



**Global
Challenges
Foundation**

Strategic Foresight and Multi-polar Solutions for Global Governance

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The submission proposes the creation of a council addressing global challenges. The council would draw on universities, scientific institutes, think tanks, and business to develop necessary medium-to-long range solutions. The first line of work is to address those global challenges currently not receiving adequate government attention and an ordinate amount of cross-disciplinary effort, with the submission citing areas as biotechnology, Big data, geoengineering and space exploitation. The council would operate with an agile staff of 12-14 people, using evidence based decision-making and fast-to-build models embracing feedback and non-linear uncertainties, rather than ever more detailed prediction models. This innovative model is meant to tackle the complexity at hand, and provide flexibility by reviewing and recalibrating goals over time to new information.





1. Abstract

The Problem. We live in a multipolar world where geopolitical competition among major powers is increasing and multilateral cooperation has become more difficult. Nevertheless, major powers have shared interests in solving global challenges such as climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, terrorism and state failure. Problems with emerging technologies such as geoengineering and biotech and ethical issues connected with human enhancement and the internet of things haven't hit crisis point, but in the absence of consensus on their development they could quickly turn contentious and become a source of future competition.

Implementing solutions for such global challenges as terrorism or change climate is daunting. Such challenges require synchronized actions by states. Many of the challenges, such as state failure, require patience. Often time, challenges create new problem sets, which then must be solved.

Governments—no matter in what country across the world—are not built for easily grappling with such “wicked” problems. Even for the most highly capable governments, the long-term is an alien concept. Most governments are just trying to keep pace with current crises. Political leaders across the world decry the lack of strategic planning, but are averse to disrupting current decision-making processes to make way for it. Many governments aren't eager to think about multilateral solutions, fearing such solutions would involve outside intrusions and loss of sovereignty.

Global institutions, such as UN, IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organizations, are charged with finding multilateral solutions but they are only focused on one or other aspect of the problem, unwilling to take a holistic approach. Outside of the UN Security Council, multilateral institution rarely focus on the thorniest security challenges such as terrorism or non-proliferation, remaining the domain of individual states.

The Proposed Solution. There is no lack of expertise in the world about how to solve the biggest challenges. Many of these experts routinely think about long-term solutions. Even developing countries—otherwise lacking resources—have think tanks, scientific institutes and universities focused on the big challenges. Businesses have entered the field, supporting efforts to find solutions to the big challenges, which they see will bolster economic development.

Our proposed governance model calls for a Global Challenges Council that draws on private sector entities—universities, scientific institutes, think tanks, and business—to develop necessary medium-to-long range solutions to those global challenges not receiving adequate government attention.

The Global Challenges Council will work with, not in opposition to governments. Governments would be solicited to join in Global Challenges Council deliberations and the Global Challenges Council would work as closely as possible with government and multilateral institutions to implement solutions. As shown by the growing business and NGO role in realizing the Millennial Development goals, private sector actors are often on the front line in attacking the big global challenges and being an integral part of the solutions.



The Global Challenges Council would start with problems where there is a shortage of multilateral thinking and action. Possible areas include biotech, Big Data, geoengineering and space exploitation where international standards are lacking. Because most governments and multilateral institutions tend to have a short-term focus, many of the longer-term challenges would be the special province of the Global Challenges Council.

Contentious issues would be another focus for the Global Challenges Council. Many times, the big challenges are not being tackled because of disagreements between countries. Also, cooperation is hard because bilateral relations between governments have deteriorated to a point there is little or no cooperation on any issues. Continued arms control looks increasingly to be a victim of growing US-Russia tensions. Governments seek to blame each other and put the onus elsewhere on tackling big challenges.

Updated and vastly improved modeling techniques using algorithms for generating tens of thousands to millions of scenarios (called an ensemble of future worlds) can analyze and test the robustness of policy options across multiple alternative futures. As such, such modeling can be used to generate insights and understanding about the functioning of systems and the robustness of policies.

Finally, the mission of the Global Challenges Council would be to find global solutions. Many governments want to exclude others, working only with like-minded states. As a result, efforts to realize global governance on shared interests are failing. The Global Challenges Council would have global representation and seek global solutions, believing that in the globalized world only solutions that have a global dimension are likely to work in the long run. Practicality and effectiveness, not ideology, would be the philosophy behind its operations.

HOW WOULD THE GLOBAL CHALLENGES COUNCIL OPERATE

The Global Challenges Council would be a global institution, having a small permanent staff who would represent major powers and different regional perspectives. A much larger network of associates who would help in identifying major global challenges would also ensure a global perspective.

It would rest on a foundation of strong strategic foresight capability, which is lacking (however surprising) in most governments and multilateral institutions. Strategic foresight would allow the Global Challenges Council to identify emerging grand challenges so that early preventive action would be effective. The Global Challenges Council's network would include strategic foresight specialists drawn from different regions.

Global challenges are wicked problems by definition, defying neat categorization. A large and diverse network of associates, including methodologists, would be critical at developing comprehensive solutions. Unlike most governments or even multilateral institutions with their silos and special interests, the Global Challenges Council would be in a better position using its wide-ranging network to develop networked approaches to deal with complex problems.

Finally, the Global Challenges Council would constantly monitor the success or failure of its recommended actions. It's remarkable that few government employ a "lessons learned" capacity that can correct in midstream well-intentioned solutions that produce unintended consequences. Such a self-correcting mechanism would ensure the Council's flexibility and agility.



2. Description of the model

THE PROBLEM

Today, we are accustomed to living in a more and more polycentric world which is characterized by overlapping spheres of interest, competing value systems, different governance standards, and rising tensions. We have accepted the fact that the world cannot be divided any longer into ‘The West and the Rest’ and that civilizations need to co-exist if they do not want to be absorbed by continuous conflicts. ‘Nation Building’ and ‘Regime Change’ based on a self-proclaimed moral superiority of liberal democratic values are coming to an end. Today, we live in both a “No One’s” and an “Everyone’s” World.

Second thoughts also accompany the merits of globalization. It is true that the free flow of capital, goods, ideas, and people have created more prosperity and lifted more people from poverty than during any other period of human development so far. It is equally true that the internet and smart technologies created whole new industries and unleashed economic potential for generations to come. Globalization lowered the threshold for economic participation and entrepreneurship; it led to more competition, transparent markets and lower prices for a wide range of consumer goods; and it eased cross-cultural exchange through cheap travels and enhanced Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

But the upside of globalization is only fully available to the well-educated, well-equipped three-and-a-half billion of the pyramid living in advanced economies and urban centers (World Development Report 2016). The remaining four billion inhabitants of this planet do not profit from these developments – at best partly. As the digital gap widens, so does global inequality. Globalization and inequality, therefore, are the flip sides of the same coin.

The increasing fragmentation of our societies comes at a high price: the de-legitimization of capitalism and the liberal-democratic order. While the former once promised prosperity and a decent life for everyone, the latter’s pledge was equal rights and equal opportunity for the masses. Today, a swelling share of the middle class doubt the truth of these promises. Populism and anti-democratic movements could well sweep away the benefits of globalization quickly – as chauvinistic attitudes, rising nationalism and the race for a place in the sun ended the first wave of globalization at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century.

Emerging technologies—hugely beneficial for human health, sanitation, agriculture, transportation, and economic productivity—have their downsides: growing global socio-economic imbalances and inequalities; and a new arms race based on Big Data and cyber sabotage. While new technologies are key to dealing with environmental risks, the economic growth powered by technology is increasing consumption of scarce resources and degrading the eco- and biosphere. Electronic and silicon garbage and the rise of dirty industries like lithium and rare-earths mining are dangerous byproducts of our technological age.

Looking to the future, the emerging healthcare technologies, including human enhancement present ethical and social dilemmas. Chronic and psychological diseases are on the rise due to improper use of biotechnology in healthcare, agriculture and the food industry. Privacy is already a growing concern for many,



but the explosion in sensors and the “internet of things” will make it an even bigger problem.

A quarter of a century after the end of the Cold War, our world is a far cry away from what we expected in 1989-91 when the bipolar world order came to an end. We have neither experienced the ‘End of History’, but thankfully nor are we confronted with a full-fledged “Clash of Civilizations.”

WHY WE NEED A NEW GOVERNANCE MODEL

Governmental policy-making structures across the world are still aligned with the processes and demands of the emerging national economies and military-industrial complexes at the end of the 19th century. The operating principles have remained essentially unchanged to the present day: compartmentalized to a high degree according to jurisdiction, strictly hierarchical and thus vertically structured, mechanical in procedure and sluggish in generating coherence. Even though bureaucracies are part of highly interactive social systems, their modus operandi is ‘increasing efficiency’, not ‘managing complexity’.

This often leads to structural blindness. A political apparatus which organizes its forward planning chiefly along the lines of departments and responsibilities is inclined to ignore weak signals of change that do not comply with its organizational logic. Hence, its world view often is over-simplified, always fragmented, and sometimes deterministic and linear. The late American columnist Will Rogers once summed up this phenomenon with the ironic observation that “everybody is ignorant – only on different subjects”. This is particularly true for stove-piped bureaucracies.

Beside these structural deficiencies, other challenges are simply caused by a lack of capacity. Routine administration is dominated by a short-term pressure to act; urgency takes precedence over importance. Consequently, there is too little time for longer-term thinking or strategic planning. And, most importantly, access to the political level – which is indispensable for the political domain of strategy development – is very limited.

For all these reasons, the response of political administrations to uncertainty and change is, almost without exception, reactive rather than proactive. To overcome these structural and procedural obstacles it is essential to apply methodologies that make the best use of the fragmented expertise inherent in (inter-ministerial) working groups to mitigate its negative side-effects.

THINKING ABOUT THE UNTHINKABLE

Business-as-usual will no longer do, this is all too obvious. At the same time, policymakers worldwide seem to be caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, seeing the dangers of immobility but unable to change current governmental processes.

Ideally, a combination of the following measures could significantly improve governments’ ability to manage change and rebuild global governance which would emphasize anticipatory governance and early warning:

inter-departmental integration of strategic forward engagement methods in the policy planning process; introduction of horizontal budget lines, i.e. budgets



geared to inter-departmental, long-term future objectives rather than to departmental concerns (which would in turn require permanent coordination and harmonization of departmental policies); an intra-governmental network for orchestrating and implementing holistic governance approaches; systematic, comprehensive impact assessment of policy based on a range of time horizons and policy alternatives; a monitoring and feedback system that continuously questions requirements, expectations and political performance, creating a self-learning system.

So-called evidence based decision-making – i.e. decisions relying on past experience, existing evidence and linear projection – has its limits in our volatile world. The further we try to look into the future the less we can rely on the extrapolation of past data. Beyond a time-horizon of five years, therefore, foresight draws upon estimates about future events and developments. The art of strategic foresight is to connect the data points of today with the trends, drivers, and key factors of change of tomorrow – and to separate the wheat from the chaff. Where hard data is not obtainable, analytic techniques based on critical and systemic thinking are the only tools available.

Analysts should be ready to accept the fact that the future may not be a linear projection of the past but may well discontinue abruptly and enter a completely new track. Looking back on recent years we must acknowledge the fact that world affairs have been influenced much more by surprising events (disruptive change) than by continuous linear developments (incremental change).

GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS ARE THEMSELVES FLAWED

Despite the existence of such recommendations for over two decades, no national governments have fully adopted the principles of strategic planning except for some small states, such as Singapore. Moreover, on the global level, there has also been a lack of reform in global institutions to focus on early warning and strategic foresight despite the rapidly changing geopolitical landscape. Understanding the global nature of our challenges is aggravated by the fact that many multilateral institutions aren't truly global. Over the past several decades, there has been the rise of multiple regional and global players led by China but also including Brazil, India, South Korea, Turkey, Mexico, Indonesia and South Africa. Nevertheless, greater decision-making power for the rising powers has been slow and halting. The US Congress only recently acceded to increasing China's weighted vote in the IMF, and this was after several years of deliberation.

The common belief among experts on global governance is that the adaptation of current global institutions, providing increased roles for non-Western powers, will be rocky and minimal for the foreseeable future. Western powers would like rising powers to simply accept existing frameworks and rules. Unfortunately, rising powers have their own views on global governance that differ, sometimes radically, from Western ones. Many of the rising powers worry about protecting their sovereignty and are averse to having the UN or other global bodies sanction international intervention even for humanitarian causes. One specialist has listed six major obstacles to more effective and global governance system: (1) persistent strategic rivalry between Western and rising powers, (2) enduring value divergences, (3) incompatible regime types, (4) different developmental stages, (5) institutional inertia, and (6) ambivalent U. S. multilateralism.



The new formats—such as the BRICS—that the rising powers have put together only replicate existing Western originated policy templates, addressing current problems, not the emerging risks. No new forms of global governance aimed at tackling emerging risks have appeared in recent years despite the crying need.

CORRECTING THE SYSTEM FROM THE OUTSIDE

While the chances of global governance reform are limited, there is no lack of expertise in the world about how to solve the biggest challenges. Many of these experts routinely think about long-term solutions. Even developing countries—otherwise lacking resources—have the think tanks, scientific institutes and universities focused on the big challenges. Businesses have entered the field, supporting efforts to find solutions to the big challenges, which they hope will bolster economic development. Our proposed idea is for the global non-state sector to develop the ways to solve global challenges and to take the initiative in solving them, all the time encouraging and inviting governments and global institutions to take charge.

Precedents exist. Non-state organizations have played a central role in international environmental negotiations. However, they have also been seen as intrusive, particularly when non-state actors represent a narrow national or sectoral viewpoints. Emerging powers have complained, for example, about some US or European-based NGOs trying to impose Western values on their societies. Care must be taken that any non-governmental organization be global in makeup and spirit.

THE MISSION OF THE PROPOSED GLOBAL CHALLENGES COUNCIL

Our proposed governance model which we have named the Global Challenges Council would draw on private sector entities—universities, scientific institutes, think tanks, and business—to develop necessary medium-to-long range solutions to those global challenges—especially emerging ones—not receiving adequate government attention.

The Global Challenges Council will work with, not in opposition to, governments. Governments would be solicited to join in Global Challenges Council deliberations and the Global Challenges Council would work as closely as possible with government and multilateral institutions to implement solutions. As shown by the growing business and NGO role in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), private sector actors are often on the front line in attacking the big global challenges and being an integral part of the solutions.

The Global Challenges Council would not be duplicative of governmental efforts. Where long term solutions to the big challenges are being implemented by governments or multilateral institutions, the Global Challenges Council would not intervene. The Global Challenges Council would solely work on problems where there is a shortage of multilateral thinking and action. Possible areas include biotech, Big Data, geoengineering and space exploitation where international standards are lacking as well as ethical and moral issues connected with biotech, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and internet of things. Because most governments and multilateral institutions tend to have a short-term focus, many of the longer-term challenges would be the special province of the Global Challenges Council.



Contentious issues would be another focus for the Global Challenges Council. Many of the big challenges are not being tackled because of disagreements between countries. Also, cooperation is hard because bilateral relations between governments have deteriorated to a point there is little or no cooperation on any issues. Continued arms control looks increasingly to be a victim of growing US-Russia tensions. Governments seek to blame each other and put the onus elsewhere on tackling big challenges.

Finally, the mission of the Global Challenges Council would be to find global solutions. Many governments want to exclude others, working only with like-minded states, and dooming the results because they aren't a global solution. The Global Challenges Council would have global representation and seek global solutions, believing that in the globalized world only solutions that have a global dimension are likely to work in the long run. Practicality and effectiveness, not ideology, would be the philosophy behind its operations. It would also employ new modeling technologies (see below) that have shown that the increasing levels of uncertainty and complexity can be pierced and effective remedies can be identified.

HOW WOULD THE GLOBAL CHALLENGES COUNCIL OPERATE

The Global Challenges Council would be a global institution with a small permanent staff as well as a much larger global network of associates. It would rest on a foundation of strong strategic foresight capability, that is lacking in most governments and multilateral institutions. Strategic foresight would allow the Global Challenges Council to identify emerging grand challenges so that early preventive action could be effective. The Global Challenges Council's network would include strategic foresight specialists drawn from different regions.

Global challenges are wicked problems by definition, defying neat categorization. A large and diverse network of associates would be critical at developing comprehensive solutions. Unlike most governments or even multilateral institutions with their silos and special interests, the Global Challenges Council would be a better position to establish a wide-ranging network to develop networked approaches to dealing with complex problems.

Finally, the Global Challenges Council would constantly monitor the success or failure of its recommended actions. It's remarkable that few government employ a "lessons learned" capacity that can correct in midstream well-intentioned solutions that produce unintended consequences. Such a self-correcting mechanism would ensure flexibility and agility for the Global Challenges Council.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PROPOSED GLOBAL CHALLENGES COUNCIL

The permanent staff itself would be drawn from different regions of the world. Every effort would be made to ensure it was not seen as primarily American, European or Asian, etc. It would be small—ideally 12-14 people total. Management studies have demonstrated that smaller organizations are more agile and flexible. A wider global network of experts would ensure coverage of growing threats and risks.

The job of the permanent staff would be to orchestrate the effort of identifying global challenges that are not already well covered by governments and multilateral institutions. By being smaller, less time can be devoted to internal



management and more focus put on the mission. Coordination between members of the staff is also easier because everybody would be ideally co-located.

Once a problem area is identified by the permanent staff, then there would be wide ranging consultations about the extent of the challenge and possible solutions. The discussions would be continually widened until a fully-fleshed out analysis of the challenge and its risks were mapped out and possible solutions. Then a second process would commence orchestrated by the Global Challenges Council's permanent staff to discuss solutions and involve government and private sector actors in implementing those solutions. At each step, governments and multilateral institutions would be kept in the loop, if not involved.

To ensure effective coordination and trust between the network and permanent staff, there would be extensive virtual contacts, via telephone, mail, skype, videoconferencing and period travel. Travel costs can spiral out of control so by necessity the organization would need to rely on virtual meetings. Although a more difficult medium to build trust, virtual meetings will ensure transparency of the Global Challenges Council's workings and its objectives concerning emerging challenges. From time to time, staff members would travel for purposes of study and consultation. That travel could be used to physically bring together experts and practitioners to build trust and enhance cooperation. Attendance at international conferences would allow the staff to meet potential experts and practitioners and widen the Global Challenges Council's network.

The Global Challenges Council's reliance on wide networks would increase its transparency. The hope is that the Global Challenges Council's associates would brief their colleagues and contacts on the work of the Global Challenges Council, helping the Global Challenges Council to widen further its network.

The networked base of the organization would help ensure flexibility. As explained, "wicked problems" are not easily solved. Agreed solutions will need to be reviewed and recalibrated at points. Having a global network ensures a "deep bench" of experts and practitioners who can be consulted and re-consulted. Having an understanding that global challenges require an ongoing effort ensures from the very start that revisions will be factored into the original concept. A large global network would help guard against a doctrinaire attitude as well as complacency.

In the Global Challenges Council, no individual or institution associated with it would have a veto. At the same time, inclusiveness would be a priority. No attempt would be made to isolate any participating individual or institution. Another priority would be effectiveness. In most cases, policies can't be effective unless they have global buy-in. With the composition being mainly substantive experts who have studied the problems and are motivated by finding workable solutions, vested national interests are not as likely to disrupt or undermine Council decision-making.

Where there remained differences, then the permanent staff would have the responsibility for facilitating a consensus—exploring options with as much input and buy-in as possible—and crafting effective—not lower common denominator—solutions.



POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Beyond the seed money provided by The Shape Prize, additional funding would need to be raised. A development officer on the permanent staff would have responsibility for identifying financing from government, multilateral institutions, foundations and business. The step-by-step process of consultations at the various stages would help in the identification of potential funding sources worldwide. Every effort would be made to diversify the Global Challenges Council's funding sources so as to ensure its global character. Without diversified funding sources, the Global Challenge Council could appear to be in the pocket of one set of major powers or corporate interests. Diversification of funding sources would help ensure the appearance as well as the fact of intellectual independence.

Solutions would need to be vetted so that they do not favor any particular country or regional interests. While Western countries may be particularly endowed with deep expertise, there's little doubt that expertise on all the existing and likely emerging challenges resides across the world.

Fortunately, there has never been a more worried global scientific and expert community. Recruitment to help with analyzing, proposing and implementing solutions would not be the problem. Many may offer their time pro bono long they saw the Global Challenges Council as a serious endeavor, trying to solve the big challenges. It would take time to build up the authority of the Global Challenges Council. But civil society, including charities, philanthropies and business are increasingly willing to step up and fund real solutions to global challenges.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES CAN REVOLUTIONIZE THE DIAGNOSIS AND IDENTIFICATION OF EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

A generic capability that often needs to be improved – especially for dealing with complex and uncertain crises – is the analytical capability to develop insights into policy solutions that can support decision-making. The more complex and uncertain future developments become, the more important this capability becomes.

Conventional forecasting, planning, and analysis methods are not equipped to deal with dynamic complexity and even less so to deal with deep uncertainty: prediction of dynamic behaviors and certainty about probabilities, validity, and optimality cannot be obtained for multi-dimensional socio-economic systems characterized by high degrees of dynamic complexity and deep uncertainty. Moreover, improving models by increasing the level of detail or their size does not help much. Improving models by increasing the level of detail or their size may even be harmful if there is little time to act.

Instead of focusing on predictability, optimality, and attempting to develop ever more detailed models validated upon past conditions, it may be more useful to develop small fast-to-build models that embrace feedback mechanisms as well as non-linearity, explore different model formulations and a plethora of uncertainties, and test effectiveness and robustness of policies in the face of these parametric and structural uncertainties. Hence, there is a real innovative method to explore the influence of extreme conditions and uncertainties on the dynamic complexity of such systems.

Traditionally, the simulation methodology System Dynamics (SD) is used for modeling and simulating dynamically complex issues and analyzing their



resulting non-linear behaviors over time in order to develop and test the effectiveness (and robustness) of structural policies. The combination of SD with Exploratory Modeling and Analysis (EMA) is very useful and sufficient for broadly and systematically exploring and analyzing plausible developments of crises, their patterns and impacts, and for testing the effectiveness and robustness of preventive and curative policies without neglecting deep uncertainty and dynamic complexity.

EMA with its algorithm-based workbench consists of using exploratory models for generating tens of thousands to millions of scenarios (called an ensemble of future worlds) in order to analyze and test the robustness of policy options across this ensemble of future worlds – in other words whether the outcomes are acceptable over the entire scenario space. As such, it can be used to generate insights and understanding about the functioning of systems and the robustness of policies, by taking deep uncertainty seriously into account. In EMA, the question is not ‘when to measure more’ nor ‘when to model better’, but ‘how to explore and analyze dynamically complex systems under deep uncertainty’, and ‘which policies do effectively and robustly improve system behavior.

In sum, Exploratory Modeling and Analysis (EMA) is a research methodology that uses computational experiments to analyze complex and uncertain systems and support long-term strategic decision making under Deep Uncertainty and consists of:

developing “exploratory” – fast and relative simple – models of the issue of interest
Generate an ensemble of future worlds (thousands to millions of scenarios) by sweeping all uncertainty ranges and varying structure and boundaries
specifying variety of policy options (preferably adaptive ones)
simulating, calculating and comparing the performance of the various options across the ensemble of future worlds, analyzing their dynamic behavior, bifurcations, etc.

ENSURING EFFECTIVENESS

The Global Challenges Council’s effectiveness would rest in part on the development of a wide-ranging global network of highly motivated substantive experts across the world. The proposed Global Challenges Council would strive to promote its solutions governments, but go around governments if necessary given the urgency of implementing solutions to the global problems.

The Global Challenges Council would seek to partner with, for example, the Civil G20 which has developed a policy dialogue between the Political Leaders of G20 countries and representatives of civil society organizations working on the issues related to the agenda of G20 Summit. The goal of Civil G20 meeting is to facilitate exchange of ideas and opinions about the agenda of the G20 Summit and discuss pertinent issues which are of relevance to civil society with a view to making substantive contributions to policy formulation based on the civil society assessment of the main agenda and issues of the G20 Summit. The BRICS summit also have a civil society component, providing an opportunity to warn about rising global risks and present solutions.

Committed to constantly learning from mistakes, the Global Challenges Council will institute regular “lessons learned” reviews. Why was the original concept not adopted? What were the shortcoming of the initial solution? How could any solution have been better operationalized? Many organizations dispense with backward



learning process. In a rush to find a solution and declare victory, they don't want to take the time to question what could have done better. Some are so invested in the solution they used that they don't want to invite criticism by undertaking any lessons learned exercise.

An institutionalized “lessons learned” process also helps to guard against an abuse of power. Any such abuse can't be swept under the carpet, particularly as results of the “lessons learned” review will be published. To ensure unbiased and objective assessments, the Global Challenges Council would involve outside experts to do the evaluation of its efforts.

Finally, the Global Challenges Council would appoint an advisory board with members from G20 governments, leaders in civil society, eminent scientists and academics focused on global challenges. A robust advisory board can help steer the organization to promising opportunities for battling global threats and ensuring solutions are globally inclusive.

UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO GOVERNANCE

The Global Challenges Council with its global makeup, revolutionary methodologies and commitment to potentially taboo-breaking practical and effective solutions to global challenges can help reverse the current decline in global cooperation and governance. With innovation within global institutions at a standstill, it's only from the outside that the energy can come for changing the discourse on global cooperation and governance. A Global Challenges Council would make a significant contribution to solving the major challenges facing humanity.

3. Motivation

A) CORE VALUES

Decisions within the governance model must be guided by the good of all humankind and by respect for the equal value of all human beings.

A Global Challenges Council would have a global membership, allowing representative from emerging powers to play a much bigger role, commensurate with their growing economic, social and political power. At times, the United Nations—which should be the place to espouse global interests—has sought to establish a strategic foresight function, but the efforts always get bogged down bureaucratically, pushing the interests of the specific organization and not broader global dimension.

A much more flexible and inclusive body—having influence with governments and multilateral institutions—can better represent global interests. It also has a better chance of working across disciplines. As explained, today's global challenges are “wicked” problems. There's a need for economists, environmentalists, regional and country specialists, etc to work together across disciplines. Bureaucracies are siloed and have problems working across the different components.

To ensure a solution has a global perspective, experts from different disciplines need to work together. Governments and bureaucracies are hierarchical, used to splitting hairs and not collaborating. Strategic planning, where it is done at all, has been sporadic.



A governance model that serves all humankind has a better chance of succeeding if it is not cobbled together with governmental representatives all seeking to maximize their national interest. Instead, a diverse and global body that has global interests at heart, including the planet's long-range interests, can better find an inclusive. At that point, we can begin to engage with national governments, making the case that national interests—short and long term—can also be served.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a partial model for the envisaged Global Challenges Council. The IPCC brings together scientists to evaluate peer-reviewed worldwide evidence and analysis on the likelihood and potential impacts of climate change. As a recognized authoritative body, it can and has informed the political debates and negotiations leading to the various climate change agreement. But, the proposed Global Challenges Council would have a broader mandate: besides becoming the authoritative voice on emerging challenges, it would offer and press for effective solutions that take into account broader global interests. And it would not be under any government's control.

B) DECISION-MAKING CAPACITY

Decision-making within the governance model must generally be possible without crippling delays that prevent the challenges from being adequately addressed (e. G. due to parties exercising powers of veto).

The small permanent staff would have the responsibility for overall management of the Global Challenges Council, ensuring that the momentum is maintained in all the program areas. In the Global Challenges Council, no individual or institution associated with it would have a veto. At the same time, inclusiveness would be a priority. No attempt would be made to isolate any participating individual or institution. The second criteria for the development of the Global Challenges Council policies would be effectiveness. In most cases, policies can't be effective unless they have global buy-in. With the composition being mainly substantive experts who above all have studied the problems and are motivated by finding workable solutions, vested national interests are not as likely to disrupt or undermine Council decision-making. The permanent staff would have the final say, ensuring decisions are made on a timely basis.

C) EFFECTIVENESS

The governance model must be capable of handling the global challenges and risks and include means to ensure implementation of decisions.

Although small in terms of the limited number of dedicated fulltime staff, the Global Challenges Council's effectiveness would rest in part on the development of a wide-ranging global network of highly motivated substantive experts across the world. There has never been such a worried scientific and expert community. Recruitment would not be the problem. It would take time to build up the authority of the Global Challenges Council. But civil society, including charities, philanthropies and business are increasingly willing to step and fund solutions to global challenges. Multinationals are increasingly interested in helping financially the United Nations achieve its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The proposed Global Challenges Council would strive to promote its solutions governments, but go around governments if necessary given the urgency of implementing solutions to the global problems.



As indicated, strategic foresight is an important component of the Global Challenges Council mission. It would focus on emerging high-risk challenges that haven't received adequate attention elsewhere. It would not duplicate existing programs by other governments or institutions. A deliberate focus on just the big global challenges that haven't received attention means its energies won't be spread so thin that they stood no chance of success.

D) RESOURCES AND FINANCING

The governance model must have sufficient human and material resources at its disposal, and these resources must be financed in an equitable manner.

To keep costs low, the Global Challenges Council's permanent salaried staff would be small. Instead it would rely on a wide global network of experts for much of the work on solutions. They would be paid for their work, but not salaried. It would be much too costly to employ a huge staff of experts.

The job of the permanent staff would be to orchestrate the effort of identifying global challenges that are not already well covered by governments and multilateral institutions. Once a problem area is identified by the permanent staff, then there would be wide ranging consultations about the extent of the challenge and possible solutions. The discussions would be continually widened until a fully-fleshed out analysis of the challenge and its risks was mapped out along with possible solutions. Then a second process would commence orchestrated by the permanent staff to discuss solutions and involve government and private sector actors in implementing those solutions. At each step, governments and multilateral institutions would be kept in the loop, if not involved.

The Shape Prize funding could some way towards financially supporting the permanent staff, but additional financing would need to be raised to fund the substantive work by experts and the elaboration, coordination and implementation of solutions. A development officer on the permanent staff would have responsibility for identifying funding sources, including from governments, multilateral institutions, foundations and corporations. The step-by-step process of consultations at the various stages would help in the identification of potential funding sources.

As important as the funding is the expertise. Throughout the process, to make this a global endeavor and not one that is driven by any one country or region, the permanent staff would need to have representatives from across the world. Solutions would need to be vetted so that they do not favor any particular country or regional interests. The Global Challenges Council's permanent staff would take care that in all the consultations throughout the process rigorous attention is paid to ensuring global representation and involvement in the solutions.

E) TRUST AND INSIGHT

The trust enjoyed by a successful governance model and its institutions relies on transparency and considerable insight into power structures and decision-making.

Management studies have demonstrated that smaller organizations—such as the 12-14 person permanent staff envisaged here—are more agile and flexible. By being smaller, less time can be devoted to internal management and more focus put on



the mission. Coordination between members of the staff is also easier because the permanent staff will be in close physical vicinity.

At the same time, the nature of the work requires involvement by an extensive global network. To ensure trust between the network and permanent staff, there would need to be extensive virtual contacts, via telephone, mail, skype, videoconferencing and period travel. Travel costs can spiral out of control so by necessity the organization would need to rely on virtual meetings. Although a more difficult medium to build trust, virtual meetings will ensure transparency of the Global Challenges Council's workings and its objectives concerning emerging challenges. From time to time, staff members would travel for purposes of study and consultation. While more limited, travel could be used to physically bring experts and practitioners. Attendance at international conferences would provide an opportunity for staff and the Council's associates to get to know one another, building trust and transparency.

The Global Challenges Council's reliance on wide networks would increase the transparency. Members of the networks have their own networks and the hope is that they will brief their colleagues and contacts on the work of the Global Challenges Council, promoting the work and helping the Council recruit new associates.

F) FLEXIBILITY

In order to be able to fulfil its objectives effectively, a successful governance model must contain mechanisms that allow for revisions and improvements to be made to its structure and components.

The networked base of the organization ensures flexibility. As explained, "wicked problems" are not easily solved. Agreed solutions will likely need to be reviewed and recalibrated at points. Having a global network ensures a "deep bench" of experts and practitioners who can be consulted and re-consulted. Having an understanding that the global challenges require an ongoing effort also ensures from the very start that revisions are likely to the original concept. Such a large global network would help guard against a doctrinaire attitude as well as complacency.

G) PROTECTION AGAINST THE ABUSE OF POWER

A control system must be in place to take action if the organization oversteps its mandate, e. G. by unduly interfering with the internal affairs of nation states or favouring the special interests of individuals, groups, organizations, states or groups of states.

Committed to constantly learning from mistakes, the Global Challenges Council will institute regular "lessons learned" reviews. Why was the original concept not adopted? What were the shortcomings of the initial solution? How could any solution have been better operationalized? Many organizations dispense with backward learning process. In a rush to find a solution and declare victory, they don't want to take the time to question what could have been done better. Some are so invested in the solution they used that they don't want to invite criticism by undertaking any lessons learned exercise.



An institutionalized “lessons learned” process also helps to guard against an abuse of power. Any such abuse can’t be swept under the carpet, particularly as results of the “lessons learned” review will be published. To ensure unbiased and objective assessments, the Global Challenges Council would involve outside experts to do the evaluation of its efforts.

H) ACCOUNTABILITY

It is a fundamental requirement of a successful governance model that it perform the tasks it has been charged with, and the governance model must include the power to hold the decision-makers accountable for their actions.

Part of the accountability would be ensured by a vigorous “lessons learned” backward-looking evaluation of the Global Challenges Council’s effectiveness (see above). An advisory board drawn from government, multilateral institutions, leading universities and scientific labs and NGO community would oversee the Global Challenges Council and act as a transmission belt for Council ideas to an elite audience. The Global Challenges Council’s participation at the G20, BRICS summit, UNGA and other high-level multilateral meetings would help it promote its innovation solutions and persuade policymakers to adopt them. Private sector—including NGOs and business—are important actors in their own right and close ties can help ensure Council ideas are adopted. Finally, using media, including new forms of social media, would be critical to publicizing solutions and putting pressure on governments and private sector actors to implement proposed actions.