



Welcome

*"Futures studies as a field is coming of age
in the 21st century.*

*Celebrating 40 years of scholarly research,
WFSF brings you the state of the art
via our Ibero-American Chapter
based in Mexico."*

Dr. Jennifer GIDLEY

President

World Futures Studies Federation

Video Conference Series 2013: State of the Art Futures Studies

Welcome dear friends to this important event.

I am very happy to introduce the first session in the 2013 Videoconference Series for the WFSF Iberam Chapter, in collaboration with the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

Firstly, I want to thank the organisers of this Videoconference series, and especially Professora Guillermina BAENA PAZ for inviting me to welcome you and for her key role in organizing this event.

As President of the World Futures Studies Federation I am very proud of the activities of the WFSF Iberam Chapter in the Latin American region. The World Futures Studies Federation Iberam Chapter based in Mexico is our first official Chapter and is providing a model for other regions to follow in their footsteps.

2013 is a very important year for the World Futures Studies Federation as we are celebrating the 40th Anniversary of our founding in Paris in 1973. We will be celebrating this important event in Bucharest Romania in June this year. This is to honour the significant meeting held there in 1972, where the decision was made to found the Federation. We do hope that many of you will be able to travel to Bucharest to celebrate with us. And if not, we will bring you what we can virtually.

In thinking about the State of the Art of futures studies today, we need to be aware that the evolution of futures studies needs to parallel the evolution of other ideas in the world. It is very important that the field of futures studies keeps up with the state of the art of research and thinking in other fields. Unfortunately, many people still think that futures studies is about prediction and forecasting, based on empirical science. But empirical science is based on the old model of classical Newtonian physics, with its mechanistic view of human nature.

Science has moved on from the idea that the universe – including human beings – is mechanical.

Concepts like quantum physics, or in biology, self-adaptive organisms, all show that existing trends don't necessarily predict outcomes. So predictive approaches to futures studies have significant weaknesses in a quantum world.

Many futures studies methods offer alternative approaches to thinking about futures. Drawing on the European critical theory approach to sociology, critical futurists make value judgments about impending futures through critique and look at the changes that need to happen to forestall an apparent outcome.

Another approach is cultural futures, which questions the dominance of the Western model of development and argues that the American dream of high consumption is unsustainable.

We can also use futures studies to empower people to create the futures they want. This is not only about personal, selfish needs and desires, but what we want for the common good, for the benefit of all.

Many of these approaches will be presented to you throughout this series by our colleagues. I am sure that in the coming months we will have some very interesting presentations and discussions in this series.

Thank You and once again, ***Welcome*** to "State of the Art Futures Studies."