

# Advancing the 2030 Agenda in a Context of Uncertainty

- The use of Strategic Foresight  
for Adaptive and Future-Ready SDG Strategies



## Rapid Global Change and Uncertainty

When the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda were defined, they described a generic “preferred future” for 2030, along with a framework for measurement. However, the world in 2030 will be very different than it is today, creating new challenges and new opportunities for achieving the SDGs. Accelerating technological transformation and profound geopolitical shifts are combining with social, demographic, and environmental trends to create a period of rapid change and high uncertainty on an unprecedented global scale. This means that all countries face a wide range of plausible scenarios about what the global context could look like in 2030.

The future cannot be predicted, but in the face of rapid change and uncertainty, strategic foresight provides valuable methods and tools for engaging with it, developing more robust, adaptive and future-ready visions and strategies by:

- Identifying key emerging changes and critical uncertainties;
- Exploring the potential implications of these changes for advancing the 2030 Agenda, including what new challenges and opportunities these changes could create, and how these changes could affect the trade-offs between competing goals and priorities;
- Testing current strategies against a range of plausible futures/ scenarios for 2030 in order to assess how well these would fare under different conditions – and making adjustments where necessary (“future-ready strategies”); and
- Provoking innovative thinking about the strategies best suited to advancing SDG goals in the face of rapid change and uncertainty.

More broadly, the application of strategic foresight to the 2030 Agenda can serve as a key step in building the means for ongoing anticipatory governance – including the capacity to better identify emerging changes and more effectively respond to them. Strengthening the ability of societies to anticipate and engage with change is key to enabling them to shape and build the future that they want.

## Towards Sustainability and Resilience

To transform towards “sustainable and resilient societies” we need to become better at understanding why and how we imagine the future. We need to develop resilient approaches to pursue the preferred future. By becoming more futures literate, we can turn the future from a liability, a source of never-ending disappointment in our own false expectations, into an asset for detecting and inventing the rich emergent, novelty ridden world around us. A sense of empowerment is felt, when we move away from reacting to emerging opportunities and challenges, towards navigating and appreciating them.

## Training Objectives

The organisers will provide an exposure to the concepts of alternative futures and strategic foresight, challenging conventional thinking and providing thought-provoking ideas for follow-up action. While strategic foresight approaches can be usefully applied to all Goals, the training will focus in on SDG 11 “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements”. Apart from gaining a basic futures literacy, course participants would have an opportunity to identify areas in which they could apply foresight approaches.

presented by:



Centre for Public Service Innovation ([CPSI](#)), Government of South Africa  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD](#)), France  
School of International Futures ([SOIF](#)), United Kingdom  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation ([UNESCO](#))  
UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence ([GCPSE](#)), Singapore

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Conference Room 5, United Nations Headquarters  
13 July 2018, 10 AM – 1 PM

Time	Agenda Item	Speaker/Facilitator
10:00 – 10:20 AM	Welcome and Context	Arndt Husar (UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence)
10:20 – 10:40 AM	Introduction to Futures Literacy	Riel Miller (UNESCO)
10:40 – 11 AM	Case Study Presentation 1 Foresight in Developing Country Contexts	Pierre Schoonraad (Centre for Public Service Innovation, South Africa) and Arndt Husar (UNDP)
11:00 – 11:20 AM	Scoping: Weak Signals (Exercise)	
11:20 – 11:40 AM	Case Study Presentation 2 The Use of Foresight within Institutions	Duncan Cass-Beggs (OECD)
	Break	
12:00 – 12:20 PM	Ordering / Implication (Exercise)	
12:20 – 12:40 PM	Case Study Presentation 3 Applying Foresight in the Context of the Agenda 2030	Cat Tully (School of International Futures)
12:40 – 12:55 PM	Debriefing Session	
11:55 – 1 PM	Vote of Thanks & Evaluation	Arndt Husar (UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence)

Open to attendees of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

**Registration:** Please register your interest here: [www.bit.ly/registerFStraining](http://www.bit.ly/registerFStraining).

On the day, admission will be first come, first serve.

Organised under the auspices of the [SDGs Learning, Training and Practice](#) workshop series hosted by UNITAR and UNDESA.

# Speaker Profiles

## Arndt Husar (United Nations Development Programme)



Arndt is Deputy Director at the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence (GCPSE), Singapore. His career in the development sector has been focused on governance and public sector challenges in developing country contexts, ranging from the local to the national level. At the GCPSE, he works on strategy, programme management and advisory services with a focus on public service innovation, strategic foresight and digital technologies. Given the role of the Centre as a catalyst for new thinking and action in the field of public service, activities range from publishing evidence to convening thinker-practitioner-oriented events for knowledge sharing.

Arndt has been driving a range of activities on public service innovation in support of UNDP's innovation agenda, including the 2013 *Public Service Innovation Lab* series across Southeast Asia (#UNDPpsi), the *Empowered Futures Initiative* with its *foresightXchange* workshop series (#fsXc) as well as work on digital transformation (#techPS).

Arndt graduated as a Spatial Planner (Engineer) from the University of Dortmund (Germany) and was a fellow of the Postgraduate Programme for International Affairs, working on City Development Strategies and Slum Upgrading with the Cities Alliance. Prior to his posting in Singapore, he worked for 5 years with UNDP India and the UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre in programme and advisory roles.

[@ArndtHusar](#) / [@UNDPpublicserv](#)

## Catarina Tully (School of International Futures)



Cat Tully is the founder of the School of International Futures (SOIF). SOIF helps leaders, communities and organisations engage with the future, to make better decisions today. SOIF runs projects and foresight retreats across the world and has 600 alumni in 50 countries. Cat advises on and teaches strategic foresight, emergent strategy and system stewardship internationally, including at the UN and as a Visiting Professor in Malaysia and Russia.

Previously, Cat was Strategy Project Director at the UK FCO and Policy Adviser in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. Before working in government, she worked in strategy across the not-for-profit and business sectors, including Christian Aid, Technoserve and Procter and Gamble.

Cat is a trustee for Involve, a public participation Think Tank; the Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development (FDSD); a Global board member of Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP); and a member of the Advisory Group of the British Foreign Policy Group (BFPG).

[@CatTullyFOH](#) / [@SOIFutures](#)

## Duncan Cass-Beggs (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)



Duncan is the Counsellor for Strategic Foresight at the OECD with a mandate to help strengthen strategic foresight and new approaches across the OECD and bring a stronger future focus to global dialogue on key policy issues.

This involves working closely with OECD staff, national governments and leading foresight practitioners worldwide to explore disruptive changes that could occur in the future – and their implications for policy decisions today. The aim is to challenge prevailing assumptions and stimulate ongoing dialogue on the most adaptive policies for a rapidly evolving and uncertain world.

Before joining the OECD in December 2016, Duncan worked in the Government of Canada, most recently as Director of Strategic Foresight at Policy Horizons Canada. Duncan has a Master's Degree in Political Science from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and a BA in Economics and Political Science from McGill University in Montreal.

[@OECD](#)

## Pierre Schoonraad (Centre for Public Service Innovation)



Pierre is the acting Executive Director and Head of Research and Development at the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI). The CPSI is mandated by the South African Government to entrench the culture and practice of innovation in the public sector.

Pierre previously served as Director: Research at the Department of Public Service and Administration with the responsibility to investigate the capacity of the state to deliver on government's developmental programmes and recommend suitable solutions to Cabinet. These research projects covered diverse sectors such as Health, Housing, Transport and Small Business Development.

In 2015 he organised a *foresightXchange* workshop, co-hosted with the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence (GCPSE) in Johannesburg, South Africa, attended by 14 African countries. The Workshop initiated a series of country Foresight Workshops facilitated by the GCPSE on aligning national development planning with the SDGs. Countries included Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, Mauritius and Cape Verde. He is currently working with the UN Country Team to align the Strategic Country Framework with the National Development Plan and the SDGs.

[@PSchoonraad](#) / [@cps\\_i\\_sa](#)

## Riel Miller (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)



Riel is the of Head of Foresight / Futures Literacy at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France. For thirty years Riel has been co-creating innovation, leadership and transformation in both the public and private sectors around the world. He is one of the world's leading strategic foresight designers and practitioners.

Previously, Riel worked as a senior manager in the Ontario public service (Ministries of Finance; Universities; and Industry) and for some thirteen years in total at the OECD in Paris (Directorates of Economics; Science & Technology; Education; Territorial Development; Development Centre; International Futures Programme).

In 2005 he founded an independent consultancy – xperidox (which means knowledge through experience) to advise clients on how to use the future more effectively. Since 1988, when he managed his first major participatory foresight exercise (Vision 2000), Riel has designed more than hundred applied futures projects around the world, large and small scale, public and private. He is an accomplished and innovative designer of processes for using the future to make decisions in the present.

[@RielM](#) / [@UNESCO](#)

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