8 BILLION POSSIBILITIES

How can the power of innovation and the human spirit enable more people to create their own future?
Conversations that matter

Conversations can be a powerful force in creating the future, yet in our digital age we may have lost the art of conversation.

The founders of the United Arab Emirates met in the desert and, in the shade of their tent, they shared coffee and talked to one another with hope and respect as they envisaged the future of their nation.

Let us sit together and let the spark of conversation connect us for a better tomorrow.

World Expos and Global Conversations

Since the first Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, World Expos have connected people and provided special spaces to spark dialogue amongst those who are curious about the future. With its mix of art and science; imagination and analysis; machines and ideas; nations and people, the World Expo is a special place for inquisitive minds interested to ask questions about the future and, in so doing, learn more about each other.

The World Majlis - Expo 2020 Dubai thematic dialogue programme

The World Majlis is Expo 2020 signature platform for ‘Connecting Minds’. It is deeply rooted in the traditional majlis of the UAE, a highly valued space to listen and learn about different perspectives. A place where people meet to hear informed opinions and shape decisions on subjects that matter to the community.

The World Majlis is an original format for open and measured conversations on topics that matter to the future of humanity. It brings together current and future thought leaders and connects experts, visionaries and change-makers from different disciplines with young, bright students. The World Majlis conversations are connected by a common thread: placing humanity at the heart of how we design the future.
8 Billion Possibilities

In a world headed towards 8 billion people sharing a common sky, how can innovation and the human spirit enable more people to create their own future in balance with the planet?

We are living at a time of great transformation where the 4th industrial revolution intersects with the “Anthropocene”. We are shaping our environment, our planet and our future. We are forces of nature made stronger by our continuously expanding technological capabilities.

Technology is rapidly improving how we live, work and learn. However, the implications of the technological transformations are vast and largely unknown, especially in the context of how it will play out in a world of 8 billion people confronted with systemic changes in our environment and economies.

The focus of our conversations is often on how robotics, pervasive technology, digital connectivity, big data and new developments in science and engineering will reshape future opportunities in societies already advanced in these areas.

However, opportunity is not equally distributed and the diversity of circumstances often requires different solutions in different places. At the same time, as a growing world gains access to better opportunities, it raises the question of how today we connect success to patterns of consumption.

“8 billion possibilities” aims to connect these transformations to the diverse communities that are represented in the World Expo, while also taking into account the interconnections between technology and planet.
Key questions in the World Majlis

The opportunity gap - While opportunities to connect with one another are increasing exponentially, we often struggle to derive lasting benefits from these connections. The real challenge is less about spelling out what needs solving, but rather how to do so effectively through connections that can help bridge the gaps between excess and deficit — too much, and too little. Gaps are widening between rich and poor, between cultures and between generations. However, we are also entering a time of great potential, where partnerships can be more easily nurtured and positive change can take place very quickly.

- What are some existing opportunity gaps? What are the emerging ones?
- How do environmental and technological changes contribute to widening or narrowing gaps?
- How do we inspire and engage people from all walks of life to contribute to the solution?
- How important is the story we tell and how we tell it?

From collaboration to co-creation and sharing – For millions of people, the obstacles to accessing opportunity are increasingly driven by global forces. Solutions to overcome these barriers are best found in the local context. Today’s technology, knowledge and connectivity reshape the meaning and manner of collaboration and co-creation.

- How can global technological knowledge can be adapted to solve local problems and generate opportunity?
- How do we empower more individuals, entrepreneurs and communities to design and embed the right technologies and solutions within their context?
- Do we build capacity for others or do we share capacity with others?
- What is the role of youth?

Team 8-billion - More people on the planet means greater competition for access to opportunities and greater pressure on the earth’s resources. It also means more and better ideas to solve challenges that transcend regional and continental boundaries. At the same time, as individually and collectively we achieve more, our successes often translate into growing consumption. However, new trends signal shifts in values and behaviours: from ownership to sharing, from physical assets to valuable experiences.

- Are the criteria and values that connect success and opportunity changing?
- Is philanthropy one of the criteria for success? If so, how can more people embrace this mindset?
- How can we harness the power of more people – creators and innovators – to shape a positive future for the planet and future generations without depleting resources?
Expo 2020 Dubai will take place at a milestone moment in our collective journey to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. With its theme of Connecting Minds, Creating the Future, Expo 2020 offers a platform for expanding knowledge, sparking innovations and inspiring engagement.

Through this conversation, we hope to identify new questions and perspectives that will help shape the programme and outcomes of Expo 2020 Dubai. Each World Majlis is a connected conversation aimed to explore the overarching aspiration of how we design a future with humanity at its core.

The combined wisdom from these conversations will continue to inform the ideas and content of the pavilions, events and future dialogues. Our goal is to engage and inspire millions of visitors at Expo 2020 Dubai, between 20 October, 2020 and 10 April, 2021.
World Majlis Themes

The World Majlis programme focuses on topics that matter to all of us because they can impact our future and that of the next generation. World Majlis conversations are connected by the common thread of placing humanity at the heart of how we design the future. We have identified four areas that resonate with Expo 2020’s theme, the UAE vision as well as the major global transformations that we are experiencing today in an unprecedented scale and scope.

From statistics to human stories
Opportunity – unlocking the potential of a growing world population

From technocracy to technology for people
Mobility – Designing and managing technologies that benefit humanity

“ Humanity at the Heart of the Future”

From buildings to smart, human-centric communities
Our Legacy City – The changing faces of our communities

From consumers to citizens in the planet
Sustainability – Creating a resilient planet in the Anthropocene