**2020 Gershowitz Conference**

Theme

Pandemic of Disinformation: Messengers, Media, and Messaging

Date

November 11-12, 2020

Overview

Accurate information saves lives. In times of crises, news media, data journalism, fact checkers, and investigative reporting shed light, whereas disinformation spreads darkness, fear, and a chain of bad decisions. While seeking to counter the spread of misinformation in what has been defined as the first ‘disinfodemic,’journalists, policy makers, and the general public must devise measures to adapt or die in a fragmented media ecosystem.The conference explores different concepts, countries, and collaboration to navigate the storm in an otherwise disinformation age. Yet, the conference will also explore some of the larger issues outside the media sphere relevant to the unique time period in which we live.

**Schedule and Presentations**

Day 1

9:45-10:30 Opening Statements:

Dr. Charles E. Menifield Dean, School of Public Affairs & Administration

Dr. Robert Shick, Visiting Scholar at SPAA, Conference Co-Chair.

Dr. Uchenna Ekwo, President, CMPI – Conference Co-Chair

Gershowitz Memorial Speech: Gabriel Gershowitz, Attorney - Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, NY

Keynote Speech: The Honorable Herbert Klein

Former United States Congressman

Member, Rutgers University President’s Council

Keynote Address: Vinod Sekhar,Vibes, Malaysia --TBC

**Day 1 Media :**

10:30-11.30 **Panel I: Media/ Disinformation**

Panel of discussants explore the fight against disinformation and why trust matters. Are digital technology and social platforms conduits of the information disorder? What is the implication of fighting back against disinformation and misinformation through media and information literacy? What’s the difference between disinformation (information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country) and misinformation (information that is false but not created with the intention of causing harm).

Speakers:

1. The Most Reverend Manuel A. Cruz
2. The Hon. Richard S. Gordon, JD Founder/President, Gordon Strategic Advisors
3. Shahira Amin - Egyptian journalist, (Former deputy head of Egyptian state-owned Nile TV and senior anchor. CNN Contributor
4. Justin Buffer, Educational Director, Cambridge Learning Center, NJ
5. Austin Mackell, CEO, Write-In-Stone, A Media Transparency NGO

**Panel II**

**Coronavirus and Drivers of Misinformation**

Cornell University researchers analyzing 38 million articles about the pandemic in English-language media around the world found that political leaders including President Trump are the largest drivers of falsehoods involving the Coronavirus pandemic. The study is the first comprehensive examination of coronavirus misinformation in traditional and online media. Panel explores the potential costs of misinformation and how it could be deadly and sow confusion about life-saving personal and policy choices.

1. Hon. William J. Palatucci, Special Counsel, Gibbons P.C.
2. Fathia Eldakhakhny - Columnist, Almasry Alyoum Newspaper—Egypt’s first independent newspaper.

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**Day 2**

**Panel I**

**Geopolitical Realities After Covid-19**

The story of Covid-19 storm is still unfolding. Both advanced economies and emerging economies are still counting the cost of the impact of the pandemic. The full economic, cyclical and structural effects are not quite visible yet, but, in any case, they will be gigantic. For example, the World Bank says Africa requires about 1.2 trillion dollars to recover from the impact of Covid-19. While any prediction may be difficult, this panel will however think of the possible impacts the virus will have on international politics? If anything, the pandemic acts as a revelation of the characteristics of our new world: the weakness of global governance - in the area of health in this case - on the one hand; and a shift in the center of gravity of the global balance of power especially the role of the United States whose trajectory may be profoundly altered by the ordeal currently facing many other countries.

Speakers:

1. Sultan of Sutu, The Sultan of Sulu, HM Abdullah Kiram of the Philippines

2. Dr. Yetunde Odugbesan-Omede

3. João Kanda Bernard, UNITA Representative for Europe -- Confirmed (recorded)

4. Muhammad Magassy, Member of Parliament of Gambia--- (recorded)

5. Senator María Lourdes Landivar-Tufiño, Bolivia

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**Panel II**

**Pandemic of Inequality and plight of Global Small States**

Even though inequality has been a challenge within the international community, Covid-19 has further exacerbated social and political disparities. In the midst of the global struggle to contain the pandemic, the plight of Small States and Self-governing Territories around the world are not reflected in global policy agenda. Panelists discuss the challenges and opportunities of Small States who have equal voting rights within the United Nations General Assembly but receive unequal treatment in global policy formulation especially at this moment of reckoning for equity and fairness.

Moderator: Joseph Hammond

Speakers:

1. Iswandy Ahmad, Member of Brunei Legislative Council

2. Cesar Saboto, Minister of Industry, St. Vincent and Grenadines---invited

3. Lord Fusituʻa, is a Tongan politician and noble of the Realm 4. Mathew Yngson, CEO of ASEAN-Carribean Council

**Panel III**

**Space Communications and Future of Governance**

In the decades after the Apollo program, innovation into Space has struggled to maintain public attention mostly due to budget constraints and policy priorities. Recent years saw space agencies leaning on private contractors. With advances in technology, global crises, and renewed public attention there is a renewed surge in interest from private companies who see unlimited economic potential. This panel will explore the real possibilities of a new frontier and the challenge of realising its benefits, while acting responsibly and in the interest of a shared future.

Speakers:

1. Daniel Macikak - Co-founder of
2. **Lamont Colucci, PhD, is associate professor of politics and government at Ripon College, Ripon, WI, and senior fellow in National Security Affairs for the American Foreign Policy Council.**

**Event Partners:**

**Commonwealth Africa Initiative**