

The Millennium Project 2050

Authors:	Kerstin Cuhls / Kerstin.Cuhls@isi.fraunhofer.de		
Sponsors:	The UNO, UNDP, and UNESCO The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Many other organisations including companies like Motorola Corporation, Shell International, Monsanto Company and Ford Motor Company. For a more exhaustive list go to www.acunu.org/millennium/affil.html		
Type:	Multinational continuous Foresight exercise		
Organizer:	It was initiated and coordinated by the American Council for the United Nations University in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution, The Futures Group, and the United Nations University at Jerome Glenn. For a complete list see www.acunu.org .		
Duration:	Continuously since 1996	Budget: € 230 000 per year excluding special studies	Time Horizon: Various time horizons up until 2050

Purpose

The Millennium Project assists in organizing futures research, improves thinking about the future and makes that thinking available through a variety of media for consideration in policy-maker, advanced training and for feedback. The goal is to accumulate wisdom about possible futures. The project is designed to provide an independent, global capacity that is inter-disciplinary, inter-institutional and multi-cultural for early alert and analysis of long-range issues, opportunities, challenges and strategies.

Fostering Thinking about the Future

The Millennium Project provides an intellectually, geographically, and institutionally dispersed think-tank capability. It is designed to provide an independent, global capability for interdisciplinary, inter-institutional, and multi-cultural for early alert and analysis of long-range issues, opportunities, challenges, and strategies. The insights and information generated are made available through a variety of media for consideration in policy-making, advanced training, public education, and feedback is welcomed. To achieve this, the project has established an international network of experts in futures research to gain access to global knowledge on futures issues. The source of sponsorship varies. Institutes and private companies are regular sponsors. Sponsorship is sometimes linked to the commissioning of special studies.

The Mix of Methodologies Applied

The main tool of the Millennium Project is its network of experts that provide quick and easy access to international knowledge. Regular Delphi surveys are carried out to gain information about global challenges and to provide assessments of these challenges. The SOFI Index (State Of the Future) enables one to make historical comparisons of the results of this work. Global scenarios are developed concerning specific challenges that may be normative, exploratory or long-range in nature. Scenarios on issues

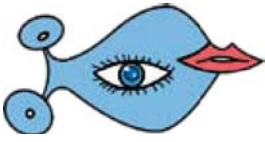
such as the development of science and technology, counter-terrorism or peace in the Middle East are written in an open way without the use of formal scenario workshops. Reports mix quantitative and qualitative approaches in a very open and flexible way.

The Network of Futurist Experts

The network relies on 25 so called 'nodes' based in Argentina, Australasia, Brazil, Belgium, Canada, Central Europe, China, Egypt, France, Finland, Germany, the Gulf Region, Iran, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Silicon Valley, South Africa, South Korea, the UK and Venezuela as well as an Experimental 'Cyber-Node' based in Hawaii. These nodes are involved in planning the project and in the different surveys it performs. The involvement of such nodes allows the project to connect global and local perspectives. The nodes identify knowledgeable and creative people in their region, translate questionnaires, conduct interviews, and disseminate project findings.

'The 2005 State of the Future'

Futures Research systematically explores, creates, and tests possible and desirable futures to improve decisions. Decision-making increasingly factors in effects of globalisation. The issues and the solutions of our time are increasingly trans-national, trans-institutional and trans-disciplinary.



It is increasingly participative. 'The 2005 State of the Future' provides an additional view on global change.

The annual 'State of the Future' survey provides a global strategic landscape that public and private policy-makers may use to improve their strategic decision-making and global understanding. Anyone is allowed to make use of the results. Business executives can use the research as input to their scenario planning, university professors, futurists, and other consultants may find the information useful in teaching and research. Nine 'State of the Future' surveys have been conducted until now. So far 1,983 experts have been involved in this work. The latest survey alone, conducted in 2005 involved 454.

Ethical issues and how they will develop have emerged as increasingly important for the future. Examples of key questions arising in this context include: What ethical behaviour should guide corporate and economic decisions? What ethical issues are involved in attempting to improve global education? What new ethical challenges stem from biotechnology and public health? Media publication policies raise ethical questions about censorship. What are the new questions of religion and moral philosophy? Is it right for people of wealth to have advantages? What is a future-crime? From these questions, ethical principles and value statements were derived and the time horizon for their realisation assessed.

The project's global scenarios included simulations, drivers of global developments and even very long-term developments.

The **counter-terrorism scenarios for example** include descriptive scenarios such as '**Escalation**', '**Counter Mindset**' with a mind of restoring the right and proper image of Islam, '**Root Causes**' with a failure to end terrorism with military means but after a short period of expansion, terrorism loses ground, '**Socratic Justice**' with the help of the UN, '**The Wild West**' where terror meets terror and '**The Peaceful Cowboy**' scenario in which cooperation with other nations improve internal security, enhance intelligence and enables economic activity. Other scenarios include '**The Next Year**' concerning an invasion of the Taliban areas, '**Fortress USA/OECD**' with closed borders, '**Establishing a Global Civic Ethic**', '**Colonialism Reborn**' and '**Call on the UN**'.

The Science and Technology 2025 Global Scenarios are:

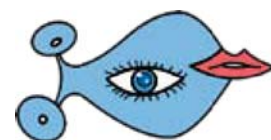
- **S&T Develops a Mind of Its Own:** Collective human-machine intelligence has dramatically increased. Customized neural nutritional supplements, genetic medicine, universal cognitive development access, and TEF (Tele-Everywhere-Feedback protocol) with CyberNow clothing and glasses achieved miracles in human performance, social stability and economic growth. The forces behind Moore's law have not only

accelerated computer capacity but also all phenomena connected to computing ...

- **The World Wakes Up:** The murder of 25 million people over a three-month period in 2021 in major population areas around the world by a self-proclaimed **AOG** or Agent of God finally wake up the world to the realization that an individual acting alone could create and use a weapon of mass destruction. In this case Congo virus genetically modified using available simulation software and a genetic engineering kit stolen from a university. The phenomenon was called **SIMAD** for Single Individual Massively Destructive ...
- **Please turn off the Spigot** concerns the Man of the Year in 2025, an anti-science hero who is in fact pro 'responsible' science and regards science and religion as parallel. He writes about how scientific results are used, positively or as weapons on 'black markets' and where concern for the work of one lab is addressed by another laboratory taking it up whenever funding is available ...
- **Backlash** is about moral issues and the evaluation of science. Arguments for the international control and regulation of science as well as for the self-regulation of science are given. Nevertheless risks deriving from science cannot be omitted. Under the Principles of Inviolability of Science with a kind of certificate, science blossoms, many new discoveries were made. Problems arise however and the Jakarta 2 resolution to establish a global science commission is signed with negative effects. Nobody works on 'risky' science anymore, horizons shrink, goals are diminished, the global economy winds down, poverty rises, and the safety zone of reduced risk that global regulation was supposed to provide proves not to be so safe after all ...

Three normative **Middle East Scenarios** round off the picture of the global scenarios. These are:

- **Water Works:** The need to increase water supply encourages political negotiations and helps to build trust in the possibility of peace. UN troops enforce agreements and new forms of international collaboration cement the peace ...
- **The Open City:** A new Pope challenges Jewish and Muslim religious leaders to solve the question of governance in Jerusalem. Politics, power, and media all play a role in supporting a proposal for a solution that is ultimately adopted as a resolution of the UN General Assembly ...
- **Dove:** This is the name of a secret contested Israeli plan to de-escalate and unilaterally renounce retaliation to demonstrate that Palestinians were aggressors ... a separate debate is going on among extremist Palestinians. At the same time 27 Israeli pilots refuse to participate in future air raids. As in a chess game, de-escalation becomes possible and a series of non-aggression treaties and agreements are signed stating that Israel has a right to exist ...



In the 'State of the Future' and other works of the Millennium Project 15 major issues for the future are identified. These **15 global challenges** may come as no surprise:

1. How can sustainable development be achieved for all?
2. How can everyone have sufficient clean water without conflict?
3. How can population growth and resource consumption be brought into balance?
4. How can genuine democracy emerge from authoritarian regimes?
5. How can policy-making become more aware of global long-term perspectives?
6. How can the global convergence of ICT work for everyone?
7. How can ethical market economies be encouraged to help reduce the gap between rich and poor?
8. How can the threat of new and re-emerging diseases and immune micro-organisms be reduced?
9. How can the capacity to decide be improved as the nature of work and institutions change?
10. How can shared values and new security strategies reduce ethnic conflicts, terrorism and the use of weapons of destruction?
11. How can the changing status of women help improve the human condition?
12. How can transnational organized crime networks be stopped from becoming more powerful and sophisticated global enterprise?
13. How can growing energy demand be met safely and efficiently?
14. How can scientific and technological breakthroughs be accelerated to improve the human condition?
15. How can ethical considerations become more routinely incorporated into global decisions?

Activities Derived from the Millennium Project

General Users

Companies sponsor studies by the Millennium Project only if they expect to obtain useful results such as insights that apply to their own context that they can use in their own strategic decision-making processes. Project findings are applied by the Millennium Nodes in their own ongoing work. Sections of 'State of the Future' reports have been used as university and high school texts.

Statements of the millennium project about global challenges do not represent consensus views. They are a distillation of a range of views from diverse participants. Data are not representative in the sense that they based on small survey samples. The diversity of opinions solicited means that issues raised and recommendations given may sometimes seem contradictory. Some may even sound like political clichés.

Nevertheless this kind of 'information about things to come' is regarded as important by different decision-makers.

Influence of the Millennium Development Goals as a Focus for Action

The UN Millennium Project 2005 led to the formulation of eight global millennium goals with targets indicating how these goals could be made measurable and operational. These were recommended for the UN in a report in 2005. They are as follows:

GOAL 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty

Target 1: Between 1990 and 2015 halve the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day

Target 2: Between 1990 and 2015 halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

GOAL 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Target 3: Ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

GOAL 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

GOAL 4: Reduce Child Mortality

Target 5: Between 1990 and 2015 reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate for under-fives.

The Impact of the Millennium Project

Critics of the Millennium Project claim it is superfluous because the problems and issues it raises are well-known. The results of the Millennium project in terms of 'questions raised' are clear, but answers to these questions would change the world. So is the Millennium project merely an idealistic endeavour?

Recommendations of the project comprise plans to achieve the Millennium Goals as well as guidelines for governance. The contribution of civil society is also discussed. Indicators for improvement are provided and achievements are evaluated.

The specific needs of regions such as Africa or of countries in conflicts are also stressed. Special emphasis is placed on recommendations for an international system to support country-level processes. Trade is an important point of discussion. Even the costs and benefits of achieving millennium goals are investigated and described. What remains unclear is whether progress on such issues arises as a result of the recommendations, as a result of other recommendations or as a result of progress towards general United Nations objectives.



It is true that many of the issues raised are well known. However if they are not gathered, written down and assessed, no one will listen. Without giving recommendations to the United Nations, how would they know? Who else would be interested in changing the world and improving the conditions for poor-people-without-a-lobby, if not the United Nations? So the recommendations in annual and special reports make sense. They serve as a reminder of the problems that are still unsolved.

Results of the millennium project are used to prepare general high ranking events such as summits. These lead to tangible outputs such as the United Nations Millennium Declaration, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly in its 8th plenary meeting on 8 September 2000, which is cited in Annex G-4 of the '2005 State of the Future' report, or in publications by the United Nations such as the year 2000 'We the Peoples' address by Kofi Annan. In all these cases however it is difficult to trace back what the source of the single information is. This is a problem that often exists in foresight.

It is also stated that the 15 Global Challenges are regarded as a framework for thinking about the world as a whole, to mitigate risks and seize opportunities. The SOFI or State of the future Index allows one to track different expectations and opinions over time. All in all, the project steers the attention of policy makers to the broad challenges of the world.

Because of its world-wide-network, the usage of information is not limited. The Chinese editions are even acknowledged by Chinese policymakers. Some of the water recommendations were incorporated into China's **11th Five Year Plan** and its **Long Term Plan for Social and Economic Development** includes water-saving technological innovations, ecological engineering for water conservation and sewage treatment, eco-system based watershed management and eco-service zoning for nature conservation. Population recommendations and recommendations about energy were also taken into account. Nevertheless it is difficult to trace what had the direct impact.

'Yes' the Millennium Project is an idealistic endeavour. The project is also run on a very low cost basis. It exploits opportunities to commit people and even companies to its goals. It informs the UNO, its nodes, different governments, companies, research organisations and others. The information it provides is not always surprising, not always really new, but it is an important part of the puzzle of what the world will look like in the future.

Sources and References

A major output of the Millennium Project is the annual report about 'The State of the Future'. The 2005 report includes a CD ROM containing collected works of the project, details of the 'State of the Future', scenarios, indicators as well as an explanation of the main methods applied in Futures Research.

- Annan, Kofi (2000): 'We the peoples ...' United Nations Department of Public Information, New York, www.un.org
- State of the Future 2005, <http://www.acunu.org/millennium/sof2005.html>
- State of the Future 2004, <http://www.acunu.org/millennium/sof2004.html> and previous versions
- UN Millennium Project (2005): Investing in Development. A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals, www.unmillenniumproject.org.
- Publications are available at www.millennium-project.org
- For teaching and methodological purposes a CD ROM 'Futures Research Methodology – V.2.0' is available via the website www.unmillenniumproject.org.