



11TH MEETING - LILLE: OCTOBER 17, 18, AND 19, 2017
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FOREWORD

RESPONSIBLE REVOLUTION

Sharing today's solutions to tomorrow's problems

Imagine a world where cars run without drivers, where unmanned aircraft deliver your mail and parcels.

Imagine a world where your desires, your needs and your buying intentions are anticipated by the collection and processing of massive amounts of data.

Imagine a world in which machines advise you on your savings, directly place stock market orders, and perform a thousand tasks that were previously devoted to human skills.

Imagine a world where objects are connected together, where robots repair themselves, where computers program and develop themselves, where human intervention becomes superfluous for most of these operations.

Imagine... no wait, don't imagine: all this is real. All this is happening now or is in the advanced stages of experimentation. This world exists, it is already ours. And what tomorrow promises is even further ranging than what we are experiencing or seeing today.

Neurotechnologies, synthetic biology, nanomaterials, the advance of artificial intelligence, even transhumanism: the upheavals initiated are vertiginous. We are no longer in one of the transitional periods that have marked our history. We are experiencing a revolution the like of which our world has seen only a few times over the centuries, and never with such intensity of acceleration.

This revolution is not without its dangers. Well-known people from diverse backgrounds have warned of the threats. The famous physicist Stephen Hawking even believes that "the development of a complete artificial intelligence could put an end to humanity." He states, however, that this artificial intelligence could "either be the best or the worst thing that ever happens."

The best or the worst? This is the question that will be at the heart of the 11th World Forum for Responsible Economy on October 17, 18, and 19, 2017.

This revolution does indeed carry major risks that can lead to extreme perils. On the other hand, it could open up promising opportunities and, in particular, offer new solutions to the two major problems of our time, constantly on the list of the our Forum's work: the first, environmental, strongly influenced by climate change; the second, social, with the persistence, or even aggravation of imbalances and the exclusion of many populations.

The best or the worst ... that depends on the responsibility that we are able to exercise, individually and collectively. Even though the word "challenge" is somewhat overused, it seems appropriate here to describe five issues (among others) of this revolution that we hope will be approached with responsibility and which will top our 11th Forum:

- ***The challenge of technological shocks.*** Artificial intelligence, up to what point? What are (and will be) the consequences of its expansion on work, on employment, on the organization of society? In short, in a world where artificial intelligence moves towards omnipresence, where do humans fit in?

- ***The challenge of knowledge and competence.*** Should we fundamentally re-examine our education and training systems? How can we ensure, with the new tools available, the acquisition and transmission of knowledge and skills, while constantly adapting to rapid changes?

- ***The geostrategic challenge of the new balances.*** What are the consequences of the differences in economic and demographic development? How can migratory movements evolve accordingly? What are the implications of inequalities between countries and how do they influence North-South relations, particularly between Europe and

Africa? What types of companies contribute to the growth of emerging countries?

- *The challenge of new entrepreneurial models.* How do business organization and management modes change? How can employees be motivated towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)? How do new forms of enterprise and new forms of work appear and grow?

- *The challenge of the common good.* What is the role of the different actors in the transformation of society? Should public authorities strengthen constraining measures to oblige companies to assume more social responsibility? Or, on the contrary, should companies be more involved in political life in order to influence the conditions under which their responsibilities are exercised? How can consideration of the interests of all stakeholders contribute to the common good?

Evidence from good practices ... According to the principle adopted by the Forum since its inception, it is not for us to discuss these challenges by proposing theoretical reflections on the future: our bias remains to present good practices from around the five continents, providing concrete examples that we hope will be contagious.

This time, however, the application of this principle may seem incongruous: how can we illustrate with the best practices of today the solutions that will have to be found for the problems of tomorrow?

There is no real paradox or insurmountable objection in this. Firstly, the phenomena mentioned in the introduction to this note show that many upheavals are under way, fully committed: they have already given rise to initiatives from responsible entrepreneurs, which form an initial set of good practices.

Furthermore, in our times, as always, there are pioneers who anticipate these prospective movements. They have, to some extent, advanced good practice(s). Of course the future will include those who, among these pioneers, have been truly visionary. But their actions can be responses to the challenges and, as such, they deserve to be shared.

Universal responsibility... Responsibility is as universal as the revolution in technologies, behaviors, companies or organizations. That is why good practices that mark the way must come from everywhere, from all continents, from all countries. But it is also important that

they represent the companies - in the widest sense of the word - in all their diversity: whatever their status, size, or sector of activity.

Large companies are, of course, the most prominent, capable of carrying out large-scale, easily identifiable actions. Our Forum has always given them the place they deserve and will continue to do so in this 11th meeting. However, this year we particularly want to showcase small and medium-sized companies that are too often forgotten by major international events. They are abundant in all regions of the world, and some are at the forefront of this revolution that we hope will be a responsible one. With them, too, we can take... one step ahead.

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President of the World Forum for a Responsible Economy