WORLD ACADEMY
OF ART & SCIENCE

EUROPEAN ACADEMY
OF SCIENCES AND ARTS

THE GLOBAL
ROUND TABLE

MONTENEGRIN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

APPROACHING 20?? YEAR

PODGORICA, MAY, 16–18, 2019

Despite continuous increase of life expectancies and improving level of quality of life, the modern world has generated the set of problems like: climate change, environmental destruction, financial crises, the widening gap between rich and poor, spreading insecurity, huge food waste, and many more, meaning problems of contemporary society multiplied by a big number. These challenges are too structural in nature, and too big for one country to handle. Even, it looks obvious that the 'western belief' that each generation will be an improvement on its predecessor, might no longer work. It seems that we are the first generations whose decisions will determine the future of human life on this planet.

To deal with the future is to deal with uncertainties. In the world everything undergoes change, often in unexpected and unforeseeable ways and speed. The human population has exploded in the past two centuries. Furthermore, India's population will overtake China's around 2020, and sub-Saharan Africa's will overtake India's by 2040. By 2100, there will be five sub-Saharan Africans on every European. Globally, the number of people living in urban areas will climb from 3.5 billion today to 6.3 billion by 2050. This rate of urbanization is equivalent to "the construction of a city of a million people every five days from now for the next 40 years". On top, consumption of resources per-person — especially in industrialized nations — has grown exponentially. As humans spread, there are less room or resources for other species. The extinction events will become more and more common. Habitat loss, pollution, global warming, overfishing and overhunting are connected to the human population explosion. All this might result in escalation of conflicts during this century, in the geopolitical instability, in widening of the gulf between the rich and

the poor, and, in particular, in international migration.

In recent decades, the world has experienced an unprecedented technological revolution, what for the consequence resulted in societies' changing in a very short period of time. Changes in technology are difficult to forecast. But, some technologies may speed things up far faster than current societies can handle. Information about alternative technologies that might be used is often difficult to foresee. From smart screens to smart suits, haptic wearables, and similar will, even, introduce a new form of intimacy in the digital realm. On top, currently, there isn't enough energy being extracted from known sources to sustain 10 billion people. Right now all modern technologies are designed to bring the world to you (phone, radio, television, internet). If those trends continue AI will soon be everywhere. All of these new technologies threaten, literally, to make us more transhumant.

Furthermore, climate change is an inevitable part of our future. The challenge now is how to slow down the progress of climate change and mitigate its effects. One of the ways we might do that is with smart technology.

All this resulted in humans have been aware for decades that the trajectory of their development needs to change. The question is: to what extent is the complexity of the problems with which humanity is faced is greater than those which its organizational and intellectual resources are capable of handling?

The contemporary institutions tend to be independent, fragmented, and working to relatively narrow mandates with closed decision processes. Those responsible for managing natural resources and protecting the environment have, institutionally, separated from those responsible for managing the economy. Thus, there are no easy answers to dealing with coming uncertainties. Ecosystems and societies are not static. Obviously, the real world, interlocked economically and environmentally, will not change; thus, the policies and institutions concerned must. These changes may be slow and gradual, but they may, also, be dramatic and swift.

Although some people claim that it is not possible to predict the future, nor even the probabilities of different futures, this does not mean that nothing should be done. Those who make decisions should be aware of potential uncertainties, and should try to increase understanding of them such to cope with them.

Some of topics to be discussed in light of coming uncertainties:

- Government accountability and transparency / corruption
- Limits of development
- Possible conflicts (geopolitical, religious, economic...)
- Technology and society
- Energy and society
- Population and urbanization
- Economy and progress, lack of economic opportunity and unemployment
- Evolution of social media
- Restrictions of AI
- Safety / security / well-being, international terrorism and migration
- Climate change, poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water...

Important dates:

- 30 Sept. 2018   The first call for papers
- 31 Dec. 2018   Submitting of the abstracts (250 words)
- 31 Jan. 2019   Approval of abstracts
- 15 May 2019   Full papers
- 16-17 May 2019   The conference
- 18 May   Social day (excursion)

The hotel, local transport, and meals are paid for participants with paper.

Contact:

Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts
R. Stijovica 5, 81000 Podgorica, Montenegro
Tel: +382 20 655 450; fax: +382 20 655 451
e-mail: nikolinac@canu.ac.me; ohn@canu.ac.me