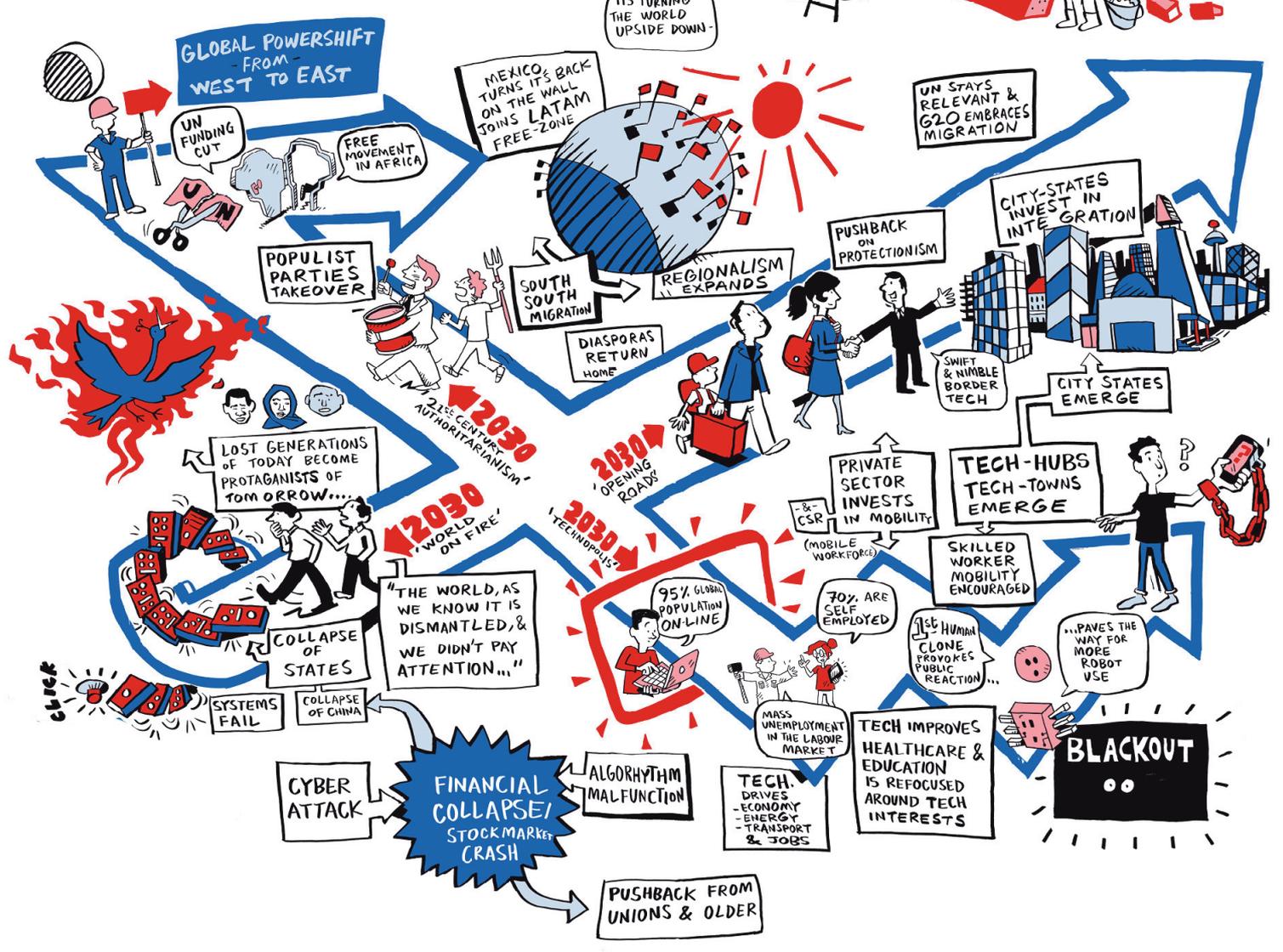
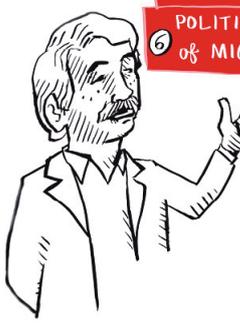


- 1 MOBILITY SEEN ON A GLOBAL SCALE
- 2 MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS VS. HUMANITARIAN REALITIES
- 3 MIGRATION VS. DEVELOPMENT
- 4 MIGRATION VS. SECURITY
- 5 EMERGENCE OF INTL. LABOUR MARKET
- 6 POLITICISATION OF MIGRATION

# TOMORROW'S WORLD OF MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

HOW CAN WE LEARN & APPLY **NEW APPROACH**



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Graphic cover design and all other graphic designs if not otherwise mentioned: Josh Knowles

Proofreading: Chris Shaw

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To cite this publication please use:  
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Global Future and International Organization for Migration. *Tomorrow's World of Migration*. Geneva, Switzerland: FES, Global Future, IOM, 2017.

Printed by: Gutenberg Beuys Feindruckerei GmbH, Printed in Germany

ISBN: 978-3-95861-992-0

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Table of Contents

Foreword ..... i

Executive summary..... 1

1. Today’s world of migration..... 3

2. Scenarios on migration – rationale and process..... 7

3. Four scenarios – a window to the future ..... 13

    3.1 My Country First!..... 13

    3.2 World on Fire..... 21

    3.3 Opening Roads..... 29

    3.4 Technopoly..... 37

4. Scenario analysis ..... 47

    4.1 The scenario..... 47

    4.2 Common realities ..... 49

5. Conclusion and Way Forward..... 55

Appendix: Participants ..... 57



## Foreword

Reflecting back on the past 13 years and to the time when these scenarios were developed, the migration and mobility reality of 2017 did give rise to extensive political and socio-economic changes. It was hard to tell at the time how the future would unfold and how to respond in policy terms. The scenarios offered the means for a glimpse at different futures, each of which seemed plausible at the time.

We can see now, with the benefit of hindsight, that none of the scenarios described in this report have materialized entirely – at least not globally. Elements of each are present and can be identified in some places or regions of today’s world. The four possible worlds – “My Country first!”, “World on Fire”, “Opening Roads” and “Technopoly” – as developed at the time enabled a look at plausible futures and the exploration of “what if” situations. Through these, we were able to better prepare for impending natural calamities, or even war, as much as we could, and play out what it might take to make serious progress towards the SDGs.

This work also spawned a whole range of local migration and mobility scenarios, using the global approach as a starting point. The ensuing local scenarios had the value of contextualizing the foresight with the local realities. While each country made its own political and migration-related decisions, it proved invaluable to “stress-test” these decisions’ implications through the scenarios presented here.

Not every development in the past 13 years has benefited migrants or people on the move. However, we are somewhat optimistic in that there is always some room for improvement; and for greater preparedness and work to invest in anticipation of potential events. It is never too late to think about the future because it is not pre-determined and each one of us can influence outcomes.

So, we place this document into the newly developed time-machine and send it back to 2017. Not because we wish to refrain from telling how the years since 2017 have played out in actual fact, but because the future is yours to shape.

**Geneva, 15 November 2030.**



## Executive summary

### What future for international migration and mobility?

The future is not predetermined. A number of variables are at play in how it shapes out. So, what is the future for international migration and human mobility? Four scenarios, developed by a team of more than 50 individuals, reveal very distinct outlooks. From a general perspective, the scenarios can be summarised as follows:



- Extensive borders, reduced mobility: **My Country First!**
- Collapse of nations, migration for sheer survival: **World on Fire**
- Inclusive and sustainable development, recognition of the benefits of migration: **Opening Roads**
- IT-planned and -controlled world, reduced need for migrant workers: **Technopoly**

Migration is today a contentious issue and, notwithstanding efforts towards a common approach through the global compacts on refugees (GCR) and for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM), there is no unified vision of the future. Migration and mobility are strongly influenced, “shaped” by context, and only to a lesser degree are they “shapers” of context.

The scenarios illustrate how antithetic (opposing) factors can yield different outcomes: those setting national migration policies and the value attributed to migrants determine the nature of the scenarios. The analysis of the scenarios as a set also illustrates how even the pursuing preferred outlooks may yield less desirable futures.

The multiple futures expressed in these scenarios do not represent a “palette” of future worlds from which to pick and choose the preferred ones while discarding the information contained in the less desirable worlds. A set of scenarios offers multiple views of possible futures, and it is relevant in its entirety given the recognised limitations of linear trends to map out future perspectives. Since the future is uncertain, multiple futures are empowering – they open minds to the varied possibilities ahead and require critical reflection of the tools to address these possibilities.

The scenarios presented here are deemed to be plausible by the scenario building team. Their stories provide an opportunity to assess policies, plans and strategies under any scenario: each scenario could materialise, whether we like it or not. Indeed, the future could reflect a combination of all four scenarios, illustrating therefore the importance of using the scenarios as a set, in order to appreciate the possible diversity ahead. Exploring a range of possible options enables forward thinking that can facilitate advance preparation to anticipate any combination of futures.





Many migrants move within countries rather than internationally. Within domestic movements, displacement warrants special attention. According to the IDMC,<sup>3</sup> every year since 2008 an average of 25.3 million people are newly displaced by disasters; this is a much larger annual number than those newly displaced by conflict and violence. At the end of 2016, the total global stock of those internally displaced by conflict and violence was 40.3 million people. Another 70 million people are reported to be living precariously at no more than 1 metre above sea level. Of the 13 Pacific Island nations, at least one is already purchasing property in another country in anticipation of sea levels rising further and forcing relocation elsewhere.

Data on migrant stocks is routinely collected and made available by national censuses, though a number of gaps persist on definitional and methodological parameters. More recent global interest on international migration has been spurred by the “large scale” and all too often dramatic, irregular movements of migrants and refugees; notably the large numbers of migrants crossing the Mediterranean, or stranded in the Andaman sea, or crossing the Gulf of Aden and characterised by a very large incidence of fatalities.

But capturing data on global migration flows, rather than stocks, has proved much more problematic due to a focus on inflows rather than outflows, varying national capacities to systematically identify the nature of travel, and the fact that most migration flow data refer to those who migrate regularly.<sup>4</sup> The diversity of motives behind migration flows and the emergence of new, fluid types of migration that transcend earlier categorisations (such as short-term versus long-term mobility) make it all the more difficult to conceptualise migration in the contemporary world. Even in the most developed countries, such as in European Union Member States, information about migration flows is at best sketchy.<sup>5</sup>

Compiling data on irregular migration flows (i.e. reflecting movement which takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries) is even more problematic, given its clandestine nature, and numbers of irregular migrants, their socioeconomic profiles, needs and vulnerabilities remain extremely limited. Their motives for migrating, and their migration patterns are multiple and complex.

Much current response to the issues raised by such large scale migration flows seem to be “reactive” to the “event of migration” rather than perceiving migration as the outcome of a number of other variables and decisions. It is characterised by unprecedented anti-migrant sentiment and xenophobia manifesting itself in anti-migrant policies and actions that perpetuate stereotypes, endanger migrants and deny the countries the contributions of migrants; a decline in public confidence in government’s ability to manage the increasing migration movements; outdated migration policies; or political leaders too often playing to the fears of people rather than addressing the current socioeconomic realities, ageing industrialised countries requiring more workers at all skill levels, distance shrinking technologies for both transport and communication needs and the increasing incidence of environmental degradation.

One of the necessary prerequisites for managing and governing migration is adequate information about the migration processes, their magnitude and composition. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes migration-related aspects in the Sustainable Development Goals. These Goals relate to different aspects of mobility, and at least ten of them are linked to explicit, measurable targets – such as target 10.7, related to improving migration measurements. In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,<sup>6</sup> UN Member States recognised the need for a comprehensive approach to human mobility and enhanced cooperation at the global level and committed themselves to the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, also reflecting target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda.

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<sup>3</sup> IDMC, “Global Report on Internal Displacement”, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> There are currently two main international data sets on international migration flows: UNDESA and OECD. UNDESA compiles flows for 45 countries, based on nationally available statistics, available at: <http://bit.ly/2hDG3lk>.

<sup>5</sup> Poulain, Perrin and Singleton (eds.), “THESIM: Towards Harmonized European Statistics on International Migration”, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> <http://bit.ly/2A3ev0G>.

Ideally, the management of migration requires some foresight into the trends and likely future developments, so that actions undertaken today are not simply reactions to events of the past, but relate to an understanding of trends and current dynamics of flows, anticipating the challenges of the future.<sup>7</sup> Yet, despite their importance, migration predictions are notorious for a high error rate, migration being the most complex and uncertain of the key demographic processes. There have been various attempts at predicting migration flows, with varying degrees of success; many of them have been prepared in anticipation of large-scale political changes, such as the expansion of the European Union in 2004. Yet many events that generated very large migration flows could not be predicted: the recent crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic is just one example, with an estimated 4.8 million refugees and more than 6.5 million internally displaced persons as of November 2016.<sup>8</sup>

The challenges characterising the collection of contemporary migration data – whether stocks or flows, regular and irregular also concern migration forecasting. The underlying concepts are far from unambiguous and definitions vary across countries, with data sources and methods used for analysing data often not comparable. The sheer number of push and pull factors (determinants) and drivers of mobility and immobility, all interacting with each other, make a comprehensive explanation of migration processes anything but possible.<sup>9</sup> The utility of migration theories for making predictions is thus relatively limited, and expertise on migration is largely fragmented along disciplinary boundaries and among experts, who may have entirely divergent expectations as to how migration might change in the future.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the inherent uncertainty and complexity in migration processes is a result partly of the uncertain nature of migration drivers and partly of human nature and the agency of migrants making decisions on whether, where and when to move. Key uncertainties that were identified at the start of the scenario exercise included the evolution of global labour markets due to the rapid advancement of digitisation and artificial intelligence, the effects of more rapid environmental degradation including climate change, the possible proliferation of armed conflicts, the success of multilateral efforts to come up with cooperative solutions that promote safe, orderly and regular migration, and rising xenophobic or anti-immigration sentiments in some of the main destination countries. The latter, it was thought, should be given special attention based on the assumption that destination countries migration policies and the way migration and migrants were seen (e.g. more of an asset or more of a liability) would become potentially a major determinant of future migration flows.



When all these ambiguities are combined, the result is that any migration estimate, and even more so forecasts, have to be seen as intrinsically uncertain, a reflection of the nature of social reality. A belief in the possibility of producing precise migration forecasts is not only naïve, but can also backfire if reality does not conform to expectations. This is very similar to the notion that migration is fully controllable when the lessons from history are full of examples of unintended consequences of actions purporting to exercise such control.<sup>11</sup>

Acknowledging the multidimensional and inherent uncertainty of migration, therefore, means moving beyond the confines of prediction and towards contemplating a set of possible futures of migration and

<sup>7</sup> This section is drawn from GMDAC, “Migration forecasting: Beyond the limits of uncertainty”, Data Briefing Series 6, November 2016.

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) data.

<sup>9</sup> Arango, “Explaining Migration: A critical View”, *International Science Journal*, 52(165) (2000): 283–96.

<sup>10</sup> Bijak and Wisniowski, “Bayesian forecasting of immigration to selected European countries by using expert knowledge”, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society Series A*, 173(4) (2010): 775–96.

<sup>11</sup> Cornelius, “Controlling ‘Unwanted’ Immigration: Lessons from the United States, 1993–2004”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(4) (2005): 775–94.

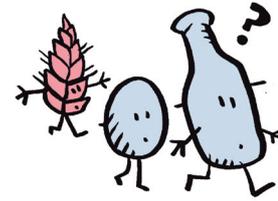
mobility, so as to enable greater preparedness and resilience through setting up contingency plans for various possibilities. A scenario approach to migration, by exploring different outcomes about what could happen, represents an alternative to forecasting and exact statistical predictions. Scenarios have been used to anticipate change, opportunities and challenges involving multiple stakeholders and political views. They can help understand the consequences of choices made today and be used as a testing ground for potential decisions and policies. The methodology has been applied widely in the private sector and in a multiplicity of settings, including within climate change, health, the labour market, energy and politics. Scenarios in migration have been pursued among others by the OECD, Oxford University and the European Research Council.<sup>12</sup>

The joint scenario building initiative “Tomorrow’s world on migration and mobility” of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Global Future and International Organization for Migration is premised on the acknowledgment that migration in and of itself is determined by a number of variables and decisions and hence needs to be addressed as the outcome of the combination of various factors. A team of 50 professionals were brought together to consider uncertainty as a central element in their group iterations on plausible migration futures by 2030. It is hoped that the findings of this initiative will assist decision-makers and migration practitioners to identify which decisions taken today may contribute to the safe, orderly and regular migration of tomorrow.

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<sup>12</sup> Most of these initiatives are still ongoing.

## 2. Scenarios on migration – rationale and process



### Futures and scenarios

Data and information about the future are scarce. Predictions or forecasts are frequently made for specific occurrences, such as weather patterns. Yet, it is difficult to predict the future of a combination of complex issues – issues that are multidimensional and cover diverse areas and may evolve very differently according to how various factors may “combine”. Migration and human mobility is one such complex issue where insights on the future would be helpful.

Attempting to anticipate or at least explore possibilities on what the future may look like enables forward planning and greater resilience. Not just “addressing” uncertainty but embracing its implication enables the consideration of different futures – illustrated through different scenarios. Decision-making on future possibilities can be facilitated through the consideration of varying, plausible scenarios. Decisions made today will themselves affect how the future will look.

Scenarios are tools which help to envisage plausible futures – future outcomes according to different variables at play. Quantitative information is an important ingredient in the development of scenarios, but it is not the only one. Qualitative insights, information to which numbers cannot be ascribed, are equally important. A third element, speculation about the future, is also central to this approach. These insights are merged with a multidimensional understanding of the past: the future does not exist in isolation, it is the product of the present and the past. It may be tempting to extrapolate the future by extending lines from the past, through the present and into the future, yet this is not what scenarios are about. Discontinuities, singularities and other unexpected elements can (and regularly do) throw a linear trajectory off-course. If it were possible to predict the future just by drawing on identified trends, then only one future would lie ahead. Experience of radical change and unexpected variables shows how the future is fundamentally uncertain and cannot be identified through simple linear trends.

The multiple futures expressed through scenarios do not represent a palette of alternative futures from which to pick and choose the preferred ones, discarding the information contained in the less desirable worlds. Scenarios offer multiple views of possible futures, thereby bypassing the limitations in linear trends. Taking into account these multiple futures opens the mind to the many possibilities ahead and to the critical reflection on which tools are needed to address these possibilities.

Developing and assessing multiple scenarios enables consideration of the different tangible outcomes lying ahead to be addressed. Different strategies or partners may be required to achieve similar goals under different scenarios.

The scenarios illustrated in this publication are deemed plausible by the scenario-building team. They provide an opportunity to assess plans and strategies according to the different scenarios: each scenario could materialise, whether we like it or not. Indeed, the actual future could contain a combination of all four scenarios as envisaged by the team, illustrating the importance of using the scenarios as a set to appreciate and prepare for the possible diversity and range of options ahead. By acknowledging that a range of scenarios are possible we are better able to make sense of developments and changes as they take place.

The time horizon for these migration scenarios is 2030, given the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals’ time frame for policy-making processes and the clear reference to migration within these Goals. All the SDGs (except goals 6, 7 and 12) offer explicit action reference to migrants or migration.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See for example: <http://bit.ly/2zFIY5k>.

## This is why we are doing this

Migration is a natural process and is as old as life on the planet. People have always been on the move for many different reasons and have migrated to all regions of the world. Though migration discourse up to recently has been confined by national sovereignty considerations, it is now at the top of the political and social agenda across the globe. In some instances, the prevailing rhetoric on migration blurs factors and causality considerations on current trends. As in all complex matters, however, this approach risks being reductive; so, in order to consider what factors, policies and initiatives may affect tomorrow's world of migration, it is important to also take into account different future scenarios and how these may impact migration.

The guiding question driving the construction of the different scenarios is: "What future for international migration and human mobility?"



Underlying the scenario-building process is the notion that there is no universal quality attached to migration, while in the case of, say, the elimination of deadly diseases or the pursuit of peace, a general consensus seems to prevail on what the future should look like. On international migration and mobility opinions vary widely: Some people wish for "more and freer mobility", others prefer reduction and limitation. For some, societies are more successful (cohesive and resilient?) when they are more homogeneous; others believe in the virtues of multicultural societies. The following quotes from scenario team members illustrate the range of perceptions:

*"A positive future would be one in which there is much more control over migration movements and a much tighter limit on people moving permanently."*

*"I imagine there will be electoral representation of all residents in about 30–40 years' time. There should be no taxation without representation."*

The team built the various scenarios on the future of international migration and human mobility on the premise that over the following 15 to 20 years very different futures for global migration may unfold. The combination of different migration determinants, or drivers, and national policies is but one of many key uncertain variables, but by no means the only one. Since international migration and human mobility are driven by a combination of predictable trends (i.e. demography) and other less predictable factors, leading to either rapid or not so rapid change, a mid-term perspective can offer valuable insights into what may happen, according to which course of action, including global migration governance, is pursued or not.

Scenarios are descriptions, creating an understanding of the wider context and offering insights into possible events that will impact the future of migration and mobility. They are tools, like maps, that allow us to explore a range of diverse and possible tomorrows. The map they yield illustrates the landmarks

visible on the way to our destinations and provides an “early warning” recognition of when we are off course – when certain landmarks are not visible or are from other landscapes. In this way, we are better equipped to understand change as it happens. Migration future scenarios provide a tool to sharpen our awareness of courses of action or approaches to migration governance and point to the need for policy coherence between migration governance and other policy areas, if the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to be achieved.

Aimed at decision-makers and policy-makers, scenarios are tools for leadership, advocacy and negotiation. They seek to provide a shared understanding for diverse viewpoints to discuss priorities, opportunities and potential pitfalls, and to plan work together in a world of complex issues – these issues may be addressed with more than one solution. They are especially useful when considering ambitious goals or complex interventions in an interconnected world where leadership, financing mechanisms, values and norms are rapidly changing. The future of migration and human mobility scenarios aim to facilitate understanding of the interactions, level of importance and possible outcomes of a series of events that otherwise might be overlooked.

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the International Organization for Migration and Global Future have formed a partnership to encourage thinking about the future of migration and mobility by convening a range of experts and stakeholders in order to identify and consider various scenarios. The future migration scenarios which are presented in this publication are outcomes of this process and are not mandated by any organisation.

### Who is involved and how

Following a broad stakeholder analysis, a scenarios team of over 50 individuals was assembled and included migrants, policy-makers, academics, opinion-makers and individuals from the private sector, think tanks and international organisations. These individuals were involved in their personal capacity throughout the process, contributing to the initiative at the different stages, which included:

- a scoping workshop to identify the overarching principles in migration scenarios setting;
- a range of interviews on key questions;
- two scenario-building workshops; and
- one webinar.

Participants’ names can be found in the Appendix.

The scenario-building process started in May 2016 and concluded in October 2017.

### Disclaimer

This is not the small print – it is actually really important.

The intent in developing the scenarios is not to predict the future. The aim is to illustrate how today’s decisions can lead to fundamentally different outcomes, different scenarios – some of which may be more desirable than others. Reflecting on the scenarios will make clear that the future can be influenced by decisions at different junctures. These scenarios help in understanding prevailing assumptions and challenge them in a positive sense: if there is a preferred future, what are the forces that might prevent it and what needs to be done to stay on course to meet that desired future? Scenarios can help us realise when we have gone off-course and a correction is needed to get us back on track.

Developing insights about alternative futures represents a tool which enables us to understand change and respond to evolutions in the wider context. The articulation of the scenarios is not about expressing a preference, whether for a negative future or a challenging future. Similarly, expressing possible actions or decisions of some actors or stakeholders in the scenarios does not mean that this is what they expect they will do – it is a means of exploring plausible options, as debated by the scenario team.

The scenarios are the result of a collective effort by each of the team members. They have been developed through a rigorous methodology and exploration of uncertainties. This includes each of the scenario team members being confronted with uncomfortable assumptions or being exposed to unusual and sometimes opposing ideas. The resulting scenarios are a joint product of the scenarios team – no single institution is its principal custodian – and they are not a manifesto.

### How to read the scenarios

It is always compelling to try to find data and numbers that could illustrate what migration will look like in the future. Which scenario anticipates the most migrants? Or the fewest? In which scenario will migration flows to Europe diminish? When or where will “robots” be so ubiquitous as to eliminate the need for migrant workers? Generating relevant migration forecasts poses a challenge in that “there is vast inherent uncertainty and complexity in migration processes”.<sup>14</sup> In other words, there is no comprehensive set of data on what migration may look like in future and the current forecasts tend to be progressively more inaccurate the further away from the present they project. Forecasts also fail to fully convey both the structural forces shaping the future, as well as the implications of the forecast data selected: variations in numbers of migrants may reflect profound political, technological, economic, environmental and social changes or decisions.

Scenarios aim to look beyond the often incomplete and false sense of security data may provide and towards a more experiential understanding of a structural and qualitative cause-and-effect description of possible futures. Any data or numbers relating to the future have been used in this report for purely illustrative and not predictive purposes.

The report aims to provide a set of plausible and compelling scenarios to inform and challenge the thinking on international migration and human mobility. Migration is complex. There is no single desirable future “end-state” on migration which everyone would sign up to or envisage as the future that humanity should strive towards. And so the following scenarios should be relevant for everyone, including as they do issues, risks and opportunities that speak to different people of different political or social persuasions.

Each scenario is presented in the same fashion:

- a short paragraph describing the overall intent – the “feel” or “cut” – of the scenario;
- an account of the World of Migration in 2030;
- a descriptive account of the successive events and decisions that lead up to 2030 – How this happened: the World to 2030; and
- a first-person story – a story-format overview to explore the emotional and personalised elements associated with the scenario.

### The scenario-building process

In order to develop the migration scenarios, an inductive approach – one where no prescribed outcome was assumed – was adopted. This relatively organic method ensures that a wide range of possibilities are considered. This methodology has included several interviews and was built into three workshops: one scoping and two scenario-building workshops. During these events the scenario team first assessed the current reality and then identified the driving forces or structures that gave rise to the current reality and may shape the future.

To identify these drivers,<sup>15</sup> the scenario team members worked on several key current reality clusters to uncover their ultimately underlying drivers. Drivers are non-directional, which means that the driver “fear of change”, for example, could in the future be “greater fear of change” or “lesser fear of change”.

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<sup>14</sup> GMDAC, “Migration forecasting: Beyond the limits of uncertainty”, Data Briefing Series 6, November 2016.

<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that the term ‘drivers of change’ in the scenario-building methodology does not signify the same meaning as the term ‘drivers’ of migration frequently used in migration literature and discourse.

The driver “inequality of average incomes between nations/regions” could in the future become “greater inequality” or “lesser inequality”; “technological development” can provide both opportunities and challenges for migrants wanting to make a living elsewhere. Thus, one driver could result in different future realities and different scenarios.



To move from the current realities to possible futures, each identified driver was collectively evaluated as to whether it was “certain” (or predictable) or “uncertain” (unpredictable). The certain drivers will play out only one way in the future – predictably. The uncertain drivers will play out in different ways, giving rise to different futures.

Using both certain and uncertain drivers, headlines about the future (in the year 2030) were constructed from this information, and organised into embryonic draft scenarios. Four distinct scenarios were finally distilled from the resulting information and articulated over time, including the role of specific actors, outcomes of decisions and – most importantly – the implications for migration.

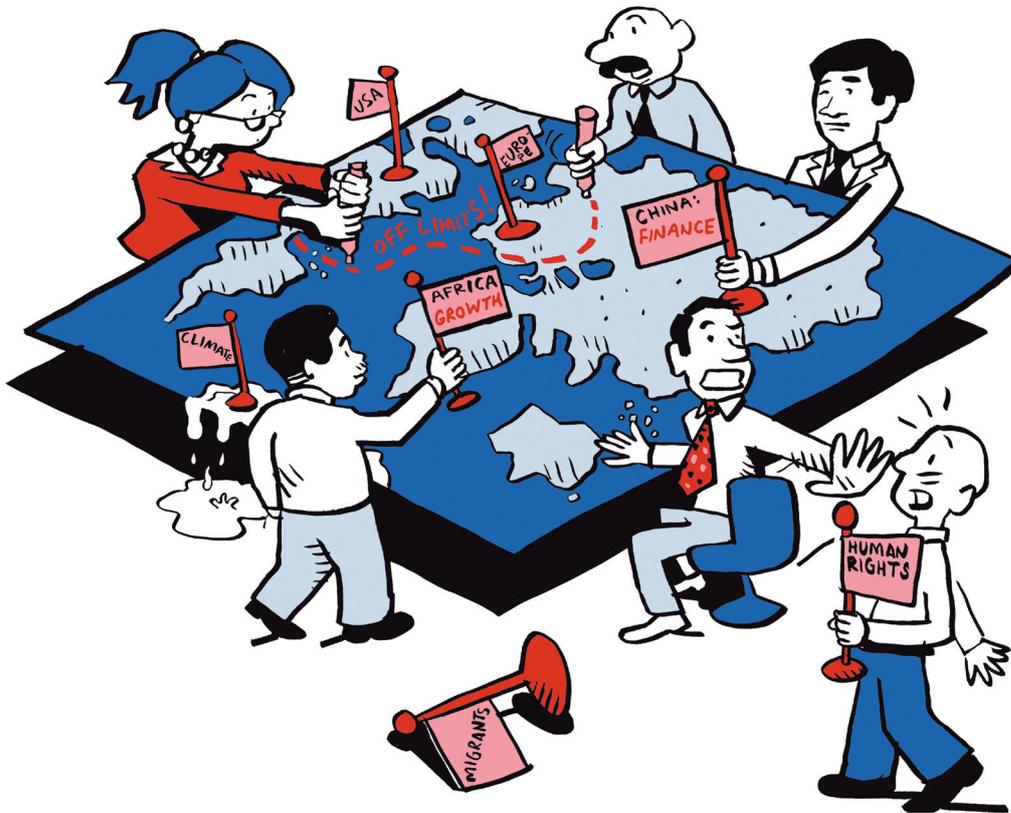
The product of this process is reflected in this report; the scenarios are not mandated by any organisation. Ultimately, the document is a means for the reader to gain insights into the thinking generated by the scenario-building team and to appreciate the fact that though the future is fundamentally uncertain, we can try to influence its course.





### 3. Four scenarios – a window to the future

#### 3.1 My Country First!



##### The scenario in brief

*My Country First!* is about involution and a global shift away from the post-Second World War liberal world order. It reflects the rise of emerging Asia and the concomitant relative decline of the former champions of this order, the United States and Europe. The latter experience an ongoing political backlash against perceived unchecked globalisation, attendant inequalities and cultural alienation. In the name of sovereignty and self-determination nationalist governments that claim to put the interests of their own nationals first, effectively managed to reduce immigration from poorer regions into their territories to a trickle.

Apart from highly restrictive and ruthlessly enforced immigration policies (“Fortress Europe”) this has worked for two additional reasons:

- Emerging economies mainly from Asia, China in particular, have effectively replaced the former global hegemony as the centres of global economic activity. In filling the void left by Europe and the US they have become increasingly attractive for labour migration, especially from Africa. This continent keeps on registering by far the highest population growth globally, therefore harbouring also the highest percentage of potential migrants, world-wide.
- Even more importantly, both old and new powers have engineered an effective economic take-off in parts of Africa, sometimes jointly, sometimes in competition with each other. This has tremendously alleviated the migration pressure out of the African continent. However, for African nations, the economic benefits, economic growth and particularly employment, often come with a loss of sovereignty: much of this development happens in special economic zones (“charter cities”) under the authority of foreign companies and agencies from both the new economic giants and the former colonial powers.

## My Country First! The World of Migration in 2030

International instruments to manage orderly, safe and regular migration, such as the global compact for migration and the global compact on refugees, both officially adopted in 2018 by the UN General Assembly, do not play any role as they are largely ignored by most of the traditional destination countries in the global North.

UN agencies working on migration and human mobility are starved of funds and have become largely ineffective after having to lay off the bulk of their personnel.

Apart from seeking to attract “high potentials”, most Western countries have effectively closed their doors to “unwanted” immigration, which refers to both economic migrants from poor countries in Africa or Central America as well as refugees from zones of armed conflict.

A large fleet of frigates and navy patrol boats with a robust mandate from participating EU Member States is now effectively cordoning off what has become “Fortress Europe” in all but name. The US has passed a series of new laws restricting immigration which among other things has made it a criminal offence to employ, provide shelter to or otherwise support “illegal aliens”.

Only a small number of developed countries are experimenting with market-based immigration management policies, providing work and permanent resident permits for which selected migrants need to pay an “entrance fee”. Most of them do not see the need for low-wage, low-skilled labour from abroad even in the face of an ageing population and a shrinking labour force due to technical advances in digitisation and artificial intelligence.

Refugee camps, migrant detention and asylum-processing facilities have all been transferred to locations in transit countries, and even to migrants’ countries of origin, Africa particularly, but Latin America also.

Africa remains the continent with the highest number of people ready to migrate for economic, conflict or climate reasons or simply to seek better life perspectives.

As a result of accelerated economic development in Africa, most of the migration now takes place across borders within Africa, generally towards a number of new growth poles, mainly cities that are particularly thriving as a result of new investment from abroad, some of which was motivated politically in the quest to “combat the root-causes of flight and migration”.

Migration out of the continent is secondary, but still important. As most avenues for migration towards traditional destination countries in Europe are effectively blocked, migration flows out of Africa have turned eastwards, mostly towards China, but also towards other countries such as India, Korea or Turkey which participate in the “new scramble for Africa” and as a quid-pro-quo accept labour migrants or traders from Africa on their soil.

The FOCAC (Forum on China–Africa Cooperation) 2021 Summit’s agreement “on a Framework on migration for China and Africa” which subsequently led to the bilateral agreements between China and African states, as well as its India–Africa counterpart in 2022, are the only international agreements that currently provide a legal basis for orderly and safe migration from Africa, albeit mostly limited to temporary and circular migration of labour migrants.

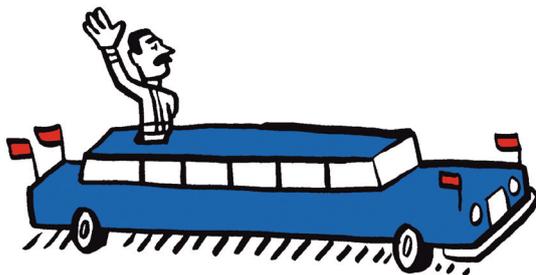
## My Country First! How this happened – the World to 2030

By 2030, the old Western-dominant multilateral rules-based international order has given way to a multipolar Asia-centred international system. Regional and bilateral arrangements prevail. These arrangements are based on national interest and mutual benefit, but are lacking in any normative human rights-based framework.

China has become the global Number One economic power, as the world's largest economy, and the world technological leader in a number of new industries as a result of the success of its "Made in China 2025" plan. It has dramatically increased its economic, political and cultural presence on all continents, but cautiously refrains from taking over the mantle and the political and military responsibilities of a global hegemon. Major geopolitical conflicts with other rising powers and the declining former hegemon, the United States, have thus so far been avoided. It also does not seek to intervene in internal political affairs of partner countries, or promote regime change.

Beyond East and Central Asia and the new "Silk Road" corridors, China has in particular deepened its presence and strengthened its relationship with sub-Saharan Africa. As part of a broader quid-pro-quo, this includes increased Chinese investment in Africa and the development of some "light-industrial hubs" in certain African countries. Communities of hundreds of thousands African traders, who used to temporarily migrate to Guangzhou and other cities in southern China since the 2010s, have been allowed to take up permanent residence in China with their families. In addition, existing bilateral "investment, migration and friendship treaties" between China and most African countries are now linking the free movement of Chinese nationals, as service suppliers (in line with to GATS Mode 4), in exchange for the temporary movement of African "guest workers" to China. In what has become a "new scramble for Africa", India, Brazil, Korea and Turkey, amongst others, have been pursuing similar arrangements. Such arrangements have led to the presence of large African communities in these countries.

The formerly dominant Western powers, bar a few exceptions, have all seen a political shift to the right. These Western powers are characterised by rapidly ageing, numerically shrinking, socially conservative and economically nationalistic societies, and to different degrees openly authoritarian and illiberal regimes. Rather surprisingly, these regimes have been able to maintain fairly stable political majorities, in many instances for a decade or more. They are usually based on coalitions of migration-sceptic elderly and middle-class voters, predominantly in small towns and rural areas, and the previous losers from erstwhile "hyper-globalisation", among them large segments of the formerly unemployed youth. These groups support both their more inward-looking economic policies supposed to favour nationals – which in most countries come along with strong redistributive fiscal and social policies (with the notable exception of the United States and a few others) – and their focus on security and policing in combination with highly restrictive approaches to immigration and strong pressures on foreign nationals to either assimilate or leave. At the same time, cultural movements that call for the defence of "national identity", "religious values" or "Western civilisation" are thriving.



Even though their economic performances overall remain lacklustre, with growth rates constantly well below global average, most of these countries have registered some notable successes in dealing with previous economic inequalities and insecurities within their respective countries. These successes have been achieved by a mix of unorthodox protectionist policies, active labour market policies, progressive taxation, public sector employment and, in some cases, temporary public work programmes.

Overall, most of them have managed reasonably well the alignment of the digitisation and increasing robotisation of their economies with the challenges of an ageing population and a shrinking labour force. The need for unskilled foreign labour has therefore shrunk to practically zero in quite a number of these advanced economies. The ongoing need for highly skilled labour continues to be actively addressed by narrowly targeted immigration policies, albeit with very mixed results. Apart from seeking to attract "high

potentials”, most Western countries have in the meantime effectively closed their doors to “unwanted” immigration. Only a small number of them are experimenting with market-based immigration management policies, charging “entrance fees” to would-be migrants. Apart from controlling the numbers, such fees are supposed to cover the long-run costs of immigration and pay for the use of public goods (schools, health, roads, justice system, etc.) in exchange for an unlimited work and residence permit.

Internationally, most Western countries no longer openly support and advocate the notion of the universality of human rights, which they had vigorously pushed for over 70 years since the Second World War. As far as existing international regimes and obligations are concerned, most of them have adopted a “multilateralism-à-la-carte-approach”, i.e. by only participating in global arrangements they see in their national interest, or where they feel that “free-riding” would be too dangerous (e.g. the Paris climate convention). Some have even pulled out of UN conventions they had previously signed. Some Eastern European EU Member States, for instance, no longer recognise the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, which they say “does not reflect the realities of the twenty-first century”. Neither the global compact for migration nor the global compact on refugees that were both officially adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2018 have therefore been implemented to any significant degree due to the non-compliance of most of the traditional destination countries. The United Nations in general, and in particular the UN agencies dealing with humanitarian matters, migration and human rights, have suffered severe budget cuts since the US, Japan and most of Europe, including the Nordic countries, eliminated almost all voluntary contributions. The voluntary contributions had previously accounted for more than half of their budgets.

In the United States, successive federal administrations from 2017 onward have significantly reinforced the border fortifications towards Mexico, though the “great wall” as such never materialised. The US has also passed a series of new laws restricting immigration, which among other things has made it a criminal offence to employ, provide shelter to or otherwise support “illegal aliens”. Immigration from south of the US border has therefore come to an almost complete halt.

After Brexit and a series of further crises, the EU Member States have managed to stay together in what some political scientists now describe as a “confederation of European nation states”, emphasising the subsidiarity principle and allowing for multiple “opt-outs” from common rules, including temporary opt-outs from the “four freedoms” (i.e. the free movement of people), or more generally for an integration at different speeds. Economic integration has weakened (especially since three Southern European countries left the common currency in the wake of the financial crisis of 2021) and became more shallow (but also widened to include non-members, the UK, Ukraine together and Turkey, in a customs union). In contrast, governmental cooperation in security and foreign policy matters has significantly deepened among a core group of Member States.

The Schengen regime, which removed internal border controls, remains suspended sine die, whereas the push for an additional common external border control in the Mediterranean has continued over the years and yielded results. A large fleet of frigates and navy patrol boats from participating Member States with a robust mandate is now effectively cordoning off what has now openly become “Fortress Europe”. This military border control has been underpinned by largely successful bilateral agreements with various North African and sub-Saharan African countries, both migrants’ countries of origin and migration transition countries. These countries receive massive investments for their infrastructure and support for the transformation of previously established refugee camps, immigration detention and asylum processing facilities into “charter cities”. The support and investment is provided in exchange for their agreement to take back their nationals and their active cooperation in keeping away possible migrants from European soil.

In 2030, sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the world region with the fastest growing population, although UN demographers now see signs of the long-awaited and much-needed “demographic transition”

towards significantly reduced fertility rates, as a result of economic development, better education for girls and women, and a massive increase in aid-funded public birth-control programmes. Still, projections are that by 2050 about 2 billion people will live in sub-Saharan Africa, following the fivefold population increase from 180 million to 980 million between 1950 and 2015. The number of people aged 15–19, who are just starting their economically active lives and need jobs, are still four to five times higher than those aged 55–59, i.e. those who are approaching retirement age. Hence, without a surge in new opportunities, both the potential for conflict about resources and positions as well as the pressure towards migration remains high. These pressures are uneven between various countries or various parts of Africa, depending on the level of industrialisation.

Some economic dynamism with average growth rates per capita of more than 3% over the past decade has been brought about by regional integration in the form of a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), substantial investment in cross-border infrastructure – mostly funded through anti-migration deals with the EU in the quest to “combat the root-causes of flight and migration” – as well as through industrial and agricultural investment from China and other emerging powers such as India, Brazil, Korea and Turkey, all of which have provided much-needed employment opportunities in various parts of Africa. However, weak and often corrupt governments have remained a major bottleneck to economic development in some parts.

This is why the idea of “Charter Cities” has finally been taken on. Free or Charter Cities are territories or “special economic zones” for which complete legal and political authority over that territory is temporarily handed over by the state to a consortium of stakeholders/developers through a long-term lease agreement (30–50 years). Under a regime of self-government, separate laws, or even the complete legal system of a third country, are adopted and applied. Initially piloted at a major registration centre for migrants (“hotspot”) in Libya in 2021, Charter Cities in Africa multiplied in the second half of the 2020s. Of the 12 Charter Cities that now legally exist, 8 have already developed into important regional economic growth poles, each with more than half a million inhabitants. They are characterised by clusters of light industry as their economic base and tens of thousands of daily commuters from the surrounding areas, often including from over the border from neighbouring countries. More than half of them have been built in provincial towns that had previously hosted asylum-processing centres; international business consortia and private relief organisations jointly manage them. They are funded by large insurance and pension funds from the US, China, Europe and elsewhere, financially guaranteed in part through the World Bank’s Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency in conjunction with EU Member States. These countries, together with the UAE, Brazil, Canada, Singapore and Turkey, initially provided the personnel for the tax authorities, the justice system and the law enforcement agencies.

While economic prosperity around these new development hubs including Charter Cities have attracted numbers of internal migrants as well as migrants from neighbouring African countries, major migration pressure seeking outlets beyond the continent persists. Neither the global compact for migration nor the global compact on refugees has had any real effect on the traditional destination countries of the global North, who continue largely to have very selective migration schemes. Therefore the FOCAC 2021 Summit’s agreement “on a Framework on migration for China and Africa” that subsequently led to the bilateral agreements mentioned above, as well as its India–Africa counterpart of 2022 are the only international agreements that currently provide a legal basis for orderly and safe migration from Africa, albeit mostly limited to temporary and circular migration of labour migrants.

Refugee flows caused by armed conflict remain a constant feature globally. However, the violent military conflicts in the Middle East of the 2010s with their epicentre in Syria, and exacerbated by the emergence of the so-called “Islamic State” (IS) or “Daesh” have been firmly under control for some time. After IS was defeated militarily and their command structures annihilated in 2020, Russia, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia subsequently brokered a deal resulting in loosely confederated “mini-states” under the joint protection of their authority.

In a donors' conference in 2022, major pledges were made for the funding of the reconstruction and development of all formerly war-torn countries in the Middle East (including, inter alia, Yemen) in what was then dubbed a "Marshall Plan for the Middle East". As a result refugees from the Middle East have been travelling back to their home countries since 2023, leading to a significant inflow of returnees over most of the following years.

### My Country First! A personal story

INTERVIEWER: *Ladies and gentlemen... Please settle down... Thank you. Please join me in welcoming Dr Khan once more to our programme. As you know, Dr Khan has been the United Nations Secretary General for the past three years, since 2026. She is the first woman to hold the post of Secretary General and the first national of a middle-eastern country. Prior to her appointment Dr Khan spent ten years leading a think tank in Amman, Jordan, promoting inclusion, acceptance and transboundary politics. She has been pivotal to addressing the tide of isolationism that has prevailed around the world for so long. We are talking to Dr Khan tonight to better understand how she envisages she will use her second term as UNSG.*

DR KHAN: *Thank you. It's a real pleasure to be back.*

INTERVIEWER: *Dr Khan, we have observed the events since those fateful years when a strong isolationist political wave swept across the world. What do you make of it and where are we right now?*

DR KHAN: *The period 2015–2020 was phenomenally interesting. First because there was this wave you have mentioned, but every wave has an undertow – a current that moves in a direction opposite to the wave. And so, while we saw movements towards nationalism and "National Interests First" we also witnessed the coming together of the more liberal cities to determine national politics. Remember, that it was the ageing migration-sceptic middle-class voters predominantly in small town and rural areas who have shaped politics. I think, in those days, we were witnessing an almost perfect storm that was caused by three distinct systems. First, we were caught off-guard by the priorities and grievances of these shifting voter statistics; second, we ignored the weight of "minor" cities; and, third, we ignored the fear people felt around issues they thought were too large to control and too close to them to ignore. We witnessed, in a sense, a deep generational gap: the baby-boomers and older on one hand, the Gen X and millennials on the other. Back then we did not segment the voters and tax payers according to their needs and priorities. Which is odd, because every product on the market was so segmented that everyone could find what they wanted, without excluding anyone else.*

INTERVIEWER: *And where are we now?*

DR KHAN: *Before going there we must understand how we got here. You will recall that the backlash – or the undertow I spoke about – was represented by a wave of young leaders. Here we are talking about Europe and North America mainly. Because in Asia the story was different. It is fair to say that China particularly has greatly benefited from this clash of generations and the resulting political and economic isolationisms. China built its corridors, invested in Africa, received the brightest migrants who felt they would not be welcomed in Europe or America – or who would not wish to move to economically stagnant countries. To put it bluntly, some blocs of countries disintegrated, while big countries lapped up the baby that was thrown out with the bathwater. Sure, plenty of young and youthful leaders were elected in this undertow, but it takes some time to piece together a broken vase.*

INTERVIEWER: *You speak of broken vases – I assume you are talking about the EU, but perhaps also the trust of nations. Apart from the UN, what other post-Second World War institutions do you think are still relevant today?*

DR KHAN: *You are right, the trust in these institutions has been lost, ironically among the very people who have perhaps benefited most from them. And it is only thanks to increased financial and political support from China that the UN is still alive today. The organs and institutions of relevance today have been redefined in these past 20 years – mostly around the newly identified needs, such as trade, a reduced Europe and a vastly expanded China. Pragmatism rules the day for the nations and regions that do well; while narrow identity-based cultural priorities have dominated, no, held back the other regions and countries. These were countries that aimed for small-is-beautiful. Migration and the arrival of millions in Europe had much to do with it. Charter Cities were an innovative way of productively dealing with migrants. I urge you to read some of the papers published about the successes of these cities.*

*But also a few words on cities, where populations are generally concentrated. This matters because today the political calculus revolves around cities. Remember what I said earlier about the priorities and grievances of those living in minor cities? Well, today that structure is different and governance has changed. Cities have changed: transport, health, housing, farming, public spaces, education... These last 15 years have brought such changes that it is difficult to believe that we still use the term “City”. Of course, the biggest cities have seen the deepest changes; and the efficiency gains that have resulted mean that migrants integrate easily and freely. Indeed, everyone is able to benefit at almost no cost. It must be said that some cities are more advanced than others, and there is a clear correlation between those countries that have isolated themselves in the late 2010s and those that have taken a more open and pragmatic approach.*

INTERVIEWER: *And what of your own region, the Middle East?*

DR KHAN: *As you know I pushed very hard both in my think tank and the UN to take a “Country second” approach, attempting to achieve simultaneously national development and global altruism. It was inspiring. So much so that the “fortress” outlooks of some countries are now beginning to shift. I think a good example is the way the “Middle East Powers” have found ways to establish peace in Syria. You think this is contrary to “Country second”? I disagree: country-first would mean there is still war. To get out of the maze of walls and exclusions that has been created since 2016 we have to take a fresh look. And we have to find the right questions to ask. For example: Why did we believe institutions would be eternal and why are we so reluctant to change or even abolish them? I think some countries and regions can emerge stronger from the difficult 15 years we have gone through.*

INTERVIEWER: *What, then, is on your agenda for your second term, Dr Khan?*

DR KHAN: *I think the time is ripe for the UNSG to become again a “world moderator”. I see my role as facilitating the transition from a world that has dipped into isolationism and the exclusion of others, not least migrants, on the one hand towards a new definition of a global outlook for the future. I respect the national sovereignty of each country and their elected officials. I will work with them to articulate a way forward and identify whether new global institutions are needed or whether we will live in a pragmatic world of regionalism. Do not forget: the SDGs have of course been achieved mainly in cities, not countries, around the world. That is why we are talking of City SDGs... I think there is appreciation now for the massive differences and gradients created by politics since 2017. These differences have created gaps that must now be filled. I will spend my second term focusing on the global aspect of the SDGs, the Global Sustainable Development Goals.*

*As you know, I have visited China often during my first term, and the paramount leader has been very proactive and supportive. I think we are entering an era of Asian dynamism that will ultimately lift all boats. China has been pivotal in ensuring the existence and application of the Regional Compacts for Migration and on Refugees. Africa has greatly benefitted from these Compacts. I think we can use the pieces of that vase and use them to assemble a vase with a new shape and a new purpose. Let us understand the recent history and appreciate the shifts. The world is not what it was after the Second World War. The UN has – finally – a female Secretary General. The future is ours to shape. This is a real opportunity.*

INTERVIEWER: *And on that note, I thank you for the time you have given to us. It's always a pleasure to have you on our programme and listen to your views. We will follow your second term closely and look forward to our next conversation.*

## 3.2 World on Fire



### The scenario in brief

*World on Fire is a story of complacency, unresolved crises that spill over, and a proliferation of strongman politics. Alpha males rule and in their short-sightedness, create effects that prove impossible to halt. This scenario is also the consequence of too many stresses on a global system that cannot be stretched any further. Climate change impacts are too severe, resource shortages are insurmountable, global institutions are rendered toothless, and there is too much going on to keep in check some small opportunistic “cancers” that hack into global financial systems and undermine economies. Because it has been a gradual worsening, some people fail to realise that this slippery slope has become steeper. The inevitable outcome of global breakdown is not by design but by lack of counter-design. The embryos of normal life will ultimately emerge from city-fortresses and a young generation, most of them born in the twenty-first century, will be fighting the disastrous status quo of 2030.*

*Implications for migration are severe. Most human mobility is displacement and people become refugees. Definitions become blurred and institutions thus become ineffective. The numbers of global migrants and refugees grow at first, then skyrocket. Hundreds of millions of people will move in search of survival, peace and safety. These movements are disorganised and improvised in response to changing situations. No region is exempt from this terrible fate, though some countries or parts thereof, or some cities, become safe havens.*

*The main message of this scenario is a call for action: if attention is not paid now the seeds will be planted for the following outline of self-destruction. Though perhaps the world must catch fire to rise again like the proverbial phoenix from the ashes.*

## World on Fire: The World of Migration in 2030

Due to the extensive conflicts and movement of people, border control systems have become wholly ineffectual and unable to cope. Ultimately, migration control systems have collapsed because of the failure of the international community to develop cross-regional migration regimes. The international protection system based on the 1951 Refugee Convention is so overwhelmed that it has ended up being irrelevant. Migration as it was known in 2017 has for the most part ceased to exist. And the decay of social and political systems has led to the irrelevance of migration: so many people are on the move and nobody counts them or puts them in categories such as “migrant” or “refugee”. The world population is lower than predicted in 2017, but numbers of people displaced have risen dramatically.

Most human mobility takes the form of displacement and eventually refugees. There is limited labour-related migration and people who can remain at their place of residence stay there. People migrate increasingly not only for economic reasons but to flee violent conflict and disasters. Definitions have become blurred and institutions have become ineffective and irrelevant. The number of people on the move has skyrocketed. For many, migration has become a necessity, not a choice. Hundreds of millions of people have moved in search of survival, peace and safety. These movements are disorganised and improvised in response to volatile situations. No region is exempt from this profound fate. Countries that are willing to take in migrants or refugees are very few indeed and the magnitude of people looking for safety stretches capacities beyond national possibilities. International organisations and NGOs dealing with migrants and refugees have largely collapsed due to lack of funds and are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of people on the move.

Nevertheless, some countries or some cities are safe havens – sanctuaries. Paradoxically, precisely because there are such safe havens, there is a growth in trafficking and smuggling – a return of slavery – which results in more (and more heavy-handed) attempts to control migration. New, very localised, control mechanisms have been developed: there is no space for centralised global data or the use of international systems to vet and verify migrants. Countries and cities implement ad-hoc tools such as reference letters and sponsorship procedures as a measure of self-protection.

The world is fragmented and barriers have been erected. These are close to insurmountable obstacles for migrants seeking safety. At last, the cities and countries that do welcome migrants are properly managed and have been established with a new ethos. The global difficulties of conflicts and movements will breathe new life into the world of the future. The lost generation of today will become the protagonists of tomorrow.

## World on Fire: How this happened – the World to 2030

The writing has been on the wall for years: cross-border conflicts had disappeared by 2017, but societal conflicts, or civil wars, have remained numerous. In fact, civil wars have increased since 2010. By 2016 some 36 cases of armed conflict were ongoing. There has been an increase of such conflicts over the past 10 years, representing a changing trend since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Alas, 2017 and 2018 continued the aggravation, with confrontation in the Korean Peninsula and new intra-state violence in parts of Africa and a continuing trend of radicalised terrorism. Countries such as Yemen collapsed while truces were brokered in Syria among the key global actors. Insufficient global leadership translated into half-hearted international efforts to reduce conflicts in countries of lesser global geopolitical interest. The number of migrants and refugees observed during the second half of the 2010s continued to grow both within borders and internationally. Indeed, a growing number of countries issued travel bans, established blacklists and placed other countries on them, affecting both travel and migration.

The global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the global compact on refugees were both officially adopted in 2018 by the UN General Assembly. However, the international instruments to manage orderly, safe and regular migration were largely ignored by most of the traditional destination

countries in the global North. These countries had “bigger” issues to contend with: in 2019 the geopolitical power play in eastern and south-eastern Europe prompted a new wave of fleeing civilians. The religion or national origins of migrants have been continuously used to justify political manoeuvres: large-scale expulsion and deportation according to religious identities and de-naturalisation of suspected terrorists are still the order of the day across the world in 2030. But the stigmatisation plays right into the hands of radical groups who want to divide societies and need a reason to recruit more people to their hateful cause. As a result, there have been more terror strikes than ever. This has precipitated an increase in Islamophobia and wanton attacks on specific religious communities worldwide; it has also ended refugee resettlement programmes to European countries and to North America. Short of calling such events a religious conflict, a coalition of countries has harnessed the political climate to organise strikes on suspected nuclear facilities in the Middle East.

These developments are not solely international. Some countries in Africa have also witnessed internal religious and socioeconomic community tensions. Many of the grievances and the need for development went unheard for too long, erupting in violence and political upheaval. International commentators all too quickly dismissed these events as symptoms of young democracies. But these arguments became shaky when Scotland and Catalonia unilaterally declared independence by 2022. Grievances are at the heart of secessionist movements around the world.

The stability in a range of countries, not just in the wider Middle East, was undermined by the progressive privatisation of security forces, and the proliferation of ethnic and religious militias that had mostly previously existed, but had gained even more strength. Migratory flows in the Middle East soured and the region was thrown into turmoil as oil prices collapsed. The economic fallout had political consequences: the rise of new opposition actors and dissidents in the Middle East created a new era in the GCC countries as religious uprisings became the order of the day.

By 2024 Egypt’s socioeconomic position had become untenable, while Libya’s has never been resolved. Consequently, the flows of migrants from and through North Africa and the Middle East dwarf those witnessed in 2016. Efforts to crack down on migration to Europe by copying other regional models made the way to Europe more dangerous. Despite signing up to the global compacts only six years earlier, European countries closed their borders, and rely on detention and forcible returns. Migration routes are globalising in parallel with a punitive border security model that puts migrants at greater risk. The global political climate has allowed this to happen, and many feel that this represents the sole option.

While these events have been ongoing, tensions continued to mount in Asia, culminating in conflict and military hardware installed in contested locations. A standoff became unavoidable with repercussions as the conflict escalated and people within China migrated away from some of the major coastal cities, feeling unsafe. This coincided with the water wars that have rocked Asia. Existing regional bodies in Asia are, as a result, at breaking point. Regional trade agreements have been suspended and millions of people have been deported – not just within Asia but more widely. Once again, although countries have been struggling, sanctuary cities have emerged, offering inclusive and novel approaches. For example, environmental and essential resource costs are weighed against economic activities; waste-water hydroponics to grow vegetables, mealworms for protein production and sea-water resistant wheat and other grain varieties are grown in salty water.



The latest of the countries to face “east–west” existential challenges is Turkey, with the quality of life diminished dramatically over the years and increased population and social strains.

The world is in turmoil and is focussed on dozens of big ongoing problems. This weakness, or distraction, has been exploited and a global anonymous collective mounted a coordinated cyber-attack on what was left of global financial centres. Although by 2026 all transactions were protected and verified through blockchain,<sup>16</sup> the cyber-attack managed to freeze users and institutions out of their accounts. Only payments of large ransom demands allowed the rightful owners back into their systems. This attack has been replicated several times and has undermined trust in the remaining online systems. People who still had some money switched to gold. In these days of financial hacks, political instability and war, gold was the only material of value.

In an attempt to establish a sort of global order, a World Summit was convened, but poorly attended. There were too many ongoing crises for heads of state to (safely) travel and attend world matters. This poor showing to restore world order proved a deadly blow to the United Nations, which by then had already shut many of its specialised agencies. The UN's relevance was called into question and funding all but disappeared.

Millions of Chinese were eventually internally displaced following a few cataclysmic years as nuclear conflict erupted in the neighbourhood – none of the global super powers could contain the escalation, all threats, bluffs and negotiations having been exhausted. Shortly thereafter and under the shroud of escalating global warfare a simmering, and now very real, border conflicts threw Asia some of its biggest challenges. The conflict escalated when a series of bomb explosions in the region spurred the mobilisation of military forces and the displacement of hundreds of millions of people. Movements of this magnitude had never been witnessed before.

Throughout this period, Latin America and Africa remained relatively unscathed. While at first people migrated from North Africa to Europe, the situation eventually reversed. With all-out wars in Asia and the collapse of Turkey, the strain on Europe became enormous. Europeans began seeking refuge in various African countries – those that would take them in. Latin America, too, became the destination of increasing numbers of migrants.

In 2030 the world looks fundamentally different than in 2017. Priorities have altered: climate change was not a matter of urgency, survival was. Asia has been in turmoil; stabilising institutions disintegrated and financial systems crashed. But not all has been lost. The spirit of some movements has remained strong. Mayors, bloggers, environmentalists, civil society have never given up. It was mostly strongman politics that had created a terminal mess. In 2030 the seeds of rebirth are already sprouting in sanctuary cities, in safe regions, through responses from the ground up, where people are more politically and socially engaged. But this will be a story for the coming years.

### [World on Fire: A personal story](#)

Transcript of an online chat between five friends:

**Elvira (Yemen)**

**Marc (South Africa)**

**Mahmoud (Venezuela)**

**Özlen (Bangladesh)**

**Chang (Great Britain)**

It is 5 January 2025 and the five friends have been through thick and thin since they met on assignment exactly ten years earlier in the Mbera camp in Mauritania. Mbera was at that time home to over 70,000 refugees, mainly from Mali, and the 6th largest refugee camp in the world. Today, ten years on, if anyone

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<sup>16</sup> A digital ledger in which transactions made in bitcoin or another cryptocurrency are recorded chronologically and publicly

were doing a census, it has become the 27th. But nobody is keeping count, and the definition of “camp” is also not valid in the sense of the 2015 definitions.

ELVIRA: *Hello all – anyone here yet?*

CHANG: *Hi Eli! You got a signal to connect – excellent!*

ELVIRA: *Chang! It’s been ages – how’s life? How’s your recovery going?*

ÖZLEN: *Hello all! Finally made it, too! Elvira! Chang!*

ELVIRA: *Özlen!*

MAHM99: *Hang on a sec.... sorting out tech....*

CHANG: *Hey Mahm – same old tech issues, huh? Good thing you’re not looking after the circuits in my legs... just kidding! How are you?*

MAHM99: *You’d be as fast as the Six Million Dollar Man! Though 6mil wouldn’t buy much these days...*

ELVIRA: *Anyone got any news from Marc?*

ÖZLEN: *No, where is he nowadays?*

CHANG: *???*

MAHM99: *Still in South Africa last time I heard, but that was five years ago*

ELVIRA: *Yeah, that’s what I got too...*

ÖZLEN: *Where’s everyone else? I’m in Dhaka*

MAHM99: *Caracas*

CHANG: *Good ol’ London England*

ELVIRA: *Sana’a, what’s left of it... you know I came here straight after Mbera...The conflict has never fully stopped or been resolved. Anyone still in touch with people from Mbera?*

CHANG: *Wow – Sana’a for the past 8 years? You’re brave! I had to get out of Egypt...*

MAHM99: *Hey Chang – I’ve not told anyone the details. Y’know,,,,,*

ELVIRA: *What’s happened????*

CHANG: *Here’s the short story: got my legs blown off in Port Said, Egypt...*

ÖZLEN: *Holy mackerel....What happened? Are you ok now? How did you get to London?*

CHANG: *You know I have been in the region for some time. It’s been such a mess. I mean back when we met in 2015 the world was a messed-up place, but it just kept getting worse. Don’t know if it’s just me, but stuff just did not get any better – no big conflicts got resolved – I mean, Elvira –*

*you've been in Yemen... you know, right? Anyway the whole region blew up, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Libya and South Sudan... Iraq, plus the fallout from those massive movements of people everywhere. All those radicals, and I don't just mean Islamists, I mean globally... And then those nuclear facilities in Arak and Bushehr were taken out. The timing of that was just great – I think it was 3 years ago, 2022 – just as this mess was going global – you remember the oil price dropped to less than \$20? Overnight countries in the Gulf were bankrupted – the only ones with some money were the Saudis because they had sold part of their Aramco shares and made trillions in 2018... but that sparked an uprising. Suddenly the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was in trouble. Libya was another ever-burning fire, and Sudan... The only way out of this terrible mess was by boat – I was in charge of getting folks to “safety” somewhere in the Med. That's why I was in Port Said, among the millions who sought refuge. It was impossible to patrol... and then some grenades were lobbed. Of course, impossible to know who... Drones picked up this mess and I was airlifted to the nearest medical outfit – not much to speak of, and after months I was taken to London. That was a lucky escape. Most were not so lucky.*

**ÖZLEN:** *This is crazy! I have been so preoccupied with my work here in Yemen, Bangladesh and Turkey – my own country – that I've almost lost sight of all the other disasters over the past years. Man, it truly is the age of the Alpha-male, huh? I mean is it just me but it feels like all these men just want to hold on to power or grab it from someone. Remember Kim Jong Un? That was a set of close calls with Trump. And what about the eastern European chess board?*

**MARCINZA:** *Hello all!!! Long time!!! Wow – you've been having a heavy conversation... sorry to join you just now.*

**ELVIRA:** *Marky! We thought you had not received my emails about linking up today, to celebrate 10 years!*

**MARCINZA:** *Looking by your exchanges so far, it's been some celebration...*

**MAHM99:** *Mark... great to have you in our conversation – what's your thinking... is the world as bad as we make it out? Dominated by Alpha males as Özlen suggests?*

**MARCINZA:** *Straight into the deep end, huh? Look, I'm in South Africa and the events you have mentioned have unfolded differently here. Or at least the impact of other global events have been felt here in different ways. All the stuff Chang has mentioned in North Africa spilled into South Sudan, and further south into the Congo Basin, as well as west into Chad. It's been a mess because of the previously unexploited and meagre deposits of petroleum, uranium, tungsten, gold, iron ore and titanium have become interesting to China. That has suddenly awakened the attention of the leaders of Nigeria and Libya. So, Alpha males? Abso-alpha-lutely! ... and they are thirsty – thirsty for water, which is now even more precious in this region than the metals... I've not been able to go back to N'Djamena – too dangerous even going near the borders. You know I was posted there years ago...*

**ELVIRA:** *Let me then provide you with an update from Asia... because there are some bright spots! Yes, the water wars in Asia are still ongoing. But we are also witnessing the emergence of “sanctuary cities” where people come together, determine their own governance and try to keep safe from all the fighting and horrors outside. There are many such cities in Asia and I heard that there are also some in South America?*

**MAHM99:** *Yes, after the collapse of a couple of national economies there has been a retreat to the countryside and to some safe cities. It's too early to say whether they will become the embryos for new countries, but it is clear that people here refer to themselves as belonging to a city, not to any*

one country! This is creating other interesting dynamics: because of all the conflicts in the region and the expulsion of millions from the US, as well as people fleeing from other countries and coming to these safe cities, their residents are also more tolerant of other nationalities. As long as citizens – in the true sense of the word – are contributing to the city's safe and peaceful ethos, they are welcome.

ÖZLEN: So, guys, where do you think all of this will be taking us in the coming years? I don't see it getting any better and what really worries me are the water wars in Asia, the consequent demise of regional bodies in Asia, over 400 million people on the move internally and nearly a billion globally... good thing the economy has been growing so much before all this....

MARCINZA: Well... remember Shaltai Boltai – the Humpty Dumpty group of Russian hackers arrested back in 2017? I hear that their name is being used again by a collection of hackers around the world. They have been targeting financial institutions. And, unlike 20 years ago, these folks are well resourced and have quantum computers. I would not be too surprised if they were coordinating a global attack on financial centres. This would crush China and what is left of European and American wealth...

CHANG: And if you want to become super-adventurous I could imagine the troubles in Asia getting out of hand: all sides have been testing missiles and been active with their nuclear equipment. It has been touch-and-go for decades now. My friends from the nuclear watchdogs are monitoring sites remotely. As always, the negotiations are slow, and that's an overstatement. So, if the region collapses and everything else in the world continues as it has been for the past 5–7 years, I could even see a nuclear conflict!

ELVIRA: But the world summit for restoring order is planned for next year – surely people will come to their senses?

MAHM99: Eli, where have you been all these years? The Security Council has been split for years and no change of any consequence passed; the assassination of that big country president a few years back still means there is no trust whatsoever – it's 8 years since that event and they still don't know who was behind it... And, of course, hundreds of millions of people fleeing, migrating and generally moving – no country feels like it is going to be same again...

ÖZLEN: Now I am depressed... is there really no hope? I cannot believe that this is how humanity will fizzle out... with hundreds of millions on the move, countries building ever higher walls to prevent access. Countries are also bogged down in definitions once again – there is such a mix of migrants and refugees and the volumes are such that the international system has in effect broken down. I can imagine that migration will literally be for survival – it will become a means of attempting to secure the bare necessities for survival.

MARCINZA: Look. The outlook is bleak; I grant you that. And the regional blocks and the UN have all but collapsed. The world as we knew it has ceased to exist and it looks as though a more sinister period lies ahead. But, at the same time, groups of individuals are self-organising. There are so many social movements that transcend any national borders and differences. They are re-imagining their world in ways we have not been used to for some time. People who are fleeing seem to be converging in places that manage to offer a minimum of safety and security. Though I am in South Africa, and you may think I am biased, parts of Africa have become such destinations.

- CHANG: *There is no denying that the world order of the early twenty-first century has disappeared. Perhaps that is what was needed? I remember that the prevailing feeling at the time was so restrictive – strong divisions and limitations, inequalities, continuous global threats. . . It was like throwing more and more fuel on a fire under a pressure cooker. The explosion was bound to come; it was only a matter of time. Now, the playing field has been levelled and there is an opportunity to shape a new world.*
- MAHM99: *Guys, none of the really bad stuff has come to happen yet. Though I can see that it might. So, before I sign off, let's reconvene again, in 10 years' time. And discuss the world again. Who knows where we'll be? I for one hope that Venezuela will be in a better situation. . . and that the downturn in Latin America has subsided.*
- ELVIRA: *Good idea, I like it and will organise it. So look out for a contact from me in 10 years! In the meantime, I think that I'll be out of Yemen very soon, not sure where. I may just take some time off and regroup with my family somewhere safe. . .*
- ÖZLEN: *Yes, no way I'll be going back to my country anytime soon, but I'll stay put here in what's left of Bangladesh – there is much climate work to be done, and it's desperately needed. So I'll stick around. In any case, I'm hopeful for the world and look forward to talking again in 10 years.*
- MARCINZA: *I'm in. I'll stay in Africa, I think it's the only place where something new and creative can sprout. I'll update you next time we talk.*
- CHANG: *Sounds good. I may retreat to Scotland – it's calm there, and since I used to be an undergraduate student there years ago, they might just let me across the border from England. Everyone hold on tight for the next 10 years – it'll be a rough ride!*

### 3.3 Opening Roads



#### The scenario in brief

*Opening Roads is a scenario about recognition of the value of collaboration, respect for the rule of law and human rights and their potential accelerating effect on added results and steady progress towards the implementation of the SDGs at many levels. In this scenario there is a generational shift towards optimisation of the benefits of migration; socioeconomic inclusion is very much part of this, and how migrants are perceived by the public in host countries changes dramatically over time. The spirit of international cooperation underpins many, or most of the policy and political decisions of this scenario.*

*From a migration perspective, the outlook in this scenario is not unconditionally hopeful; migration continues to be a sensitive issue, one that can still create political discomfort but there is broad consensus that it is an integral part of our globalised world. The implementation of the global compact for migration and the global compact on refugees now provides a stepping stone for the governance of human mobility in the twenty-first century. A large number of displaced persons still await a sustainable solution; there have been more comprehensive approaches to mobility and migration in recent times and the international community has been able to respond effectively to those who require protection, assistance and sustainable solutions. Immigration-induced benefits are recognised and migrants have increasingly played a role and contribute socioeconomically to the communities that receive them. The benefits of inclusion are recognised in the receiving communities.*

*In this scenario, we see the end of the great global recession that began in 2008. Economic recovery among the G20 and the emergence of new economies have been accompanied by renewed demand for migrant labour. In general terms, migrant workers now are more integrated, enjoy higher levels of protection and have better access to essential services, and also rely on sustainable livelihoods that enable self-reliance and an increased degree of choice.*

## Opening Roads: The World of Migration in 2030

Throughout the years since the 1960s, the global proportion of migrants to the total population has remain unchanged at roughly 3%. In high income countries, net migration is projected to account for roughly 80% of population growth and most rich countries would shrink without immigration. Increased cooperation on migration governance and creative thinking to address challenges and tap into opportunities have led to more sophistication in migration governance overall and the realisation that the agency and creativity of migrants was a major asset to match labour demand and individual skills. Much of the SDG 10.7 target on orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people including through planned and well-managed migration policies has been achieved as countries develop more comprehensive and coherent migration governance frameworks while also recognising migrant agency. There are clear indications that migration is becoming safer as more people are able to access safe regular pathways. Human mobility is included in trade agreements and, while migration featured on the G20 agenda intermittently up to 2016, by 2030 it has become a permanent item.

Substantial progress has also been made on other SDGs, such as: 8.7 significant reduction in forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking; 8.8 on labour rights and safe and secure working environments for all workers including migrant workers, in particular women migrants and those in precarious employment; 17.18 on enhanced data capacities and availability; 3.8 on universal health coverage and consequent reduction in pandemic occurrences; 1.5 on climate change resilience; 11.b on cities' integrated policies. There is a growing recognition that new technologies and Big Data can complement other sources of data to inform migration policy in real time.

Noticeable progress has been achieved on the 2016 New York Declaration commitments as well: on better protection of the human rights of all migrants and refugees, regardless of status, including the rights of women and girls and their full, equal and meaningful participation in finding solutions; all refugee and migrant children able to access education within a few months of arrival; and children no longer detained for the purposes of determining their migration status.

Poor countries rescuing, receiving and hosting large numbers of refugees and migrants receive the necessary legislative and financial support. Countries in the developing world affected by large unexpected flows and or protracted refugee situations are able to access humanitarian and development assistance including through innovative multilateral financial solutions, and resettlement programmes have increased in size and numbers. Comprehensive responses to large numbers of internal and internationally displaced persons are agreed to and implemented, with full recognition by UN Member States, civil society partners and the UN system of their respective roles and responsibilities.

Xenophobia against refugees and migrants prevailing in earlier years has subsided with expanding evidence and recognition of immigrants' positive contribution to hosting societies' socioeconomic development, as well as a generational change in recognising social diversity as an asset rather than a threat. The fight against ethnic, religious or gender discrimination has progressed. Economic development and advanced technologies have contributed to substantially increase employment opportunities in many countries also in the global South, but especially in large cities, thereby absorbing large numbers of migrants. Innovative secondary cities have also become destinations for national and international migrants. National border management systems include evidence and integrated intelligence mechanisms to more effectively and equitably address flows and facilitate spontaneous, individual labour demand and supply matching.

Sufficient funding for migration governance systems has been provided by governments in order to achieve the intended outcomes and objectives as set out in the global compact for migration. By 2030, the global value added in managing human mobility through cooperation and information sharing has become recognised and human capital is now treated as a global resource and asset. Multilateral agreements are in place to govern the mobility of individuals in ways that are mutually acceptable to countries

of origin and destination and the private sector and that respects the rights and interests of the migrants themselves. Economic cooperation, globally and within regional blocks eventually prevails over protectionism, facilitating trade and human mobility and integrated labour market systems. Integrated economies benefit from fully digitised mobility verification systems and global databases.

Migration and planned relocation as adaptation measures vis-à-vis the adverse effects of climate change are recognised as necessary instruments within global and regional migration and mobility frameworks. Safe and regular pathways for such migration are created to protect the human rights of those moving and ensure that the migration experience also harnesses the development potential of countries of origin and destination as well as the individuals themselves.

Conversely, the prevailing recognition of the overall market benefits stemming from facilitated migration and mobility does not always favour humane considerations and the weakest may at times actually be “left behind”; irregular migration, corruption and smuggling businesses are still a focus of concern; the drawbacks of automatism and smart systems call for the upholding of ethical standards and verification mechanisms at all levels.

### Opening Roads: How this happened – the World to 2030

At first, the paths of regions and countries appeared to be running on separate tracks, until about 2022 when there was an inevitable convergence.

In general, economic uncertainty, cultural reasons and in the case of Europe the increasing centralisation in the management of economic and political issues at the EU level has contributed to driving longstanding xenophobic and right-wing rhetoric for some time and there is still space for such views. This is also the case in North America and in parts of Africa. However, this was not the only voice: narrow populist victories also meant that alternative views regarding the added value of migration persist and eventually emerged. There was also push-back against many of the “austerity-driven” policies of the late 2010s. Push-back against trade protectionism in favour of much more open trade policies impacting levels of mobility and migration brought about significant gains for mobility regulation and migrant protection.

In 2018, the global compact for migration and global compact on refugees were adopted by all countries in the UN General Assembly. Both have had a positive effect in the medium term, by ensuring implementation of countries’ existing commitments to abide by recognised obligations and standards – though this was not immediate, as the way countries deal with migrants and refugees gradually evolved. Destination, transit and origin countries appreciate the importance of working together to manage different flows of people in a responsive and responsible manner. A trust fund was established to enable developing countries to develop their migration governance capacities.

Countries in the Middle East were inspired by the global compacts. As the Syrian war drew to an end, millions returned home and, with life being rebuilt, hundreds of thousands of workers sought economic opportunities in neighbouring countries. Gulf Cooperation Council countries used this as an opportunity to revise their own dealings with migrant workers and accept obligations towards contractual labourers. Gulf States and states of origin of migrant workers in Asia reached agreement on a minimum wage for migrant workers and accompanying social entitlement such as health coverage and pension schemes.

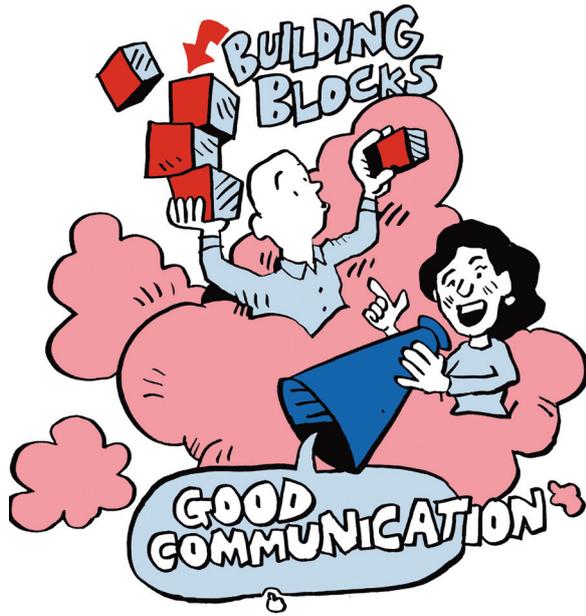
Regional cooperation has been reinforced, thanks in part to a momentum around cities, and in part to a shift in politicians and politics. In the case of Europe, while Schengen survived and movement continues to be free in much of Europe, border control policies have become more effective and responsive, as well as less focused on controls. Legal and safe channels for migration have been expanded. The number of migrants dying trying to cross borders has fallen dramatically. Similarly, other regions such as South America, West Africa, Southern Africa and Southeast Asia have developed and deepened their own

processes, expanding scope and focus, by opening legal channels for migration, trade and political management. By 2024, the G20 had committed to the implementation of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and review of its progress becomes a priority and standing objective at G20 annual meetings.



Cities around the world formed alliances to come up with solutions for shared concerns and to learn from each other. Suddenly, as was evidenced already through joint efforts to address climate change, cities and their mayors had an increased role in addressing the challenges of human mobility – in addition to the traditional seats of power, such as regional and national governments. Initially, mayors of global cities came together to formulate a white paper on regulating new “sharing” or “platform economy” types of phenomena, such as AirBnB and Uber, or the use of drones for delivery services that increasingly impacted the way business was conducted in their cities. They had quickly realised that they all faced more serious and urgent challenges: the lives of people in their cities, including the lives of the migrants. Cities had become, almost by definition, collectives of migrants. This is where the future was forged. City governance compacts became the catalysts managing migration and integration. At first, this came about through numerous parallel attempts and policy approaches, in an effort to tackle the main migration and integration challenges: the city incubators played a big part. Later, key insights and similar productive practices led to national adoption of effective practices, notwithstanding power struggles that had inevitably emerged within some national governments. Outcomes for innovative migration and integration policies ultimately were part of the new arrangements emerging.

Between 2020 and 2025, a number of trade agreements were concluded, bilateral as well as multilateral. Some of the more isolationist stances of key countries prior to 2020 have shown that collective or global approaches are vital for the growth of its constituents. As the trade deals were being negotiated, the private sector pushed for mobility and access to labour markets in a bid to attract the workers it needed. Aspects of human mobility were included in trade agreements, as were parallel improvements of migrant worker treatment. North African and sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire and Kenya created a strong negotiating bloc with Mexico, the Philippines and others to push for fair migrant treatment and ultimately for the generation of the “Exploitation-Free” label. Africa and Europe reached agreement on a wide-ranging set of migration policy agreements, allowing initially for annual quotas of labour migrants in return for more effective control of irregular migration across the Mediterranean, and increasing the quotas over time to effectively facilitate mobility. As technologies spread globally, and the full potential of technological innovation became better appreciated and ethically managed, access to education improved exponentially even in the poor countries that are countries of origin for much labour migration, including through massive open online courses streamed into everyone’s palm. As economies



began to shift away from the “old” fossil-fuel-based technologies to renewables and electric energy technologies, so did the demand for new talent. The nature and locality of work transformed, inducing retraining on a massive scale, but this remained relatively limited compared to the new hires required in China and several other emerging economies. Eventually, the rural pools of workers were depleted and demand for talented and trainable workers in more advanced economies in Asia as well as regional hubs such as Brazil and South Africa changed the dynamics and geographies of labour migratory movements. Universities also played their part in placing the migration issue on national permanent agendas: 90% of the top universities are in G20 countries and they are in continuous need of foreign students and staff.

In 2029, the movement that started on labour exploitation-free goods has become universal and means that mandatory audits of global supply or value chains are carried out regularly. These exploitation-free audits became an important way to reform employment practices as company valuations reflected company performance on that front as well. Indeed, that was but one important measure that reflected the global shift: pension funds were among the first to pull out of oil-based investments and poured money into green economies. Countries’ economic performances were judged with new parameters and only economic activity that supported (or did not undermine) sustainable development was included in GDP measures. Some countries went so far as providing a GDP balance of sustainable versus unsustainable economic growth. Very quickly the resulting shifts rewarded the most innovative and advanced enterprises and business models. Eventually, by 2030, economies were being assessed against all 17 SDGs: while compliance is still on a voluntary basis, investors “vote with their feet”. Some new winners have emerged: Latin America and Africa have shifted to green energy production, are strongly entrepreneurial, provide increasing opportunities to local youth and are experimenting with attracting and retaining skilled labour.

Since 2015, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change became increasingly important in global efforts to combat the adverse effects of climate change and adapt to its effects. Although planetary warming continued in the aftermath of the accord and in spite of disaster risks and climate risks increasingly putting more people at risk of disasters and displacement due to the adverse effects of climate change, such as sea level rise and desertification, by 2030, ambitions to keep global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels had been scaled up. Countries have now agreed to limit the temperature increase to a maximum 0.5 degrees Celsius and projections in 2030 suggest that this will be possible by the end of the century. Least-developed countries and Small Island Developing States and their populations in particular still face major challenges in efforts to adapt to the threat of climate change, but new technology and technology transfers, financial flows and capacity-building have proved to have a positive effect on their resilience and their adaptive capacity to climate-related natural hazards and risks. The potential of migration to contribute to adaptation to climate change is increasingly recognised, and migration is integrated more comprehensively into national plans to address climate change.

The United Nations reformed itself drastically to better adhere to the original charter obligations, with a resulting growth in public confidence – this was not a foregone conclusion 10 years ago. Critics lamented its inefficacy and bureaucracy, even blamed it for some of the ongoing problems at the time. But

then things changed and it has now become clear that a generational shift has taken place. The experimentation that started in 2017 in the multitude of “labs” around the world has paid off, as has the general move towards more efficient systems in general. The global economy has shifted to becoming far “greener” than it was a decade or more ago, and gender equality has grown globally. There is a notion that life has become easier and has improved when solutions, rather than confrontations, are found. The consideration of migrants and people on the move is a clear winner: it is far better and more productive to identify and promote the benefits individuals can bring; but far costlier to fight this reality, building walls and risk political isolation. Finally, the role of cities has become clear: cities are to achieving the SDGs what China has been to achieving the MDGs.

### Opening Roads: A personal story

*Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a pleasure to address you on this historic day. I have to admit I am nervous, so I thank you for your understanding. As you know, the reason I stand before you today, is by pure coincidence. I was born on 27 September 2015. Yes, the same date the SDGs were adopted. I was identified by an NGO that helped migrants arriving in Europe. I was born on an Italian rescue boat three weeks premature due to the physical and emotional stress my mum went through. This NGO helped me and my family get on our feet and to make a life for ourselves in Europe.*

*You might think that with the protection of this organisation, the last fifteen years have been easy. Far from it. I will use the short history of my life so far as a representation of the SDGs. There is much to celebrate tonight: most of the SDGs have been achieved, but some have not. Now is a time for reflection and assessment. So, let me begin with my own story and you will note how life has a funny way of evolving, and of going on.*

*A few days after I was born, my twin brother died. He was just a few minutes younger, but he was weaker. My family was living precariously in overcrowded conditions on a small Italian island. We were in an emotional and legal limbo. What would become of us? Where would we register Jamal's birth and his passing? Where would we bury him? While these were then the most dramatic worries, they were not the only ones. My dad was negotiating for us to move to the mainland where, apparently, there were more opportunities and a better life and the jobs he and mum had been hoping to find.*

*My mum's memories are sketchy at this point. She had been through a lot. Eventually we got to Rome. But it was not the paradise my parents had expected. The hostility, the poverty were overwhelming. There was no place for us and people did not want us around. There were so many like us: families in search of a better life. We lived on handouts and avoided the mean looks of people who did not want us in their country. They, too, were struggling though not like us; they had family and friends close by. We felt so alone... And this was 2018. I know, because my mum was beaten very badly. It happened, as it had to so many other foreign women, when it was dark. It was late afternoon in the winter and she was on her way to collect me from nursery. People had ganged up on her and, when she was unable to reply in Italian, they isolated my mom from the busy street into a dark corner of an alley... It later turned out that those who attacked her were also foreigners. These were confusing times. You would have thought that the worst of the financial and migrant crises would be over. You would have thought that the SDGs had created some momentum and created a shared consciousness. Perhaps there was a little: when mum was well again, my parents joined a volunteer group and we moved away from Rome to a smaller city where we felt safer. We had heard that there were opportunities, not so much for work, but to become involved in work and contribute to the community. My dad was convinced that this would help everyone realise that, given half a chance, we could show our worth. So we did. My parents helped with elderly people, taking care of their house and their lawns and we got financial support from the government.*

*I was 5 or 6 years old then, and I remember that these activities and interactions provided a sense of purpose and belonging. We made friends with the people we helped in the city and with the city administrators who arranged for this scheme to remain alive and be successful. And I became fluent in Italian! I loved going to school although some of my classmates would not invite me to their birthday parties. I also recall that delegations from cities in other countries came to visit to understand how these programmes were working. And people*

from companies came too, to see whether such schemes could be stepping stones towards providing gainful employment. My parents, though happy in this city, were hoping for more at that point. They established links in other cities and countries. They were so pleased when they were among the first to be users of online job and skills matching. I mean, it took years – here I am skipping to the interesting parts, but I now know that companies, corporations had been pushing for quicker and easier movement for workers. When I turned 9, in 2024, my dad was “matched” with a job in horticulture in Holland. You see, he was a successful farmer back home – we would have stayed, had it not been for the fact that the weather had become so unpredictable and farming on our land became impossible. Dad was hired because systems started converging: his volunteering, the vocational training he did, the online courses in farming and horticulture, and his e-citizenship were available to recruiters. This is how a Dutch flower producer found him and an agreement was reached very quickly! Once this happened everything went quite quickly and we moved to the north of the Netherlands.

This to say that, while it took a long time to reach the point of this integrated system, once it was in place, everything just accelerated. It was completely straightforward for my mom and me to come with dad. The matching scheme was so thorough and comprehensive that travel, visas and living quarters had been arranged within days. With everything being digitised and centralised, the level of control makes these movements very safe and expedient for everyone – though a bit creepy... In addition, I have to say that this level of “digital belonging” saved my life: I got seriously injured during a class trip last year to Vaalserberg, the hill where Belgium, Holland and Germany meet. I slipped and fell because it was so wet; I was concussed and there was risk of internal injury and bleeding. My teachers called a car that arrived within 3 minutes – it was of course a medical unit. The fingerprint reader in the vehicle identified me, the scanning equipment determined my vitals and health status and the remotely connected paramedic assessed that it was urgent to get me to an emergency centre. The nearest centre was in Aachen, Germany, and, thanks to my digital persona and the autonomous technology, I was taken the 5 kilometres in 4 minutes flat. My parents were alerted automatically and they jumped into another autonomous vehicle to join me – no documents were needed to cross the border as their information was centrally stored and readable from their eyes or fingerprints. As you know, basically everyone is connected online, and almost everyone has a centralised digital ID – it’s just a matter of time before these efficiencies pay off for everyone around the world, too. And I looked into it: the autonomous car was built locally, the software to run it comes from Korea, the medical tele-devices from Uganda, the personal identification software is open source but managed in Chile, while its hardware is printed in France.

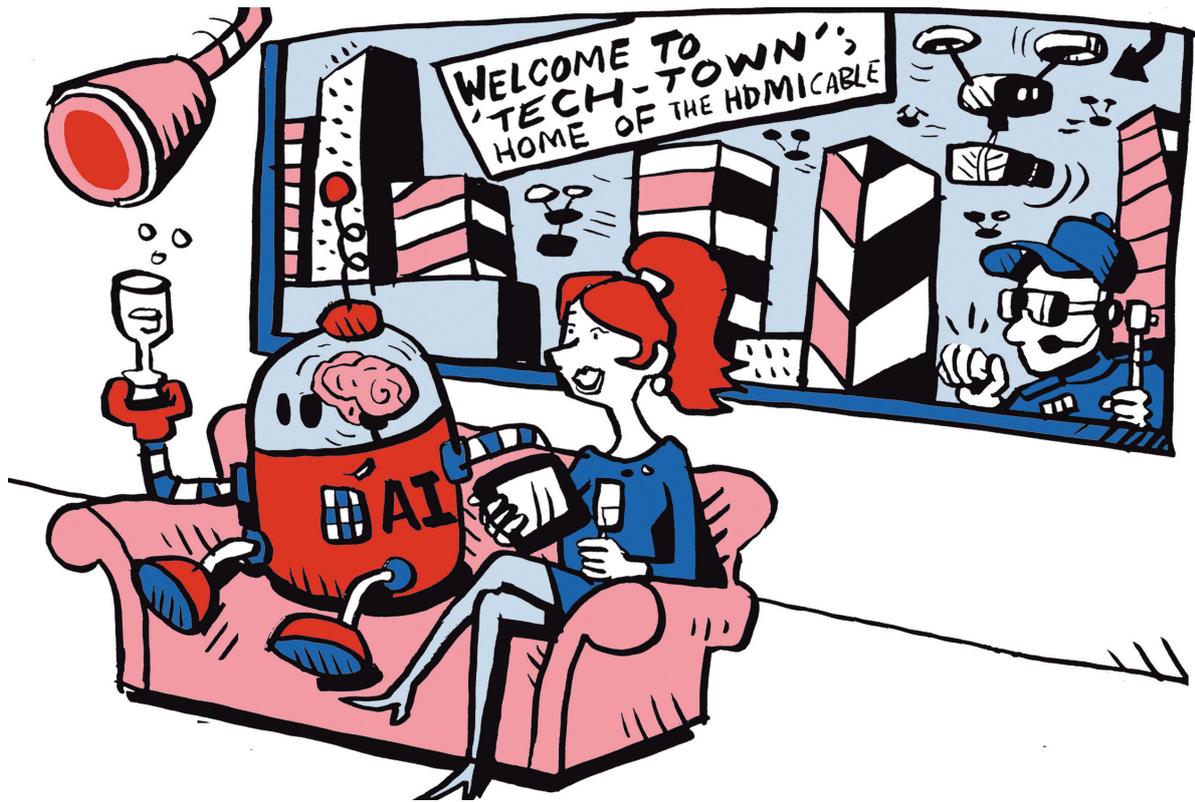
In Holland mum continued her training and was helped to find a job administering a guaranteed income scheme a couple of years ago. Besides, she also runs a digital business... It has been a long journey and, had the overall attitude of people not changed, our lives would have turned out very different. But I sense that our experience is not isolated: we stay in touch with our relatives back home – there are now greater opportunities in the cities, not only the capitals, but also in the smaller cities where things have been planned more deliberately.

Why has life and life on the planet turned out this way? I like to think that what started on my birthday – the birthday of the SDGs – with a rather administrative concept about the future, has become a global way of life. After all, in 2015, the world was ineffective and full of inefficiencies, mostly due to the fear that the agency of migrants would wreak havoc on many societies’ structures and values. In a sense, the SDGs were about being smarter, better and to include and empower more people – everyone.

I started out in life as a migrant. Today I speak five languages, have access to the most advanced networks and technologies, and, most importantly, am viewed as a person full of potential. Contrary to the choices my parents took, to leave their country at great risk, losing one child, I can live up to my full potential in a place of my choice – within reason of course. I am not seen as a migrant, but as a member of this globally integrated community that strives to make life better for everyone.



### 3.4 Technopoly



#### The scenario in brief

*In the world of Technopoly, technology rules supreme and unchecked. So much so that tech leaders become de facto rulers. There is a power shift, not to key countries, but to the tech entrepreneur elite away from democratically elected political classes. The shift is gradual but inexorable because of the increasingly pervasive presence of technology in all spheres of life – it becomes impossible to disassociate technology from survival, employment, entertainment, health, education, house management, energy and human interaction. Technology is intended as a mix of Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation and technological development.*

*What this means for migration: the numbers, direction and qualification of migrants will change over time. In a tech-dominated world, lower-skilled labour will be less in demand, and more people will be self-employed through online platforms, requiring less relocation to carry out jobs. On the other hand, more and more global tech hubs will emerge and attract highly skilled professionals. Aided by personalised global skill formation and education systems, tech elites will be identifying entire populations or countries destined for specific roles, reinventing a division of labour. Global migration numbers can be expected to fall and irregular migration to practically stop altogether as a result of centralised and ubiquitous high-tech borders and general individual movement monitoring. At this point people are disempowered of any choice as far as migration and mobility is concerned.*

#### Technopoly: The World of Migration in 2030

By 2030 the world has undergone transformation in every sense. The gradual, though at times rapid, shift towards full technological integration means that people, their opportunities and their decisions, have become governed and controlled by algorithms. At the same time, technological innovation has led to social progress with the expansion of education for all and a guaranteed basic income for some.

About 40% of the global population are under the age of 25,<sup>17</sup> having been born between 2005 and 2030 and only half of them are generation Z – born between 2005 and 2016. The younger ones are referred to as “generation smartphone” or “generation blockchain”. The diminished freedom and greater higher control has become increasingly unnoticed by the “generation smartphone” and generation Z. This generation is now already holding economic and political power together with machines, but they are also experiencing an increased fight for power. To counteract this trend of reduced freedom, an increasing number of workers have emancipated themselves from the dependence on big companies by creating cooperatives of the shared economy type (e.g. own apps, own services, work remotely).

In this world, there is a general trend towards more temporary legal migration without any paths to citizenship, for both lower-skilled workers and highly skilled migrants. Within countries we observe an increase in regional mobility towards cities, due to the attraction of regional tech towns. As the specialisation of the tech industry has progressed, mobility among highly skilled migrants has risen. Student mobility has continued at a lower rate, with university education more online and detached, and students on the move are now attracted to new tech hubs instead of traditional universities.

Migrants with lower skills face unemployment due to the rise in the use of robots for jobs such as shop assistants, drivers, hand-sewers, receptionists and many more.<sup>18</sup> Low-skilled migrants are being forced to return to their home countries, leading to a substantial reduction in global remittances.

Irregular labour migration has decreased, as jobs available in destination countries are no longer to be found. At the same time, the number of irregular over-stayers has risen, as they have no opportunities anywhere else. New surveillance technology allows over-stayers to be rapidly detected and expelled. In addition, enhanced border controls are preventing new irregular entrants.

Refugees benefit through the emergence of start-ups in refugee camps. They also gain from the universal education programmes available online. In addition, they profit from integrating into middle-income countries, particularly in Latin America and Asia, which are growing markets for tech products. And asylum seekers' claims are processed more efficiently and with less (possible) bias thanks to robots.

### Technopoly: How this happened – the World to 2030

The years to 2020 were characterised by a weakened pushback to technology from “traditional” industries. The innovations, the ease of use and the added quality of life provided such benefits that the costs were forgotten. Although automation has grown across the globe and across economic sectors, temporary legal migration increased regionally, particularly to regions such as North America, Europe and the Middle East, where much manual labour was still needed to support agriculture, care and infrastructure modernisation.

Governments across the world have had trouble instituting good governance and balanced regulation of the activities of tech firms, the companies' extensive reach and their genuine economic and public appeal. The regulatory difficulty stemmed from a pervasive lack of understanding for the impending changes and the implications of technological advance. In supporting think-tanks and lobby groups tech firms ensure that policy is shaped by technological imperatives. Since the dawn of time information has been power and, already in 2017, “companies rich in intellectual property, like those that sit in Silicon Valley, control about 80% of the corporate pie”.<sup>19</sup> As tech's financial potency grows, tech companies acquire major blue-chip companies, consolidating their position.

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<sup>17</sup> UNDESA, Population Division, “World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision”, 2017, available at: <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/>.

<sup>18</sup> Beiner, “Will Robots take my jobs”, 2017, available at: [www.replacedbyrobot.info/](http://www.replacedbyrobot.info/).

<sup>19</sup> Foroohar, “Release big tech's grip on Power”, Financial Times, 19 June 2017, available at: <http://on.ft.com/2zjhF8x>.

While on the one hand regulatory machines stuttered into action, on the other start-ups created by entrepreneurial refugees began to flourish. The sales chains (i.e. inventory, stock, servers, distribution, credit) no longer needed to be in the same place, thanks to an increased blockchain use, including smart contracts. Refugee-camp-based start-ups did well and sold to millions of customers. From 2019, middle income countries in Latin America and Asia increasingly welcomed asylum seekers and invested in the integration of refugees, following the adoption of the global compacts for migration and on refugees in 2018. Indeed, these two compacts were adopted without much fanfare, as more pressing issues started to appear on the horizon – such as the employment dilemma, population ageing, cancer epidemics, etc. While some countries automated production, a sizeable number of countries still saw opportunities in expanding production through importation of cheap labour to compete with global robotisation.

In 2019 the growing reliance on algorithms began to strain international relations, sparking conflict that resulted in military action in the Pacific. That same year, skills and education policies were overhauled to better suit the needs of different countries and regions. A true shift gets underway, so that by 2028 children's access to education reaches 90% in the South.

The International Labour Organization celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019, with governments, workers' and employers' organisations discussing among other things how labour rights could be preserved in this new era of automation.

Technology investments in renewables paid off, and energy costs dropped dramatically so that energy became almost free. First, fully automated rice and wheat production enterprises brought global employment in agriculture down to 5% from about 29% in 2014 – a massive drop with enormous employment and labour migration consequences for key countries such as China, India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Philippines, Brazil and others.<sup>20</sup>

Miracle results could be seen in tech advances and, among other trends, an enrolment reduction in the social sciences. Mobility among highly skilled workers was becoming more common because of tech specialisation. Border controls were carried out using advanced technology, e.g. in biometrics and implants. US firms had experimented with microchip implants for their employees since 2017.<sup>21</sup> These technologies were developed by migrants to ultimately control the flow of migrants.

By 2021, 95% of the world population had internet access. The continued automation of jobs was met with resistance by trade unions and SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) and their associations, which underlined the negative effects on workers and the fact that smaller enterprises lacked the capacity to invest in automation. Older people in particular, but others too, who felt left behind were demonstrating in the streets for “better data protection” and a fairer share of the benefits from data collection. Such demands met with first successes: in some countries, new legislation was instituted conferring on individuals the right to be remunerated for providing personal data to firms. At international level there were discussions to recognise this as a human right, the implementation of which did not pose any problems. The sale was a mere click on an “OK” button, and payments for accessing personal data were made through blockchain. This was similar to when in the past individuals made money by selling blood; now blood is produced synthetically. Tesla and Google cars dominated the automobile market, following the acquisition by these firms of some of their key competitors.



<sup>20</sup> Earth Policy Institute, “Top 10 Producers of Corn, Wheat, Rice, and Total Grain”, 2010, available at: <http://bit.ly/2huvSfn>.

<sup>21</sup> Astor, “Microchip Implants for Employees? One Company Says Yes”, The New York Times, 25 July 2017, available at: <http://nyti.ms/2j17x11>.

AI began to oversee ever increasing aspects of life: monitoring and gradual improvement of working conditions of employees across the board (those in the formal economy); decisions on the distribution of social services; control and issue of visas; handling of refugee processing; and more.

The mid-2020s were characterised by a battle for the power of surveillance between governments and firms. Intergovernmental tech spying was on the rise, together with the growth of government hacking by other governments and resistance groups, etc. All the tools were available to and created by the “good guys” as well as the “bad guys”, though that distinction became blurred in some cases. Eventually hacking and “algorithm malfunctions” caused a major stock market crash in 2023, wiping billions off the value of stocks. Algorithms creating upheaval on stock markets is nothing unusual, but the difficulties of reigning in systems and AI this time were unprecedented.

Also in 2023, Ollie, the first human clone was created in an advanced laboratory. This shakes the world and made 2023 the dawn of a new era: intelligent life can be created using machines and AI.

As concerns migration and mobility, reductions in regular labour flows but also in irregular and ad-hoc labour movements became the norm in the mid-2020s due to shrinking opportunities, in particular manual labour. Jobs in destination countries were being taken over by robots. On the other hand, the number of irregular over-stayers increased as people tended to stay put despite having been replaced by automated systems because the perspectives are no better in their home countries or elsewhere. Over-stayers are mostly those people who could get their families to join them.

After years of work on coordination and harmonisation, globalised curricula finally began to exist, e.g. in healthcare and engineering. The shift towards more service-oriented work led to closures of private recruitment agencies for unskilled workers. These agencies now specialise in skilled ones. As a result, the Kafala system collapsed in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

In 2024–25, despite the low cost of energy production, conflicts erupted around energy distribution between the monopolies that emerged around the world.

The shape of the world was changing. Global tech cities were emerging. They adopted their own immigration rules thanks to massive sovereignty gains as governments had incentivised regional tech hubs in key cities around the world.

Global unemployment rates observed in the second half of the 2020s reached unprecedented levels. Return migration among lower-skilled workers skyrocketed, particularly to countries such as the Philippines and regions such as Latin America, Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. The big migration flows were no longer towards gainful employment but away from unemployment; they also occurred because of obligations to leave. As a direct consequence, remittances declined causing serious development deficits. Because of high unemployment, self-employment reached 70% and most people were on multiple income-generating assignments, often unregulated by labour law. For some time, the tendency has been to shift the coverage for social risks such as unemployment, illness or disability to the individual. Possessing an entrepreneurial spirit to thrive, or even survive in this economy, became critical. Despite fewer people living in abject poverty, profound economic disparities continued to persist within and between countries. The technological march progressed inexorably. Quantum computing, online health monitoring and patient group-funded research, all enabled the development of specific treatments, including a cure for HIV/AIDS in 2026.

Because everyone was connected, a global database for skills matching became available, rendering labour markets more efficient. Countries increasingly specialised in supplying workers for specific occupations and their national education and vocational systems became aligned with this.

Surveys in 2027 highlighted that student mobility was predominantly towards new “tech hubs” that had emerged in all regions. Technological innovation had become the central driver of the economy of the future. Students were aiming to be part of this transition and social science studies had become at most a hobby for the rich.

Not all this technology was benign – or at least, not all technology users were: thus in 2027, the hijacking of algorithms led to an autonomous drone swarm attack emanating from a small landlocked country, a country at the forefront of drone technology since the 2010s. This and similar incidences elsewhere prompted the authorities to strengthen regional regulations on artificial intelligence as it was becoming clear that technology and AI can lead to serious geopolitical difficulties and conflicts.

In 2028, late by some standards, 5% of the world’s population was covered by basic income schemes, an acknowledgement that retraining might not have been enough to counter joblessness. These schemes were closely tied to Corporate Social Responsibility, mostly by tech firms. Extensive lobbying for the previous 15 years and debates about taxing robots finally resulted in tech companies providing the bulk of the resources for at least partial basic income.

Regional mobility increased towards regional tech towns, on the heels of the student movements of earlier years. Some tech-savvy and leapfrogging sub-Saharan African countries started to reap the benefits of their demographic dividend and more regional migration to these tech hubs made them increasingly competitive on the global market.

By the late 2020s, the world had become a tech system – whether individuals, cities or countries, all have to find their function in this vast structure. Movement was allowed only when and where necessary. Optimisation became the name of the game and individual decision-making was not part of the equation.

In 2030 “generation smartphone” oversees business and government. Robots provide half of all healthcare worldwide. Deaths and injuries from road accidents have largely disappeared with the presence of autonomous electric vehicles. Everyone has a single marker for their identification. The world has embraced technology in its most intimate sense: it has become difficult to distinguish reality from virtual reality; a human operator from a Siri. Almost everyone now prefers the infallible AI-powered medics over the approximate flesh-and-blood ones.

On the other side of the coin, however, large numbers of people are suffering from extreme stress, and suicide rates have surged everywhere. Individuals cannot cope anymore with multitasking and total social control. There is also a decline of freedoms for people wishing to migrate for work: countries hold quasi-monopolies on professions and the AI-powered skills-matching platforms make specific decisions, in accordance with the interests of the major global tech firms. Our every move, all the choices we make, all our expectations have been logged in the memories of computer farms, deep in the tundra somewhere, keeping data cool and safe for future use.

Migrants have not disappeared – many are still in countries they might call temporary homes. Others hope in an AI-approved opportunity to migrate to find gainful employment. Workers have rallied across borders and workers’ cooperatives have created their own apps to gain independence from the big tech firms, forever hoping to shape their own digital alternative worlds. Migrants and potential migrants are also well connected among each other and have recently elected a dynamic E-migrant global coalition president.

## Technopoly: A personal story

Dear Dr Z,

Please find enclosed our confidential report on “When the tech giants rule”. As per your brief, we have reviewed the technological outlook, the attendant power shifts, the implications for private sector and the effects on population.

Ultimately, the question we have addressed is how a tech leader can gain and maintain political, financial and technological power for the coming 50 to 100 years – as this is the more consequential question we understood to be implicit in our assignment.

This exercise has been stimulating, if unusual, in that we could convene experts in fields we were unfamiliar with. The exploration of and speculation around new concepts has been most gratifying and we are convinced you will find our analysis and recommendations helpful. To better illustrate our reasoning, this report looks back from 2030.

As per the terms of our engagement, we have ceased any further research and our team has been disbanded with the strict instruction never to disclose the terms or content of this assignment. Strictest confidentiality rests assured.

With our kind regards,

Chair and Secretary of Technopoly  
Undisclosed location,  
31 December 2017

### Confidential Report:

*How Tech Titans can ensure and maintain global control and do good*

#### **Numbers**

Let us begin with some numbers: the billionth personal computer was sold in 2002. The two-billionth was sold in 2007. And in 2008 one billion computers were in use; two billion by 2015. And in 2020 there were 6 billion smartphone users.<sup>22</sup>

By 2017 half of the world’s population was connected to the internet – close to 4 billion people. After a massive acceleration in uptake – reflecting the peak of Moore’s law and the nearly free renewable energy available – 95% of the global population was connected to the internet by 2022. This spectacular adoption of easy-to-use connected devices has only been surpassed by the silent uptake and proliferation of the 50 billion IOT (Internet of Things) devices steadily logging data in the background.

As of the twenty-first century, “billions have replaced millions” in every sphere of our technological lives. There has been inflation and a market penetration unlike anything witnessed previously: Facebook had 3 billion users in 2020 and some of the most profitable companies, worth hundreds of billions, even trillions, of US Dollars, are either in the tech sector or were started by a tech entrepreneur. True to recent history, acquisitions and mergers have ensured that fewer than 20 individuals control 80% of the tech market. These individuals have

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<sup>22</sup> TechCrunch, 6.1B “Smartphone Users Globally By 2020, Overtaking Basic Fixed Phone Subscriptions”, 2015, available at: <http://tcrn.ch/29QzODY>.

reached global superstar status and have become household names. They are a brand. They shoot rockets into space. They buy up blue-chip companies and have direct access to their global users.

### **Technology**

Since the mid-2010s the high-tech sector in its multiple dimensions (i.e. robotisation, artificial intelligence, communications, etc.) has expanded rapidly and increasingly affected people's lives. The innovations have provided opportunities and challenges, not least in the sphere of employment and job security. The question of robots taking over was mooted some time ago, when it became evident that only a fraction of jobs still required the human touch. Self-driving trucks and cars took longer to come to market than initially thought, but killed the combustion-engine industries by 2025. But no matter, because small autonomous vehicles outnumber combustion engine cars on two continents. While the futuristic plans of leading tech companies were being translated into products, an army of lawyers beavered away to ensure the right legal and policy environment existed to cushion the introduction of technologies into the mainstream. Lobbying and pressuring by tech companies surpassed the levels observed from the financial and the pharmaceutical sectors already in 2017.<sup>23</sup> The reality was that governments simply did not understand the technologies (or their implications) nor how to regulate them. But governments, like people, understood a good thing when they saw it: deaths and injuries from car accidents had diminished globally.

Technology is everywhere. Codes and algorithms are everywhere. The young and the old use, wear and develop technology. Inevitably, the older generations push for greater data and privacy protection. But, as we have seen with the proliferation of CCTV cameras, this is a temporary blip. The reality is that now, as a species, we need technology more than we need water – and more frequently, too.

By 2025, the children who had attended Silicon Valley schools in the late 2000s (and their many branches throughout the world), were firmly plugged into society, business and government evolution. Technology is not just a product – it's a way of thinking. It's an attempt at optimising productive processes and making them ubiquitous and close-to-free. Technology is evolution. These early model schools have been replicated and imitated globally and we have seen a shift towards very practical applications and tech-related disciplines. Globally, fewer students enrol in social science studies, more gravitate to software engineering, hardware production and the like. Back in 2019 education policies and curricula of many OECD economies were changed, and now we see the results. Globally, in every family, there is an engineer, a techpreneur, a tech gig-worker or a professional high tech developer.

The automation that has followed, albeit more slowly than we had thought at first, has enabled a high degree of self-employment. Nearly three-quarters of all workers are self-employed and on multiple jobs. No wonder: agriculture has been optimised and automated, first in rice and wheat production, followed by the other grains and, of course, the growth of meat. Processing of immigrants and migrants in general was automated a long time ago. So now only a tiny percentage of global employees are in agriculture (5%). Ultimately, this level of constant connection and optimisation has reduced the need for workers to physically relocate in order to carry out their tasks and assignments. The concepts of teleworking have become much more accepted as people perform jobs that are computer-bound and machine-controlling.

### **Saviour**

The proliferation of technology has led to a very real dependence on it. Like everything in life, technology can be imperfect, can be hacked and abused. These are the risks and that's why waivers exist. People implicitly know this – everyone clicks "OK" when installing new software or agreeing to share their data. Tech leaders are their saviours. They fix software bugs. They use individual data to optimise products. They protect as much as possible the privacy of the individual. When the Soccer World Cup was cancelled because of the extensive and deep hacking of the security and ticket issuing systems, Tech leaders came to the rescue and showed that governments were behind the hack attacks. If anything, the tech leaders were seen as the saviours, preventing

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<sup>23</sup> Foroohar, "Release big tech's grip on Power", Financial Times, 19 June 2017, available at: <http://on.ft.com/2zjhF8x>.

far worse attacks on other, vital systems in the targeted countries. Tech leaders also came to the rescue when algorithm malfunctions led to stock markets crashes.

### **Switch**

Susan George assessed,<sup>24</sup> back in 2015, that "... business elites don't want to govern directly. They operate behind the scenes – directing planning, setting standards and fashioning government to maximise their own profits." Now, we recommend that this approach not be changed. There is little to gain from overtly taking power by running for public office. Our research shows that Tech leaders already control the people's mobility thanks to ownership of global recruitment systems, global biometric and technological border control and surveillance system software; global transport systems (cars, trains, trucks, ships, aircraft) are steered by software owned by tech giants; tech companies own, or part-own, energy companies and have massive investments in green energy production; tech groups are vital in mounting resistance by governments against hacking by other governments; tech companies "own" robotics and artificial intelligence. Tech leaders rule supreme over the millions of migrant workers – taskers – who are moved around the globe to a job or back home.

This reality is in effect global dominance. How to ensure this dominance endures? Precisely by playing again the "Saviour" card: Tech leaders must promote the financing and adoption of a universal guaranteed income, or its analogue. Since the mid-2020s unemployment rates have skyrocketed for unskilled workers, placing pressure on social safety systems. Indeed, the gradual, and at times rapid, introduction of automation, has led to entire cadres of workers becoming obsolete – "obsoleted" as the new terminology goes. To avoid a backlash against tech leaders, progress must be capitalised upon using this three-step approach:

- 1) Promote a very low taxation on technology and robotics, matched by the patent-holding tech company. This implies a minimal financial cost but maximises the reputational gain.
- 2) Increase lobbying spending to ensure politicians run with this concept (financial institutions spent well over \$2 billion ahead of the US 2017 elections, at today's prices some \$10 billion should ensure the same support).
- 3) Utilise the unique access to the billions of online users by creating a popular demand for such an income scheme.

Surely the critics will mount a counter-campaign and claim untold future social and financial costs. But evidence from the early 2020s (and from the Gulf States) shows that people quickly adapt to a guaranteed income.

The guaranteed income will also find favour with the people who have benefitted from remittances their migrant relatives used to send every month. Tech leaders will more than fill the void on both sides by providing an income and corresponding remittance! It is the most effective means for dealing with the highest rate of unemployment the world has seen. Thanks to tech titans, fewer people will live in abject poverty (though the actual number may not change, but tech leaders cannot be blamed for that!), and once again tech leaders will be heralded as saviours.

### **Building**

The new world you are building is about health, clean energy and cities. Thanks to your efforts in AI, virtual reality and synthetic biology, a cure for AIDS was found in 2026 – yes, your quantum computers identified the molecular interactions between virus and immune system. You were awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine. Your world is being propagated in regional hubs, financed and incentivised by governments (by you, really) to attract the most talented global minds. Students are flocking to such cities of technological excellence; the cities are becoming technology nodes that churn out new ideas and fend off invasion and destruction. Here we are not talking about the stuffy old colleges our grandparents considered top-notch. We envisage new hubs, virtual teachers and students, 3D holographic presence, and much more.

Energy consumption has dropped since 2025. Its generation is now renewable and its cost has fallen to close to zero. Solar and hydrogen dominate the market and quantum computing allows for the creation of new designs to distribute energy without loss. The regional power blackouts witnessed in the early 2020s were the

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<sup>24</sup> George, "Shadow Sovereigns", 2015, available at: <http://bit.ly/2yN2bx3>.

result of the massive consumption of pesky tweets and cute-cat photos; it nearly brought the internet to its knees. But the near limitless amount and efficient distribution of energy nowadays has done away with such problems. And the oil market has all but collapsed: its prices have become so volatile that only a few countries find it economically viable to still be in business. Sheikh Yamani's old quote<sup>25</sup> now applies: "The Stone Age came to an end, not because we had a lack of stones, and the oil age will come to an end not because we have a lack of oil."

You, tech leader, are building all of this. While you have been making the world a better place you have remained at arm's length from the responsibilities and potential public scrutiny that political leaders have had to contend with in the past. What's more you belong to the global ecosystem of tech leaders – it will be increasingly easy for you to shape global policy around issues that matter to you. You can shift the human masses around the world. You will determine who works where: some manual and physical labour will still be needed; your software, tools and distribution means you can "upskill" and specialise entire countries to service specific global sectors. In the past Romanian and Moldovan women were leaders in elderly- and homecare in Italy; plumbers were all from Poland; nurses from southern Africa. You have the wherewithal to determine the future of entire continents for generations to come, and will probably be focussing on the best and brightest. You will oversee the setting of global migration rules. The UN Global Compact and the Global Redesign Initiative of the World Economic Forum have generated the ideal platforms for tech-to-policy network to wield your power.

You will be commandeering the new population of human clones. Yes, the first human clone created seven years ago, in 2023, was also the product of one tech leader's investments and products. So, there is very little that does not fall under your purview, and there is no need whatsoever for any formal political role.

### **Addiction**

In conclusion, as long as the world stays addicted to the technologies you produce, you will remain in charge. This means a sustained investment into R&D, buying and incubating the right companies/start-ups, and dealing with the occasional fallouts or massive hacks. This is your century. You are in charge and this is your golden era – excitement about science and technology, unprecedented influence, global impact and decision-making beyond anything ever thought possible. And the world will remain addicted to technology because people feel so connected, consequential and important. Let's face it, the world's cucumber brains have been pickled, and they can never go back to being cucumbers again!

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<sup>25</sup> Fagan, "Sheikh Yamani predicts price crash as age of oil ends", Telegraph, 25 June 2000, available at: <http://bit.ly/2zKozdJ>.



## 4. Scenario analysis



### 4.1 The scenarios

It is important to consider the four scenarios as a set, not as four separate stories: key lessons can be derived from each. A comprehensive understanding enables an appreciation of changes as they occur and of the decisions that are necessary to navigate within the possible futures. While no single scenario may come about, a mix of all four will probably be part of the future.

The scenarios address the core question: “What future for international migration and human mobility?” Each scenario, *My Country First!*, *World on Fire*, *Opening Roads* and *Technopoly*, offers very different answers as a result of attributing different weight and prominence to underlying structural drivers of change (not to be confused with drivers of migration).<sup>26</sup>

#### My Country First!

*My Country First!* projects a new multipolar, Asia-dominated and far less liberal world order, where politics in the formerly dominant West has become largely inward-looking, with a focus on the needs, priorities and entitlements of fellow nationals. Despite the demographic challenges, the majority in the ageing societies of the old West see mass immigration far more as a threat (to their welfare systems and cultural identities) than an opportunity: this view is reflected in highly restrictive migration policies and their strict enforcement. It is also underpinned by a reluctance to engage in multilateral fora and in international cooperation more generally, beyond the narrow confines of security-related issues. The latter, however, include targeted new and unconventional approaches towards “fighting the root causes of flight and migration”.

In terms of migration, it is clear that under a *My Country First!* scenario migration to traditional destination countries will be reduced to the bare minimum and be highly selective: bar a few exceptions for humanitarian reasons only those migrants that are considered economically useful are allowed in, filling specific labour market or skills gaps. However, the “success” of this approach to immigration is partly linked to two other concurrent developments that contribute to both changes in the geographical direction as well as the reduction of migration flows. One is the assumption that by 2030 some of the new centres of global economic activity, especially in Asia, will have largely replaced the old West as the destination for labour migration. The other assumption is that outside interventions in the traditional regions of origin of migration will trigger an economic take-off for these regions – largely through unconventional approaches (special economic zones/“charter cities”) – that would eliminate the need for many would be migrants to migrate out of their regions as significant new employment opportunities would have been created in their part of the world.

Compared to a situation in which we just extrapolate current migration trends in combination with demographic projections up to around the year 2030, under the *My Country First!* scenario we would have both far less international migration and human mobility, especially across continents, as well as significant changes in the geographical direction of migration flows.

#### World on Fire

This scenario is about a world where a proliferation or multiplication of initially low-intensity intra- and inter-state conflicts (if unresolved), leads the world down a slippery slope towards a situation where tensions turn to armed conflicts that become increasingly violent, interlinked, feeding on each other and finally degenerating in a situation of all-out war. This scenario is also about the conspicuous absence of strong and responsible global and regional leadership of major powers (some declining, some emerging);

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<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that the term ‘drivers of change’ in the scenario-building methodology does not signify the same meaning as the term ‘drivers’ of migration frequently used in migration literature and discourse.

these have become too absorbed in internal politics or in geopolitical power struggles among each other following the shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world.

In a *World on Fire* the number of global migrants and refugees will skyrocket as hundreds of millions of people move in search of survival, peace and safety, within their own countries, beyond borders and across continents. With a widespread breakdown of law and order in many parts of the world, most national migration control systems also collapse, as do underfunded international organisations and NGOs overwhelmed by the sheer volume of displaced persons. With many states now in disarray, cities and local communities become the sole safe havens for migrants and refugees.

The key message of *World on Fire* is a quest to ensure problems are resolved, that new and existing conflicts do not become protracted or become international and that checks and balances exist to rein in some of the most bellicose leaders around the globe. Most important here is a strong political will by all major powers to engage in international and regional cooperation to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts under the auspices of the UN Security Council and regional mechanisms such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The *World on Fire* is dire for almost everyone; it brings out the best and the worst in people. While the conflict rages, communities for survival are established. While the business of human traffickers is booming, people help one another. While the future looks bleak, especially at the local level, new forms of governance based on enlightened values pave the way ahead and the 'phoenix rises out of the ashes'.

### Opening Roads

The principal story in *Opening Roads* is international collaboration, the world coming together and aiming to achieve what is good and positive for all. A new global mind-set emerges that sets out to achieve universal and sustainable development. Because the focus is on each individual, every group and every country, migrants and mobile people also fare better. Migration is welcome and regulated, orderly and regular. Countries set their own rules and migration policies according to most effective and productive criteria.

The story of *Opening Roads* is one of social transformation as a whole. Although not all problems are solved by 2030, inclusive dialogues have moved beyond tokenism and are accepted norms. Migrants, women, minorities are all structurally integrated in progressive change. All of the migration-related targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are largely achieved.

As a result of these successes the global proportion of migrants to the total population will just follow past trends and remain unchanged at roughly 3%, even though net migration will account for about 80% of population growth in traditional high income countries.

### Technopoly

An altogether different outlook is presented in *Technopoly*. Although technological advance is central, there is also a shift away from government control (appreciated by some) towards greater power and authority held by technology and Tech gurus (not appreciated by everyone). Private sector technologies rule supreme and directly or indirectly set national policies, priorities, laws and regulations. In this world, ultimate power has been handed over to the technology owners.

The consequences are mixed for migrants and people on the move who have become strings of zeroes and ones in global labour supply chains. First, in a tech-dominated world more people will work through online platforms, requiring less job-related relocation, and less migration as well. Second, lower-skills will be less in demand; the pressure on unemployed lower-skilled migrants to return to their home countries will increase, with new surveillance technology making it easier to detect and expel over-stayers. On the other hand expanding global tech hubs will attract highly skilled people from everywhere. Third, the

scenario also projects a trend towards more temporary migration without any path to citizenship, for both lower- and highly skilled migrants, reminiscent of the old “guest worker” model of yesteryear.

As a result, the numbers, direction and qualifications of migrants will substantially change, and the forced return of migrants to their initial home countries may become a rising challenge.

*Technopoly* forces a rethink about human activity, employment and distribution at a time when ‘jobs’ as we know them in 2017 will disappear, populations will grow and everyone will be more connected than ever. What will the global social consequences be? Who will rule?

## 4.2 Common realities

The scenarios highlight four possible ways in which international migration might evolve.

### Migration will continue

Irrespective of the scenarios, migration, mobility and people moving in search of safety will continue. Numbers will vary considerably as will the countries migrants move from and to. What also varies across the scenarios is the attitude to migration by different countries.

### Gradients

People move along gradients: from lack of accessible employment towards perceived labour opportunities; from environmental instability to environmental safety; from conflict towards peace. As long as gradients within and across countries exist, people will move along them.

The four scenarios express these gradients in different ways:

- In the **My Country First!** scenario, movement is towards countries that accept migrants, while others are simply off-limits. Nations that adopt the My Country First! stance will remove the gradient that leads towards them, thereby reducing migration in-flows. In this scenario, there are fewer incentives to migrate as economic opportunities in traditional home countries are on the rise.
- In the **World on Fire** people flee conflict, war and insecurity. Even though resettlement options decrease, the perception prevails that migration destinations still exist.
- In **Opening Roads** migration is along the opportunity gradient. As it is possible for professionals to move, people will move for better jobs, towards job hubs or simply to gain new employment.
- The **Technopoly** world is all about smart systems identifying labour supply and demand, and matching them. The gradient is thus determined and regulated by artificial intelligence, the needs of highly automated production systems and the enhanced possibilities of controlling migration flows.

### Who sets migration policy

Countries set their migration policies as they see most fit:

- In **My Country First!** immigration policies are central to national policy. Enforcing such policies is also a matter of (perceived) national interest, and in principle contrary to internationally agreed common migration and refugee regimes.
- In **World on Fire** countries may set immigration policies, but implementing them in the prevailing chaos appears irrelevant. Countries are not able to either set or implement their immigration policy. If at all, standards are being set by cities or local communities that provide safe spaces for migrants.
- Countries in **Opening Roads** also set their own migration policies, but in coordination with other countries. These are likely to differ markedly from the policies of My Country First!
- The migration policies in **Technopoly** are most likely shaped and influenced by powerful technology companies. So, while on the surface it is the countries that set such policy, in reality they are only puppets of these new “masters of the universe”.

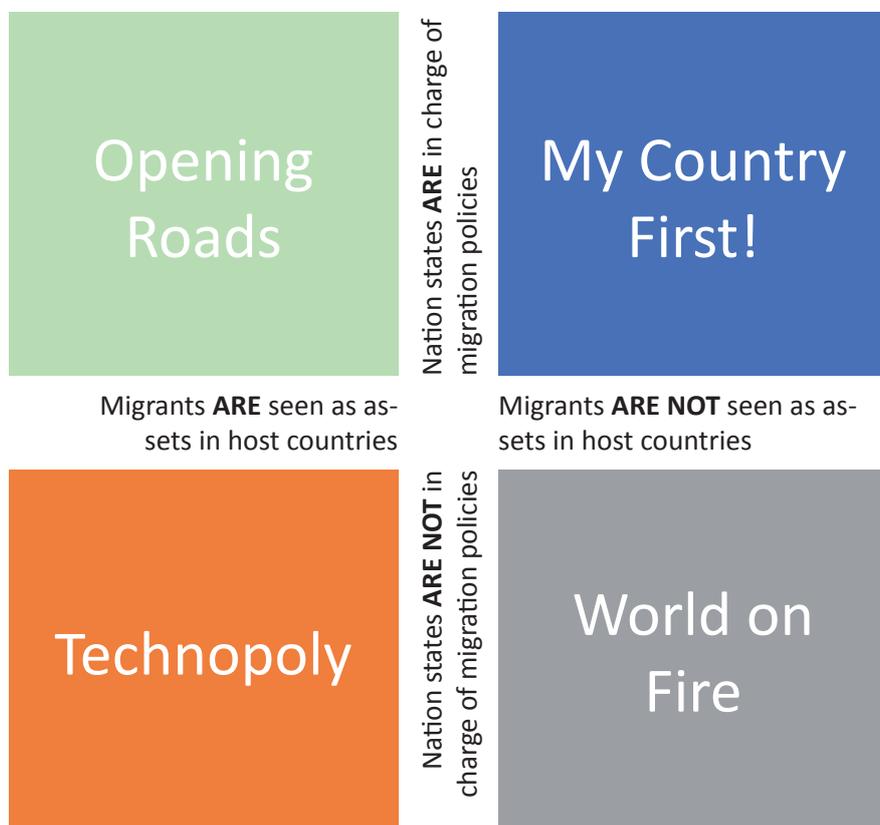
## How migrants are viewed

Migrants play a central role in each scenario – though it varies widely in each scenario:

- In **My Country First!**, where nationals are prioritised in all jobs, immigrants are not wanted and legislation is pursued to remove them from the national territory, even when they may have entered under previous regulations.
- In **World on Fire**, people on the move are mostly refugees seeking safety. In this dire global situation, migrants are not perceived as representing any particular added value, in general are not welcome – and are seen as burdensome.
- **Opening Roads** foresees greater freedom of movement, a wide recognition of the benefits of migration and the value of diversity brought by migrants and their families.
- Finally, in **Technopoly** migrants are considered assets, employable and representing added value which can be quantified and slotted into production chains. Global matching systems ensure that companies have access to the right skills, wherever these may be located. This matching system also links to immigration and visa requirements consistent with national policies. Those migrants whose skills no longer match new requirements may face the threat of extradition.

Below is a simple illustration of the fundamental steps, regarding migration policies and the way in which migrants are viewed at aggregate level in each scenario. The critical branching points are those junctures where very different outcomes could start to happen, depending on the decisions taken and resulting in different scenarios:

- The first branching point explores whether it is the nation states and their governments that set national (im)migration policies;
- The second branching point determines whether or not migrants are by and large seen as valuable contributors to host countries.



The illustration above highlights the dichotomies around critical points and facilitates the grouping of characteristics of each scenario. It also highlights where the scenarios differ from one another or what they have in common: in both **Technopoly** and **World on Fire** scenarios the “nation state” government does not determine immigration policy or at least it does not control its enforcement. Similarly, in neither **World on Fire** nor **My Country First!** are migrants seen as assets or net contributors to their host countries.

The diagram also illustrates why these scenarios should not be ranked in terms of “best”, “worst” or “middle”, as there is no such thing as a “business as usual” baseline. Rather, there are real choices and decisions to be made, with outcomes resulting in the different scenarios. Yet, similarities and partial overlaps among apparently different scenarios point to the potential ease with which it is possible – from a migration perspective – to shift from one world into another.

Finally, it is interesting to note that none of the four global scenarios depicts an “open border” approach of free movement of people as it currently exists within many nation states or – supra-nationally – within the European Union, among others. This is the case even for the **Opening Roads** scenario of orderly, safe and regular migration based on internationally agreed rules, which comes closest to this. Scenario members have judged such scenario to be implausible or far less plausible than the other four scenarios presented here – at least within the given time horizon (by 2030).

#### [A further comparison of the scenarios](#)

The table overleaf provides a further analysis of the four scenarios through a comparative look at the developments of key determinants of migration and human mobility. Poverty, demography, inequality within and between countries, and the nexus between conflicts, failed states and bad governance have been selected as emblematic. How these issues unfold in each of the scenarios can either be gleaned directly from the actual scenario stories in Section 4, or can be deduced from the stories with a reasonable degree of plausibility even if these developments are not explicitly mentioned in each of the stories themselves.

	<b>My Country First!</b> 	<b>World on Fire</b> 	<b>Opening Roads</b> 	<b>Technopoly</b> 
<b>Poverty</b>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Economic take-off in parts of formerly poor countries will lead to an overall decline in poverty</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Not clear-cut, increase in job opportunities decreases migration pressure while income increases may allow more people to pay for travel to those (few and new) places that are open to migrants</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Destruction and economic disruption lead to a sharp and widespread increase in poverty</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Increased unregulated migration and mobility, all-out global refugee crisis</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Eradication of extreme poverty (people living on less than \$1.25 a day) in line with SDG 1.1. likely. Possibly increased resilience of the poor with respect to: economic and social shocks</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Not clear-cut, but may lead to reduction in unregulated migration</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> No clear-cut answer. Poverty implications depend on how widely productivity gains will be redistributed e.g. through social protection floors or basic income grants</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Not clear-cut. Even increased poverty might not lead to an increase in unskilled labour migration as unskilled jobs become scarce (are taken over by robots)</p>
<b>Demography</b>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Globally uncertain, depends on demographic transition mainly in Africa; ageing and shrinking population in most rich countries</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> As most rich countries decided to “age gracefully” only limited potential for migration; partly substituted by new destinations (e.g. in Asia)</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Belief that population growth will come to a (at least temporary) halt due to skyrocketing mortality rates (war)</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Massive unregulated movements of people fleeing war and destruction</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> With global economic and social development, broadly in line with the SDGs we are likely to see a transition to lower fertility rates in poor countries and lower but still positive overall population growth.</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Uncertain, but reduced demographic pressure may also lead to reduced migration pressure</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> No clear-cut overall trend. Rapidly rising population in global tech hubs; decline in rural areas / small town may be halted through increased internet connectivity</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Unclear; less labour migration through online connectivity and less potential for low-skilled workers, higher mobility for some of the highly skilled, more returnees migrating back to their home countries</p>

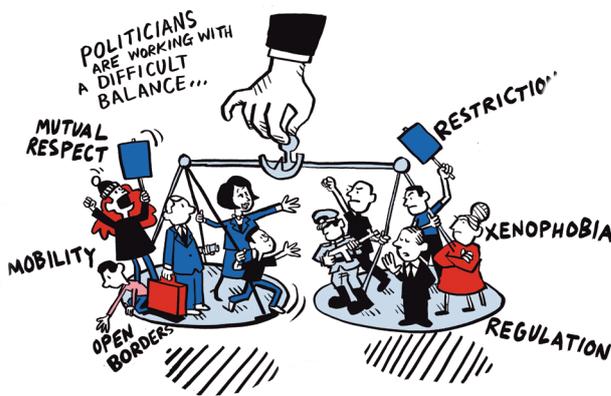
<p><b>Inequality within and between countries</b></p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Reduced inequality within rich countries; reduced inequality between rich, emerging and developing countries due to higher growth rates in the later</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> As income inequality between countries remains high, differences in average incomes remain a major driver for migration</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> As a result of war and destruction affecting countries unevenly the current pattern will have changed dramatically. Within countries, with many losers and a few winners the distribution of power and wealth is likely to have changed</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Struggle for power and resources will add to unregulated migration</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Uncertain within countries despite a decline in poverty rates; reduced inequality between countries due to faster growth in poorer countries</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> As income inequality between countries remains high, differences in average incomes remain a major driver for migration</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Increasing regional differences within countries between tech hubs (“Silicon Valleys”) and the rest. To the extent that tech hubs concentrate in high income and emerging economies, inequality between them and LDCs will rise.</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Rising inequalities are incentives for more migration towards tech hubs</p>
<p><b>Nexus between conflicts, failed states and bad governance</b></p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Well-governed countries, failed states and special economic zones under the control of foreigners (“charter cities”) co-exist in poor regions</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> more intraregional crossborder migration (e.g. in Africa)</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Armed conflict and war largely as a result of bad governance mostly but not exclusively in failed states</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Massive unregulated movements of people fleeing war and oppression</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Increased multilateral cooperation in many areas including security have led to marked decrease in armed conflicts</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Greater acceptance of orderly migration; regulated movement of people</p>	<p><b>By 2030:</b> Increasing disparity between prosperous tech hubs and regions (and associated populations) that feel left behind increases likelihood of tensions and conflict within and between countries</p> <p><b>Migration implication 2030:</b> Uncertain</p>



## 5. Conclusion and Way Forward

The scenarios, the drivers and the inter-relations among the varying scenarios point to several current and future challenges for decision-making and policy-making on migration and human mobility.

First, at present “there is lack of political will or legal protection for migrants”,<sup>27</sup> and the scenarios illustrate how the future on this issue is uncertain. All speculative worlds for 2030 indicate that the perception around migration and migration policies themselves are a product of a wider context. This context is determined by certain drivers as outlined in chapter two. Should the emphasis of drivers shift, different futures may materialise. In other words, in order to pursue an outcome that comes close to the Opening Roads scenario, much political capital needs to be invested to ensure that the current momentum on respectively the global compact for migration and the global compact on refugees is sustained in the long term into adoption and implementation.



Second, both compacts rely on shared principles, commitments and understandings. Implementing these compacts in the future will rely heavily on national priorities and, in some instances, “a fundamental shift in the public perception of migrants and migration”. The scenarios are instructive about both elements: national migration priorities may be set in the future by nation states or by other actors, such as multinational (technology) companies; perceptions about migrants may also shift radically.

Third, the future is uncertain, but some scenarios may easily morph into each other. The analysis has shown that, when viewed through the lens of perceptions around migrants and nation states setting migration policy, scenarios that are very different share significant similarities. The world in the Opening Roads scenario is geared towards adoption of the compacts and towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, yet it can drift into the My Country First! scenario if migrants are not seen as positive contributors to society. It is therefore important to continually re-examine all aspects of the current state and explore the risks of veering off course and into a different world.

So, can the development of different scenarios help, today? It is a conceptual approach which does not focus on numbers and projections, unlike others.<sup>28</sup> As per recent comments around the global compact for migration consultations, some of the “soft” or qualitative approaches such as perception, politics and commitment are also relevant. The four scenarios can contribute insights here. They provide plausible outlooks to explore the present and the future. In which world are we now? Where are we headed? Where do we want to be? What must be done to get there? These and other questions can be tackled through the scenarios, the drivers and the scenario analysis techniques.

The scenarios do not purport to convey the definitive outlook on the future of migration and human mobility. They are but a starting point and other scenarios can be envisaged, not least in regional, national and local contexts. The four scenarios presented here can act as catalysts for further exploration of the future using additional, more specific and relevant information.

So, how can these scenarios be used further? They are valuable in many respects:

<sup>27</sup> Statement by William Lacy Swing on 5 September 2017: <http://bit.ly/2yMqwTG>.

<sup>28</sup> See for example <http://gmdac.iom.int> or [www.global-migration.info](http://www.global-migration.info) amongst others.

- First, scenarios can provide insights into alternative futures that may not be expected or that are not part of current approach to migration thinking and analysis. Scenarios also illustrate outcomes that may not be among the preferred futures. Reviewing the scenarios enables collective thinking on possible alternatives.
- Second, scenarios enable the exploring and testing of existing plans and strategies. Shell, the oil company, develops a set of global scenarios every two years. Their scenarios offer a set of alternative futures against which investments over \$1 billion need to be tested. This means that only projects that demonstrate viability under all the global scenarios get approved. Using scenarios to test the robustness of plans and strategies is a means of “future-proofing” decisions by ensuring they are more adaptive and flexible to a range of different conditions. This can be done in the migration space for programmes, policies and political decision-making.
- Third, scenarios facilitate an understanding of change. They provide a unique “lens” through which information, events and development as they happen can be assessed and better understood. The scenarios in this report illustrate four distinct worlds for 2030, and also distinct paths that have been pursued to reach such outcomes.

## Appendix: Participants

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