



A roadmap for
**Indo-Pacific
Regional
Cooperation in
a Post COVID-19
World Order**



International Conference

March 10-11, 2022

Concept Note

The origin of the term 'Indo-Pacific' is traced to German geopolitical scholar Karl Haushofer who used it in the 1920s in his work, 'Indopazifischen Raum,' while Indian historian Kalidas Nag referenced it in the 1940s. In more contemporary history, the term gained prominence after then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's speech in the Indian parliament in August 2007, where he remarked, "We are now at a point at which the confluence of the two seas is coming into being. The Pacific and the Indian Oceans are now bringing about a dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and of prosperity." Multipolarity was fast emerging in Asia, and there was a need to further strengthen it. To that end, frameworks such as the Asia-Pacific were proving to be limited in scope and unable to meet current geopolitical requirements or respond to emerging economic engagements.

Countries falling in the direct hinterland of the vast Indian and Pacific oceanic expanse are termed 'Indo-Pacific countries.' It is a multipolar region, contributing more than half of the world's GDP and population. The motivation for a larger bloc always comes from its sheer size, resources it owns, and the scope and size of the economies of scale that it can generate. Though Indo-Pacific is a conceptual framework and not a regional organisation, it is becoming the world's strategic centre of gravity and its future affects people everywhere.

The U.S. considers the Indo-Pacific as one of its important priorities of foreign policy. Recently the White House has come up with a revised Indo-Pacific Strategy wherein the U.S. calls for a sustained and creative collaboration of allies, partners and institutions within the region and beyond. The document considers

India to be a prominent regional leader contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific and collaborating in new domains like health, space, cyberspace, technology cooperation, besides others. The year 2022 also celebrates 75 years of US-India ties. The U.S. leadership in the Indo-Pacific region outlines five objectives – advance free and open Indo-Pacific; build connections with and beyond the region; drive regional prosperity; bolster Indo-Pacific security; and build regional resilience to transnational threats. These objectives are also of interest to countries like India, Australia and Japan.

Any discussion on the Indo-Pacific will be fruitful if India and the U.S. are on the same page strategically. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, several discussions on connectivity, security, trade and non-proliferation had taken place in the context of the Indo-Pacific region. However, it is important to recognise the current changes in the international space and recommend a roadmap for successful Indo-Pacific development cooperation.

With this background, the Indian School of Business, in partnership with the U.S. Consulate General, Hyderabad, is organising this international conference on March 10 and 11, 2022 on a virtual platform. The objective of the conference is to engage various stakeholders of development and come up with a roadmap for a stronger Indo-Pacific Regional Cooperation in the context of the changing and uncertain times.

The scheduled conference is also timely as the U.S. Government recently released its Indo-Pacific Strategy and also celebrates 75 years of Indo-US ties. As part of the engagement with the U.S. Consulate offices, ISB has been organising multiple workshops for various stakeholders with the objective of increasing their awareness about Indo-Pacific and related issues. So far, we have organised detailed workshops for journalists and International Relations scholars. The videos of these workshops can be accessed at youtube.com/channel/UCYrGDNolIYjVbM-GadHTg

The conference is expected to be of immense use for the think-tanks, practitioners, government officials, diplomats, industry, media, and academia.

The sub-themes which will be discussed during the two-day international conference are:

Inaugural Session: A Roadmap for Indo-Pacific Regional Cooperation

Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region is critical for development-based, emerging world order. The existing issues pertaining to security, development, and environment must be addressed for a successful Indo-Pacific region. The objective of this session is to set the scene for deeper deliberations and come up with a roadmap for a stronger Indo-Pacific regional cooperation.

In-Conversation Session: Shaping Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific

India and the U.S. play a critical role in shaping geopolitics and making it strategically more relevant through aligning with the countries based on consensus and cooperation emerging out of common concerns. The objective of the session is to deliberate on various issues and opportunities that are shaping the geopolitics of the region.

Security Dialogue: Negotiating Security Partnership in the Indo-Pacific Theatre

The Indo-Pacific is emerging as one of the most important theatres for the 21st century's geopolitical affairs. The leaders in the region are striving to protect shared values and promote the security and prosperity of the region. As the foreign policy perspectives of countries vary and change based on diplomatic requirements, it is important to negotiate for a strong security partnership that incorporates not only military capabilities but also cyber capabilities, AI, quantum technology and undersea capabilities. The objective of this session is to discuss AUKUS and other developments in negotiating a stronger security partnership in the Indo-Pacific theatre.

Sagar Dialogue: Rules-Based Maritime Indo-Pacific Order

For common prosperity and security in the Indo-Pacific region, there is a need to evolve through dialogue a common, rules-based order that respects sovereignty, territorial integrity, and equality of all nations. The objective of the session is to deliberate on the challenges in arriving at a rules-based maritime Indo-Pacific Order.

Resilience Talks: Building Resilience in the Indo-Pacific: Climate Change and Disaster Response

The Indo-Pacific is home to more than half the world's population, and seven of the 15 biggest economies which account for 60 per cent of the world economy, two-thirds of all economic growth over the last five years. The region also faces major transnational challenges with the climate crisis being one that needs immediate attention. Being home to 70% of the world's natural disasters, it becomes imperative for partners to come together to reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. This session will aim to focus on measures that promote resilience to these 21st-century transnational threats focusing on climate change and natural disasters.

Regional Dialogue: Modernizing Alliances, Strengthening Partnerships: Within and beyond the Indo-Pacific

For the last 75 years, the Indo-Pacific region has witnessed several regional alliances, organizations, and treaties. These partnerships have the region generate 60% of the world's GDP and two-thirds of the present global economic growth. This success has been attributed to a rules-based international order. However, such alliances and coalitions need to be updated in response to constantly evolving geopolitics, while ensuring that all partners and allies gain the benefits of a free and open Indo-Pacific that is more connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient. Advancement in technology and greater interconnectedness has meant that our societies are more integrated. Organizations like the European Union, which is one of the top investors in the region, now seek increased engagement with the Indo-Pacific. The objective of this session is to explore the synergy between these groupings with the larger developmental objectives of the Indo-Pacific region.

Economic Dialogue: Building Prosperity in the Indo-Pacific

As one of the fastest-growing regions in the world, the Indo-Pacific region has the capacity to elevate close to 1.5 billion people to the middle-income category. Despite COVID-19 impeding the pace of economic growth in the region, Indo-Pacific remains the epicentre of the world economy. That said, the focus needs to be on improving trade facilitation, promoting the digital economy and technology, rebuilding resilient supply chains, pushing for more decarbonization and clean energy, and equipping emerging economies of the region with high-standard infrastructure. The objective of the session is to talk about the aspects which would collectively enhance prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

Diplomats' Roundtable: Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: Focus on Education, Healthcare, Technology and People-to-People Connect

Cooperation within and beyond the Indo-Pacific region is critical to aspire for inclusive and resilient world order. There are multiple issues and challenges which needed networked cooperation and engagement like – education, healthcare, climate change, technology, manpower, besides others, that is needed to be discussed for arriving at a development-oriented Indo-Pacific region. The objective of this panel is to discuss and explore these areas of cooperation which would aim to strengthen the region's collective soft power.

Final Plenary: Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: Strategies for Today's World

Countries across the Indo-Pacific and beyond are exploring new ways to look at globalization. Many of the countries recognize the fixed costs that underline undiversified supply chains though many others are exploring self-reliance to strengthen the global supply chain. For both approaches, the world needs international cooperation to meet its developmental goals. The objective of this session is to deliberate on possible strategies of cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, in the context of the pandemic-impacted world.