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## Summit for the Future 2006

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**Organizer:** The Club of Amsterdam  
**Duration:** 2006 **Budget:** N/A **Time Horizon:** N/A

### Background

The 'Summit for the Future' is organized on an annual basis by The Club of Amsterdam. It brings together international Thought Leaders to discuss significant, global challenges and opportunities. In 2006 it focused on the subject of risk and the role of risk in society, innovation and global growth. Without risk taking there is no progress, no growth and no prosperity. The Summit provided an occasion to reflect upon the role of risk in enterprise and society, on how the global spectrum of risk is changing, and on the acquisition of new tools and thinking to harness risk as a force for growth in the future.

#### The Role Risk in Innovation

The Summit for the Future Report addresses a multitude of aspects and appreciations in a structure generating the ingredients of knowledge and transparency and identifying them as keys to a sustainable future.

The Summit itself has been structured in 5 **Knowledge (disciplinary) Streams:**

- Life Sciences,
- Media & Entertainment,
- Trade and Asian Leadership,
- Healthcare,

- Corporate Governance,

As well as 5 **Interdisciplinary Streams:**

- Innovation as Risk Taking,
- Knowledge based Risk Management,
- Values and Spirituality,
- Cross-Cultural Competence and
- Creative Leadership.

Participants look at the issue of risk through many different lenses and come to the summit with questions. Ample time is allowed for spontaneous inter-session discussion involving over 300 participants from more than 30 countries.

#### Building a Global Knowledge Network

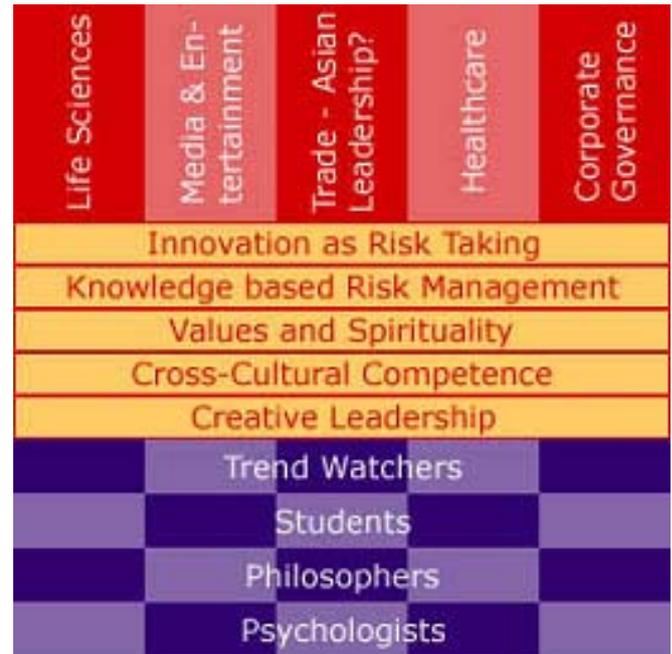
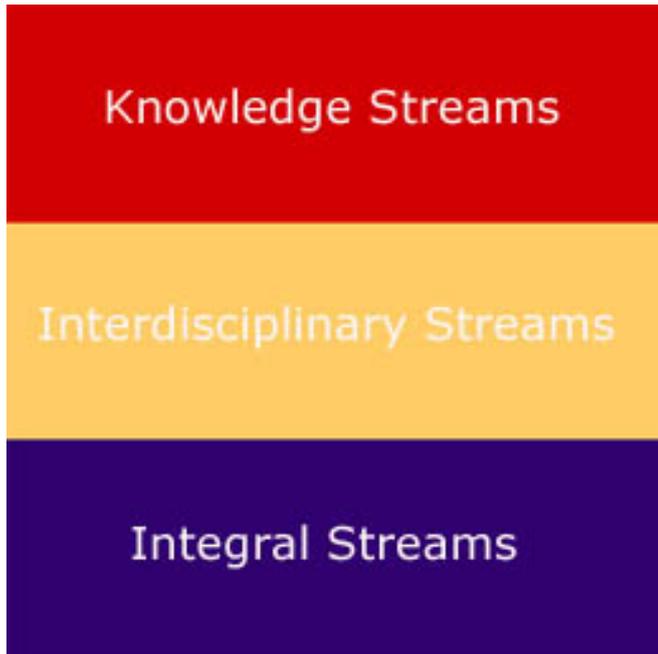
The Club of Amsterdam can be seen as an engine for shaping the future through networked learning. Bringing people together requires easy access. They must be true to their values to engage with the Club of Amsterdam. The circulation of knowledge moves people forward in their lives and careers. Recommendations from past participants makes the Think

Tank grow in membership, in knowledge and in added-value of the process. While examining essential issues related to industry, science, education, government and society the Club of Amsterdam is building a global knowledge network with leading institutes and specialists. The Summit for the Future allows findings from events and publishing throughout the previous year to come into focus.



## A Multi-Layered Approach

The Summit was organised around a number of 5 knowledge streams and 5 inter-disciplinary sessions. Each Knowledge Stream session involved the participation of a **Trend Watcher**, a **Student**, a **Philosopher** and a **Psychologist**, who acted as **Catalysts** for constructive debate. During the second part of the Summit each of these catalysts discussed their joint solutions in a final series of the **Integral Streams**.



This approach provided us with 36 distinct lens through which to explore the topic Risk:

- 5 Knowledge Streams,
- 5 Interdisciplinary Streams,
- 20 Catalysts,
- 5 Integral Streams and the
- General Overview.

## Dealing with the Residue of Risk

It is important to understand that there is a level of risk in any activity. Government and others may do everything they can to mitigate that risk, but it does not entirely go away. There is always an irreducible residue of risk that cannot be removed.

Life is safer than it has ever been but we seem less prepared to accept risk in anything we do. We need to make sensible decisions about what really is dangerous. We should form these by weighing up the facts rather than being susceptible to public hysteria. By making everything appear life threatening we are in danger of crying wolf once too often.

### Life Sciences: Networks of SMEs and Corporations

Towards the end of the 20th century we developed recombinant DNA technology. This gives us the ability to produce any protein we desire in any biological system we choose. So we have started to shift the production of proteins and other bio-derived products to more economical biological systems. Now, more than ever, it is important to develop a vision of how we want to collectively advance into the future as a spe-

cies. One way to increase our chances of success or survival is to change our behaviour, our way of thinking and to raise our awareness.

Large pharmaceutical companies have spread out their bio-pharmaceutical manufacturing and research arms to carry out R&D and sales functions in order to optimise their capacities, support internal activities and cater to external clients. Outsourcing is a not just a way of cutting costs, it is a strategic option for dealing with risk. It provides an opportunity to establish and foster long-term, strategic relationships with partner companies.

### Media & Entertainment: Wireless Markets in Asia as a Driver

In the high-tech and consumer world where product life spans are short and consumer interest is fickle, innovation may be the only effective strategy for long-term prosperity. It is not about the idea. It is about the proposition. Even if you have the best idea in the world, if it is not aligned with the market and consumer wishes, it will fail. This is hard to come to terms with if you come from an organisation that prizes ideas. Open standards act as bridges to inter-connect these islands into ar-

chipelagos of functionality which can equal big companies but which also leave room for small players to participate in the eco-system. This is the ideal model for internationalization and it is truly scalable one.

Along with the boom in mobile telephony around the world, a parallel wave of innovation in wireless corporate networking promises to usher in a new world of 'un-tethered knowledge workers' and 'flexible network organisations.' China is viewed as a powerhouse that will benefit Asia as a whole and have repercussions for wireless players around the world. The Asia-Pacific displays a broad diversity in terms of diffusion of wireless markets and industries, over and above the existing matrix of social, political and economic diversity.

### Trade and Asian Leadership

India requires a long-term view while for China a quicker reaction pattern is realistic. If we added up the total volume of world trade that can reasonably be described as partnership-enabled, a high percentage of it today would be accounted for by offshore outsourcing, companies transferring back-office functions to territories made attractive by lower labour costs.

Ships from China to the USA are full but empty in the other direction. The cost for a container from China is \$800 to \$1,400. The cost of a container to China is half of that. China has become the world's third largest merchandise trader after Germany and US. It is also gaining a substantial share in business services outsourcing. Due to the risks and challenges faced by the region, trade in Asia has yet to reach its full potential. Nevertheless the emerging Asian region is expected to grow 6.6% in 2006 according to ADB estimates. The recent acceleration in growth will propagate further restructuring and reforms. These will create rich opportunities accelerated trade growth in the region. In order to boost growth momentum, Asia has to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to manage the risks prevailing in the region through economic cooperation amongst the Asian countries and through continued structural reforms within individual economies.

### Healthcare: Introducing the Individual Profile

Healthy survival has a lot to do with 'living up to your genes'. This means that there must be a certain degree of compatibility between life-style patterns 'enabled' by evolution and

those practiced by an individual. An assessment of key factors determining individual health can provide individual health-related risk profiles. An integrative physician would approach a patient and their individual situation without prejudice and without a specific preference for a healing method. 61% of those questioned said they would opt for a combination of Chinese and Western medicine. An understanding of the human condition that includes the biological, cognitive, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions forms the basis for all of these interventions. The mind-body model is a very old fashioned model that goes back to Descartes. We now know that this system also contains neural, hormonal and immune systems that work with or without our will. The struggle for a happy life has never been put so sharply in the centre of our emotional, psychological and bodily health and in the centre of power. Like Daedalus we tend to take risks when the possibilities of gains are high but at what cost?

### Corporate Governance: Moving towards Stronger Customer Integration

Dialogue is characterized by the postponing of judgment. Too often we offset communicating by starting with verdicts and not with open questions. Our world now is sufficiently in crisis that transparency in all endeavours is critical to survival. Evolution is better understood as the bio-geological process of the Earth as a whole and the changing patterns of species over time, both physiologically and behaviourally, within that larger context. Even the single nucleated cell - the only kind of cell other than bacteria - is now known to be a cooperative enterprise that has evolved from once hostile bacteria. Healthy, mature living systems are dynamically cooperative because every part or member at every level of organization is empowered to negotiate its self-interest within the whole.

Adherence to sound corporate governance is not only the onus of the owners of the company, or those who hold top managerial positions. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders. Customer expectations should not be compromised against adherence and both should be carefully integrated to create a transparent organization delivering customer value at all times.

Cooperation, collaboration and community empowerment are more efficient and effective ways of doing business than living in fear of drowning in a competitive race or wasting energy and resources on beating down the competition.

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## Seeing Risk as a Chance

### Healthcare

The prevailing approach is 'curing the disease'. Through a proactive approach to health we need to move 'from curing to caring'. We need to look beyond the body to look at the being, to go from a fragmented view of healthcare to a more inte-

grated view of the individual that combines the physical with the psychological, mental and emotional health of the patient.

### Innovation Experience

We had discussions on entrepreneurship and innovation. These are a part of the human experience everywhere in the world. People have needs, and some of those are the need to plan, to care for families, to build, to construct and to change the world. Our most basic biology demonstrates the fact that

we are driven to embrace change, and that we are vectors and factors of change. This is how we anticipate the world's development. The downside of our investment is that we fight these changes as if they were dangerous risks.

### The Politics of Fear

There is a 'politics of fear' associated with risk or at least the perception of risk enables a politics of fear. People manipulate people. Communication is a form of manipulation, and one of the things we do is invite force. The way that we propagate politics of fear to influence how people behave is a form of violence. We need to understand what is real in terms of our perception of risk - risks to business, risks to the environment, risks to the planet, risks to ourselves.

### Money

Money is not a map of the world, but it is certainly a partial one. And if it is the only one we use we will not navigate the landscape of risk very well. The idea is to move beyond money towards something that is more value-based but includes money. After all money is one of the most powerful tools ever invented. It is one of the most powerful causes for change in the world ... but so is communication and so is knowledge!

### Media

Media and entertainment drive communication, connectivity, and the diffusion of knowledge. They create new forms of economic activity. Peer to Peer, sharing and Open Source are already movements that have evolved away from a purely money-driven society towards a broader, more value-based economy. This diversification away from money to a broader palette of values is a form of risk mitigation.

### The System

Another thread that ran through the meeting was the whole idea of systems. It is so easy to blame 'the system' and so hard to change it. If you feel the need to blame, you can instead look at the system and recognize that part of the way the world is today is in the system, so to speak. But you mustn't forget that it does come down to individuals. Individuals matter and individuals can make a difference. But they must want to make a difference. They need to know that they matter. They need to give themselves the freedom to participate in the world in that way.

There is a movement away from the individual to the system which has led to a range of wonderful emerging ideas about collective being, a collective consciousness, collective intelligence, and the idea that a system made up of individuals is an independent form of life. This emerging collective consciousness is a very positive image, the idea that we are part of a system, but that that decisions do come down to individuals and they can make a difference.

In many parts of the world people have generally become more affluent, educated and free. Leadership and governance systems are changing. Nowadays we all are leaders in some way. Our attitudes to governance and leadership change the way people lead. This is linked to the notation of responsibility and attitude to risk. Rather than seeing risk as something evil, unnecessary, beyond our control and a basis for a politics of fear, we can see it as corresponding to an opportunity, see it as a challenge, as a force for good. Instead of thinking in terms of problems, we have to learn to give ourselves the freedom to act and do something about it, to proactively live with risk and with the consequences.

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## Sources and References

The Club of Amsterdam website is at [www.clubofamsterdam.com](http://www.clubofamsterdam.com)

The report for the Summit for the Future 2006 can be found at [www.clubofamsterdam.com/event.asp?contentid=625&catid=85](http://www.clubofamsterdam.com/event.asp?contentid=625&catid=85)

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**About the EFMN:** Policy Professionals dealing with RTD, Innovation and Economic Development increasingly recognize a need to base decisions on broadly based participative processes of deliberation and consultation with stakeholders. One of the most important tools they apply is FORESIGHT. The EFMN or European Foresight Monitoring Network supports policy professionals by monitoring and analyzing Foresight activities in the European Union, its neighbours and the world. The EFMN helps those involved in policy development to stay up to date on current practice in Foresight. It helps them to tap into a network of know-how and experience on issues related to the day to day design, management and execution of Foresight and Foresight related processes.