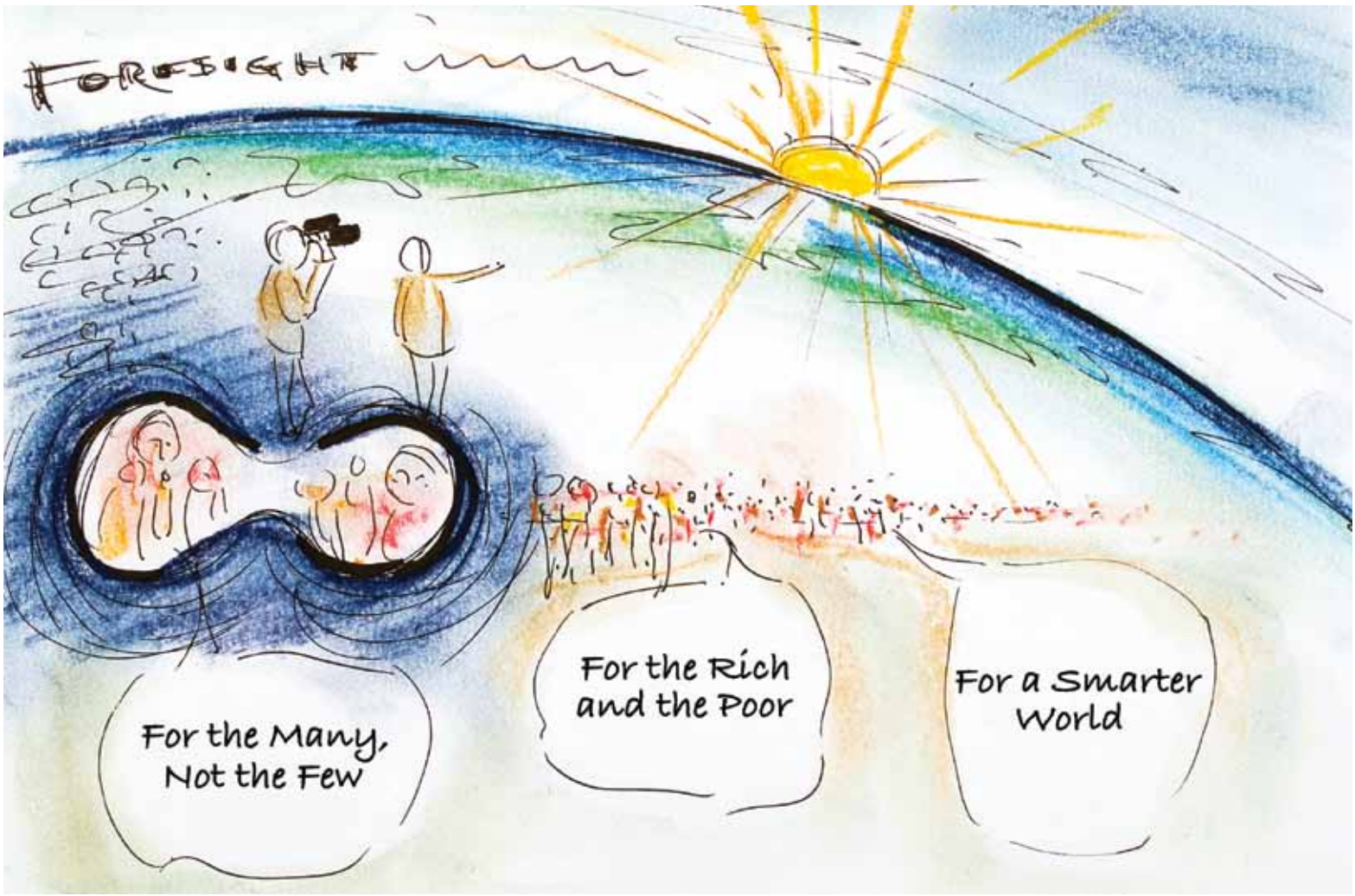
INSTITUTE FOR
ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

PRO-POOR FORESIGHT FOR
REGIONS, COUNTRIES, AND
COMMUNITIES



PRO-POOR SCENARIO TOOLKIT:

WORKSHOP MATERIALS AND GLOBAL FORECASTS FOR 2039

Contents

1. Introduction

Pro-poor foresight considers a variety of plausible future scenarios while placing poor and marginalized populations at the center of concern.

What are scenarios?

Scenarios are alternative paths into the future that allow comparison of different circumstances for decision-making in the present. In this case, scenarios will be developed that place poor and marginalized populations at the center of concern. These scenarios can be used to identify emerging challenges and opportunities that can be addressed in order to improve the lives of these populations.

Scenarios enrich our mental image or map of the interacting forces that influence the future – particularly those forces or "drivers" thought to be most important to a specific community, country, or region. Alternative scenarios are typically structured around alternative forecasts of how the key drivers may play out.

Why create scenarios?

Scenarios are an important tool for learning and for informing decision-making when there is high uncertainty. To maximize opportunities for learning, scenarios should explore a wide range of future possibilities. The approach of the Institute for Alternative Futures is to deliberately explore a wide possibility space that includes not just the "most likely" developments, but also highly challenging and highly desirable future states. When developed using the "aspirational futures" approach described below, scenarios can help communities, countries, and regions clarify and better achieve their vision and goals.

What is pro-poor foresight?

Pro-poor foresight: any foresight activity, such as forecasting, scenario planning, or visioning, that puts poor populations at the center of concern for the future

In March 2009, the Institute for Alternative Futures (IAF) and the Rockefeller Foundation gathered futurists from around the world to explore how foresight could be used to enhance and accelerate development opportunities for poor and marginalized populations. One of the meeting's recommendations was to encourage people from the academic, civil society, and policy communities to engage people who have experience in poor communities in a process to develop scenarios that place these communities at the center of concern.

With this goal in mind, IAF designed this "Pro-poor Scenario Toolkit" to help communities, countries, and regions develop scenarios that place those poor populations at the center of concern for the future. This toolkit specifically invites policy-makers, researchers, students, professors and active citizens to explore the future as stakeholders who can identify actions to be taken today to avoid feared consequences and achieve desired societies. IAF is seeking submissions of scenarios that place poor communities in the center of concern and that look out to the year 2039. Scenarios that are submitted to IAF will be posted on IAF's website, and those judged most worthy will be awarded a cash prize.

THE FULL REPORT FROM THE MARCH 2009 MEETING IS AVAILABLE AT:
www.altfutures.org/pubs/propoor/Foresight_For_Smart_Globalization.pdf

What is the "aspirational futures" approach?

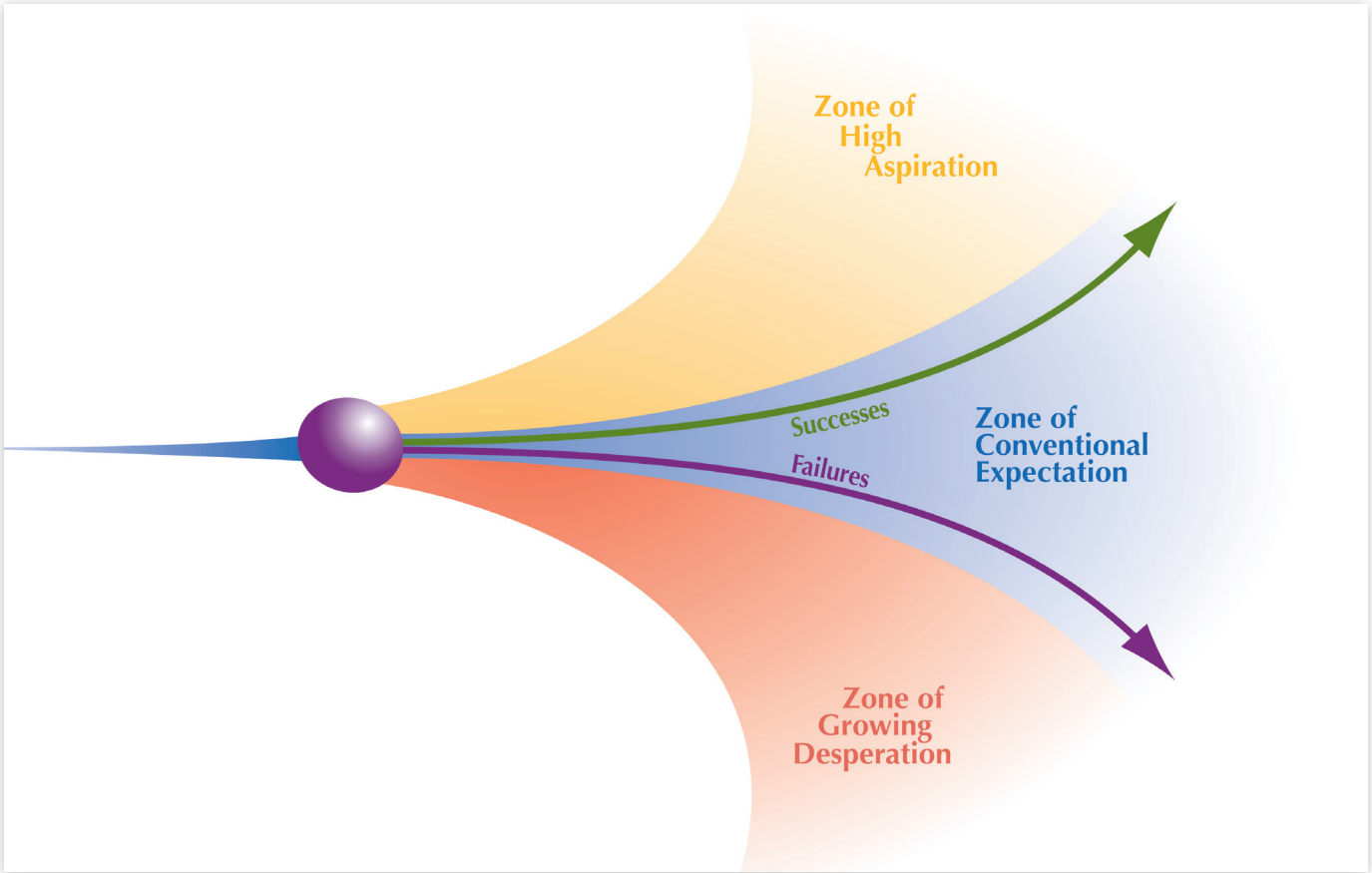
There are many different ways to create scenarios of the future; they vary both in the rigor of their research and in their underlying assumptions and objectives. Over more than three decades, IAF has developed an "aspirational futures" approach for scenario development that is particularly appropriate for pro-poor foresight. This approach develops scenarios in three different "zones" of the future.

- A "zone of conventional expectation" reflects an extrapolation of current trends. This is the future that many people expect to happen, since it draws upon trends with which they are already familiar.
- The "zone of growing desperation" proposes a problem-plagued future embodying the group's greatest fears and concerns. This zone is very important strategically, in part because in any scenario, somebody always does well.
- The "zone of high aspiration" describes a future characterized by surprising successes. Surprisingly, it is often more difficult to imagine a good future than a bad one, since our brains are hard-wired to give precedence to threats over aspirations. However, IAF has found that a well developed scenario in this zone can become a powerful force for change.

IAF typically develops four scenarios – one expectable, one challenging, and two visionary. Psychology tells us that humans have a strong tendency to spend more time thinking about potential challenges than they do about potential opportunities – that is, the bad tends to outweigh the good. Having an additional visionary scenario ensures that the process is biased toward a wide range of opportunities that could emerge.

Charting two alternative paths to visionary success creates a bias toward the wide range of opportunities that could emerge.

IAF"S ASPIRATIONAL FUTURES APPROACH DELIBERATELY EXPLORES EXPECTABLE, CHALLENGING, AND VISIONARY FUTURES.



2. How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit will help communities, countries, and regions develop scenarios that explore the expectable, challenging, and visionary scenarios that they should consider when planning for an uncertain future.

Purpose of the toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to help you develop a set of scenarios for the future of your community, country, or region that put poor populations at the center of concern. While scenarios can be developed for any time horizon, this toolkit is designed to produce scenarios for the year 2039 – 30 years after the meeting on pro-poor foresight held by IAF and the Rockefeller Foundation. This is the date to be used for scenarios being submitted to the Award Competition (see next page).

Scenario process

Scenarios can be developed in a number of ways. In some cases, a small group may decide to develop a set of scenarios, working together to develop forecasts and to combine these forecasts into complete scenarios for the future. Larger groups may hold a workshop to collect input and develop scenarios using a more structured format. One person may also decide to develop a set of scenarios, perhaps to help in making a decision that is important to him or herself personally. This scenario toolkit has been designed for use in any of these contexts, but is based on a one-day scenario workshop, which would be the most structured of the approaches listed above. Groups and individuals who would like to use a different process can follow the same basic structure but according to their own schedule.

Scenario format

Each scenario should tell a story. Most importantly, it should be written from the perspective of someone living in the year 2039. Each scenario should be roughly 2-3 pages in length and should describe what the world looks like in 2039, as well as how that scenario came to pass. IAF suggests the following format:

- In the 1st paragraph, make clear that the year is 2039 and describe what life is like – in particular for the poor – in your community, country, or region. How do people interact, how do they get the things they need, what are the most important issues of the day?
- In the 2nd paragraph, look back and describe the year 2011 from the perspective of the people living in 2039. How do people in 2039 think about life in 2011? What has changed? What has stayed the same? Do they feel like life has gotten better, worse, neither?
- In the next 5 or 6 paragraphs, describe the process by which the world moved from the situation you have described in 2011 to the situation you have described in 2039. What were the most important trends or drivers that produced this outcome? Did change come quickly or gradually? Were there any major events, advances, or disruptions?
- In the closing paragraph, summarize how the key forces have changed the world since the year 2011. Also, look ahead to the future beyond 2039. What are people concerned about, and where do you expect the world to go from here?

Characteristics of a Good Scenario

A good scenario captures a believable future and presents it in a way that is understandable and meaningful for people who read it. Beyond that, the characteristics of a good scenario will vary depending on the zone in which the scenario is located.

- A good "expectable" scenario will be sufficiently familiar that people who read it will recognize the future it describes as an extrapolation of trends with which they are already familiar. While a great deal of change is no doubt expectable within the next three decades, this scenario should be more expectable than surprising to readers.
- A good "challenging" scenario describes a future that is believably worse than the present without being so overwhelmingly bad that the reader is likely to dismiss it as unlikely. Readers should feel uncomfortable about the real potential of problems getting worse without feeling despair that nothing can be done.
- A good "visionary" scenario should be surprisingly, yet believably, successful in addressing the problems that presently appear most difficult without offering solutions that are fantastical. Readers should feel challenged by the possibility of great success and sobered by the recognition that it can only come from great effort and some luck.

AWARD COMPETITION

IAF invites policy-makers, researchers, students, professors and active citizens to use this toolkit to explore alternative scenarios of the year 2039 in order to identify actions that can be taken today to avoid feared consequences and to achieve desired outcomes. IAF is offering awards for the best pro-poor scenarios developed around the world. It is anticipated that groups will use this toolkit to develop their scenarios, but they are welcome to use other materials or approaches instead if they so prefer. Scenario submissions must be received by Jonathan Peck (jpeck@altfutures.org) no later than April 30, 2011. Submitted scenarios will be published by IAF, and those judged most commendable will be awarded a cash prize of up to $5,000, as determined by an international panel of judges from both the futures and development communities.

To be eligible for an award, submitted scenarios must:

- Place poor populations at the center of concern. That is, the scenarios must be well developed based on forecasts that would be important to the future of the global poor.
- Present at least three different scenarios for the future.
- Connect compelling and plausible images of the future with present realities to clarify decisions and provide meaningful recommendations for action.
- Include contact information for all co-authors and list all participants.
- Special consideration will be given to scenarios that have engaged or included poor or marginalized populations in their development.

3. Materials for 1-Day Workshop

This agenda has been developed for a workshop with 10-40 participants. An optimal number of participants would be 12-16. Smaller groups may follow the same basic process, but a less formal setting may be appropriate.

Objectives

- Create a set of pro-poor scenarios representing alternative views of the future.
- Encourage the active participation of poor and marginalized populations.
- Develop specific recommendations that could be implemented to create a better future.
- Form networks of people who can use foresight on a continuous basis.

Roles

- Organizer – Recruits participants and provides overall management of the process.
- Facilitator – Leads the discussion and ensures that all participants contribute to the scenarios.
- Participants – Attend the workshop and contribute to the scenarios.
- Reporter(s) – Take notes during the workshop and, if assigned, draft the scenarios.

AGENDA

At least 3 days before the workshop

Organizer distributes Global Forecasts (see appendix) to all participants. These forecasts should be read by all participants in advance.

On the day of the workshop

9:00 Welcome and Orientation – Organizer welcomes participants, and Facilitator explains objectives and reviews the agenda. If appropriate, Facilitator then asks participants to introduce themselves.

9:30 Forecast Explanation – Facilitator explains the process of creating forecasts in each of the three "zones" – e.g., expectable, challenging, and visionary. Using the driver list in the Participant Guide as a reference, Facilitator leads a brainstorm to identify key drivers that will shape the future of the community, country, or region. Participants will decide on 8 drivers to forecast. Facilitator then divides participants into 4 teams, and assigns 2 drivers to each team.

9:45 Forecast Development (See Participant Guide)

10:30 Break

10:45 Forecast Team Presentations (See Participant Guide)

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Scenario Explanation – Facilitator explains the process of combining the forecasts of different drivers to create scenarios in the three "zones."

1:45 Scenario Development (See Participant Guide)

3:15 Break

3:30 Scenario Presentation – Each Scenario Team presents their scenarios for discussion.

5:00 Strategy Recommendations (See Participant Guide)

5:30 Next Steps – Facilitator assigns responsibility for finalizing the scenarios and submitting them to IAF. Facilitator leads a discussion of how the scenarios can be used in planning and which of the individual recommendations should be pursued immediately. Recorder writes down the actions to be taken and the names of the people responsible.

6:00 Adjourn – Organizer thanks participants for their efforts and adjourns the workshop.

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Driver Brainstorm

1. Participants review the potential drivers listed below and select those that are relevant to the community, country, or region for which scenarios are being developed. Participants may also provide other drivers not listed here that may be appropriate.

Climate	Local customs	Manufacturing
Cultural identity	Religious practice	Remittances
Diaspora engagement	Intellectual property	Aid effectiveness
Natural disasters	Commodity markets	Family planning
Development ethics	Political economy	Foreign aid and investment
Food security	Communications	Outsourcing
Civil society	Infectious disease	Transportation
Evaluation	Chronic disease	Trade agreements
NGOs	Generational differences	Political rights
Health care	Gender equality	Human rights
Local government	Working conditions	Military forces
Corruption	Maternal health	Crop innovations
Water security	Violence, war, genocide	Fisheries
Pandemics	Literacy	Technology
Migration	Agricultural practices	Energy & resources
Family structure	Education	Service economy

2. Facilitator leads a brief (15-minute) discussion to identify potential drivers, and then holds a vote to select the eight drivers for which forecasts will be developed.

3. Facilitator then divides participants into four forecast teams and assigns two of the chosen forecasts to each of the four teams.

Forecast Development

1. Each team chooses a team facilitator (to lead the discussion and ensure everyone has a chance to contribute), a team recorder (to take notes), and a team spokesperson (to report the team's forecasts to the full group).

2. The team reviews the Global Forecasts provided in the appendix.

3. The team then develops community-specific forecasts for the two drivers assigned by Facilitator. For each driver, the team discusses how that driver would evolve between now and the year 2039 in each of the three "zones" – expectable, challenging, and visionary. Thus, the discussion should yield three distinct forecasts for each driver. The team facilitator leads the discussion and the team recorder takes notes.

4. For each driver, the team summarizes their forecast for each "zone" in 2-3 sentences. During the Forecast Team Presentations, they will present these short forecasts to the full group.

Forecast Presentations

1. When called upon by Facilitator, each team's team spokesperson reports the team's three forecasts (expectable, challenging, and visionary) for one of their drivers. The team spokesperson may also briefly discuss the implications of each forecast for the community, country, or region. This presentation should take no more than 5 minutes. Participants should write down the forecasts that are presented on the attached forecast/scenario matrix sheets. Each participant should have three of these matrixes – one for each zone of the future. Participants will use these later during the scenario development process.

2. Facilitator then facilitates a 10-minute full group discussion of the forecasts that have been presented. Questions that Facilitator might ask include: (a) Are the forecasts plausible? (b) What else may need to be considered? (c) What other changes would result if this forecast occurred?

3. Facilitator then calls upon another team's spokesperson to present one of their drivers. This rotation continues until each team has presented both of its drivers.

Scenario Development

1. Facilitator divides participants into three groups. Each group will develop one scenario in one of the three zones – expectable, challenging, or visionary. If there are enough participants, Facilitator may form a fourth group to develop an additional visionary scenario.

Note: To ensure that the two visionary scenarios reflect distinct paths into the future, Facilitator should have the two teams developing these scenarios emphasize different types of change. For example, Facilitator could have the teams consider opposite ends of the following dichotomies:

- *Technological change / Social change*
- *External forces / Internal forces*
- *Steady improvement / Transformation following crisis*
- *Top-down / Bottom-up*

2. Each team selects a team facilitator to lead the discussion and a team reporter who will draft the scenario based on the team's discussion.

3. Team members review the forecasts for their zone that they have captured on their forecast/scenario matrixes during the forecast presentations.

4. The team discusses what the community, country, or region would look like if these forecasts occurred. The team facilitator may prompt this discussion by asking team members to identify the most significant change that occurred between the world of 2011 and the world described by the forecasts. By describing the future in which these forecasts have actually taken place, the team creates a scenario for the year 2039.

Note: One or more of the forecasts may not be consistent with the scenario that emerges from the team's discussion, in which case those forecasts can be adjusted to reflect the overall change taking place in the scenario.

5. Once they have described the year 2039, the group discusses how this future came to be. For example, the team may want to think about this in terms of the newspaper headlines they would expect to see between the years 2011 and 2039 as their scenario unfolds.

6. The reporter writes up the scenario following the scenario template provided below.

Note: For the Award Competition, it is expected that the final scenario will be 2-3 pages in length. However, a shorter scenario may suffice for the workshop itself.

7. The team decides on a name for the scenario. This is typically a short phrase (2 or 3 words) that captures the key change described by the scenario.

Note: If scenarios are being developed informally rather than as part of a workshop process, then the team should turn at this point to developing the other scenarios using the same steps. IAF typically begins with the expectable futures to establish a baseline of expectations, then describes the challenging scenario, and then describes the one or two visionary scenarios.

Strategy recommendations

1. Working individually, participants consider the implications of each scenario. For each scenario, each participant identifies two strategies that should be pursued today, given the assumption that that scenario will take place.

2. Addressing each scenario in turn, Facilitator leads a discussion of these strategies, giving participants a chance to share the strategies that they feel are the most promising.

3. Facilitator then leads a discussion of the strategies that have shown up several times during the discussion of the different scenarios. These strategies that would make sense in multiple scenarios are referred to as "robust strategies," since they are advisable across a range of potential outcomes.

Note: Recorder takes notes during both of these discussions in order to capture the strategy recommendations as well as any next steps that are decided upon to explore or implement them.

FORECAST/SCENARIO MATRIX

Scenario Name_____

☐ Expectable ☐ Challenging ☐ Visionary

Drivers	Forecasts

SCENARIO TEMPLATE

Scenario Name_____

☐ Expectable ☐ Challenging ☐ Visionary

¶1 Description of life in the year 2039

¶2 Description of life in the year 2011, looking back from 2039

¶3-8 Description of the changes that took place between 2011 and 2039

(SCENARIO TEMPLATE, continued)

¶9 Summary of key changes and looking forward beyond 2039

GLOBAL FORECASTS FOR 2039

Climate

Alpha

- Government efforts at controlling climate change prove only marginally effective, with negative consequences for many and benefits for few
- 2038: Another record year for storms, coastal flooding, drought and famine somewhat mitigated by government response
- Millions migrate away from flooded lowland regions; climate refugees become a global problem by 2020

Beta

- National economic concerns have stifled concerted government action to mitigate the effects of climate change
- Rising sea levels and intensifying storm patterns devastate coastal populations and leave many once populous areas uninhabitable
- The migration of millions of refugees fleeing disease, famine, and drought has created humanitarian disaster and stoked xenophobia in developed countries

Delta

- A concerted global response to climate change has improved environmental conditions and provided relief to the most affected populations
- Many countries use sophisticated models to anticipate the potential implications of new policies
- The shift towards a sustainable 21st century global economy has become a source of pride and celebration

Development Ethics

Alpha

- Western countries eliminate agricultural subsidies in 2023, allowing developing countries to compete in the world food market
- Growing corporate social responsibility improves standards of living for employees as policies are set by socially aware boards of directors
- Increased transparency allows donors to fight corruption in recipient countries and improve aid effectiveness

Beta

- Wealthy countries suffer from "aid fatigue" and shift resources from global humanitarian aid to address domestic problems
- Foundations and philanthropists work at cross-purposes as they pursue their own areas of interest with minimal coordination or cooperation
- Governments provide aid in order to obtain natural resources, forge military alliances, or open new markets for their own countries' exports

Delta

- Despite the tumultuous economic shifts that define the 21st century, people globally report being happier despite having less economic wealth
- Many in rich countries come to see that the rich cannot be truly healthy if they do not care for the poor
- "Development" is redefined as the design of economic, social, and spiritual environments to help each person achieve his or her optimum potential

Education

Alpha

- The education gap between men and women in developing countries has narrowed substantially through universal education
- Government subsidies for education have increased from 2011 levels, but due to the higher pay in other fields, a global shortage of educators persists
- Diversity increases in both the ends (job preparation, citizenship, culture) and the means (classroom, online, apprenticeship) of education

Beta

- Government support for education erodes as a growing number of repressive regimes see an educated population as a threat to their power
- Violence and banditry lead many parents to keep their children at home; literacy rates drop as a result in many developing countries
- Pay-for-access controls limit access to information in developing countries, making education more difficult

Delta

- Handheld devices, ubiquitous by 2015, are leveraged to create globally shared virtual spaces for cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual learning
- The global focus on education strengthens economies and supports efforts to maintain peace and stability
- Talented young people around the world are identified early in life, provided a world-class education, and groomed for positions of community leadership

GLOBAL FORECASTS FOR 2039

Political Economy

Alpha

- By 2039, a combination of FDI, remittances, and foreign aid have successfully integrated many countries into the global economy and reduced extreme poverty
- Nation-states remain the principal political entities in 2039, but policies are largely shaped by powerful multinational corporations and interest groups
- China, Brazil, and India lead the world in economic growth, despite also having the largest slums; growth in Japan, Europe, and the US has slowed as aging populations have produced and consumed less

Beta

- A series of recessions and monetary crises has led to widespread defaults and the erection of trade barriers around the world
- National interests dominate government agendas as countries compete for scarce resources and defend borders against incursion and migration
- The rise of China under authoritarian rule leads many populations to prefer autocracies that maintain order in the face of crisis

Delta

- While nation-states continue to provide important functions, much political and economic activity has shifted to the community level
- Communities interact with their counterparts around the world to share knowledge and collaborate on initiatives of widespread interest
- UN peacekeepers drawn from all member states enforce a widely recognized set of human rights

Technology

Alpha

- Robots, knowledge technologies, and automation have displaced large numbers of workers in manufacturing, agriculture, services, and knowledge work
- Real-time language translation becomes widely available by 2020, and facilitates travel, knowledge exchange, and neural development
- Molecular and nanotechnologies provide inexpensive means to reduce illness resulting from infectious diseases

Beta

- Robots and knowledge technologies are used for warfare and for the control of marginalized populations, who have minimal access to the technologies that shape their lives
- Advances in neuroscience and communications technologies widen the knowledge gap between those who can and cannot get access to these educational opportunities, especially in early life
- New "molecular miracles" provide expensive cures for a few, but are not widely available

Delta

- Technological diffusion is so rapid that beneficial innovations quickly become available to the majority of people who need them for work, health, and learning
- Nanotech-based products revolutionize key areas of life, including energy, agriculture, habitat, and health
- Mobile technology supports rapid innovation and transfer so that science and technology draw more participants from around the world as both producers and consumers

Energy & Resources

Alpha

- A growing percentage of electricity is provided by decentralized renewable technologies, decoupling energy from government control and increasing access to technology around the world
- Resource stresses in rapidly developing economies cause severe periodic shortages and dislocations that make many countries more vulnerable
- Natural gas and coal surpass oil-based energy, but carbon energy remains the dominant source of power

Beta

- Repeated global economic shocks stall the development of renewable energy sources; carbon-based fuels provide 90% of the world's energy
- People in poor communities rely on low-tech solutions such as windmills, coal, and animal husbandry for electricity, heat, and food
- Shortages of carbon, rare earth, and natural resources have prompted a series of regional wars for control of resource-rich countries

Delta

- Energy infrastructures around the world have shifted towards distributed energy networks and away from carbon-based fuels
- Energy-efficient recycling allows the "trash" of the past to be transformed into usable materials
- As the communications revolution has eliminated the need for paper, the forests of the world have begun to recover and have been protected as world heritage sites