Cotte

I will try. Hello, my name is Basile Cotte, I work at the European Commission. Thank you so much for all of your insights. You have mentioned that the global economic order is forever changing and is impacted by many factors. My argument is that – and you mentioned it as well – it is impacted by the evolution of technology and innovations.

My question to you would be, in your opinion, do you think that the strategic use of innovations, new technology, in our era of global interconnectedness will lead to a more stable economic order or, on the other hand, can lead to disorder of the global economic system?

Thank you.

Masood Ahmed



A very good question. Is the technological progress going to lead to more stability or more instability? You might also within countries, not just international.

Anybody else have a question? No, I see no other questions. Okay, in that case, who would like to answer that question? Do you think that the pace of technological change, particularly artificial intelligence now, is going to make international economic relationships work better or more unstable?

Anyone have a view on that?

Yann Coatanlem, CEO of DataCore Innovations LLC, President of Club Praxis

I have tried to ask ChatGPT, but I could not.

Masood Ahmed

We could ask ChatGPT for the answer.

Yann Coatanlem

I think it is a tough question, and it can go either way, really. As I said, in principle, having more data, more fine-tuning of models, can help educate all of us and hopefully come up with mutual decisions that go in the right direction and that create win-win situations at the end. However, technology can also create some new gaps between countries.

Masood Ahmed

On balance, Yann, that was a very ChatGPT answer, thought, right? Because you say it can be this, it can be that. Are you feeling positive about this or do you think, 'I am more worried than I am feeling good about it'?

Yann Coatanlem

I am an optimist who is always a lot.

Masood Ahmed

Madam Touré?

Aminata Touré

Yes, definitely I think we do have the example of the Arab Spring on how much internet and technology come into play. The end of the process is another story, but if you come back to Africa, definitely it has raised the level of consciousness, more participation of young people and women – and that is a good thing because I am a pro-disorder type of activist. I mean, a disorder that would lead to a better order.

In that sense, I think it is a good thing that people get more aware of the issues, of the scandal – that is one thing. It even forces governments to be more accountable on the issues they deal with, and I think it is very good because, to get to a new order, you need some disorder and maybe technology is going to play a role.

Of course, there is a downside to it, we do know that: messages of hatred and things like that that we know. However, globally, I think it is a good thing. It is a tool that gets citizens to participate more, especially in an environment where they do not have much access politically or economically. It gives more echo to the voices of those who are leftovers, on the side of the road.

**Masood Ahmed**

Thank you very much. Good, a bit of disorder. Hye-min, please?

Lee Hye-min, Senior Advisor of KIM & CHANG, former G20 Sherpa of Korea, former Ambassador for International Economic Affairs of the Republic of Korea

Yes, I would like to address the question from the floor with regard to technology development. I think it can be good or bad, but I think they change the priorities.

My experience in negotiating Korea/US FTA in 2006-2007, at that time, with regard to telecommunications, the most important issue was how to liberalize facility-based telecommunication services.

However, after that, with the OTT service in place, facility-based telecommunications services are not so important. Value-added services are more important. No-one talks about facility-based telecommunications services anymore. At that time, we did not know what OTT was and, at that time, it did not enter into force.

Therefore, we resisted the US request to liberalize facility-based telecommunications services, but we fully liberalized value-added telecommunications services. OTTs, like Netflix, have come over to the world through facility-based telecommunications services.

The development of technology can change the priorities in international trade agendas, but it can be good as well as bad.

Masood Ahmed

All right, thank you. Pierre?

Pierre Jacquet, Professor of Economics at the École nationale des ponts et chaussées (ENPC), member of the Cercle des Économistes

Yes, I agree with what has been said. I, personally, as an engineer, see the potentialities in technology. I think there are a lot of promises in technological progress, but it is the responsibility of human beings to give a moral dimension to technology use. Therefore, technology is not a substitute to political will and to thinking about the ethical dimension of technological change.

What makes me more optimistic than I was earlier is that there are international discussions about that dimension, especially insofar as artificial intelligence is concerned, for example. I think that technology can bring people together to discuss substantial matters, and that is good news even in the current context.

Masood Ahmed

Thank you very much. Yide?

Qiao Yide, Vice Chairman and Secretary General of Shanghai Development Research Foundation

Yes, I guess the progress of science generally is good. However, its implication is uncertain. The movie recently released, *Oppenheimer*, disclosed these fundamental contradictions. I guess that is the very simple answer.

Masood Ahmed



Thank you very much. Vlad, any thoughts on this?

Vladislav Inozemtsev, Director of the Center for Post-Industrial Studies in Moscow, Special Advisor to Middle East Media Research Institute's Russia Media Studies Project in Washington, DC.

No, I just think that, first of all, technology brings a curse because it undermines some old technologies, some established relations and visions. Therefore, every kind of technological breakthrough is increasing chaos.

However, I would say the mission of innovators is to do what they are doing, to increase the curse, and the mission of politicians and the mission of intellectual leaders is just to combat this and to put in some framework and put some limits to this.

This is a kind of societal change as it is organized. Therefore, I definitely oppose the idea that we should regulate and limit the creative knowledge and the creative expression in any way.

Masood Ahmed

Thank you very much. I think we have come to the end of our time, and I do not think that that is a conversation which is feasible to summarize. What I will say, though, is that I think what is very clear from this is that I do not think that this hankering for preserving the order in which we used to live is actually a meaningful approach because, every time we start talking about it, we discuss mostly that there are so many problems that the order that we have has created. I do not think we yet have an agreement on what is the kind of order where we would like to end up, let alone where we are going to end up.

I would say there are some quite open questions about how long and how disorderly the transition process will be, and whether, during that transition process, we can make progress on some of the common challenges where we cannot afford to wait for the lack of clarity to be resolved because it will just end up creating disorder of a whole different magnitude.

I want to thank all our panelists for their insights. I want to thank you all for your presence and I would like you to join me in giving them a round of thanks, please.