

Ged Davis

Well we are 30 minutes behind time, we have a 90 minute session ahead of us and this is really your session. We've aimed to use the rapporteurs effectively as reminders of some of the key points that were covered. Sarah's going to give a critical comment. I'd like then to go to you and to either take brief statements if you think that's important or questions either for the rapporteur and particularly for the last session, though we had a number of, I think, extremely important speakers who I would like to have the opportunity to answer questions. Do we have a few? We do have some. Fine I'll pick that up.

I want to start really with a very simple way of summarizing two quite extraordinary days. How does one do that? Well I think one gets out of one's skin and I was particularly pleased that one of my favorite authors received the Nobel prize for literature this year – Doris Lessing. She wrote, and I always found it immensely inspiring, a series called the Canupos in Argos series which includes the book *Shikasta*, which talks about the future history of the planet. So I'd like you to suspend disbelief for about three minutes, now you can do this by just closing your eyes. I know some of you are on PCs or on Blackberries, some of you have traveled far, but this is the point – I would like to observe the proceedings using the inspiration of Doris Lessing of the last two days, to give you a view as perhaps how sentient beings operating at about 500 light years from planet Earth might take a position. Now looking at rather longer times, horizons, than we normally do.

So let me move into my alter ego as observer 35IIASA. Those who wish to close their eyes are welcome. Cherished soul beings. I would like to update you on my observations of Planet 3 of the Sun system which I briefly covered at our last connection one century ago. You may remember that I reported at that time that the dominant bipeds in the northern hemisphere had developed class 1 technologies, some 1 to 2 centuries before. Remember class 1 technologies feed on their environment. And as we know from a series of other observations, they have severe side effects, the treatment of beings as objects, the production of excess hubris, and the irresistible temptation for more. In the centuries since our last connection, I have seen some disturbing developments: a four-fold increase in the number of bipeds, a tenfold increase in the annual GDP per biped, our investigations and observations have concluded that the much-used term GDP refers to the Gross Destruction of Potential that is taking place on the planet. The fortyfold increase in GDP over one century is evidenced by the widespread destruction of the environment and beings other than bipeds. More concerning, our future intuitions indicate at least a further sixfold increase in GDP in the coming century as class 1 technologies spread across the planet and that demands on the environment are likely to grow beyond the capacity to handle it. I should note that there are some limited networks of positive change underway. The early flowering of a planetary consciousness, evolution of class 2 technologies, the balance feeding on the environment with the environment's developments, and even noticeable, some class 3 technologies based on mentation, imagery, and communication.

Cherished beings, I ask your agreement to expend more attention to this planet in the coming century since it remains at a bifurcation point between collapse and renewal and will teach us valuable lessons in biped evolution. I thank you for your attention. I will report next in one century when we convene for our next connection. Thank you.

I'd like to really follow that up very briefly with something that, I suppose, is much closer to home. Let me just make the point. What I've said is clearly an interpretation, but it's equally a strong interpretation of much of what we've heard. We are at the cusp of a very significant point, and perhaps amongst other things, the most significant changes have to take place, if not in our value sets, in the value sets of our children, and certainly our grandchildren. We have little time. But I think what is important is the way we intellectually interpret the observations from these sentient beings. Clearly this is language we're familiar with, and when I look at the global agenda and the discussions going on, much of it focuses clearly around the power shifts connected with globalization. And what we might call the transitional inequalities, which are not just about north and south, but about the wealthy who in fact understand the processes of globalization whether they're in India or China, wherever they may be, at the expense of those who've got other priorities and knowledge.

The range of global challenges is quite substantial. We've seen over the last two days many of them. What we have up here cover more than we heard over the last two days but less in that we covered also forestry, fisheries, other areas—this the agenda of global risk at the World Economic Forum and I am sure all of you in your own capacities, whether you're practicing politicians, researchers, what have you, will have your own example of this. Interestingly, is what this means. I would like to just briefly touch on the attributes because for me this puts IIASA really in the central position as one of the institutions that can live with dealing with large-scale, nonlinear, difficult to understand, not fully conceivable problems whose impact cannot be easily anticipated, but involves multiple perspectives, multi-stakeholder responses. Now what perhaps is encouraging in some of the presentations—the focus on shared responsibility, augmented intelligence, open source work going on, Wikis, other tools—we're developing interesting capacities which go beyond the role of any single analyst or institution. And let me just conclude as this introduction by making brief synthesis. None of these problems exist on their own, and the great challenge, as many have said, is in framing them in ways that are useful. How we understand the world, the tools we use, the role in particular of foresight and assessment programs is important. Recognizing—the word hasn't come up, but we know it; it came up maybe in one or two presentations, that it is the dilemmas that are as important as any single example of a solution. And the governance structures, although many of them are working on this at the moment to look at new forums, perhaps looking at as many as 20, but perhaps somewhere between 14 or 20 leaders in some new configuration. Perhaps an extension of the G8 but more likely to be something somewhat different, that's happening and is needed. And to conclude—this is where IIASA's role clearly is going to be very important in the next 35 years – it's the conscious design of large systems, provision of advice whether it's cities, states, or even the planet. So with

that as an introduction, I'd like to turn to my colleague Bob Correll to get a smoothing on Session 1.