

**Tapio Kanninen**

**Developing an Early Warning-  
Reaction System for Global and Regional Threats.**

**A more detailed elaboration:**

**Tapio Kanninen.**

***A Political Early Warning-Response System to Address  
Global and Regional Threats.***

**Published in early 2007 in:  
Mika Aaltonen (ed.).**

***The Third Lens Multi-ontology Sense-making  
And Strategic Decision-making.***

**Ashgate, 2007.**

**Also available at <http://www.cris.unu.edu/workingpapers.asp>**

**And <http://esc.clubofrome.org/cor-eu/news/index.html>**

## Threats to humankind in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

- **Rapid climate change and natural disasters**
- **Potential energy crises and depletion of other natural resources**
- **Weapons of mass destruction**
- **New and old epidemics**
- **Criminal and terrorist networks**
- **Financial markets instability**
- **Increasing illegal arms and drug trade**
- **Ethnic and religious intolerance  
(human rights violations, genocide)**
- **Increasing inequality and discrimination**
- **Cyber terrorism**

## **International mechanism for reporting threats**

- **These threats receive only periodic attention, which very quickly fades away again**
- **However, the crises have potentially cumulative, unforeseen spin-off effects and interconnections**
- **Therefore, a coherent international mechanism for reporting threats - comprehensively, systematically, periodically—  
should be established with an independent, nonpartisan scientific scrutiny of facts, trends and interconnections**

## Outline of the presentation

- **Theoretical part: how to create international monitoring mechanism**
- **Practical part: how to establish a credible monitoring and reaction mechanism**
- **Future**
- **Discussion on how to go forward**

## **PRECEDENT # 1:**

**International efforts to standardize the description and measurement of the ‘realities’: 1940s-1950s – Economic Factors**

### Historical origins

- To avoid 1930’s types of depressions
- To correct economic imbalances
- To facilitate international trade and other economic relations

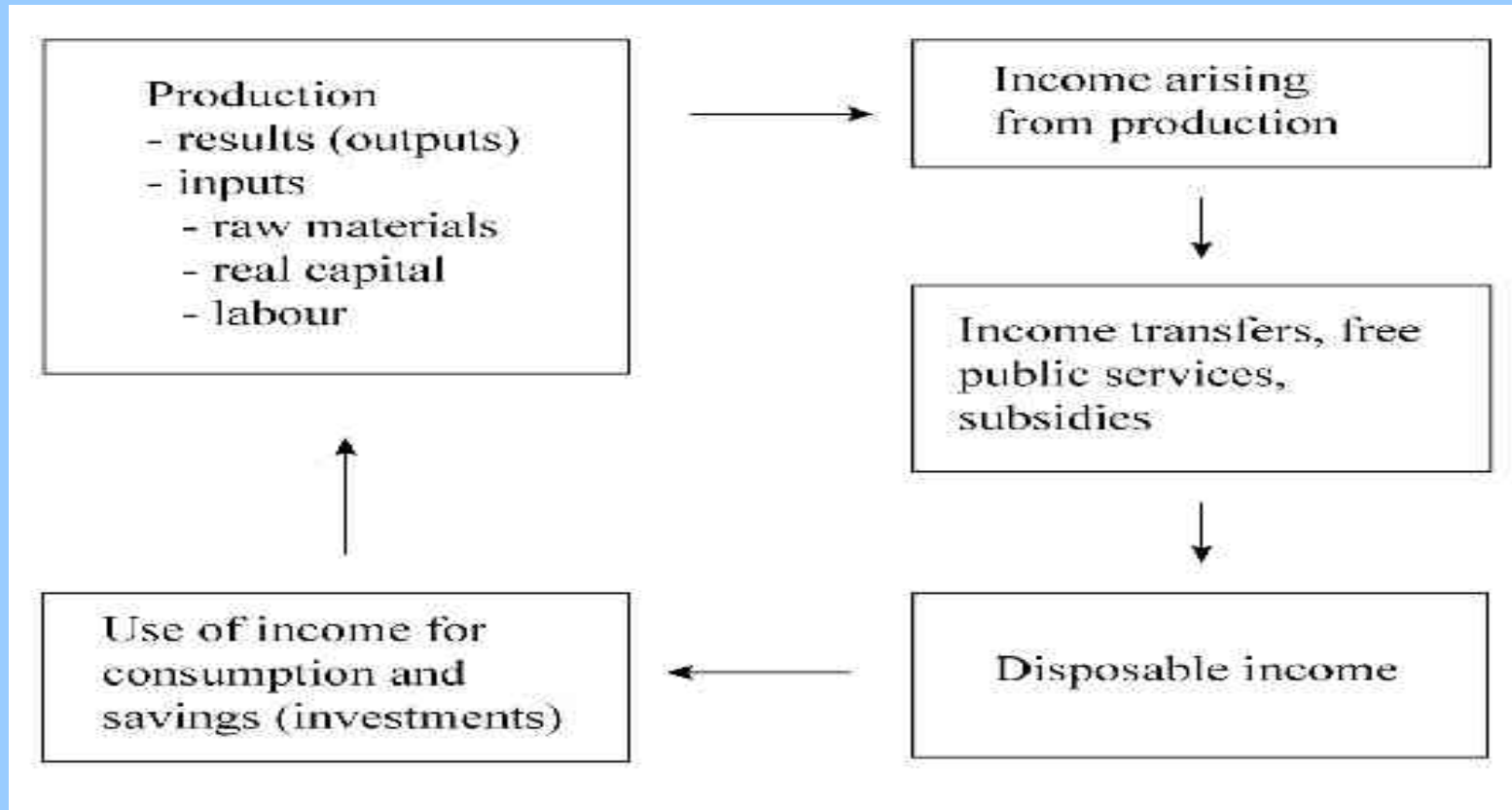
### International measurement response

- SNA and System of Material Balances
- Input/output models
- Econometric models

### Theories in the background

- Keynes’ theories (and Marxist production theories)
- Richard Stone’s work

# The Cycle of the System of National Accounts



## **PRECEDENT # 2:**

**International efforts to standardize the description and measurement of the 'realities': 1960s-1970s – Social Factors**

### Historical origins

- **To control social instability**
- **To improve living standard and fight against poverty**
- **To solve problems in labor markets, migration, population growth etc**

### International measurement response

- **System of Social and Demographic Statistics**
- **Social indicator movement**
- **Standard of living measurements**
- **Social reporting**

### Theories in the background

- **Richard Stone's work (life cycles)**
- **Theories of basic human needs**

## **PRECEDENT # 3:**

**International efforts to standardize the description and measurement of the 'realities':**

**1970s-1980s – Environmental Factors**

### Historical origins

- **To control international pollution**
- **To avoid depletion of resources**
- **To predict and avoid ecological catastrophes**

### International measurement response

- **Framework for Environmental Statistics**
- **System of Materials and Energy Balances**
- **Earthwatch, Infoterra**
- **Limits-to-growth-types global models**

### Theories in the background

- **Environmental Stress-Response Models**
- **Engineering models of pollution and energy/materials flows**

## **PRECEDENT # 4:**

**International efforts to standardize the description and measurement of the 'realities': 1980s-90s – Political Factors**

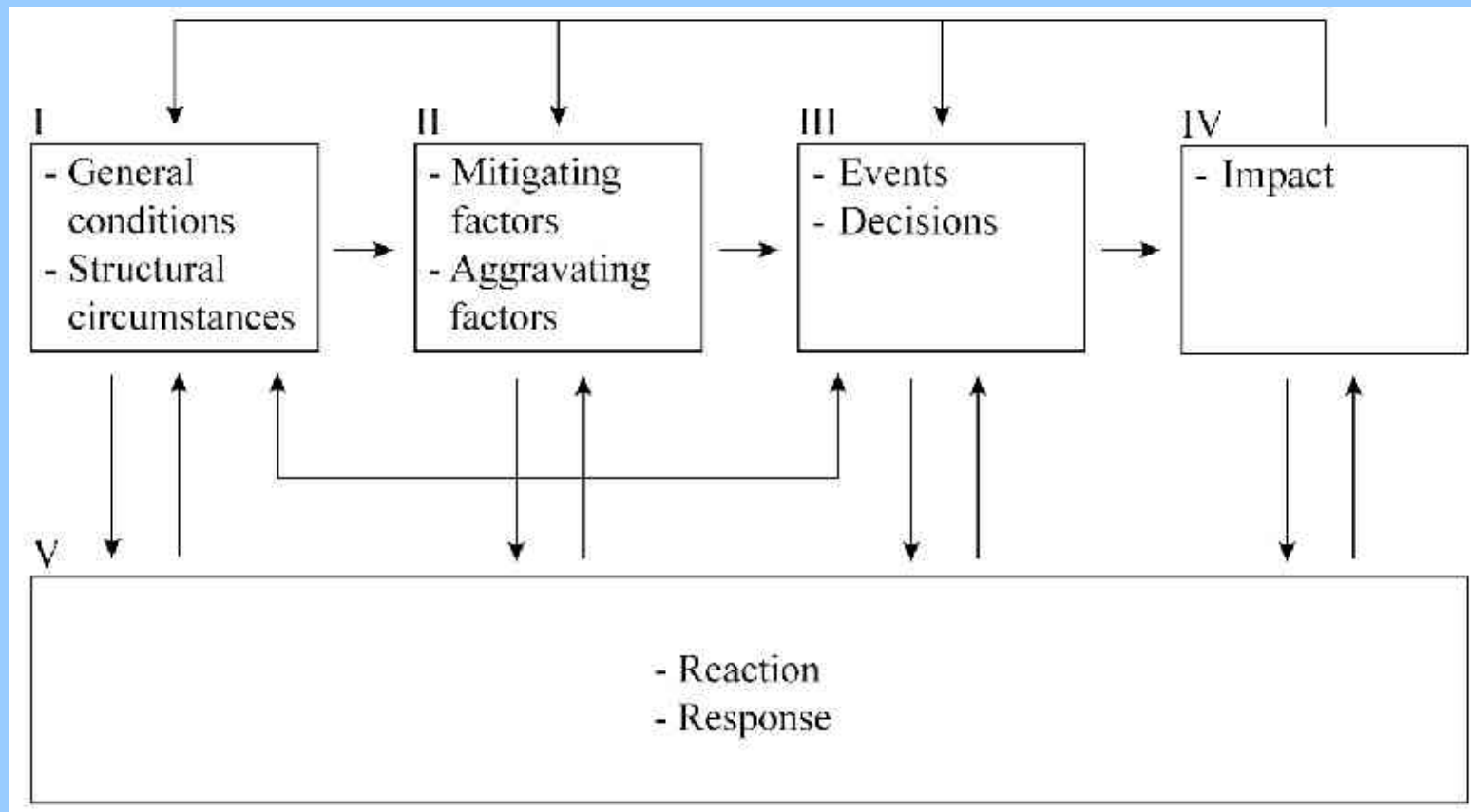
### Historical origins

**All of the above...**

**... and**

- **To avoid nuclear war (between superpowers or regional rivals)**
- **To prevent and predict conflicts, especially with escalation potential**
- **To avoid and control nuclear and other terrorist acts**

## A conceptual framework for political monitoring

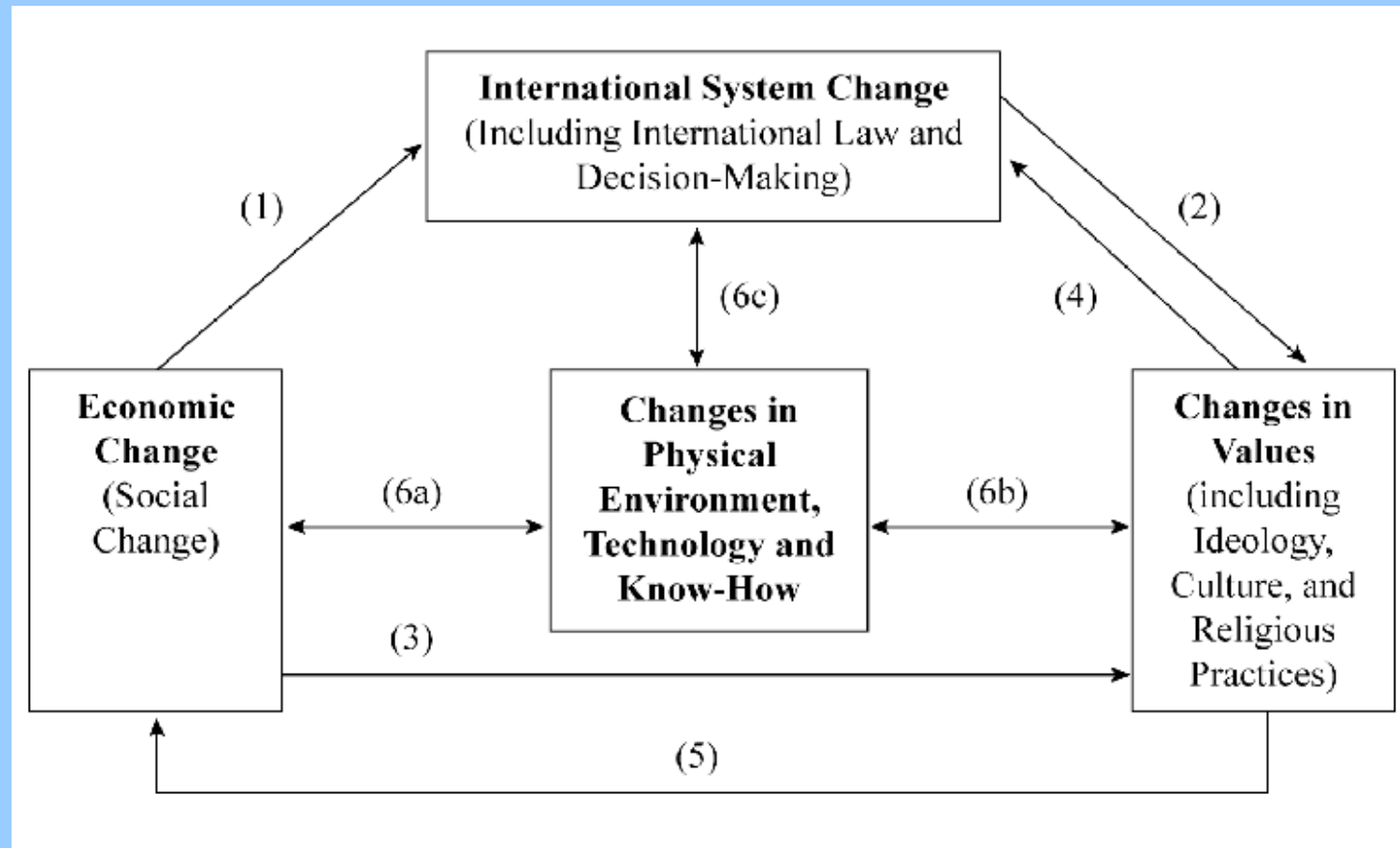


## Situational analysis of conflicts



# A simple framework to analyze the future

Relations between economic, systemic, environmental and ideological change



**UN Secretary-General U Thant in 1969  
cited in ‘Limits to Growth’ (by Meadows, Meadows, Behrens  
III and Randers, 1972)**

- **“... the Members of the United Nations have perhaps ten years left in which to subordinate their ancient quarrels and launch a global partnership to curb the arms race, to improve human environment, to defuse the population explosion and to supply the required momentum to development efforts.”**
- **“If such a global partnership is not forged with the next decade, then I very much fear that the problems ... will have reached such staggering proportions that they will be beyond our capacity to control.”**

## In '30 Year update to Limits to Growth'

Meadows, Meadows and Randers concluded in 2003:

- **Such a global partnership is not in evidence**
- **Scenarios of 30 years ago are still surprisingly accurate, and better supported by the data and examples gathered since**
- **Humankind is in overshoot, its economy far from sustainable and there is little time left for the fantasy of an infinite globe**
- **Any adjustment will be a huge task entailing a “revolution as profound as the agricultural and industrial revolutions.”**

## **The current global early warning and response system; Its haphazard nature:**

- **Periodic global commissions, panels or high-level working-groups on sectoral issues and challenges**
- **Periodic sectoral UN reports or publications such as the UNDP Human Development report, World Bank reports**
- **Periodic reports and newsletters by policy or scientific institutes (e.g., Human Rights Watch, International Crisis Group)**
- **Periodic reports by governmental agencies on human rights, arms trade, terrorism, the environment etc.**
- **Media reports on global and regional threats**
- **Articles, books and movies on global and regional threats**

## **The current global early warning and response system; Its major problems:**

- **Discussions and search for solutions are dispersed, ad hoc and short-term — moving from one popular issue to another**
- **Agenda setting is government-driven with national interests dominating**
- **No systematic, comprehensive and interconnected approach to the world's interacting and interdependent problems**
- **Lack of a credible way to find out the most urgent threats**
- **Reaction to emerging threats is delayed as there is no broad agreement on the validity and reliability of critical data (e.g. global warming)**

## **A possible solution:**

### **“Annual Global Report”**

- **By an independent, multidisciplinary, rotating group of high-ranking scientists**
- **As an annex to the UN Secretary-General’s Annual Report on the Work of the Organization**
- **This Annual Report already draws plenty of attention of diplomats, national decision-makers and the media**
- **Yet, until now without immediate or long-term effects**
- **Thus, the Secretary-General should promote and expand the Annual Report’s and its annex’ role in UN decision-making**

## Possible benefits of the “Global Report”:

- **Top scientists would gradually start to contribute more seriously than before to the shaping of the world agenda**
- **With scientists changing every year, each report would have a surprise element, draw attention and prevent one-sidedness**
- **High quality of analysis and little influence of national interests due to the scientists’ independence from UN and governments**
- **Maybe no short term affect on global agenda, but likely medium and long term change of priorities**
- **International standardization of data and research methodology as important side effect**

## **An alternative proposal:**

- **Using or creating an institution without direct links to the UN**
- **Headed by a world-class statesman/woman or a small group of eminent personalities or scholars with easy access to the world's media and decision makers**
- **Its annual agenda, research capacity and mission could be similar to the “Global Report” proposal**

## **FUTURE:**

- **Inventory on what has been done in various fields of activity**
- **A seminar in Europe and/or U.S.**
- **A project for the Club of Rome?**



## PROJECT: a model for consideration

- **Regional focal points (information gathering/analysis/action)**
- **Center for analysis of regional data**
- **High-powered board for publicity and advocacy (with easy access to decision-makers and media)**
- **Suggestions from audience**



**Thank you for your attention**

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