



**Reframing South Asian
Regional Cooperation
In the New Context**
National and Global Dimensions

4-5 November 2023, Dhaka, Bangladesh



Parallel Session C1

Role of Knowledge Actors in Advancing a New Political Settlement in South Asia

Sunday, 5 November 2023 | 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Venue: Ballroom, Sheraton Dhaka

Chair: *Dr Swarnim Wagle*, Member
Federal Parliament, Nepal

Besides pursuing its main purpose of promoting evidence-based policies, think tanks around the world have played a critical role in providing a safe space for ideas or debate, legitimizing policies or ideologies, and developing future cadres of policymakers and politicians. Think tanks have often been crucial actors in shaping and influencing the political settlement processes in South Asia. Think tanks in South Asia serve as neutral forums for dialogue and collaboration between various stakeholders, including governments, civil society, and international organisations. Over the years, think tanks in South Asia have always engaged in Track II diplomacy, which complements official negotiations and helps build trust between conflicting parties. Think tanks in South Asia are also facing numerous challenges, including resource constraints, limited civic space, and the constant pressure to ensure neutrality.

Guiding Questions for the Panellists

1. What key lessons can be drawn from the historical roles of think tanks in South Asia contributing to political settlements in the region?
2. Can think tanks catalyze political settlement in South Asia in the current limited civic space across countries?
3. What are the potential future trends and challenges for think tanks in South Asia in their quest to contribute to political settlements?
4. How do think tanks navigate issues of neutrality and impartiality while working on politically sensitive topics in South Asia to uphold their credibility and effectiveness?