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## THE GLOBAL CHALLENGES FORUM “GENEVA DECLARATION”

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### PREAMBLE:

Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, on 16 and 17 September 2015, against the background of an escalating refugee crisis in Europe, the Global Challenges Foundation and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) co-hosted the Launch of the Global Knowledge Networking Initiative in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS).

In support, they invited a distinguished and diverse group of experts from around the world to guide the way ahead and convened its Inaugural Conference entitled, ***“Toward a Smart Century: Global Partnerships for Innovative Learning and Leader Development.”*** Participants helped to shape a broad understanding of the continuing role that Global Knowledge Networking (GKN) should play in empowering future leaders, their organizations, and institutions to address global challenges through integrated approaches that make knowledge manageable and actionable.

The Inaugural Conference explored the means of promoting greater resilience to complex emergencies and shared global threats posed to the environment, human security (including health), maritime and cyber security, and energy security, as well as challenges posed by terrorism and hybrid warfare. A shared understanding emerged that humankind is moving quickly towards a knowledge-based Smart Society in which the networking and cross-fertilization of ideas through an innovative education and training development hub can foster smart collaboration. A dynamic approach to the discovery and co-development of new capabilities can help build trust and collaboration among many cities and nations, effectively empowering readiness through enhanced community resilience, connecting generations, and cultivating a wide array of new global partnerships.

The Inaugural Conference, therefore, decided to create this future, concluding that new pathways toward holistic, cross-discipline and divergent thinking--which can empower connectivity, information sharing and fusion through a comprehensive approach--must be pursued. Having achieved consensus that a smart security, global knowledge capability is needed, the Inaugural Conference established the ***Global Resilience Readiness Initiative***.

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## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE “GLOBAL RESILIENCE READINESS INITIATIVE”

To foster imagination and discovery, produce enlightened experience, prevent conflict and promote sustainable development, the Inaugural Conference established the *Global Resilience Readiness Initiative* with the aims and goals to:

- Support community decision-making in partner nations and in international bodies through “*composable organizations*,” where people, ideas, processes and technology can be brought together as needed;
- Pursue “whole of stakeholders” approaches and enhanced information sharing in the area of disaster preparedness;
- Build new learning tools with partners to improve common understanding and shared procedures for rapid, decisive, resilient responses to complex emergencies;
- Contribute to significantly enhanced training and readiness capabilities for security and resilience through co-development of a global network of regional Resilience Readiness Centres;
- Evolve to meet new security challenges, and in particular adapt to the pace of change of information and communications technology (ICT) that underpins the development of the Smart Society.

The Inaugural Conference requested the Chairman of the Global Challenges Forum (GCF) Foundation to serve as Executive Director of the *Global Resilience Readiness Initiative*, and to undertake consultation with global cities, nations, international bodies and other major institutions engaged in promoting innovative learning and leader development.

As an initiative of the Global Challenges Forum Foundation, all subsequent activities will be carried out in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations of the Canton of Geneva or other legal jurisdictions as may be appropriate. We will continue to reach out to the UN Institute for Training and Research, the US Department of Defense, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, and other Inaugural Conference collaborating organizations for guidance and support.

All Inaugural Conference Participants are invited to join in as Founding Members. This Declaration is made by the Undersigned on behalf of the Global Challenges Forum Foundation and the Global Knowledge Networking Inaugural Conference.



TALAL ABU GHAZALEH  
Founder and Honorary Chairman



WALTER L. CHRISTMAN  
Co-Founder and Chairman