

World Bank Communication and Good Governance Scenario Exercise Instructions 2014

Overview of Exercise:

The goal is to write a narrative about the future (or "scenario") of your society. These stories can be as little as a medium-sized paragraph, or as long as you like. In this exercise, your story is the opening paragraphs of a speech about the political and economic communication rights situation in your country in the year 2025. You are giving the speech as the leader of your organization (we assume that if you are not currently the head of your organization, by 2025, you will be!). If your organization is not identified with one particular country, you may write about a region or choose a specific country that is relevant to your organization.

We hope that you will enjoy imagining these futures and writing about them. We encourage you to be creative but these paragraphs do not have to be works of art, and if you would like help with your English, please send us a draft before you post it. An effective scenario is merely one which clearly imagines and articulates the most important political, economic, social, etc. conditions of a future society or situation. The scenario would straightforwardly explain the main communication issues that have been important to your country/region and the steps taken by your organization, or other governance related organizations, that helped change the circumstances of today to the day of your speech in 2025. Your paragraph(s) would describe the imagined future situation and also mention the key challenges and potentials of that future.

To help you create these stories, we offer you some broad description from the experiences in the first decade of this century of some of the most well-researched communication societies today: Brazil, the People's Republic of China, and the United States.

BRAZIL: deep economic digital divide, internet/mobile relatively politically free

CHINA: relatively deep economic digital divide, high political control of internet/mobile

S. KOREA: little economic digital divide, moderate political control of internet/mobile

USA: moderate economic digital divide, internet/mobile has high political freedom

We have provided you with reference articles (both in excerpted form and through links) about the main issues of these countries as "Information Societies" and their experience of the political and economic dimensions of communication rights today. You may read as little or as much of these articles as you like. They are provided to help you develop your scenario ideas, as needed.

*This exercise is based on the "Alternative Futures" approach to scenario exercises.

Ideas for a CHALLENGING TIMES scenario

It is the year 2025, and your country has become known around the world as one of the most important case studies of Information Society development (through internet, mobile and social media technologies) through very challenging circumstances over the last decade. Your country's path has been much harder than your organization thought it would be back in the 2014. Your country has nonetheless overcome, or at least been able to manage, many of these challenges to the development of political and economic communication rights, as interpreted in your national context. In fact, your country and your organization are seen as important examples of succeeding despite adversity in the ongoing development of Information Societies around the world.

Like many countries that faced major problems in the first decade of this century such as Brazil, your country is viewed as a source of inspiration about developing good governance as an Information Society. At the same time, many of the challenges your country and organization faced are seen as particular to your society or region.

As head of your organization, you have been asked to give a speech to an international conference on Information Society governance reviewing the unexpectedly hard challenges that your country has experienced with the development of Information Society governance policies and structures over the last decade. Your audience is composed of senior officials and policy experts much like yourself, but from many different countries and international agencies. It is a private session and your remarks will not be reported by journalists. You want to focus on both the political and economic dimensions of communication rights as your country's society has interpreted them in your national context. The road to this moment has been an unexpectedly difficult one, and while you intend to affirm the successes that your country has had and the greater promise that it has today, you want to remind your audience of both the challenges that your country has faced and the ones that lie ahead. Think about the most important lessons your country and your organization can teach the rest of the world?

In preparing the opening passage of the speech, think back over your long experience in your organization, and consider the role your organization played in both the key internal reform initiatives, as well as the main external transformational trends that your government has had to respond to that shaped the political and economic dimensions of your country's Information Society over the years 2014-25.

Ideas for a VISIONARY scenario

It is the year 2025, and your country has become known around the world as the most remarkably successful model of Information Society development (through internet, mobile and social media technologies) over the last decade. Your country has been much more effective and innovative in developing political and economic communication and information rights, as interpreted in your national context, than the your organization thought possible in 2014. In fact, your country and your organization have been so successful that you are now seen as one of the primary visionary models for other countries around the world to follow as they continue to develop as Information Societies.

Like those much discussed Information Society models which were much praised in the first decade of this century -- such as Brazil, the People's Republic of China, South Korea and the United States -- your country is viewed as a source of inspiration about developing good governance in an Information Society context. At the same time, many of the achievements and innovations of your country and organization may best be regarded as particular to your society or region.

As head of your organization, you have been asked to give a speech to an international conference on Information Society governance reviewing the astonishing success that your country has experienced with its development of Information Society governance policies and structures during the last decade. Your audience is full of senior officials and policy experts much like yourself, but from many different countries and international agencies. It is a private session and your remarks will not be reported by journalists. You want to focus on both the political and economic dimensions of communication rights as your country's society has interpreted them in your national context. The road to this moment has been an admirable and amazing one, and while you are celebrating the successes and the greater promise that lies ahead, you want to remind your audience that challenges remain and others will emerge. Think about the most important lessons your country and your organization can teach the rest of the world.

In preparing the opening passage of the speech, think back over your long experience in your organization, and consider the role your organization played in both the key internal reform decisions, as well as the main external transformational trends that your government had to respond to, that shaped the political and economic dimensions of your country's Information Society over the years 2014-25.

When you have completed your scenario, please post on the Future Scenarios 2014 page.