



**POPULATION
INSTITUTE**



2030: The “Perfect Storm”
--Scenario Planning Guide--

2030: “Perfect Storm” Scenario

--Sample Scenario Planning Exercises--

Background

Scenario planning exercises are commonly used by governments and businesses to anticipate and prepare for various contingencies. Military analysts use “war games” and scenario planning exercises to enhance military preparedness and prevent the outbreak of hostilities. In the private sector, businesses and organizations have applied scenario planning to a broad range of issues, from relatively simple tactical decisions, to the complex process of strategic planning and vision building.

A successful scenario planning exercise requires role playing. Participants must accept, *for purposes of the exercise*, that the conditions described in the scenario are accurate. With respect to the two scenario planning exercises outlined below, the year is 2030, not 2010. You cannot change what has happened. You must accept the conditions as described in ***2030: the “Perfect Storm” Scenario***. Questions regarding the feasibility of the scenario are reserved for discussion at the end of the role-playing exercise.

Successful scenario planning exercises also require preparation. It’s important that the key participants or role players study the scenario in advance and come prepared to discuss it. Some of the role players may be experts on one or more of the issues raised by the scenario, but not every participant has to be an expert. Preparation, however, is critical.

Below are two sample scenario planning exercises. The first looks at the challenges that could be faced by world leaders in 2030; the second explores the implications for six developing countries: Bangladesh, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Uganda, and Yemen. Both are designed to create a clearer understanding of the problems that might be generated by a “perfect storm” and what can be done now to mitigate them.

Version #1 -- Resolving the World Crisis (Four Hours)

The Challenge for World Leaders

World leaders are scheduled to meet in July of 2030 to discuss next steps, but optimism is waning. Climate change, energy, food, water, and conflict prevention are all on the agenda, but U.S. and world leaders confront three problems:

1. **Conflicting Advice:** Policymakers are receiving conflicting advice from the experts on how to respond. There is mounting concern that good faith efforts to address one problem could exacerbate one or more of the other problems. Policymakers everywhere find it difficult to ascertain, given limited resources and

options, which policies will have the best outcomes.

2. **Domestic Political Opposition:** World leaders recognize the gravity of the international crisis and want to respond accordingly, but they face severe domestic pressures. Concerned about the global economy, including food and energy prices, people everywhere are increasingly resistant to policies that could lead to higher prices or taxes.
3. **Diminishing U.S. Clout and International Differences:** The U.S. leadership role has diminished. Strapped by foreign debt, a weak economy, and continued pressure on the dollar, the U.S. finds itself unable to act unilaterally. It favors expanded international cooperation, but its influence has been diminished by the growing clout of the two Asian superpowers. It's not certain what position India or China will take in response to any U.S. proposals.

Introduction (20 minutes)

The moderator sets the stage for the planning exercise, by briefly reviewing the scenario and the challenge for world leaders.

Part One: Expert Advice

In this portion of the exercise, the participants hear from five experts who have studied the scenario in advance and have come prepared to give their advice and assessment. Each expert is given one question and ten minutes to respond.

- **Climate Expert (5-10 minutes):** Given the lack of progress to date in controlling GHG emissions, what can be done to keep global emissions below the 450ppm threshold and alleviate the worst effects of climate change?
- **Food Expert (5-10 minutes):** Given the gravity of the food crisis in 2030, what can be done to prevent the spread of starvation?
- **Energy Expert (5-10 minutes):** Recognizing that there is no short-term solution to the energy crisis, what can be done in the next 5 to 10 years to resolve it?
- **Conflict Prevention Expert (5-10 minutes):** Given the world situation, what can be done to mitigate or prevent potential conflicts over resources?

Moderator-led Panel Discussion (15-20 minutes)

The moderator queries the panelists about potential policy conflicts, i.e. the extent to which efforts to solve one problem (e.g. food) might exacerbate another problem (e.g. climate change).

BREAK (15 minutes)

Part Two: Response of World Leaders

In this portion of the scenario planning exercise, participants are divided into four teams representing the U.S., China, India, and the United Nations. Each team is assigned a leader, or chooses a representative who will report back to the full group. They are given

approximately 30 minutes to meet and discuss policy options. When the full group is reconvened, each team leader is given ten minutes to outline their country's position.

- **U.S. President** (5-10 minutes): Given the current predicament and U.S. national interests, what should the U.S. do?
- **Chinese Premier** (5-10 minutes): Given the current predicament and Chinese national interests, what should China do?
- **Indian Prime Minister** (5-10 minutes): Given the current predicament and Indian national interests, what should India do?
- **U.N. Secretary General** (5-10 minutes): What can be done at this stage to help the people and countries most in need?

BREAK (15 minutes)

Part Three: Discussion

The moderator sets the stage for the planning exercise by briefly reviewing the scenario and the challenge for world leaders.

- **Three outside observers** (10 minutes each) offer their observations on the scenario planning exercise and its implications.
- **Questions and comments from all participants** (30 minutes)
- **Concluding remarks by the moderator** (5 minutes)

Version #2--Coping with the Perfect Storm (Two Hours)

The Challenge for Developing Countries

As world leaders attempt to cope with the global dimensions of the “perfect storm,” developing countries in 2030 will have to struggle with their own unique set of problems. In addition to dealing with the challenges posed by high food and energy prices and an unstable global economy, the poorest of the developing countries will have to wrestle with the threats posed by population growth, climate change, and resource scarcity.

In this scenario planning exercise, participants are divided into teams representing developing countries that may confront particularly difficult circumstances in 2030. The number of countries that are role-played will depend on the number of participants and the available time. For purposes of this illustrative exercise there are six countries, each with one or more problems that need to be addressed.

In advance of the scenario planning exercise, each participant is required to study the global scenario described above and a separate, country-specific scenario for their country. The country-specific scenarios will be one-page in length, and will outline the situation in that country with respect to population, age distribution, water resources, food production, government, unemployment, civil unrest, internally displaced persons, and the effects of climate change. Here's how it works:

Introduction: (15 minutes)

The moderator sets the stage for the planning exercise, by briefly reviewing the 2030 scenario and the kinds of challenges facing developing countries, donor nations, and international agencies seeking to assist them.

Role Playing Exercise: (75 minutes)

Each team meets to discuss the global scenario and the country-specific scenario that they have been assigned. In their discussions, they are asked to address two sets of questions:

1. Looking ahead, if the “perfect storm” described in this scenario for the year 2030 continues, what types of problems could arise in your country? What steps could be taken to mitigate or alleviate them?
2. Looking back at the past twenty years (2010-2030), what could have been done differently to better prepare your country for dealing with the “perfect storm” and the problems associated with it? What were the principle obstacles to progress in those areas?

Each team is given 45 minutes to formulate and summarize their responses. A team representative is chosen to report back the findings. When the teams are reassembled, each team representative is given five minutes to present their report.

Discussion Period: (30 minutes)

After the role playing is concluded. The moderator then leads participants in a 30 minute discussion about some of the overriding issues that emerge from the reports and the implications of the “perfect storm” scenario.

EXAMPLES:

The following are some of the countries that could be examined and a brief description of the kinds of problems that could be highlighted in the country-specific scenarios:

Country-Specific Scenarios

Country	Scenario Highlights
Egypt 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population since 2010 has grown from 80 million to 105 million.• Water scarcity due to decreased flow of Nile.• Falling grain production requires increased grain imports.• High youth unemployment.
Yemen 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population since 2010 has grown from 23 million to 37 million.• Water scarcity is acute. Sana’a, the capital, is under strict rationing.• A major civil war has erupted, and Saudi Arabia has intervened.

Ethiopia 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population since 2010 has grown from 83 million to 119 million. • Severe drought has reduced crop production. • In recent years, more than 20 million people have been dependent on external food aid. • The government has canceled leases of agricultural lands by foreign governments and corporations.
Uganda 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population since 2010 has grown from 32 million to 56 million. • In the last 20 years, temperatures have risen by 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit. • Coffee production and export earnings have been sharply curtailed. • The level of Lake Victoria is falling due to climate change and demand for hydroelectricity.
Bangladesh 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population since 2010 has grown from 163 million to nearly 200 million. • Typhoons have devastated coastal areas. • Rising seas are beginning to affect low-lying areas. • The numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons are rising rapidly.
The Philippines 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population since 2010 has grown from 93 million to 124 million. • Rice production has stagnated over the past decade because of the impact of typhoons and a shortage of arable land. • Severe poverty is on the rise, particularly in Manila and other urban centers. • The insurgency on Mindanao has grown much larger and threatens the national government.