



INSTITUTE for 21st
CENTURY AGORAS

Liberating
Democratic
Dialogue



ΓΡΑΦΕΙΟ
ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΟΥ
ΤΟΥ ΠΟΛΙΤΗ



Reimagining Our World Systemically

From Problématique to Purposeful Action

A Structured Democratic Dialogue for Leaders, Thinkers, and Changemakers

Overview

More than half a century after the Club of Rome introduced the Global Problématique, humanity faces an even more tightly interwoven web of ecological, geopolitical, technological, economic, and social pressures. What the Club of Rome described in the 1970s has since accelerated into what many now call a polycrisis: a condition where multiple crises interact and amplify one another, making both diagnosis and intervention increasingly difficult. In this context, the need to update our understanding of the Problématique and to revisit the systemic approaches required to address it has become urgent. The "Reimagining Our World Systemically: From Problématique to Purposeful Action" aspires to address this challenge and advocate that there must be no limits to hope. Central to this effort is SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): strengthening the means of implementation by enabling intensive collaboration across disciplines, sectors, and regions, and by working explicitly with the interdependencies among the SDGs.

Organizers

- International Society for the Systems Sciences (SIG: Systemic Dialogue; SIG: Balancing Individualism and Collectivism; SIG: Students)
- Institute for 21st Century Agoras (Global Agoras)
- International Federation for Systems Research
- Future Worlds Center
- Endorsed by the Club of Rome
- Under the auspices of the Cyprus Office of the Commissioner for the Citizen
- Under the auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union (Jan–Jun 2026)

Project Overview

Phase 1: Virtual Sessions (Mar–Apr 2026)

Five to six (2-hour) online sessions, utilizing the structured dialogic design process (widely known as Structured Democratic Dialogue: SDD), devoted to revisiting and updating the global Problématique, with explicit attention to SDG interdependencies and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Up to 30 participants will work collectively to:

- i. Surface the **continuous critical problems** humanity faces today by responding to the Triggering Question:
*What are the most critical obstacles that humanity needs to address in the next few years
to ensure a sustainable and just future?*
- ii. Clarify their meanings and cluster them into themes, thus developing a shared language and mental model
- iii. Explore the influence relations among the challenges culminating in the construction of a visual map that highlights which obstacles addressed will most likely have the greatest influence on transforming the system.

This preparatory work ensures that all contributors construct a common framing and a deeper appreciation of the complexity involved, thereby being better prepared to propose essential systemic actions, which is the focus of phase 2.

Phase 2: Face-to-face (Jun 29 – 30, 2026; after the 70th ISSS Conference)

The initiative culminates in a two-day summit in Cyprus, which will engage about 24 participants, mostly representatives from Phase 1, as well as a few other leading systems scientists and some senior policymakers from across Europe and beyond. The June dialogue seeks to answer a guiding, action-oriented question regarding the influence map of obstacles generated in Phase 1. The Triggering Question for this phase is:

What essential actions can humanity take in the next decade to build a resilient, fair, peace-capable, and future-fit world system?

Participants will again use the SDD methodology to generate and explore actions, cluster and explore their interdependencies, and finally co-design a shared structural map of priorities; a blueprint for guiding action that can inform policy, research agendas, institutional reforms, partnership strategies, and broader societal mobilization. The aim is not incremental improvement but a coherent systemic architecture for thriving planetary futures. The Cyprus convening is designed as a catalytic starting point rather than a concluding milestone, initiating a longer-term global process of follow-on dialogues, regional replications, and sustained SDG-17-aligned partnerships. Its results will be stewarded through an expanding international network committed to translating systemic insight into coordinated implementation.

Method

The process follows the rigorous methodology of SDD; a globally applied, transdisciplinary method used for peacebuilding, governance reform, conflict transformation, and large-scale futures design. SDD is grounded in:

1. Systems science and complexity theory
2. Dialogic design principles
3. Equitable participation, cognitive diversity, and partnership building (SDG 17)
4. Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) to map interdependencies
5. Collective intelligence processes that reveal "deep drivers" of systemic change

The method creates a safe, intellectually rich environment where every participant contributes to the shared model, regardless of status, discipline, or political position. It is designed to prevent domination, groupthink, rhetorical persuasion, or power asymmetry.

Expected Results, Outputs, Outcomes, and Legacy

1. A co-created Influence Map showing systemic relationships among key challenges (Phase 1) and key actions (Phase 2); a structural map as a partnership/implementation blueprint (who needs to coordinate with whom, across what dependencies).
2. Strategic recommendations tailored to political, institutional, and civil-society audiences.
3. Input into the ISSS 2026 post-conference activities on planetary governance and systemic action.
4. The results are intended to serve as a reference architecture for governments, international organizations, and civil-society networks to strengthen SDG implementation partnerships (SDG 17).
5. Catalyze SDG 17-aligned alliances, research programs, and policy initiatives; a long-term platform for systemic governance innovation.
6. A narrative summary, appropriate for audiences worldwide, in the form of a final report/white paper.

Why This Matters

Most global initiatives fail not because of a lack of knowledge, but because: institutions are siloed; disciplines do not dialogue; political incentives are short-term; complexity overwhelms decision-makers; and public trust in governance continues to erode. This initiative directly addresses these gaps by enabling: a shared understanding of system interdependencies (including SDG linkages); SDG 17-ready cross-sector partnerships grounded in science and practicality; actionable priorities that withstand political realities; and a unifying narrative for a future-fit planetary civilization. The dialogue brings together those who think about whole systems and those who shape them — a rare but necessary collaboration.

This work is part of the broader mission of the International Society for the Systems Sciences to elevate systems thinking into real-world action at a decisive moment for humanity.