

## **Foreseeing the Global Futures with Emphasis on the Middle East and Africa in the Aftermath of "Covid-19 Pandemic"**

2nd International Conference for Future Studies and Risk Management  
(ICFSRM)  
Alexandria, Arab Republic of Egypt, 8-9 September, 2021

Prepared by the Council of Future Studies and Risk Management in the Academy of Scientific Research, Ministry of Higher Education, in collaboration with the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Arab League, the Millennium Project by the United Nations and The Egyptian-Arab Futures Research Association. The conference was held digitally over the course of two days. Scientists and researchers of future studies and different fields that were affected the most by the Covid-19 pandemic participated in the conference.

Concluding recommendations of the conference:

The conference recommends localizing what constitutes scientific attributes and distinguished ethical codes for the sciences, the art of study and research of futures and risk management in Egypt and the Arab world. This was established in six main points that respond to three critical questions: **Why** should we consider the future? **How** should we face it and cope with it? **What** can be achieved in the matrix of national, regional and international challenges?

We may respond as follows:

1. Establish a higher council for Future Studies in collaboration with presidential organizations and the cabinet.
2. Establish a national academy for studying and researching futures independent from planning and strategic research organizations.
3. Establish academic departments, jobs, syllabuses, academic and professional degrees in universities.
4. Support partnerships and increase the number of missions on a national and foreign level.
5. Present a list of current challenges and conduct periodic Delphi surveys tackling possible and preferred strategic solutions in the population, education, health, national security, water, food and energy.
6. Take into account the recommendations of specialized experts, speakers and participants in conferences, seminars and surveys concerned with the issues discussed in the agenda of the 2nd international conference held on 8-9 September 2021, in collaboration with the Arab Academy in Alexandria. What follows is a summary of said recommendations after surveying the views of the participants who attended the conference physically and virtually. They are as follows:

- The future of higher education is headed towards universities of the fourth generation. These use the latest technological means that put the student in the center of the learning process with the flexibility of the learning system for degrees and short syllabus and continuing education. This is done alongside the collaboration with universities internationally to achieve the concept of a global citizen. This way universities become a site for cooperation, innovation and entrepreneurship.

- The shift to Artificial General Intelligence can occur within the next ten years. Therefore, we must prepare for it well. Otherwise, we will face a new wave of unemployment as machines would replace human workers. As such, international cooperation is to oversee this shift and create new job opportunities for the new age. We must also bear in mind that a sudden shift towards Artificial Super Intelligence is a possibility. In this shift, a machine may improve itself to be even better than humans in performing tasks. This is a threat that we should not underestimate. Rather, we must prepare for it and oversee it on an international level.
- Future studies are an essential tool for all organizations and countries as it enables them to face future challenges and repercussions. To add, it encourages cooperation and international collaboration in the field of future studies because we all live in the same world and face the same challenges.
- We must develop business education to face the rapid developments that the pandemic imposed on the business world. This can be achieved by choring the appropriate fields to compete for greater success, benefit from emerging markets, establish strong partnerships with the industry and focus on the student as a catalyst for the learning process by making him/her participate more in the process and rely more on continuing education strategically.
- Rely on modern technology in managing grand national projects, including advanced tools of analysis and surveillance to ensure required quality while maintaining resources. To add, integrating artificial intelligence technologies with remote work systems to increase efficiency, while maintaining safety, health and environmental safety requirements.
- Prepare for any wild cards by attempting to predict them and place scenarios to deal with them and reduce their effects and implications, where a given wild card may be turned into an opportunity we can benefit from.
- Prepare for the digital shift and prepare the generation (Generation Z) to cope with this shift by shifting to skilled-based education to meet the requirements of future jobs.
- Shift to automation & digitization in all ports with continuous training to build the abilities of a given organization. This is to be prepared for this shift and guarantee the flexibility and sustainability of the field of maritime transport and the operation of ports.
- Spread awareness regarding foreseeing and planning the future and the importance of using it in governmental and non-governmental organizations to face the repercussions and effects resulting from similar events and variables in the future.

- The progressive, rapid, exponential change has become the norm of the 4th industrial revolution. This can be attributed to the growth of digital technologies and the transference and storing of data. This reached the point where its efficiency helps the growth of artificial technology applications with the help of the internet of things and the rapid movement of large amounts of data, alongside other digital technologies. We must prepare for the rapid economical, social, environmental, technological and political changes that are more rapid than training and planning changes. This change could be so rapid, unexpected and difficult to catch up with. This is important considering the shift towards Artificial Super Intelligence, where a machine will perform independently. Here, we emphasize the importance of preparing for it and overseeing it.
- The lessons learned from dealing with the pandemic and its repercussions in some sectors, especially tourism, elaborated the importance of setting different scenarios for the future of these sectors, including the occurrence of a similar event that may have significant effects on these sectors on an international level. This demands international cooperation and the integration of modern technologies and the immediate execution of all health, security and environmental safety procedures. This ensures rapid response and returns to normal work for these sectors to reduce the repercussions of similar events.
- One of the challenges that threaten humanity is climate change. This demands the use of mathematical and digital models that relies on big digital data that were gathered based on environmental phenomena to simulate these models on climate change in the future. As such, placing scenarios that foresee the future, suggest solutions and applicable procedures reduce the effects of climate change. Countries and governments spent a lot of money to apply these procedures to control the effects of this phenomenon that is one of the greatest challenges humanity faces.
- The world is now in an era of contemporary challenges that demand continuous cooperation and international supervision that may be resulted from the fury of nature (climate change or Covid-19 pandemic), which may lead to further implications that threaten humanity. Therefore, we have nothing except the human culture, societal bonds, international cooperation between all cultures and civilizations to ensure the survival of the human race, that is capable of facing these challenges. These dangers that some communities already face will spread to other communities because the nature of these challenges is now international and demand us to unite to face them together.