

## Building Hopeful Futures – Implementing the Declaration on Future Generations

### 5. The DFG and the UN80 Initiative

**Date:** Friday, 18th July 2025

**Location:** Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN + Hybrid

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The Dialogue Session on “The DFG and the UN80 Initiative” was the fifth of a series of dialogues titled “The DFG Dialogue Series.” The series is a strategic initiative led by the **Permanent Missions of Kenya, Jamaica, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the School of International Futures (SOIF)**. The dialogues are designed to move from **words to action** on the principles enshrined in the Declaration on Future Generations (DFG), and to inspire and unlock global action through **showcasing real-life innovations from different countries**. By convening policymakers, civil society representatives, and experts, these dialogues will address multilateral opportunities for DFG implementation and the adoption of long-term governance strategies within key global policy discussions across geographic and thematic areas.

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***“We need to invest in the things that we need to have as a priority in the future... [it's] a very clear metric of commitment in respect of future generations.”***

***- Guy Ryder, UN Under Secretary General for Policy***



## Context

The UN80 Initiative, which was announced in March 2025 by the Secretary-General, H.E. António Guterres, is a system-wide process of the UN which seeks to streamline operations, improve the organization's effectiveness and reaffirm the UN's role and relevance in a rapidly changing world.

As the UN considers this comprehensive process, the future of multilateralism and its role in it through the UN80 Initiative, an important opportunity is presented for the UN and Member States to embrace the principles of the Declaration on Future Generations to be more anticipatory, adaptive and responsive by leveraging science, data, statistics and strategic foresight for long-term planning; using forward-looking, evidence-based impact assessments and anticipatory risk analyses; investing in capacity to better prepare for and respond to future global shocks, crises and challenges; using evidence-based planning and foresight to avoid and mitigate risks; building intergenerational solidarity and dialogue; and promoting a whole-of-society approach.

The dialogue event was the first place to bring together these two agendas in a thoughtful way, with powerful interventions by a range of UN Permanent Missions, as well as key actors within the UN system. It aimed to provide tangible insights on the foresight and future-oriented policymaking approaches of the DFG by exploring:

- What can we know by looking out at the rest of this century?
- What can we learn from countries and large organisations that have used foresight to navigate complex change?
- What approaches might the DFG encourage us to take in exploring options for system-wide review?

## Navigating the certainties and uncertainties of the future

Although the future is unknowable, trends and scenarios work can help us to explore the contours and uncertainties of the future landscape in a structured way. As the UN considers its role and the future of multilateralism, there is an **intrinsic value of collective strategic intelligence in building a common understanding of the future landscape across Member States and the UN system, and what cross-system principles and capabilities are needed**. What are the 3-4 scenarios one generation and beyond? What are the key drivers and what are the short-term and long-term implications? This collective view and lexicon is critical to UN Member-states and agencies' ability to examine the choices and challenges ahead, including in the interplay and trade-offs between the short- and long-term. A clear message surfaced that business as usual is not acceptable, and a visionary conception of the UN that confronts the future landscape requires courage and creativity to stress-test and explore against different scenarios - that put radically alternative possible futures on the table. There was an acknowledgement of the need to genuinely challenge assumptions and confront the realities of current geopolitical dynamics in terms of power, technology and demography instead of operating under assumptions of the past. Foresight resources, scenarios and models exist that can support this process.

## Narratives and stakeholder engagement

Participants also reflected on the Future Generations narrative as it relates to those served by the UN system. The UN should reflect the needs of those it serves and there are populations that need the UN more than others, especially as we look ahead to the demographic changes across continents like Africa and Asia. This surfaced an important point around the political and **citizen engagement and ensuring that the lived experiences that people are grappling with are reflected in the UN80 process**, which would also help to bolster the credibility of the process, as well as creating sense of common purpose, both within the UN, across and between Member States and at the citizen level. This should also be supported by a systemic stewardship approach to UN reforms - at regional, agency and country levels.

## Learning from practice

Speakers shared lessons learned from Singapore, Portugal, and UN and other multilateral organisations on how to integrate futures and foresight thinking into comprehensive reform processes, including through embedding in governance through strategic coordination, institutional resilience and stakeholder engagement.



They also highlighted:

- Reform efforts risk being **conservative and backward-looking** unless active foresight measures are used
- There is a need to be very clear about the pressures of today and the reality of the current situation, including confronting the scale of where power and decisions are being made
- There is value in **common purpose** and understanding of the environment as a way for bringing organisations and people with different levels of understanding to consolidate around a way forward
- This collective vision can be used as a common approach and umbrella – to unify across agencies and countries, which requires a common view to take forward coming from the centre
- There is a point where "handing off" of scenarios and collective views to specific agencies to prioritise and resource decisions and stress test is needed to develop delivery and policy specific decisions
- There is value in shared vocabulary and culture around collective understanding of why things need to change, what is coming ahead, and major certainties, uncertainties and opportunities

Furthermore, there was agreement that the UN80 initiative must integrate long-term thinking, focusing not only on institutional restructuring but also on realigning mandates, resource allocation, and decision-making toward future needs. Reform should be proactive, inclusive, and informed by data and foresight—not merely responsive to crises—in order to build the long-term capability to respond to crises that arise while continuing to navigate to the futures.

There was also an acknowledgement that growing systemic risks (like nuclear proliferation, climate tipping points, and social tensions) **require integrated responses** facilitated by foresight.



## Words to Action: How the Declaration on Future Generations can help unlock the UN80 Initiative

Proposals were made to ensure that the UN80 Initiative is aligned to the principles of the Declaration on Future Generations, including:

### 1. Operationalize the DFG across UN reform

There was a commitment to embed DFG principles into the UN80 Initiative and to use strategic foresight including scenarios to guide resource prioritization, mandate consolidation and institutional realignment. Using strategic foresight can also help to unlock creativity of specific ideas and solutions to challenges (examples were given around changing work patterns and collective intelligence ideas from RC networks, Foresight networks and Accelerator labs).

### 2. Review and hold UN80 proposals to account for how well they help to implement the commitments in the DFG and the Pact for the Future

There was a clear intent to review and stress test proposals for intergenerational fairness and resilience against a desired future and alternative scenarios of the UN for the future. There was also a specific commitment to review the UN80 proposals in September for alignment with the Pact for the Future and particularly the DFG commitments.

### 3. Commitment to institutional structures for future generations

There was a reaffirmation of the importance of establishing a Special Envoy for Future Generations and equipping their office with the authority and tools to influence UN-wide processes. There was also recognition of the need to invest in foresight units within agencies and country teams to support anticipatory governance and to ensure that the process does not damage the emergent capability that has grown recently and supports innovative future-facing resources many of whom have shared insights to this DFG dialogue and driven change in Member-states, e.g. Accelerator labs network.

## Representatives from the following were represented at the event:

Permanent Mission of Lithuania  
Permanent Mission of St Kitts and Nevis  
Permanent Mission of Austria  
Permanent Mission of Jamaica  
Permanent Mission of the Netherlands  
Permanent Mission of Kenya  
Permanent Mission of Austria  
Permanent Mission of El Salvador  
Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
Permanent Mission of the European Union  
Permanent Mission of France  
Permanent Mission of Italy  
Permanent Mission of Mozambique  
Permanent Mission of Portugal  
Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic  
Permanent Mission of France  
Permanent Mission of Malta  
Permanent Mission of Germany  
Permanent Mission of Mexico  
Permanent Mission of New Zealand  
Permanent Mission of Algeria  
Permanent Mission of Indonesia

Permanent Mission of Morocco  
Permanent Mission of Namibia  
Permanent Mission of Guatemala  
Permanent Mission of Israel  
Permanent Mission of Uruguay  
Permanent Mission of Hungary  
Permanent Mission of Egypt  
Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan  
Government of Finland  
UN Executive Office of the Secretary General  
UNDP  
UNESCO  
UNFPA  
UN University  
IDLO  
Coalition for the UN We Need  
International Organization of Youth  
UN Foundation  
Global Partnership for Education  
Baha'i International Community  
Project Starling  
Centre for Future Generations  
GIZ  
Kiplomacy  
RAKSHA

For further information on [in-country innovations, technical advice on national level mapping and implementation or opportunities for engagement](#), please contact:

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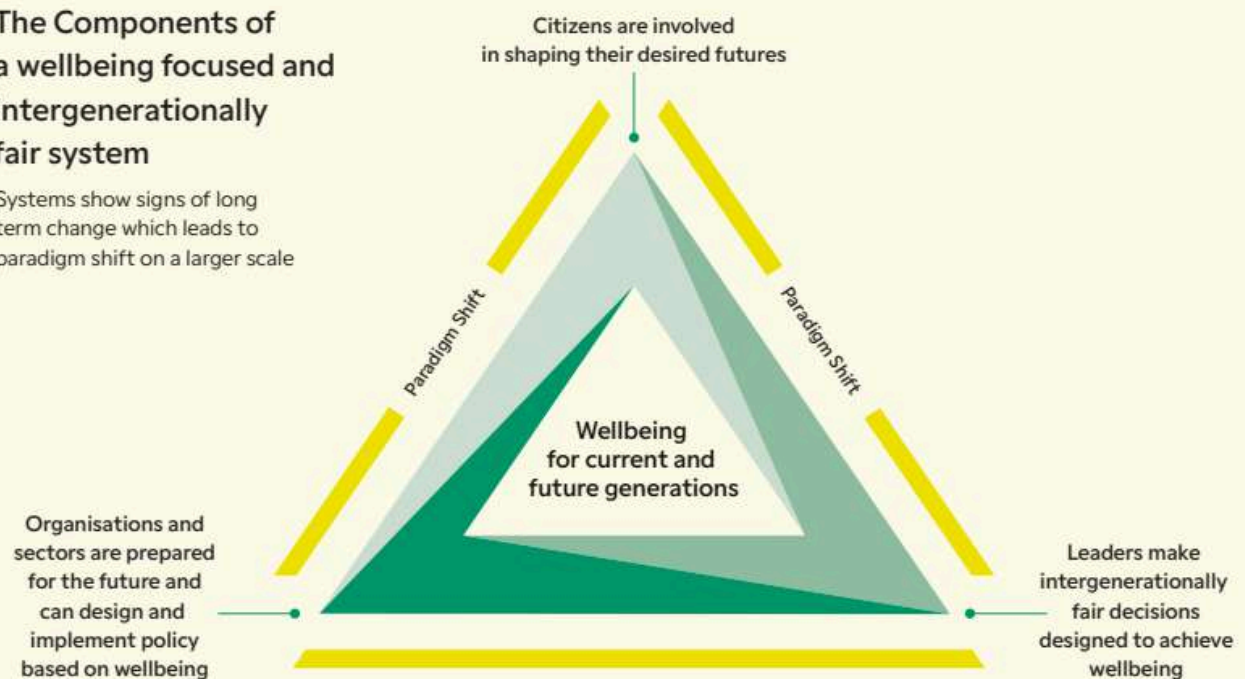


Annex 1. The Foresight Governance Prism, from the [Working for Current and Future Generations: Handbook on DFG Implementation](#) (SOIF, 2024).

Figure 1: The Foresight Governance Prism

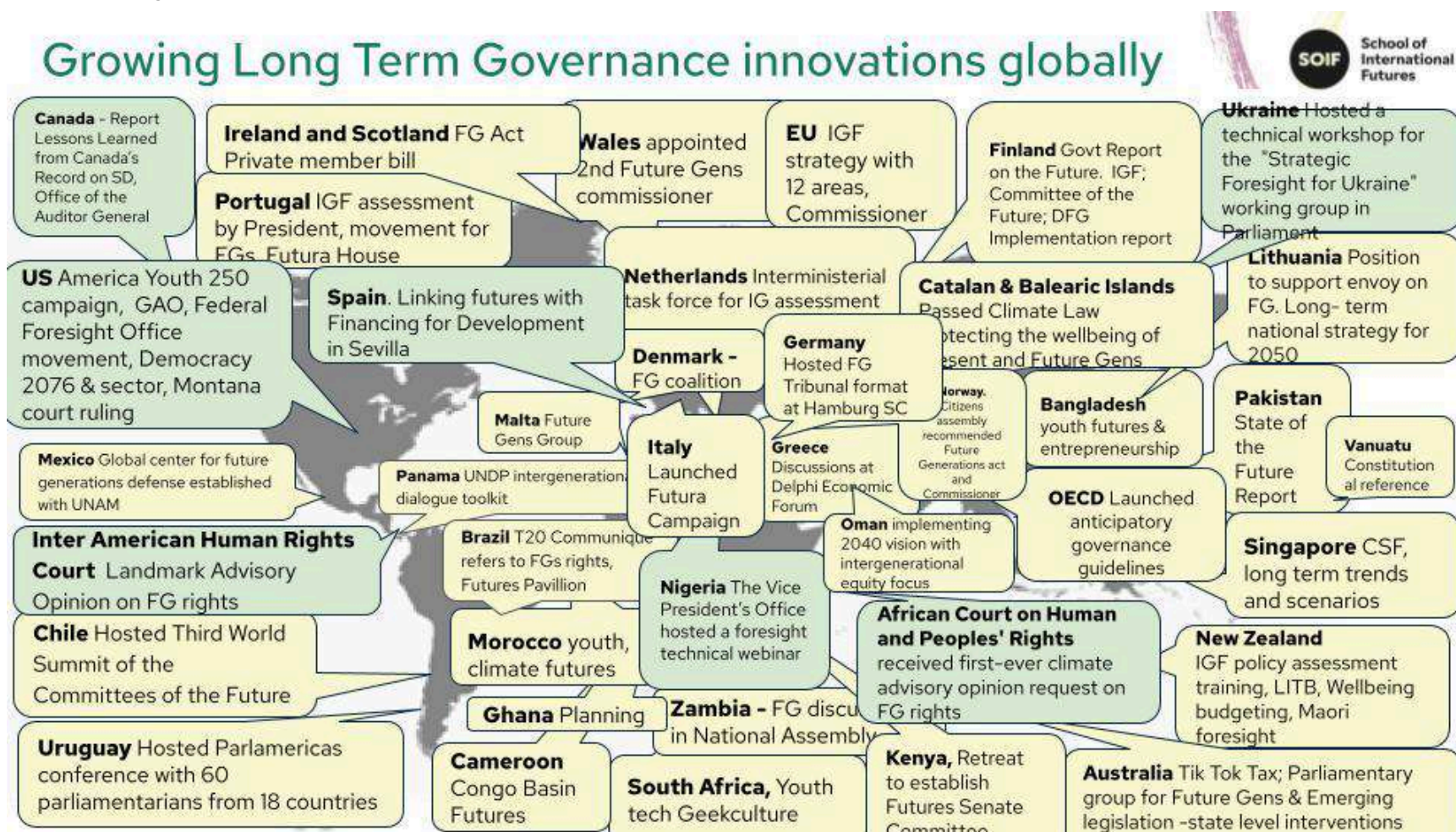
**The Components of  
a wellbeing focused and  
intergenerationally  
fair system**

Systems show signs of long  
term change which leads to  
paradigm shift on a larger scale





## Annex 2. Long-Term Governance Innovations Across the World





## Annex 3. Event agenda

# Agenda

### I. Opening Remarks

- ★ H.E. Ambassador Brian Wallace, Permanent Representative, Jamaica
- ★ H.E. Ambassador Ekitela Lokaale, Permanent Representative, Kenya
- ★ H.E. Ambassador Lise Gregoire-van Haaren, Permanent Representative, Kingdom of the Netherlands
- ★ Guy Ryder, Under Secretary General for Policy, EOSG

### II. Framing Remarks

- ★ Cat Zuzarte Tully, Managing Director, School of International Futures

### III. Speakers

- ★ What are the key global trends and uncertainties relevant to multilateral governance?
  - Owen Gaffney, Club of Rome
  - Peter Glenday, School of International Futures
- ★ What can Member States and the UN learn from previous reform and transformation endeavours that used foresight and futures approaches?
  - Cheryl Chung, Senior Director, Insights and Strategy, The Majority Trust
  - Margarida Mano, Vice-Reitora da Universidade Católica Portuguesa
  - Aarathi Krishnan, Founder & CEO, RAKSHA Intelligence Futures

### IV. Open Discussion and Summary

### V. Closing Remarks

