

Critical global risks: Geopolitical turbulence ahead

World: *The Global Risks Report 2020*, developed with the support of the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Advisory Board, warns that geopolitical turbulence and the retreat from multilateralism threatens everyone's ability to tackle shared, critical global risks.

Without urgent attention to repairing societal divisions and driving sustainable economic growth, leaders cannot systemically address threats like the climate or biodiversity crises.

The report forecasts a year of increased domestic and international divisions and economic slowdown. Geopolitical turbulence is propelling us towards an 'unsettled' unilateral world of great power rivalries at a time when business and government leaders must focus urgently on working together to tackle shared risks.

More than 750 global experts and decision-makers were asked to rank their biggest concerns in terms of likelihood and impact and 78 per cent said they expect 'economic confrontations' and 'domestic political polarisation' to rise in 2020.

This would prove catastrophic, particularly for addressing urgent challenges like the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and record decline in species. The report, produced in partnership with Marsh & McLennan and Zurich Insurance Group, says policymakers must match targets for protecting the Earth with ones for boosting economies – and for companies to avoid the risks of potentially disastrous future losses by adjusting to science-based targets.

For the first time in the survey's ten-year outlook, the top five global risks in terms of

likelihood are all environmental. The report sounds the alarm on: Extreme weather events; failure of climate-change mitigation and adaptation by governments and businesses; human-made environmental damage and disasters, including environmental crime; major biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse (terrestrial or marine); and major natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and geomagnetic storms.

Systems-level thinking is required to confront looming geopolitical and environmental risks and threats that may otherwise fall under the radar, says the report, which this year, focuses explicitly on impacts from rising inequality, gaps in technology governance and health systems under pressure.

■ www.weforum.org



Schistocerca gregaria – the Desert Locust – is threatening food security in the Horn of Africa

Avalon | Alamy (stock photo)

Locust crisis

Horn of Africa: As the *CRJ* went to press, the FAO described the swarms of Desert Locusts as: "Extremely alarming," adding that they had also invaded the Persian Gulf.

The outbreak is the worst to strike Ethiopia and Somalia for 25 years and the worst infestation that Kenya has experienced in 70 years. The Desert Locust is said to be the most destructive migratory plant pest in the world – a small swarm of one square kilometre can eat the same amount of food as 35,000 people in one day.

Pasture and croplands have suffered in East Africa and there are potentially severe consequences for the region where

millions rely on agriculture and livestock.

The countries affected include: Kenya; Ethiopia; Somalia; Uganda; South Sudan; and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. FAO's Desert Locust Watch says that Djibouti and Eritrea are also affected.

Several days of strong winds created the right conditions for dense, immature swarms to reach the Persian Gulf, arriving in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the south-west coast of Iran. Saudi Arabia and Yemen have also seen swarms.

The FAO is preparing to take action to provide growers with farming packages, veterinary care for livestock, and cash to families who have lost their crops so that they can purchase food.

Behavioural adaptation

USA: Authors from Ohio State University argue that society should focus less on how individuals respond to climate issues like flooding and wildfires and instead work out what it takes to inspire collective action that will protect humans from climate catastrophes on a much grander scale.

They analysed studies on behavioural adaptation to climate change, finding that most have emphasised the psychology behind individual coping strategies in the face of isolated hazards, and came from the point of view of a single household managing its own risk.

What is needed, they propose, is systems-level thinking about what is truly adaptive for society, and research on the dynamics that lead people to change entire systems through transformational actions and on barriers that keep people from embracing transformative efforts.

Robyn Wilson, lead author and a professor of risk analysis and decision science in Ohio State's School of Environment and Natural Resources, noted: "Thinking holistically is part of what transformation research is all about. We can't all be running around doing our own thing individually. We need to think beyond the selfish individual who says, 'What do I need to do to be better off?'"

Wilson said there was a time when researchers avoided studying adaptation for fear it would redirect attention and efforts away from mitigation. "Eventually, there was a recognition that we have to do both. We don't really have a choice," she added.

■ *The research review is published in the journal Nature Climate Change. More details from <http://news.osu.edu>*

TURKEY: Three people died and 179 were injured after a Boeing 737-800 operated by Pegasus Airlines slid off the runway while landing at Istanbul's Sabiha Gökçen International Airport. The aircraft was completely destroyed in the first fatal accident in the airline's history. The incident took place less than a month after another Pegasus flight overran the runway at the same airport.

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Twenty year anniversary

Kosovo: In September 2019 former members of the UN Fire Rescue returned to Kosovo, where they had served 20 years earlier, writes Bob Triozzi.

In July 1999 I was sent to Kosovo by the UN World Food Programme to conduct fire prevention inspections for the offices, warehouses and residences that the UN agency would utilise as part of the Interim Government of the Serbian Province. Following inspections I evaluated the local fire service capabilities.

I approached Bernard Kouchner, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG) Kofi Annan and UN-appointed Governor of Kosovo, with a plan to reorganise the Kosovo Fire Service.

Eventually, firefighters from eight countries on three continents became part of UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Fire Rescue. They transformed a group of individuals with no training or uniforms, around 15 broken vehicles and a dozen shacks that served as fire stations, into a service of 500 professional, uniformed firefighters, with 75 pieces of equipment from 25 fire stations.

We started with reorganising registration plates for fire vehicles. In 2000 I was part of the committee to eliminate the old emergency telephone numbers and

institute the 112 emergency number. My idea was to have all the fire service registration plates begin with the number 112 in red; normal Kosovo plates were white with black characters. In this way, the vehicle would be identified as belonging to the fire service and it would serve as a reminder of the new number.

Another innovation was to transform the Police Academy into a Public Safety Academy. The idea was to create a professional training environment where those coming into the police and fire services would form friendships and personal rapport from the very beginning of their careers. Hopefully, this would spill over into the street when the two services would be operating together at the same emergencies. Police officers and firefighters are still trained at the same facility today.



The 20-year reunion was held last September with members from Italy, Canada, Spain and Germany

Robert Triozzi

in brief

World: The International Energy Agency says that global energy-related CO₂ emissions plateaued in 2019 at around 33 gigatons, following two years of increases. This was mainly from a sharp decline in CO₂ emissions from the power sector in advanced economies, thanks to the expanding role of renewable sources, fuel switching from coal to natural gas, and higher nuclear power output.

DRC: At least 22 people were killed in February amid rising violence involving the army and separatist groups. Fourteen children were said to have died.

Germany: Fifty-two people, including 18 children, were injured by a 29-year-old driver ramming his car into a procession in the town of Volkmarshausen. The incident occurred a few days after a gunman killed nine people with migrant backgrounds in Hanau.

Niger: At least 20 people, many of them women and children, died in a stampede while queuing for food and money in south-eastern Niger. Around 120,000 people displaced by Boko Haram violence in Nigeria live in the region.

Australia: The Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology said that 2019 was the country's warmest year on record, with the annual national mean temperature 1.52°C above average. Both mean annual maximum and minimum temperatures were above average for all States and the Northern Territory. "This was one of the strongest positive Indian Dipole events on record," said a bureau spokesperson.

PEOPLE

It's been an exciting few months at CRJ, and here's the official announcement of new people who have joined our Advisory Panel recently. Their extensive biographies are testimony to their wide and impressive experience – read more about them on our website. And a warm welcome to all of them!



PAOLO GARONNA is Professor of Political Economy at the LUISS Guido Carli University of Rome, Italy. He is also Secretary General of the Italian Banking, Insurance and Finance Federation. Professor Garonna was previously Director General of the Italian National Institute of

Statistics, and Deputy Director for Labour, Social Affairs and Education at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris, and became Deputy Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva. He has published books and essays on applied economics, statistics and finance.



ERIC J MCNULTY holds an appointment as Associate Director and Program Faculty at the National Preparedness Leadership Initiative (NPLI) at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and as an Instructor at the Harvard School of Public Health in the USA. His work

focuses on leadership in high stakes, high stress situations. Eric also works at the Harvard Chan School and teaches in executive education programmes at numerous universities around the US. He is the co-author of the book, You're It: Crisis, Change, and How to Lead When it Matters Most.



AMY POPE is a Partner at Schillings, where she advises individual and corporate clients on sensitive, complex and high profile matters. A seasoned courtroom lawyer, she is a skilled tactician and strategist. Pope was US Deputy Homeland Security Advisor to President Barack Obama,

where she led on challenges such as managing cyberattacks, terrorist threats, natural hazards, violent extremism, border security threats and disease outbreaks. Before joining the White House, she served as a senior official in the Criminal Division and as a trial attorney at the US Department of Justice.



KATE RAWLINS is Associate Director, Digital Capability at Helpful Digital, where she prepares and delivers crisis simulation exercises and training courses. She is a former journalist and government press officer and has qualifications in criminology. She has worked in the fields

of crisis communication co-ordination, community and stakeholder relations, media advisory and corporate social media management. Kate delivers training and simulations for clients such as Coca Cola and ExxonMobil. Her recent projects include helping to provide the relevant people with critical information in the Grenfell Fire Response (UK).



MLADEN VRATONJIĆ is Chairman of the Board and Director at the Critical Communications Association (TCCA). With over 35 years of experience in telecommunications and more than 15 years in public safety, he currently holds the position of Vice President of

European Emergency Number Association (EENA). Previously, he was Public Safety Specialist at Motorola Solutions and Head of Telecommunications directorate of the MOI, Republic of Serbia. Mladen has led large-scale projects including the 'Public Safety TETRA Network' in Serbia.

Civilian casualties

Nigeria: The Boko Haram sect is said to be responsible for the murder of more than 30 travellers along a highway outside the town of Auno in Borno in February, 2020.

The passengers were stranded for the night in their cars on the stretch of road near a military checkpoint – mounted because of a curfew – when the attack was started by the insurgents. They set fire to several trucks and cars, according to reports.

Civilians who tried to escape through the surrounding bushes were shot

and several others were abducted.

The leader of the military operation against Boko Haram, General Olusegun Adeniyi, expressed “profound sadness” over the attack, but he emphasised that the military needed the highway closed at night for its counterinsurgency campaign.

Over the past decade, Borno in north-eastern Nigeria has been the epicentre of the Boko Haram and Islamic State of West Africa Province insurgency. The terrorists have killed thousands, displaced millions and abducted hundreds since 2009.

Living in a trust paradox

World: The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer reveals that despite a strong global economy and near full employment, a majority of respondents in every developed market do not believe they will be better off in five years' time, and 56 per cent believe that capitalism in its current form is now doing more harm than good in the world.

“We are living in a trust paradox,” said Richard Edelman, CEO of Edelman. “Since we began measuring trust 20 years ago, economic growth has fostered rising trust. This continues in Asia and the Middle East, but not in developed markets, where national income inequality is now the more important factor. Fears are stifling hope, and long-held assumptions about hard work leading to upward mobility are now invalid.”

The concerns are wide-ranging and deep. Most employees globally (83 per cent) are worried about job loss owing to automation, a looming recession, lack of training, cheaper foreign competition, immigration and the gig economy. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents worry about losing the respect and dignity they once enjoyed in their country. Nearly two in three feel the pace of technological change is too fast. And there is no agreed-upon truth; 76 per cent say they worry about fake news being used as a weapon.

Business (58 per cent) is the most trusted institution, taking the lead role in global governance.

“Business has leapt into the void left by populist and partisan government,” said Edelman. “It can no longer be business as usual, with an exclusive

focus on shareholder returns. With 73 per cent of employees saying they want the opportunity to change society, and nearly two-thirds of consumers identifying themselves as belief-driven buyers, CEOs understand that their mandate has changed.”

Ninety-two per cent of employees say CEOs should speak out on issues of the day, including retraining, the ethical use of technology and income inequality. Three-quarters of the general population believe CEOs should take the lead on change instead of waiting for government to impose it.

“People's expectations of institutions have led us to evolve our model for measuring trust,” said Edelman.

This year's results reveal that none of the four institutions is seen as both competent and ethical. Business ranks highest in competence, holding a massive 54-point edge over government as an institution that is good at what it does. NGOs lead on ethical behaviour over government and business. Government is perceived as both incompetent and unethical, but is trusted more than twice as much as business to protect the environment and close the income inequality gap. Media is also viewed as incompetent and unethical: a majority (57 per cent) don't believe the media does a good job of differentiating opinion and fact, but find it invaluable on covering news.

Said Antoine Harary, president of Edelman Intelligence: “Trust is undeniably linked to doing what is right. The battle for trust will be fought on the field of ethical behaviour.”

■ www.edelman.com

Fake news sparks violence

Ukraine: Protests and clashes with riot police broke out after a mass email sent to the Ministry of Health's entire contact list announced five cases of Covid-19 in the country.

The fake email was sent on the day a plane arrived carrying evacuees from China. Protesters attacked buses ferrying the evacuees and tried to block the

road leading to a health facility where they were to be quarantined. In other areas, crowds used tyres and cars to block the entrance to a hospital and gathered with a priest on the road to a medical facility.

The email, which was untrue, originated from outside Ukraine, said the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) in a statement.



IDPs who spoke to Refugees International feel uncertain about their future in Mogadishu, but most said they could not go back home

Refugees International

Addressing long-term displacement

Somalia: The Somali Government is taking positive steps to address long-term internal displacement and while there is still some way to go, the future looks promising, reports Mark Yarnell from Refugees International.

There are an estimated 2.6 million IDPs in Somalia. While some continue to arrive daily because of ongoing conflict as well as climate factors, most were displaced from their home areas years ago – unable to return and still in need of emergency assistance.

In Mogadishu, around half a million IDPs mostly live in insanitary conditions in settlements with dilapidated shelters, lacking access to critical services such as healthcare and education. They face the constant threat of eviction by landowners seeking to reclaim the land and are at the mercy of settlement ‘gatekeepers’ who are connected to the

landowners and often take a portion of aid as rent.

The Mogadishu local administration's first-ever IDP policy promotes the rights and wellbeing of displaced people. At the federal level, the government not only adopted a national IDP policy, but also launched *National Evictions Guidelines* that aim to prevent forced, short-notice evictions without alternative land and housing options. Additionally, the government created a Durable Solutions Secretariat to co-ordinate support measures for IDPs, such as improving access to secure land tenure. It has ratified the *Kampala Convention*, a legally binding agreement that affirms the rights of IDPs in Africa.

In a context as challenging and dangerous as Somalia, achieving lasting, durable solutions is no easy task, but the government is on the right track.

■ www.refugeesinternational.org

Failing our children

World: A report convened by WHO, Unicef and *The Lancet* says the health and future of every child and adolescent worldwide are under immediate threat from ecological degradation, climate change and exploitative marketing practices that push fast food, sugary drinks, alcohol and tobacco at children.

No single country is adequately protecting children's health, their environment or their futures.

“Despite improvements in child and adolescent health over the past 20 years, progress has stalled, and is set to reverse,” said former Prime Minister of New Zealand and Co-Chair of the Commission, Helen Clark. “It has been estimated that around 250 million children under five years old in low and middle income countries are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential, based on proxy measures of stunting and poverty. But of even greater concern, every child worldwide now faces existential threats from climate change and commercial pressures. Countries need to overhaul their approach to child and adolescent health.”

■ A Future for the World's Children? can be downloaded at: www.thelancet.com

Building collapse

Cambodia: Thirty-six people were killed and more than 20 injured after a building under construction collapsed in Kep, 160km southwest of the country's capital, Phnom Penh, in January 2020. At least 13 women and six children were among the dead.

Cambodia is experiencing a construction boom with hotels, high-rises and casinos being built under little regulatory oversight. Many workers in the country are not protected by union rules.

A senior police officer said that the accident occurred after concrete had been poured onto the highest level of a weakened seven-storey building.