UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL RISK REPORT

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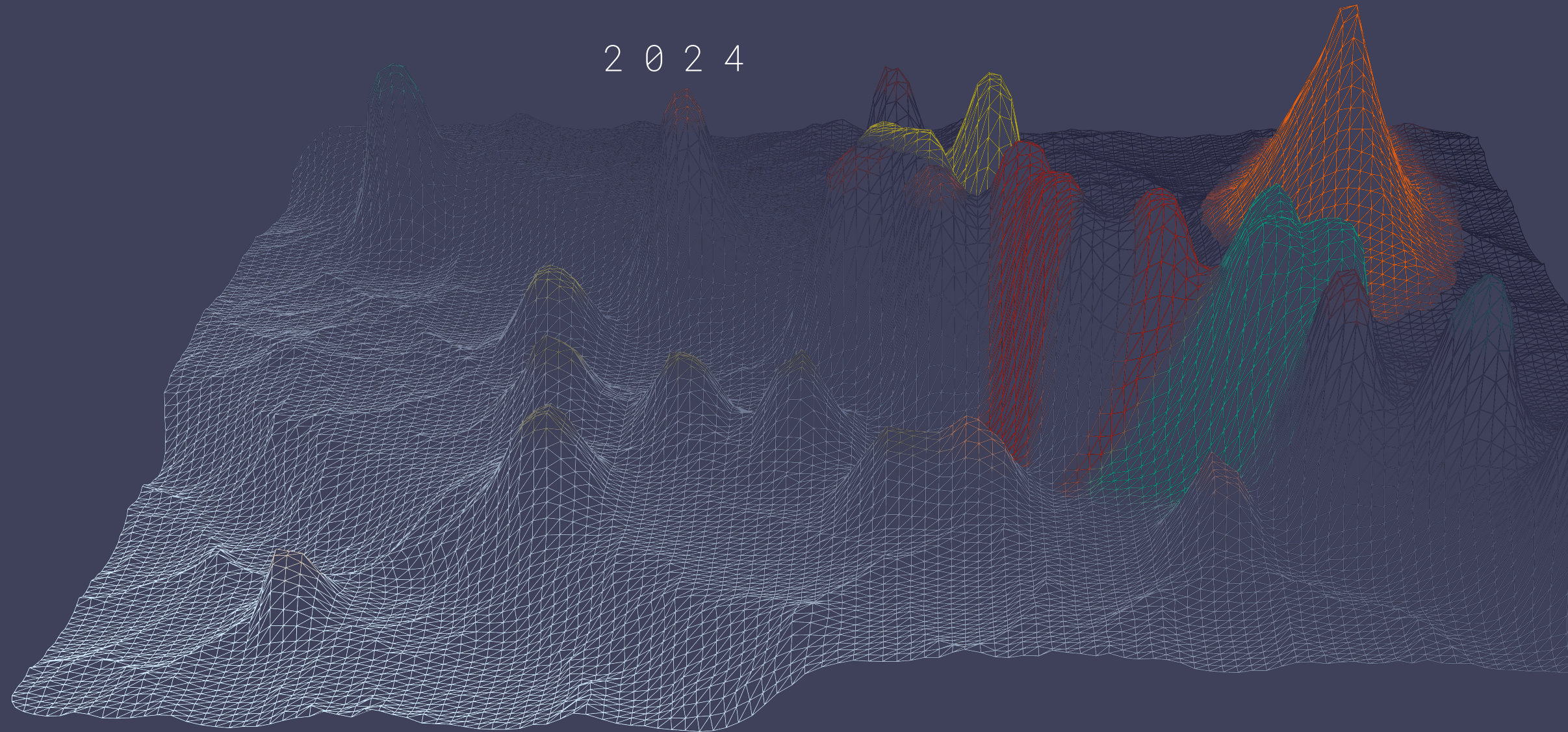
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"Our future depends on global cooperation to address global risks. The inaugural Global Risk Report sends a clear and urgent message: no country, company, or institution can confront these global vulnerabilities alone."

PREFACE

We are at a defining moment for humanity.

In a year marked by converging global crises, the international community faces mounting pressure to strengthen our collective capacity to anticipate and respond to shared risks.

This report, drawing on data collected in 2024, offers a valuable snapshot of how stakeholders around the world—governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society—perceive global risks and assess the multilateral system's readiness to address them.

Even though circumstances have shifted since the time of data collection, one truth holds: we remain dangerously unprepared for the risks that matter most. But we are not powerless.

This report is a wake-up call - and a blueprint. It shows us where we are most exposed and how we can and must renew multilateral cooperation. It urges us to move from crisis response to prevention, from fragmentation to foresight, from division to solidarity and resilience.

We owe it to future generations to make that choice.
The path forward lies in our hands.

António Guterres

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

CONTENTS

UN
GLOBAL
RISK
REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are living in an age of increasingly complex and inter-connected global risks, and we are not sufficiently prepared.
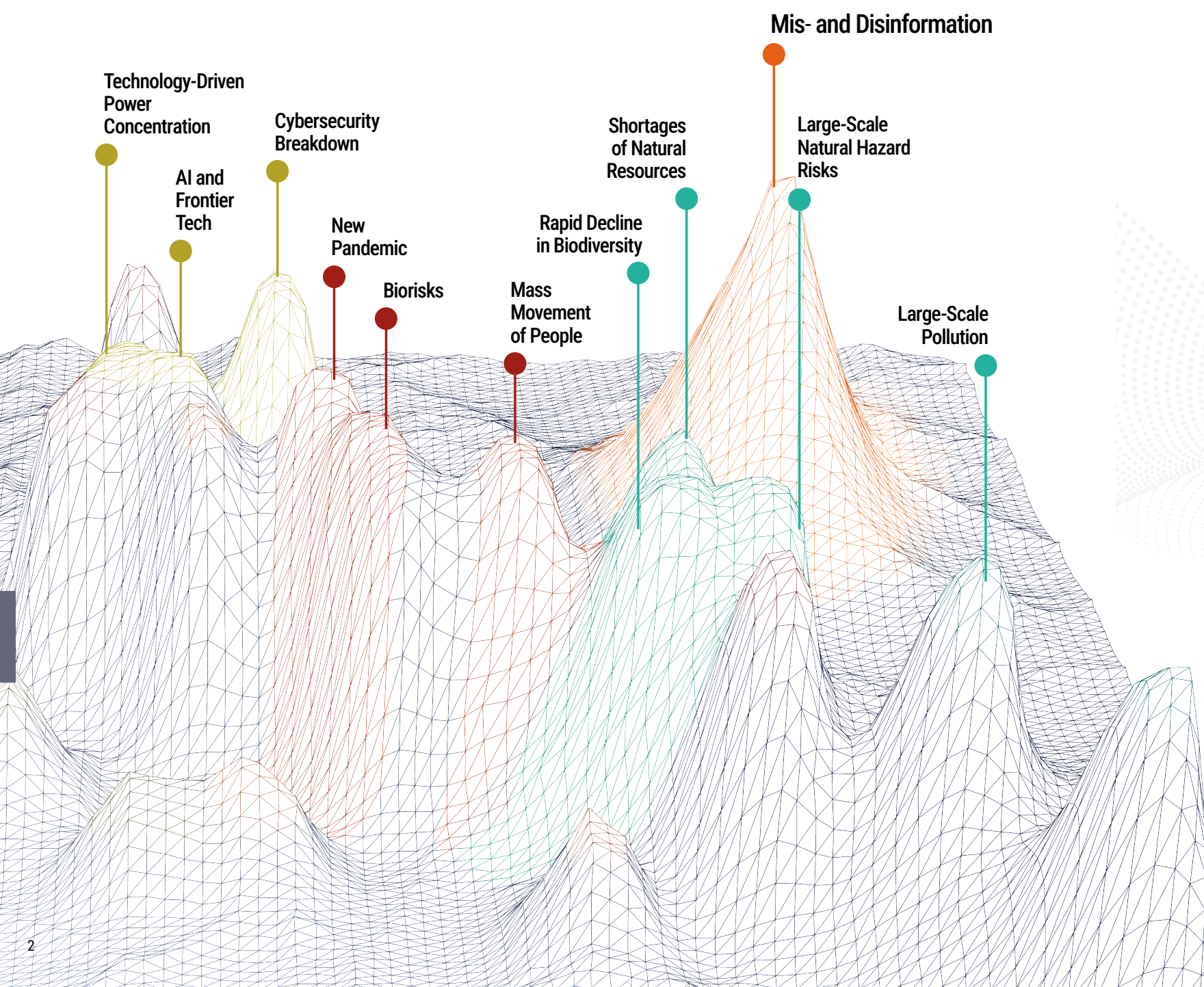
To better understand and prepare for these risks, the United Nations has conducted a global survey of stakeholders in government, the private sector, civil society, and academia. **The survey asked which risks are most important and which risks multilateral institutions are least prepared for.**

From the survey results, four groups of 11 risks emerged as both very important and least prepared for. We call these Global Vulnerabilities. They include risks from across political, technological, societal, and environmental domains.

When asked about solutions, respondents overwhelmingly identified joint action between governments as well as multistakeholder coalitions as the most effective approaches. They also highlighted critical barriers that prevent such joint action, including a lack of risk prioritization, consensus-building and accountability, as well as mistrust and information gaps, which if addressed, could significantly improve outcomes.

To illustrate the potential of improved joint action, this report closes with four future scenarios—ranging from fragmented to strong multilateral collaboration. The stark differences between these possible futures highlight a critical choice facing today's policymakers: Will the world choose breakdown, maintain the status quo, or break through to a more prosperous, greener and safer world for current and future generations?

Mis- and Disinformation

Technology-Driven Power Concentration

AI and Frontier Tech

Cybersecurity Breakdown

New Pandemic

Biorisks

Shortages of Natural Resources

Rapid Decline in Biodiversity

Mass Movement of People

Large-Scale Natural Hazard Risks

Large-Scale Pollution

GLOBAL VULNERABILITIES

Technological risks	Societal risks	Environmental risks	Political risks
Cybersecurity Breakdown	New Pandemic	Natural Resource Shortages	Mis- and Disinformation
Negative Outcomes of AI and Frontier Technologies	Biorisks	Biodiversity Decline	
Technology-Driven Power Concentration	Mass Movement of People	Natural Hazard Risks	
		Large-Scale Pollution	

Perception survey: Risk perceptions shape how we prioritize action

The insights in this report are based on survey responses from over 1,100 stakeholders across 136 countries with diverse perspectives, including representatives of governments, industry, civil society and academia.

The survey considered the respondents' perceptions on the importance of 28 risks across societal, technological, economic, environmental and political categories (Annexes 1 and 2), as well as the interactions between these risks. Crucially, respondents also shared their assessment of the preparedness of multilateral institutions to manage those risks.

Stakeholder perceptions matter because they directly influence what actions can be taken at local, national and international levels. Perceptions reflect what people value most and help define priorities for institutions across governments, civil society, the private sector and beyond. While technical risk assessments are important, perceptions shape how stakeholders navigate multiple interconnected risks and determine support for policy responses.

The 28 risks surveyed in this report were carefully curated through a comprehensive multi-step process (Annex 1). The final selection resulted from a rigorous case-by-case assessment of more than 100 risks identified through a review of over 40 risk reports, consultations with stakeholders from international and national institutions, as well as several red team exercises.

1. WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT GLOBAL RISKS?

Environmental risks top global concerns across all stakeholders and regions

The survey results demonstrated that all stakeholder groups agreed on the most pressing global risks. Across all regions, environmental risks emerged as the highest priority, with climate change inaction and large-scale pollution ranking at the top (Figure 1). These risks were seen as both highly likely and severe, highlighting their potentially catastrophic long-term impacts on ecosystems, economies and societies.

Societal and political risks also featured prominently among the top concerns, reflecting widespread unease. Mis- and disinformation, rise in inequalities, geopolitical tensions, mass movement of people and large-scale wars ranked among the top ten risks.

Figure 1: Perceptions of the most important global risks

* Risk importance is a compound measure that combines respondents' perceptions of the likelihood and severity of a risk. The top risks in this list are seen as most likely to occur and to have severe impacts if or when they manifest.

RANK	RISK	IMPORTANCE *
01	Climate Change Inaction	37.2
02	Large-Scale Pollution	36.0
03	Mis- and Disinformation	35.4
04	Natural Hazard Risks	35.0
05	Rise in Inequalities	34.7
06	Biodiversity Decline	34.6
07	Geopolitical Tensions	34.5
08	Natural Resource Shortages	34.3
09	Mass Movement of People	33.2
10	Large-Scale War	32.6
11	Biorisks	32.3
12	New Pandemic	32.1
13	Rule of Law Collapse	32.0
14	Cybersecurity Breakdown	31.7
15	Global Financial Crisis	31.6
16	Weapons of Mass Destruction	31.1
17	AI and Frontier Tech	31.0
18	Proliferation of Non-State Actors	30.8
19	Tech-Driven Power Concentration	30.8
20	Social Cohesion Collapse	30.4
21	Widespread Debt Crisis	30.2
22	Economic Fragmentation	29.1
23	State Sovereignty Erosion	28.5
24	Global Economic Stagnation	27.9
25	Supply Chain Collapse	27.8
26	Geoengineering Disasters	27.5
27	Multilateral Institution Collapse	26.3
28	Space-Based Event	23.4

RISK CATEGORIES:

- Economic
- Environmental
- Political
- Societal
- Technological

Environmental concerns are global, other perceptions vary by region

The survey revealed broadly consistent perceptions of the top risks but also identified regional variations (Figure 2).

While stakeholders in all regions shared environmental concerns, mis- and disinformation was ranked more highly in Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions. In North Africa and Asia, concerns about cybersecurity breakdowns, artificial intelligence (AI), and other frontier technologies were among the top ten risks, unlike in other regions.

Respondents in Sub-Saharan Africa ranked the risk of a new pandemic more highly than elsewhere. Notably, only respondents in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean identified global financial risks and concerns about non-State actors (including terrorist and criminal groups) among their top concerns.

Geopolitical instability is a shared global concern, but respondents in Europe, North America, North Africa and Western Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa were particularly worried about the risk of large-scale war.
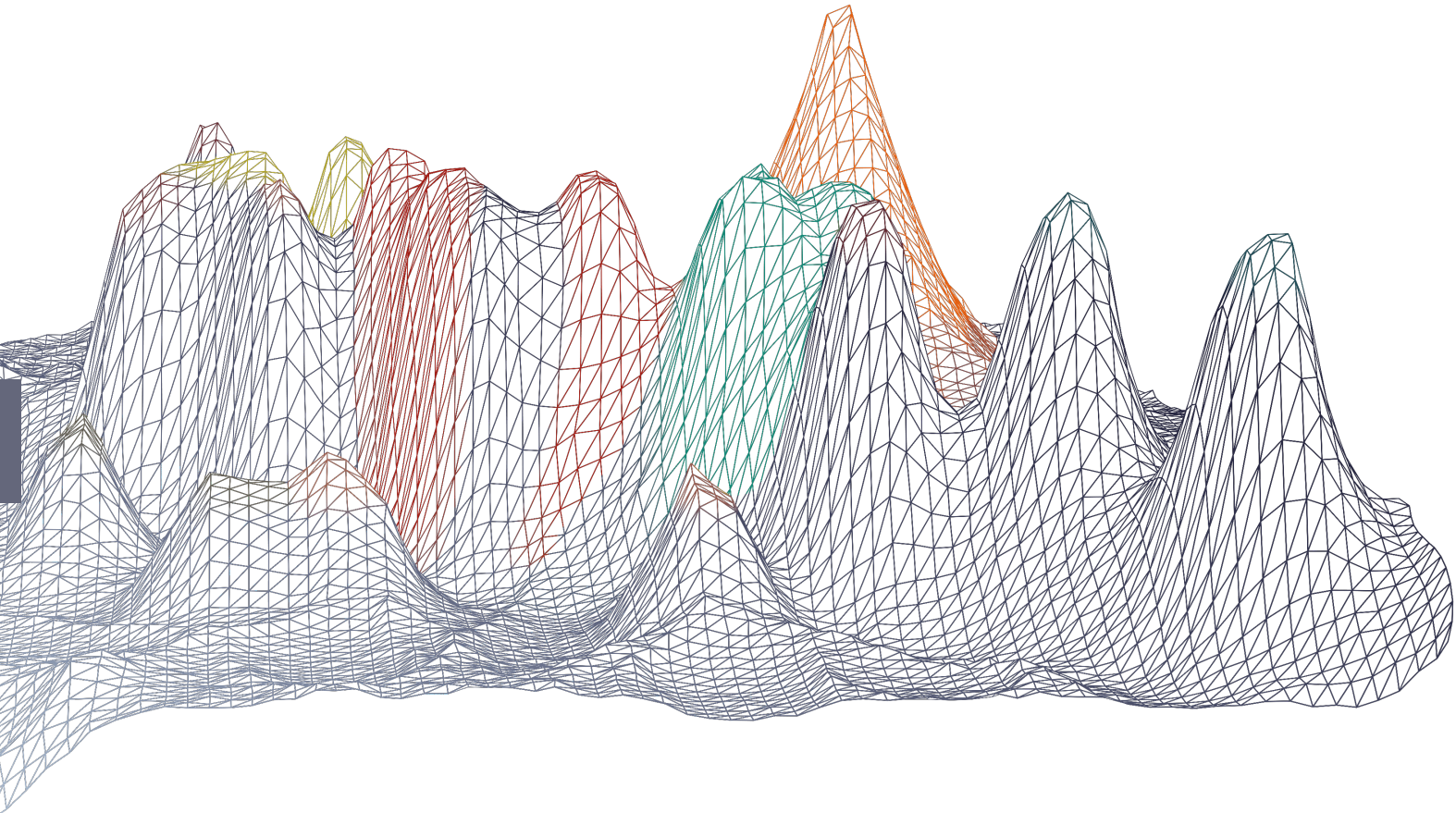
Figure 2: Most important risks by location of respondent

RISK CATEGORIES: ● Economic   ● Environmental   ● Political   ● Societal   ● Technological

	Central and Southern Asia	Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	Europe and North America	Latin America and the Caribbean	North Africa and Western Asia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Oceania
01	Large-Scale Pollution	Climate Change Inaction	Climate Change Inaction	Natural Resource Shortages	Large-Scale Pollution	Large-Scale Pollution	Climate Change Inaction
02	Natural Resource Shortages	Biodiversity Decline	Mis- and Disinformation	Large-Scale Pollution	Natural Resource Shortages	New Pandemic	Natural Hazard Risks
03	Biodiversity Decline	Natural Hazard Risks	Large-Scale Pollution	Mis- and Disinformation	Natural Hazard Risks	Mis- and Disinformation	Large-Scale Pollution
04	Climate Change Inaction	Natural Resource Shortages	Rise in Inequalities	Rise in Inequalities	Climate Change Inaction	Climate Change Inaction	Rise in Inequalities
05	Natural Hazard Risks	Mis- and Disinformation	Geopolitical Tensions	Biodiversity Decline	Large-Scale War	Natural Hazard Risks	Biodiversity Decline
06	Rule of Law Collapse	New Pandemic	Natural Hazard Risks	Climate Change Inaction	Geopolitical Tensions	Geopolitical Tensions	Natural Resource Shortages
07	Geopolitical Tensions	Large-Scale Pollution	Biodiversity Decline	Natural Hazard Risks	Rule of Law Collapse	Rise in Inequalities	Rule of Law Collapse
08	Rise in Inequalities	Geopolitical Tensions	Mass Movement of People	Biorisks	Cybersecurity Breakdown	Global Financial Crisis	Geopolitical Tensions
09	Mis- and Disinformation	AI and Frontier Tech	Natural Resource Shortages	Global Financial Crisis	AI and Frontier Tech	Proliferation of Non-State Actors	Mis- and Disinformation
10	Cybersecurity Breakdown	Biorisks	Large-Scale War	Proliferation of Non-State Actors	Weapons of Mass Destruction	Large-Scale War	Mass Movement of People

Many risks are already turning into crises

Respondents highlighted that many risks are already manifesting on a global scale (Figure 4). Over 80 per cent identified mis- and disinformation as currently occurring, followed by more than 70 per cent pointing to rise in inequalities and geopolitical tensions as pressing challenges. Environmental risks such as climate change inaction (70%) and large-scale pollution (64%) were also seen as key present-day concerns.

A smaller proportion of respondents emphasized risks anticipated to emerge in the near future. Over the next one to seven years, more than 30 per cent believed that risks arising from advancements in artificial intelligence and frontier technologies (42%), new pandemics (41%), and cybersecurity breakdowns (38%) may pose significant threats to global stability (Figures 3 and 4).

Beyond immediate and near-term concerns, the survey also highlighted longer-term risks likely to impact future generations. Respondents pointed to threats that may materialise over the next two to three decades, including space-based events (35%), geoengineering disasters (29%), and natural resource shortages (25%), requiring forward-looking strategies, such as investment in international resilience and joint action.

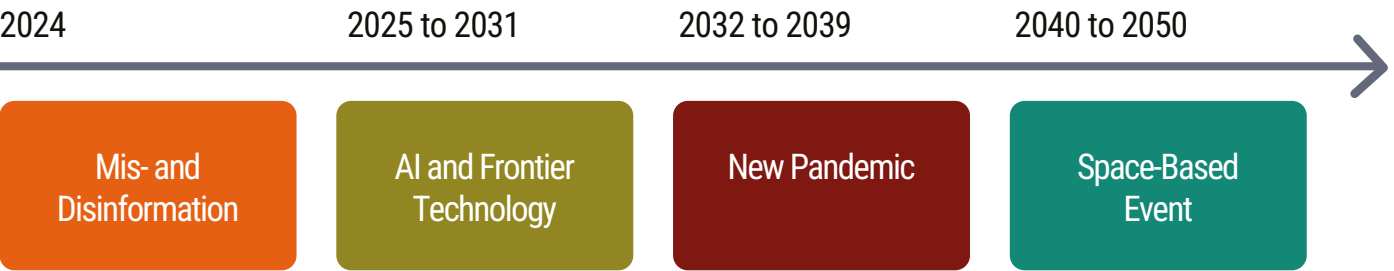**Figure 3:** Risks most likely to occur, by timeframe

2024	2025 to 2031	2032 to 2039	2040 to 2050
Mis- and Disinformation	AI and Frontier Technology	New Pandemic	Space-Based Event

Top 5 risks that are perceived to be **currently occuring**

Mis- and Disinformation	84%
Rise in Inequalities	77%
Geopolitical Tensions	76%
Climate Change Inaction	70%
Large-Scale Pollution	64%

Top 5 risks that are perceived to occur in **next 1-7 years**

AI and Frontier Tech	42%
New Pandemic	41%
Cybersecurity Breakdown	38%
Global Financial Crisis	36%
Large-Scale War	34%

Top 5 risks that are perceived to occur in **next 8-15 years**

New Pandemic	27%
Geoengineering Disasters	25%
Supply Chain Collapse	24%
Space-Based Event	24%
Global Financial Crisis	23%
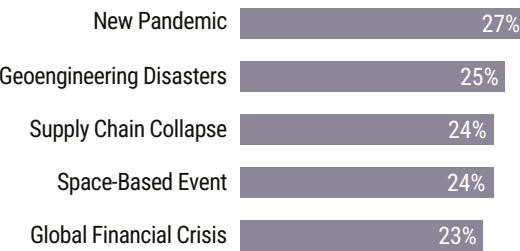
Top 5 risks that are perceived to occur **between 16 years from now and 2050**

Space-Based Event	35%
Geoengineering Disasters	29%
Natural Resource Shortages	25%
Multilateral Institution Collapse	22%
Supply Chain Collapse	19%
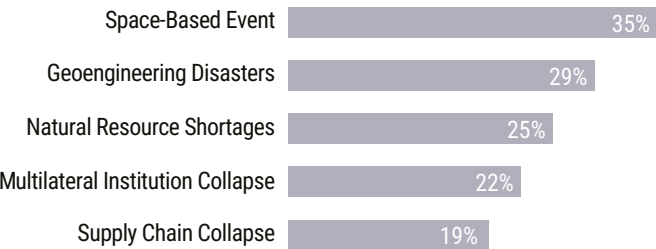
Note: Survey respondents were asked when they believed risks would have a significant negative impact on a substantial portion of humanity. Responses of "Don't Know" were excluded.

Risk connections can inform global action

Figure 5: Network map of global risks
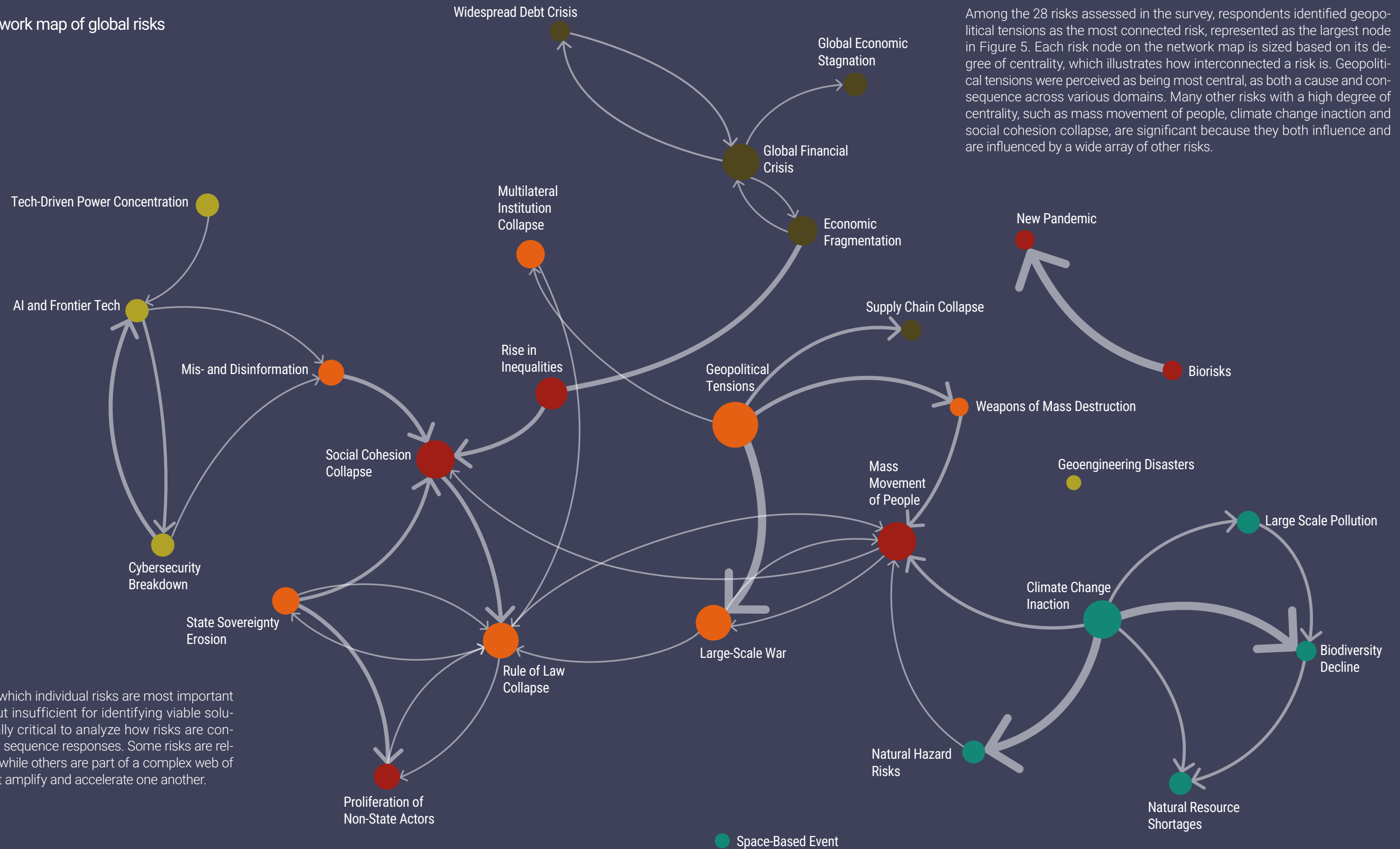
Among the 28 risks assessed in the survey, respondents identified geopolitical tensions as the most connected risk, represented as the largest node in Figure 5. Each risk node on the network map is sized based on its degree of centrality, which illustrates how interconnected a risk is. Geopolitical tensions were perceived as being most central, as both a cause and consequence across various domains. Many other risks with a high degree of centrality, such as mass movement of people, climate change inaction and social cohesion collapse, are significant because they both influence and are influenced by a wide array of other risks.

RISK CATEGORIES: Economic   Environmental   Political   Societal   Technological

Widespread Debt Crisis
Global Economic Stagnation
Global Financial Crisis
Tech-Driven Power Concentration
Multilateral Institution Collapse
Economic Fragmentation
New Pandemic
AI and Frontier Tech
Supply Chain Collapse
Rise in Inequalities
Geopolitical Tensions
Biorisks
Mis- and Disinformation
Weapons of Mass Destruction
Social Cohesion Collapse
Geoengineering Disasters
Mass Movement of People
Cybersecurity Breakdown
Large Scale Pollution
Climate Change Inaction
State Sovereignty Erosion
Biodiversity Decline
Rule of Law Collapse
Large-Scale War
Proliferation of Non-State Actors
Natural Hazard Risks
Natural Resource Shortages
Space-Based Event

Understanding which individual risks are most important is necessary but insufficient for identifying viable solutions. It is equally critical to analyze how risks are connected to better sequence responses. Some risks are relatively isolated, while others are part of a complex web of interactions that amplify and accelerate one another.

Geopolitical tension is the most interconnected risk

The relationships between risks can also be measured by connection strength. The survey identified the strongest connection between geopolitical tensions and large-scale wars (Figure 6). Respondents generally observed the strongest links between risks within the same category, such as between climate change inaction and natural hazard risks, or between rise in inequalities and social cohesion collapse.

While cascading effects are often felt within the same category, they do also cross categories. For instance, geopolitical tensions were seen as drivers for mass movement of people (Figure 6). Similarly, climate change inaction was identified as a focal risk with cascade risks such as biodiversity decline, natural resource shortages, natural hazard risks, and mass movement of people. These findings emphasize the importance of understanding interconnected risks and their causal pathways to prioritize and sequence responses effectively.

Figure 6: Top ten risks by connection strength

RISK CATEGORIES: ● Economic   ● Environmental   ● Political   ● Societal   ● Technological

RANK	CONNECTION STRENGTH	FOCAL RISK	TOP CONNECTED RISKS	CASCADE RISKS
01	155	Geopolitical Tensions	**Large-Scale War** / Weapons of Mass Destruction	**Mass Movement of People** / Rule of Law Collapse
02	143	Climate Change Inaction	**Natural Hazard Risks** / Biodiversity Decline	**Mass Movement of People** / Natural Resource Shortage
03	125	Biorisks	**New Pandemic**	**Global Financial Crisis**
04	87	Large-Scale War	**Mass Movement of People** / Rule of Law Collapse	**Social Cohesion Collapse**
05	84	State Sovereignty Erosion	**Proliferation of Non-State Actors** / Rule of Law Collapse	**Mass Movement of People**
06	82	Rise in Inequalities	**Social Cohesion Collapse**	**Rule of Law Collapse** / State Sovereignty Erosion
06	82	Mis- and Disinformation	**Social Cohesion Collapse**	**Rule of Law Collapse** / State Sovereignty Erosion
07	77	Social Cohesion Collapse	**Rule of Law Collapse** / State Sovereignty Erosion	**Mass Movement of People** / Proliferation of Non-State Actors
07	77	Global Financial Crisis	**Widespread Debt Crisis** / Economic Fragmentation	**Rise in Inequalities**
07	77	Cybersecurity Breakdown	**AI and Frontier Tech** / Mis- and Disinformation	**Social Cohesion Collapse**

2. WHICH RISKS ARE WE **LEAST** PREPARED FOR?

Global institutions are seen as effective in risk identification

Survey respondents identified five critical risks that multilateral institutions are least prepared to address: outer space, cybersecurity breakdowns, the proliferation of non-State actors, mis- and disinformation, and the erosion of State sovereignty.

Respondents evaluated preparedness across three dimensions—risk identification, reduction and mitigation (Figure 7). Overall, respondents recognised risk identification as the greatest strength of multilateral institutions, driven by robust global data, insights and multistakeholder forums, such as those supporting climate action. However, respondents noted significant room for improvement in identifying risks around frontier technologies and artificial intelligence, mis- and disinformation, space-based event, cybersecurity and new pandemics, where international frameworks remain underdeveloped.

Effective risk mitigation and reduction typically require action across national, regional and international levels. Respondents saw multilateral institutions contributing most effectively to action on climate change, geopolitical tensions and economic stability. Nevertheless, they also highlighted significant limitations in addressing risks around space-based event, cybersecurity and non-State actor proliferation, emphasizing the systemic challenges in these emerging areas.

Figure 7: Perceived preparedness of multilateral institutions

The overall preparedness score is the average of three dimensions: identification, reduction and mitigation.

RISK CATEGORIES: ● Economic ● Environmental ● Political ● Societal ● Technological

LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS: Low ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ High

RISK	PREPAREDNESS	Identification	Reduction	Mitigation
Overall (Average across all risks)	4.3	4.7	4.1	4.1
Space - Based Event	3.6	3.8	3.4	3.6
Cybersecurity Breakdown	3.9	4.1	3.7	3.9
Proliferation of Non-State Actors	3.9	4.4	3.7	3.7
Mis- and Disinformation	4.0	4.3	3.4	3.8
State Sovereignty Erosion	4.0	4.5	3.8	3.7
Tech-Driven Power Concentration	4.1	4.4	3.9	4.0
Geoengineering Disasters	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.0
AI and Frontier Tech	4.1	4.2	4.0	4.1
Social Cohesion Collapse	4.2	4.5	4.0	4.1
New Pandemic	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.2
Weapons of Mass Destruction	4.2	4.8	4.1	3.8
Biorisks	4.3	4.5	4.1	4.2
Natural Resource Shortages	4.3	5.0	4.0	4.0
Large-Scale War	4.3	5.0	4.1	4.0
Supply Chain Collapse	4.3	4.7	4.1	4.3
Mass Movmt. of People	4.3	5.0	4.0	4.2
Economic Fragmentation	4.4	4.8	4.1	4.2
Natural Hazard Risks	4.4	4.7	4.0	4.4
Widespread Debt Crisis	4.4	4.8	4.1	4.3
Biodiversity Decline	4.4	4.9	4.2	4.1
Global Economic Stagnation	4.5	5.0	4.3	4.4
Rule of Law Collapse	4.5	5.0	4.3	4.4
Global Financial Crisis	4.6	5.0	4.2	4.4
Large-Scale Pollution	4.6	5.2	4.2	4.3
Rise in Inequalities	4.6	5.3	4.2	4.4
Multilateral Institution Collapse	4.6	4.9	4.6	4.4
Geopolitical Tensions	4.6	5.3	4.2	4.4
Climate Change Inaction	4.8	5.5	4.6	4.4

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3. WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL GLOBAL VULNERABILITIES?

Global Vulnerabilities arise when institutions are underprepared for important risks

The first part of this report examined which risks respondents perceived as most important, while the second section identified those for which multilateral institutions are more or less prepared. When combined, these perspectives reveal the central concern of this report: Global Vulnerabilities arising from critical risks where the international community is least prepared (Figure 8).

One vulnerability clearly stands out: **mis- and disinformation**. It is perceived as an extremely important risk for which the international community is not prepared, with the potential to exacerbate geopolitical tensions, societal discord and crisis response challenges.

Beyond mis- and disinformation, three Global Vulnerability clusters emerge—each belonging to a single risk category—where multilateral institutions are not adequately prepared for the most important risks, in the view of stakeholders:
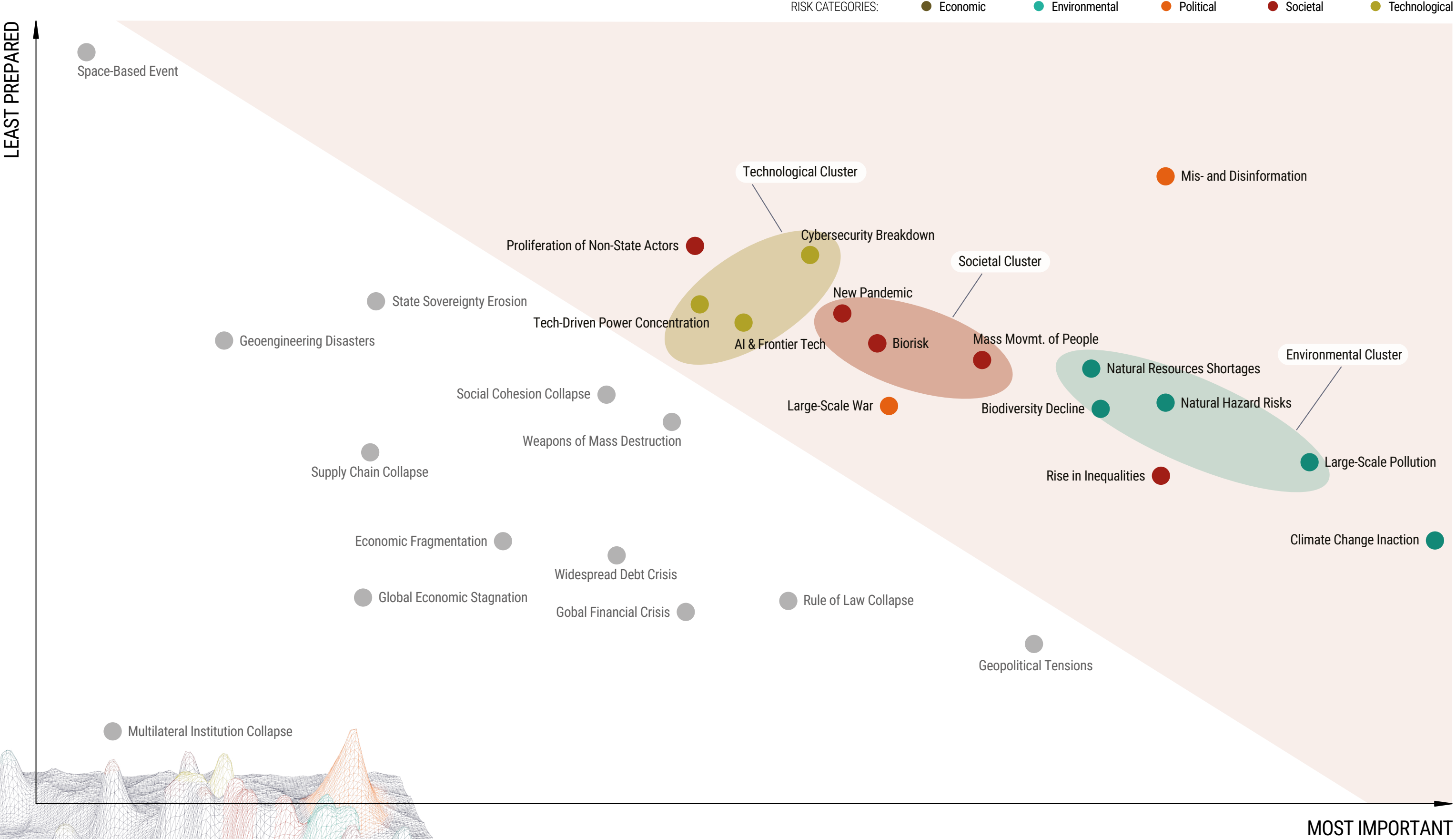
- An **environmental cluster**, concentrated on natural resource shortages, natural hazards, biodiversity decline and large-scale carbon pollution. These risks are perceived as important by survey respondents. While some level of global preparedness exists, it is perceived as insufficient relative to the scale of the challenge.

- A **societal cluster**, centered around risks of a new pandemic, biorisks triggering disease outbreaks and the mass movement of people. This group of risks was seen as important, underprepared for and highly interconnected, by survey respondents.

- A **technological cluster**, focused on cybersecurity breakdowns, artificial intelligence and frontier technologies and power concentration in the technology sector, where national and international institutions struggle to catch up with rapid advances.

These Global Vulnerabilities offer decision-makers information on priorities for international collaboration, where Member States need to learn more, share experiences, and enhance resilience – as emphasized in the UN75 Declaration and the Pact for the Future.

Global Vulnerabilities emerge when a risk is perceived as important but lacks adequate preparation

Figure 8: Map of Global Vulnerabilities

Note: Global Vulnerabilities are a product of the scores on risk importance and risk preparedness. The shaded area in the chart represents risks where importance is high, and preparedness is low.

RISK CATEGORIES: ● Economic ● Environmental ● Political ● Societal ● Technological

LEAST PREPARED

MOST IMPORTANT

Space-Based Event

Mis- and Disinformation

Technological Cluster

Proliferation of Non-State Actors

Cybersecurity Breakdown

Societal Cluster

State Sovereignty Erosion

New Pandemic

Tech-Driven Power Concentration

Mass Movmt. of People

Geoengineering Disasters

AI & Frontier Tech

Biorisk

Environmental Cluster

Natural Resources Shortages

Social Cohesion Collapse

Large-Scale War

Biodiversity Decline

Natural Hazard Risks

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Rise in Inequalities

Large-Scale Pollution

Supply Chain Collapse

Economic Fragmentation

Climate Change Inaction

Widespread Debt Crisis

Global Economic Stagnation

Rule of Law Collapse

Gobal Financial Crisis

Geopolitical Tensions

Multilateral Institution Collapse

4. WHAT ENABLES OR BLOCKS EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO RISKS?

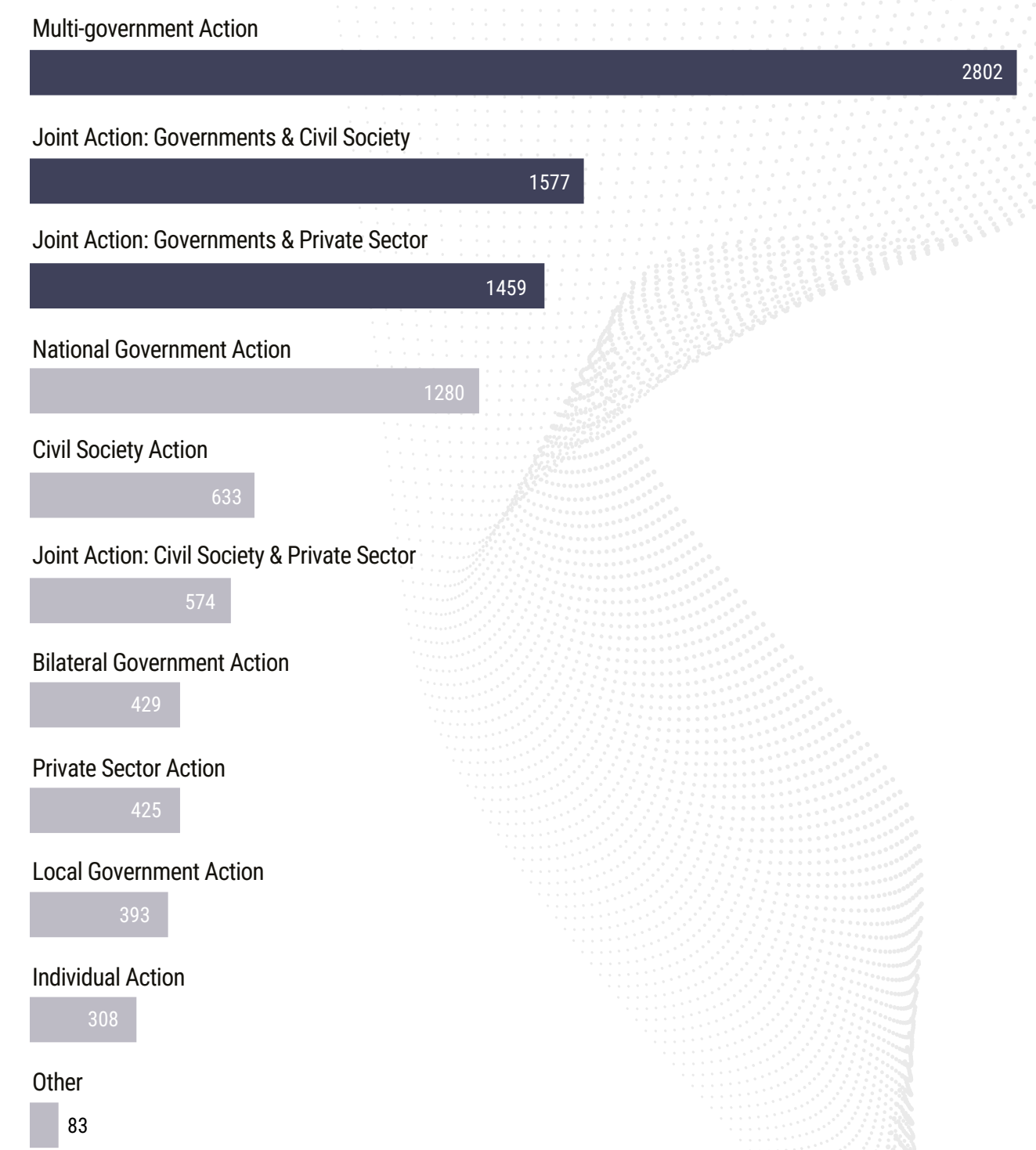## Multi-government action is seen as the most effective risk response

Respondents were asked to identify which stakeholder group is best placed to take action on each Global Vulnerability. Overwhelmingly, the results suggest that joint action by multiple governments is the most effective response. Joint action between governments and civil society, and joint action by governments and the private sector, also consistently ranked as top choices (Figure 9).

Respondents indicated that joint government action, through multilateral institutions, was particularly effective in addressing large-scale wars, geopolitical tensions and weapons of mass destruction. They saw collaboration between government and civil society as most effective for addressing the erosion of state sovereignty and the

collapse of social cohesion. By contrast, stakeholders felt that government-private sector collaboration could make the greatest contribution to reducing the risks of supply chain collapse and global economic stagnation.

Unilateral action by national governments was considered among the most effective responses to address a rise in inequalities and mass movement of people. However, across all 28 global risks, such unilateral action was consistently viewed as less effective than joint responses involving two or more governments working together.

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Figure 9: The **most effective** actions to reduce risk

Multi-government Action — 2802
Joint Action: Governments & Civil Society — 1577
Joint Action: Governments & Private Sector — 1459
National Government Action — 1280
Civil Society Action — 633
Joint Action: Civil Society & Private Sector — 574
Bilateral Government Action — 429
Private Sector Action — 425
Local Government Action — 393
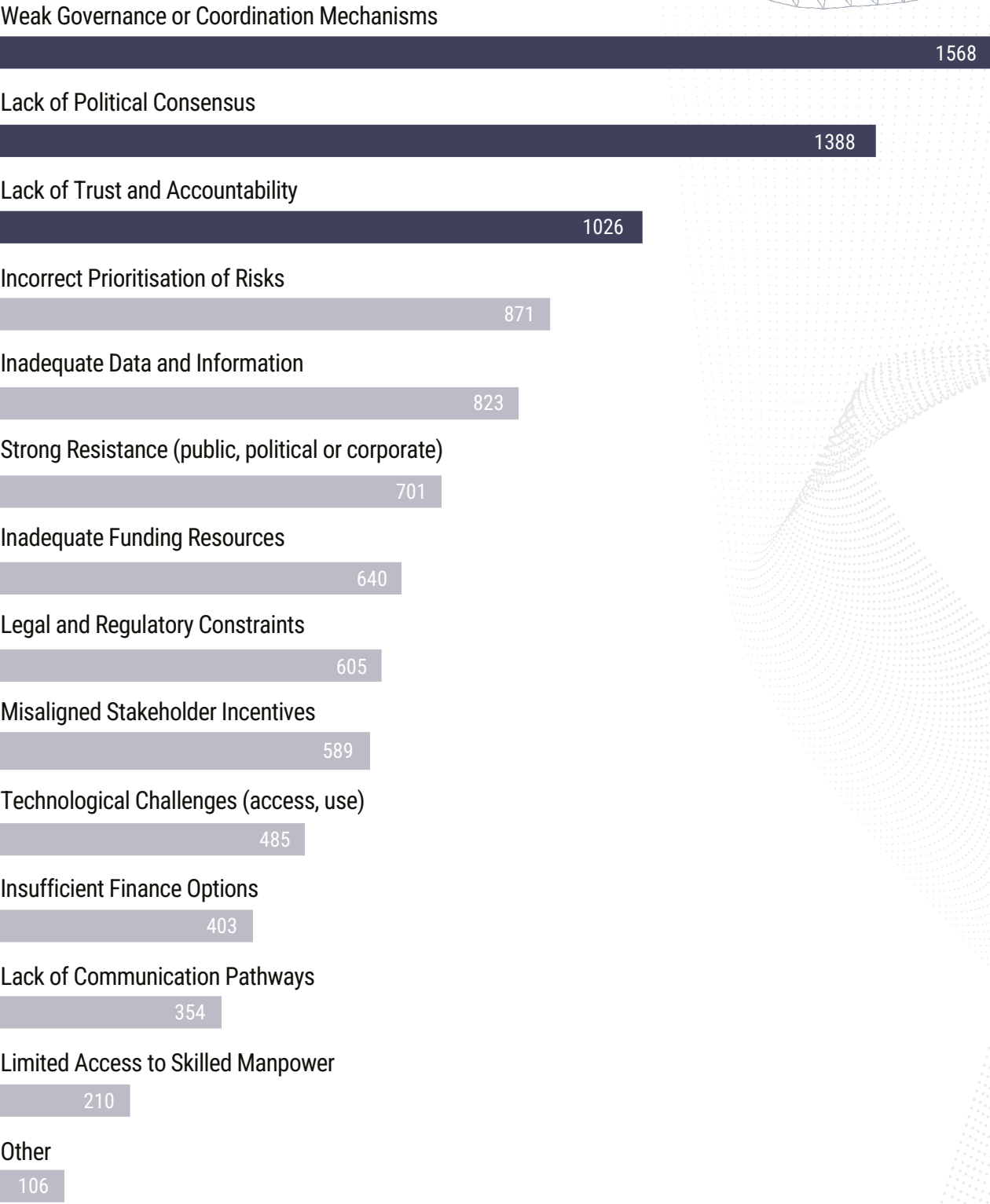Individual Action — 308
Other — 83

Note: Bars represent the frequency of mentions, aggregated for all 28 risks.

Weak governance and lack of consensus are the top barriers to action

Survey respondents also identified several key barriers to progress (Figure 10). Weak governance and coordination, along with a lack of political consensus, were seen as the largest obstacles, followed by lack of trust and accountability. Respondents also highlighted the improper prioritization of risks and inadequate data and information as key roadblocks.

Figure 10: Barriers inhibiting better global risk management

Weak Governance or Coordination Mechanisms
1568

Lack of Political Consensus
1388

Lack of Trust and Accountability
1026

Incorrect Prioritisation of Risks
871

Inadequate Data and Information
823

Strong Resistance (public, political or corporate)
701

Inadequate Funding Resources
640

Legal and Regulatory Constraints
605

Misaligned Stakeholder Incentives
589

Technological Challenges (access, use)
485

Insufficient Finance Options
403

Lack of Communication Pathways
354

Limited Access to Skilled Manpower
210

Other
106

Note: Bars represent the frequency of mentions, aggregated for all 28 risks.

Mis- and disinformation face unique barriers compared to other risks

These barriers vary differently across the most important risks (Figure 11). For **mis- and disinformation**, the primary obstacles include gaps in data, accountability and communication pathways. These gaps hinder the ability to engage on evidence-based narratives and ensure co-ordinated responses.

Lack of political consensus was identified as a particularly strong barrier to addressing geopolitical tensions, rise in inequalities, large-scale war and mass movement of people. Similarly, weak governance or coordination mechanisms were seen as a top barrier to tackling large-scale pollution, rise in inequalities and mass movements of people.

Incorrect prioritization of risks emerged as a concern, particularly for environmental risks, highlighting a perceived mismatch between agreed actions and the magnitude of the challenge. By understanding such barriers and their connections to specific risks, decision-makers can better direct limited resources to the most effective actions.

Figure 11: Top three barriers to action for the most important global risks

BARRIER LEVELS: ● High-level barrier ● Mid-level barrier ● Low-level barrier

	Weak governance/ coordination	Lack of political consensus	Incorrect risk prioritization	Lack of trust/ accountability	Inadequate funding resources	Lack of communication pathways	Inadequate data and information
Climate Change Inaction	Mid	High	Low				
Large-Scale Pollution	High	Mid	Low				
Mis- and Disinformation				Mid		Low	High
Natural Hazard Risks	Mid		High		Low		
Rise in Inequalities	High	Mid			Low		
Biodiversity Decline	Mid	Low	High				
Geopolitical Tensions	Low	High		Mid			
Natural Resource Shortages	High	Low	Mid				
Mass Movement of People	High	High				Low	
Large-Scale War	Mid	High		Low			

5. WHAT ALTERNATIVE FUTURES LIE AHEAD?

Risks and levels of cooperation shape four future worlds

This report began by identifying the most **important risks** (Chapter 1) as well as those for which we are least prepared (Chapter 2). Risks that were most important and least prepared for were identified as **Global Vulnerabilities** (Chapter 3):

• **Mis- and Disinformation**, perceived to be extremely important, and a risk for which the international community is deeply underprepared.

• **An environmental cluster**, concentrated on natural resource shortages, natural hazard risks, and biodiversity decline.

• **A societal cluster**, centered around risks of a new pandemic, biorisks that could trigger disease outbreaks, and the mass movement of people.

• **A technological cluster**, focused on cybersecurity breakdowns, artificial intelligence and frontier technologies, and power concentration in the technology sector.

The report then considered which actions would **most help** address these Global Vulnerabilities and how to overcome **barriers** to action (Chapter 4). Survey findings overwhelmingly pointed to **joint action between States and diverse stakeholders** as the best way forward.

These insights were then also harnessed to develop four foresight scenarios, potentially unfolding between now and 2050. These scenarios illustrate how **more or less joint multilateral action** could impact each of the Global Vulnerabilities (Figure 12). Each scenario prominently features a risk (e.g. natural hazard risks, mis- and disinformation, new pandemic and cybersecurity) from one of the Global Vulnerability clusters.

Recognizing that risks are interconnected, each scenario also shows how a risk can positively or negatively cascade across others. This approach is rooted in the findings of the perception survey. By integrating these results, the scenarios realistically capture the complexities of cause and effect while showing that impacts do not always follow a step-by-step sequence. For instance, in the Breakdown scenario, which envisions a state of fractured multilateral action, the collapse of ice shelves leads to increased risks of natural hazards, biodiversity loss and the mass movement of people.

The scenarios have been developed using **established foresight methodologies[1]** that draw out **interconnections** between risks. They are not predictions of the future, rather, they build a bridge between perceptions, actions and possible outcomes.

Figure 12: How the survey insights inform the scenarios:

MOST IMPORTANT RISKS
(Chapter 1)

LEAST PREPARED RISKS
(Chapter 2)

GLOBAL VULNERABILITIES TO RISK
(Chapter 3)

Mis- and Disinformation

Societal Cluster

Environmental Cluster

Technological Cluster

DEGREE OF JOINT ACTION
between governments, industry, and civil society (Chapter 4)

FOUR SCENARIOS
(Chapter 5)

Breakdown scenario	Status quo scenario	Progress scenario	Breakthrough scenario
Fragmented joint action exacerbates the cascading effects of **natural hazard risks***.	**Uncoordinated joint action** leads to uneven consequences after a global **disinformation*** attack.	**Improved joint action** mitigates the impacts of a **new pandemic*** outbreak.	**Strong joint action** overcomes an acute global **cybersecurity*** incident.

* Each scenario prominently features a risk (e.g., natural hazard risks, mis- and disinformation, new pandemic and cybersecurity) from one of the vulnerability clusters.

1   See Annex 3 for the foresight scenario building methodology.

BREAKDOWN SCENARIO

State of global cooperation and joint action: **Fragmented and collapsing**
Global Vulnerability: **Natural hazards risk**

In an increasingly **fragmented world**, the multilateral system is under severe strain and **unable to take joint action** to prevent or prepare for global risks. Climate commitments are widely abandoned, accelerating the increase in global temperatures and leading to the **collapse of major ice shelves**, raising sea levels globally. Rising tempera-

tures contribute to other natural hazards like droughts, heatwaves, and forest fires. **These risks have negative cascading impacts, collapsing economic development in many regions and rapidly increasing global inequality and insecurity.**

KEY OUTCOMES:

Environmental cluster:

The collapse of ice shelves leads to a significant sea level rise, causing massive flooding in major coastal cities and rendering several Small Island Developing States uninhabitable.

Extreme weather events contribute to widespread ecosystem and biodiversity loss. Fractured global cooperation prevents effective support to the most devastated communities.

Technological cluster:

Countries and companies that can monitor environmental changes with satellite data and artificial intelligence technology can protect their people and gain relative strength, which they leverage in other areas for economic, political and security gains.

The breakdown in global cooperation impedes any knowledge sharing, data exchange, and cybersecurity collaboration across countries, which leaves most countries unable to act proactively to cascading risks.

Societal cluster:

Rapid sea level rise, coupled with planetary warming, has large societal effects. Droughts, heatwaves and floods decimate agriculture, leading to widespread food insecurity and famine, driving the mass movement of people from vulnerable locations to neighbouring areas and regions.

Fractured global cooperation means that the mass movement of people is chaotic, increasing inequality within and between countries.

Mis- and Disinformation:

The cascading effects of natural hazards prompt countries to prioritize domestic stability over global cooperation. The shift away from multilateral institutions limits the exchange of critical information and statistics.

As universally accepted science and data erode, common grounds for understanding diminish. Growing mistrust and scepticism create an environment where misinformation can be strategically deployed to manipulate public opinion and public policies.

IMPLICATIONS:

Multilateral collaboration on climate risks continues to disintegrate, undermining confidence in international agreements and broader cooperation. Regions with high capacities adapt to climate changes, leveraging technological, military, regulatory, and legal means to safeguard their gains. Many countries with less capacity cannot adapt, fueling civil strife within and across borders. In this scenario, global inequalities and tensions increasingly amplify, leading to a total collapse of global cooperation and a dystopian future for much of the world.

STATUS QUO **SCENARIO**

State of global cooperation and joint action: **Unchanged and uncoordinated**
Global Vulnerability: **Mis- and Disinformation**

The multilateral community has not adapted to the 21st century and **joint action continues to follow the status quo**, leaving it vulnerable to a wide range of risks. The weakening structures of international cooperation disintegrate more rapidly when a convincing and sustained

disinformation video campaign goes viral, depicting a country preparing for war against one of its allies. **Global efforts to address complex interconnected challenges remain hampered by slow and ineffective decision-making.**

KEY OUTCOMES:

Mis- and Disinformation:

Countries without advanced digital literacy and robust cybersecurity frameworks cannot distinguish authenticity from fakes, as video campaigns are quickly and easily translated into local languages and contexts. Disinformation is deeply connected to trust and this incident further divides people and countries, lowering barriers to unrest and conflict.

Environmental cluster:

Digital disinformation is now considered a matter of national security, intensifying the digital arms race. Governments rapidly scale up investment in frontier technologies, data centres and digital manufacturing, with far-reaching environmental implications.

The rapid expansion in these sectors increases reliance on fossil fuels and the mining of rare earth materials, exacerbating natural resources scarcity, creating significant pollution and large-scale electronic waste.

Technological cluster:

Sustained disinformation campaigns have a negative impact on cohesion within and between countries of all development levels. As a result, many countries decide to separate or firewall their digital, satellite and communication networks from one another. The loss of trust also contributes to an increase in cybersecurity attacks, further compromising digital and physical infrastructure.

Societal cluster:

The pollution of the information environment gives space for further disinformation campaigns, including those focused on societal issues like public health, migration and social cohesion. Persistent gaps in global cooperation and a pervasive mistrust of shared information between countries exacerbate vulnerabilities, including the potential for new pandemics.

IMPLICATIONS:

As hopes for a mutually beneficial future dim, the world grapples with multifaceted challenges, including the deterioration of the global information environment. Increased distrust between countries and within societies erodes cohesion and increases vulnerability to global risks like pandemics and large-scale conflict.
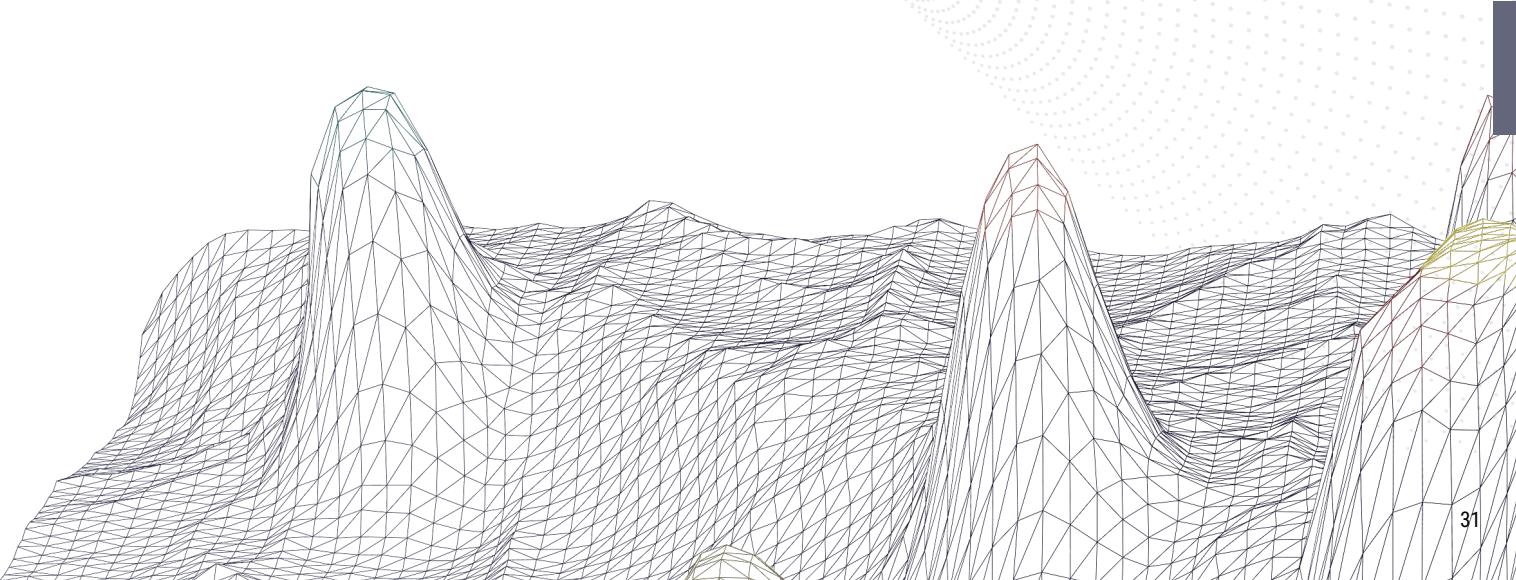
PROGRESS SCENARIO

State of global cooperation and joint action: **Improved**
Global Vulnerability: **New pandemic**

The international community has learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and **improved joint action across multilateral institutions** and with the private sector. When a **new pandemic emerges**, governments and international organizations coordinate their efforts to share informa-

tion, vaccines, protective equipment, and risk management strategies, effectively mitigating the spread of the disease and its economic impact. The positive effects of **successful international collaboration in a public health crisis result in progress across other areas**.

KEY OUTCOMES:

Societal cluster:

Success in using advanced medical technology to respond to the pandemic spurs other public health improvements through telemedicine, advanced diagnostics, and personalized medicine.

Improved global cooperation helps extend these benefits to populations around the world, improving global outcomes. However, access to new technologies, demographic shifts, and inequality remain major hurdles, with most benefits accruing to those in wealthier countries.

Technological cluster:

Stronger international collaborations on pandemic response leads to improved data sharing, satellite imaging, and artificial intelligence. These advancements lay the groundwork for expanded technology collaborations and effective international governance of frontier technologies. Some improved international collaboration reduces biorisks, but uneven distribution of frontier technologies remains a critical concern, outpacing regulatory adaptations and cooperation efforts.

Environmental cluster:

Multistakeholder collaboration on the pandemic response inspires action on other global challenges, including climate change. New international initiatives promote renewable energy, sustainable transportation, the building of resilient infrastructure and sustainable practices to counter natural hazards.

The positive effects of these collaborations and funding platforms, including active private sector engagement, help decrease large-scale pollution and build more sustainable supply chains.

Mis- and Disinformation:

Success in sharing evidence-based and verified solutions helps to address harmful disinformation in many regions.

However, unequal progress undermines the broader benefits, maintaining disparities in access to reliable information and hindering collective understanding and action.

IMPLICATIONS:

While improved joint action has strong positive benefits, especially in the climate and technology spaces, persistent inequalities limit the potential for truly inclusive progress. Sustained efforts are essential to ensure that progress is inclusive and reaches all communities worldwide.
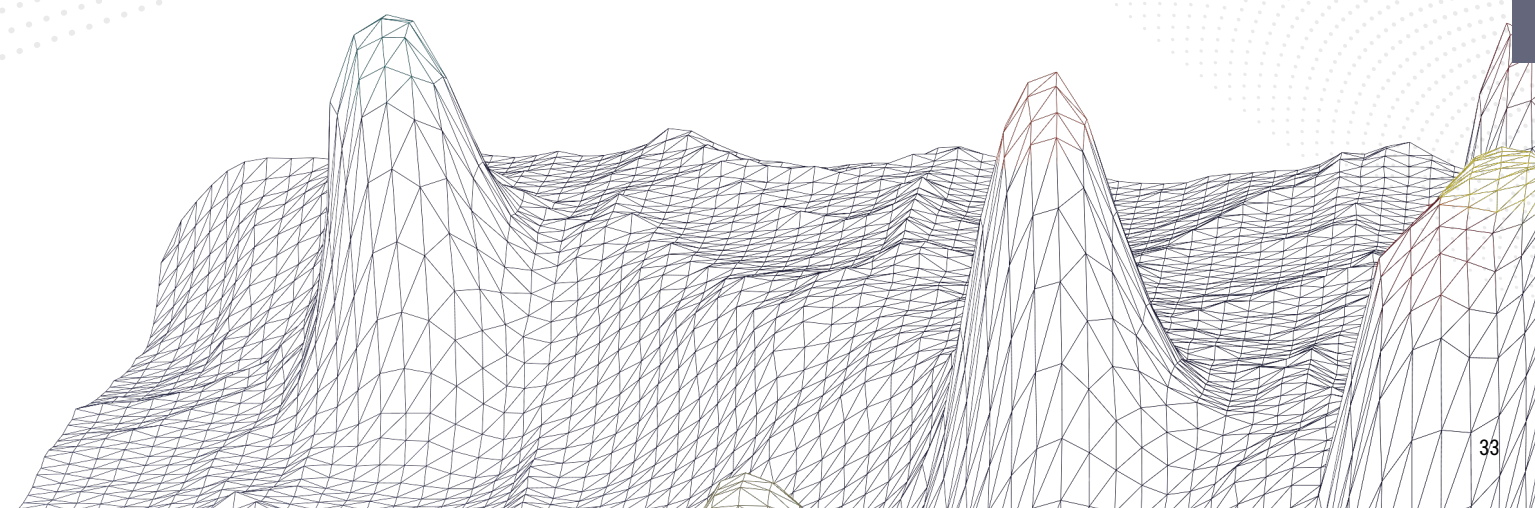
BREAKTHROUGH SCENARIO

State of global cooperation and joint action: **Strong and accelerating**
Global Vulnerability: **Cybersecurity breakdown**

The multilateral system has adapted to the challenges of the 21st century and **joint action is stronger than before**. What could have been a catastrophic event—a sudden, global, **cybersecurity** breakdown plunging billions of people into digital darkness—is swiftly resolved within hours through rapid, coordinated action between nations and in cooperation with the private sector. **The effective collaboration has significantly positive cascading impacts for sustainable development**.

Technological cluster:

The fast and effective international resolution to the cybersecurity incident further advances global digital collaboration, which in turn leads to further collaboration on frontier technologies like artificial intelligence, quantum computing and advanced energy solutions that are safely integrated across sectors and regions.

The state of advanced international collaboration ensures that the benefits of these breakthroughs in health, energy, agriculture and education are experienced by all people, reducing global inequality and further increasing cybersecurity.

Societal cluster:

Enhanced trust in global digital cooperation encourages more data sharing, enabling faster detection of public health threats, improving coordinated responses and ultimately lowering the risk of a new pandemic. Technological breakthroughs in public health and energy reduce global inequality, but some regions still struggle with issues related to ageing demographics.

Mis- and Disinformation:

While biases, lack of accountability, and the digital divide are still not fully resolved, strong joint actions between governments, the private sector and civil society accelerate trust in the digital realm, enhancing national and international social cohesion.

Environmental cluster:

Accelerating collaboration leads to the adoption of efficient energy technologies and sustainable practices across the world, limiting the rise in global temperatures.[2]

Concerted global efforts in biodiversity conservation and pollution control prevent habitat loss, fostering long-term ecosystem recovery.

IMPLICATIONS:

Further evidence of the effectiveness of joint action, especially between governments and the private sector, has cascading positive effects for people and planet. A reinvigorated multilateral system sees an increase in legitimacy and trust, with specific benefit to collaboration on energy, health, education and agriculture. While structural inequalities persist, progress is sustainable and effective global risk mitigation measures are firmly entrenched.

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2   Data modelling by the International Future Model, Pardee Centre for International Futures, University of Denver.
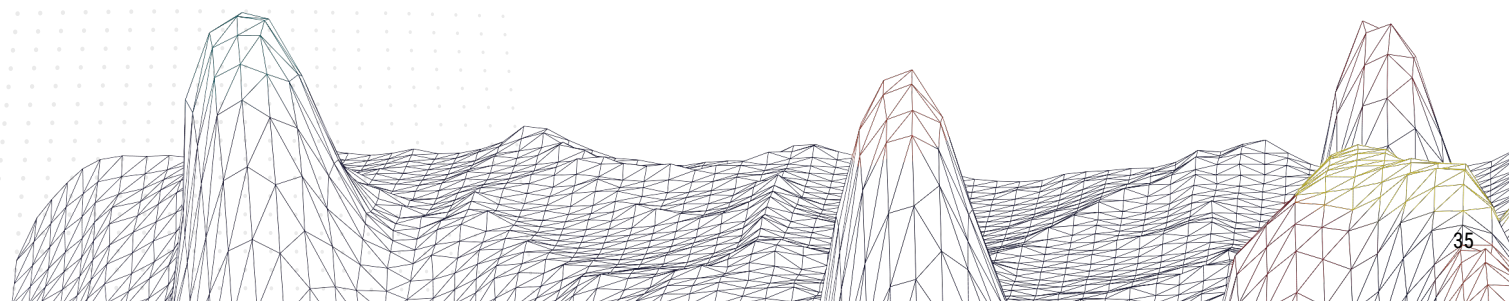
6. WHAT IS THE PATH FORWARD?

While stakeholders recognize the interconnectedness of risks, this understanding is not adequately reflected in current international institutions, which often address risks in siloes. Upgrading our shared capacity to assess, prepare and respond is imperative. Multilateral institutions need to be more inclusive, networked and effective, so that they can better anticipate, adapt and respond to new challenges.

While the path forward will be complex, regular stakeholder surveys can serve as a barometer for assessing whether multilateral institutions are adapting to meet these challenges. Risk surveys provide an opportunity to identify areas for recalibration in international agendas, forums, and organizations.

This report has delivered valuable analysis on risk importance, preparedness, and vulnerability. Based on these insights, the Secretary-General commits to:

- **Immediately** create a task team to strengthen the United Nations System's capacity to address risks in the information ecosystem. The team will focus on the effects of mis- and disinformation on United Nations mandate delivery, including through research, risk assessment and response strategies.

- **By December 2025**, finalize standard operating procedures that strengthen the United Nations System's anticipation of and response to complex global shocks, in line with Action 54 of the Pact for the Future.

- **By December 2026**, publish a second Global Risk Report to track changes in perception and provide updates on global risk mitigation progress.

The global risks and scenarios examined in this report present us with powerful insights, highlighting the potential of cooperative action and the consequences of inaction and delay. They reinforce the urgency of improving global cooperation, as envisaged in the Pact for the Future.

In the face of multiple, interconnected risks, determining where to focus efforts is a critical challenge. The vulnerabilities identified in this report offer important pointers for prioritizing action, targeting key risks that multilateral institutions are not sufficiently prepared for. Managing these vulnerabilities is not only essential for mitigating individual risks but also for reducing their cascading impacts across all domains of life. Continuing with status quo approaches is not an option. The complexity of today's challenges demands transformative action.
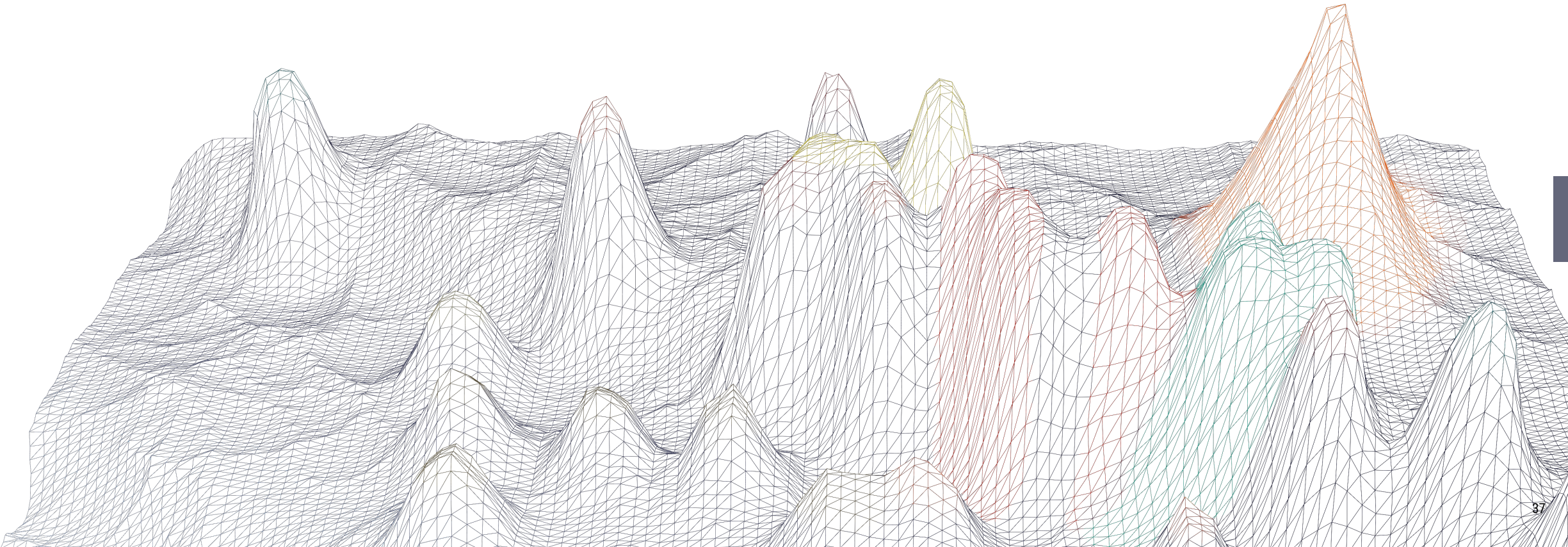
ANNEX 1: RISK IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITIONS

While there is no United Nations definition of global risks, for the purposes of this report, a "global risk" is defined as *"an event or condition that would have a significant negative impact on a large portion of humanity and the planet."*

The information presented in this report is grounded in a perception study of 28 global risks, identified through a rigorous and structured process. This process began with an extensive literature review of over 40 well-known global risk reports, sourced from global, regional, and national levels, and authored by a diverse range of stakeholders, including the private sector, public sector, and civil society. This review resulted in the identification of more than 100 risks, which were then categorized using the STEEP framework (Societal, Technological, Economic, Environmental, and Political) (Table 1).

Table 1: STEEP framework

Category	Definition
Societal	Risks that affect the stability, cohesion, and overall well-being of societies. These risks are often driven by factors such as inequality, public health challenges, and social unrest, and can lead to widespread disruptions in the social fabric.
Technological	Risks that emerge from the development, deployment, and reliance on technology. These risks encompass issues related to the availability, security, and equity of technological infrastructure and services.
Environmental	Risks that arise from the degradation of natural ecosystems and changes in climate patterns, affecting the sustainability of life on Earth.
Economic	Risks that impact the stability and growth of global economies. These risks are closely related to financial systems, markets, and the broader economy.
Political	Threats that negatively impact geopolitical relations or undermine political stability.

The initial long list underwent a detailed risk-by-risk assessment conducted by the Pardee Center for International Futures at the University of Denver, which involved the following steps:

1. Clearly define each risk, and how it could materialize.

2. Conduct an in-depth review of existing literature from research and policy sources to deepen the understanding of each risk, focusing on drivers and potential outcomes.

3. Informed by this literature, estimate the likelihood of each risk occurring by the year 2050.

4. Analyze the potential impact of each risk within the broader context, considering the wider implications of its occurrence.

Based on this rigorous assessment, a shortlisting exercise was conducted. This list was carefully curated to ensure it was holistic, capturing a comprehensive range of risks. Each risk on the list was selected because it was determined to have a non-negligible probability of occurring and a significant negative impact on both humanity and ecosystems.

Subsequently, the refined list was reviewed by over 20 technical focal points—nominated by members of the Secretary-General's Executive Committee, selected specialized United Nations agencies, and verified by technical representatives from all five Regional Commissions of the United Nations. Consultations held between December 2023 and February 2024, culminated in a final list of 28 global risks, categorized by the STEEP framework (Table 2). This list was officially validated and endorsed by the Deputies Committee and the Executive Committee of the Secretary-General and serves as a foundation for the perception study that underpins this report.

Table 2: Risk list and definitions

STEEP Category	Risk	Definition
Economic	Economic Fragmentation	The breakdown of an economy into smaller, relatively independent and isolated components or segments, manifesting in the separation of markets, industries, or regions, leading to reduced integration and cohesion within the overall economic system.
Economic	Global Financial Crisis	Severe disruption in the international financial system characterized by widespread banking and financial sector distress, currency devaluations, and economic downturns affecting multiple countries or regions simultaneously.
Economic	Supply Chain Collapse	Collapse of availability of businesses, people and activities involved in the procurement, logistics, transformation and delivery of finished goods.
Economic	Sustained Global Economic Stagnation	Prolonged period of minimal or no growth in the worldwide economy, marked by sluggish or stagnant economic activity, high unemployment, limited expansion across multiple sectors, deepening inequalities and mounting pressures of indebtedness.
Economic	Widespread Debt Crisis	A significant number of entities, such as countries, regions, or sectors, facing a high level of financial distress due to an inability to meet their debt obligations. It can result from economic downturns, fiscal mismanagement, external shocks, or a combination of these factors.
Environmental	Inaction on Climate Change	Failure or reluctance of individuals, governments, or organizations to implement substantial measures or policies aimed at mitigating and adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change, such as rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation.
Environmental	Large-Scale Natural Hazard Risks	Potential for widespread damage, disruption, or loss caused by changing meteorological conditions as well as natural phenomena like earthquakes and volcanic activities.
Environmental	Large-Scale Pollution	Extensive and widespread contamination of air, water, or land, leading to significant demand for financial resources, human effort, and time to remediate. This includes forms of pollution such as ambient air pollution, chemical pollution, physical waste, or radioactive isotopes, as well as space waste and debris.
Environmental	Rapid Decline in Biodiversity	Swift and significant reduction in the variety and abundance of species within a specific ecosystem or across the planet, often resulting from human activities, habitat destruction, pollution, and other factors.
Environmental	Shortages of Natural Resources	Depletion of high-value natural resources like oil, gas, minerals and timber, as well as mismanagement and competition over diminishing renewable resources, such as land and water, aggravated by environmental degradation, population growth and climate change.
Environmental	Space-Based Event	Natural or technological occurrences originating in or affecting outer space (e.g., solar flares, geomagnetic storms, or asteroid impacts) that have a significant and potentially severe impact on Earth or its systems, causing substantial disruptions to satellite communications, power grids, or other critical infrastructure on Earth.
Political	Collapse of Multilateral Institutions	Weakening and degradation of organizations and their collective action to resolve problems that are bigger than their individual efforts could tackle (e.g., global challenges like climate change and health crises), despite being foundational pillars of the international system established in the post-WW2 era.
Political	Collapse of Rule of Law and Massive Violations of Human Rights	Breakdown in international legal regimes and widespread disregard for basic human rights.
Political	State Sovereignty Erosion	Breakdown or failure of a government or political system to fulfill its basic functions, such as maintaining law and order, providing essential services, or representing its citizens effectively.
Political	Geopolitical Tensions	Significant changes in the global political landscape, involving alterations in power dynamics, alliances, and strategic interests among nations.
Political	Large-Scale War	Conflict of significant magnitude involving widespread and substantial military engagements, potentially waged within a country or between nations or coalitions, with extensive geopolitical, economic, and societal consequences.
Political	Misinformation and Disinformation	False or misleading information, with misinformation being inaccuracies spread without harmful intent, and disinformation being intentionally false or deceptive information circulated with the aim of causing harm or manipulating perceptions.
Political	Weapons of Mass Destruction	Atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which may have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above. (UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific)
Societal	Biorisks	The risk posed to human, animal, plant, or environmental health, by outbreaks of disease of natural, accidental, or deliberate origin.
Societal	Collapse of Social Cohesion	Heightened social discord, surge in violent criminal activities, victimization of minority groups, breaches of human rights, and, in the end, the eruption of violent confrontations.
Societal	Mass Movement of People	Large-scale movement of people driven by factors like economic pursuits, escaping poverty, violence, war, persecution, climate change, and natural disasters, encompassing both voluntary and forced movement.
Societal	New Pandemic	The global spread of a pathogen or variant that infects human populations with limited or no immunity through sustained and high transmissibility from person to person, overwhelming health systems with severe morbidity and high mortality.
Societal	Proliferation of Non-State Actors (incl. criminal and terrorist groups)	Widespread growth in the number, influence, and activities of entities that operate outside the control or governance of traditional nation-states, could include terrorist and criminal organizations exerting considerable influence in various sectors, beyond the conventional structures of national governments.
Societal	Rise in Inequalities	Rise in disparity in opportunity and access based on income, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity, religion, and capacity to use digital assets.
Technological	Breakdown in Cybersecurity	Widespread and systemic failures in safeguarding digital systems, infrastructure, networks, and data from unauthorized access, attacks, malicious use and exploitation.
Technological	Geoengineering Disasters	Large-scale manipulation of planetary processes to control and modify earth's climate or weather.
Technological	Negative Outcomes of AI and Frontier Technologies	Adverse effects, whether intentional or unintentional, resulting from progress in AI and related technological capabilities—such as generative AI— on societies and ecosystems. These impacts may include, but are not limited to, increasing inequality, bias, conflicts and misinformation issues.
Technological	Technology-Driven Power Concentration	The growing centralization and consolidation of influence, control, and authority facilitated by advancements in technology, as well as the control over resources, influence and power that can be accumulated in the hands of private companies.

ANNEX 2: GLOBAL RISK REPORT **SURVEY** METHODOLOGY

The global risk survey received responses from 83 UN Member State representatives, and 1,028 stakeholders across civil society organizations, businesses, and academia from all regions of the world.

"Global risk" was defined throughout the survey as an uncertain event or a condition that would have a significant negative impact on a large portion of humanity and the planet.

Stakeholder Groups

The survey targeted five main stakeholder groups that were chosen to capture diversity and expertise in risk perceptions.

Survey Implementation

The Global Risks Survey was conducted through an online survey platform, between February 2024 and May 2024. The survey comprised three main sections: Respondent Demographics, Global Risk Outlook and Perception, and Global Risk Preparedness.

Table 3: Stakeholder group definitions

Stakeholder	Definition
UN Member States	Government officials from the 193 UN member states
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	Non-governmental organizations accredited with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), including non-profit organizations and under-represented communities such as women and youth groups
Private Sector Organizations	Members of private or for-profit organizations recognized by the UN Global Compact
Risk Experts and Academia	Civil society actors or members of private organizations specializing in risks across different industries (e.g., banking, political risk) and academic affiliates of tertiary education institutions specializing in risk across different disciplines
United Nations	Employees at the United Nations and its affiliated bodies

Section 1: Respondent Demographics

This section of the survey asked respondents to provide their demographic details, used primarily to compare stakeholder groups and regional differences. All responses were kept anonymous, de-identified, and confidential. Questions in this section included:

- Nationality and country of residence or representation

- Domain(s) of expertise

- Type of organization (e.g., UN Member States, Private Sector Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, etc.)

Section 2: Global Risk Outlook and Perception

1) **Likelihood** asked respondents to rate how likely each of the 28 risks were to negatively impact a large portion of humanity by 2050. Respondents were provided with a Likert scale of 1 to 7 with the following anchors: (1) Extremely unlikely, (4) Neither likely nor unlikely, and (7) Extremely likely.

2) **Imminence** asked respondents when they believed that each of the 28 risks would have a significant negative impact on a large portion of humanity. Respondents were provided with the following options: (1) Currently occurring, (2) In 1-7 years, (3) In 8-15 years, (4) In 16-25 years, and (5) After 2050.

3) **Severity** asked respondents how severe the impacts of each of the 28 risks would be if the risk were to occur by 2050. Respondents were provided with a Likert scale of 1 to 7, with the following anchors: (1) No impact at all, and (7) Extremely severe impact.

4) **Risk Prioritization** asked respondents to pick and rank five risks in order of which they believed should receive highest priority for action by multilateral institutions.

5) **Risk Interconnections** presented 5 randomly-assigned risks from the total list of 28 risks to respondents and asked them to identify how each of those risks could be connected to other global risks. This same subset of risks would remain consistent for all lines of risk inquiry in Section 3. For each risk, respondents were asked to identify: (i) One other risk that is most likely to lead to or cause this risk, (ii) One other risk that would most likely worsen the impact of this risk, and (iii) One risk that is most likely to occur as a result of this risk.

Section 3: Global Risk Preparedness

1) **Risk Preparedness: Identification** asked respondents to rate the ability of multilateral institutions to identify the emergence of each of five randomly-assigned risks before it posed a significant threat using a Likert scale of 1 to 7, with the following anchors: (1) Not at all, and (7) Very able.

2) **Risk Preparedness: Reduction** asked respondents to rate the ability of multilateral institutions to reduce the likelihood of each of their five assigned risks occurring on a Likert scale of 1 to 7, where (1) indicates Not at all, and (7) Very able.

3) **Risk Preparedness: Mitigation** asked respondents to rate the ability of multilateral institutions to mitigate the negative impact of each of their five assigned risks and ensure timely recovery if the risk were to occur on a Likert scale of 1 to 7, where (1) indicates Not at all, and (7) Very able.

4) **Risk Governance: Actions** asked respondents to select up to two forms of stakeholder action that can best address each of their five assigned risks. Options included: Unilateral, bilateral and multilateral action by governments, action by civil society, private sector, individuals, and subnational governments.

5) **Risk Governance: Barriers** asked respondents to select up to two top barriers that impede the effective addressing of each of their five assigned risks. Options included: Inadequate data and information, Insufficient finance options, and Lack of political consensus.

Data Cleaning

A total of 1,786 responses to the GRS were received. From these, 1,111 responses were retained for analysis, while 675 were removed using the following data cleaning criteria:

1. Responses were removed if respondents did not give consent to proceed with the survey. 144 responses were deleted from this step.

2. Responses with less than 53% completion rate– past the respondent demographics section– were removed. A pairwise deletion rule (i.e., keeping the response even if the respondent did not finish all survey questions) was applied to keep the maximum amount of information from all survey responses. 511 responses were deleted from this step.

3. As each member state should provide only one valid response, 6 duplicate member-state responses were removed. When multiple responses were received from the same member state, the response with the highest completion rate was retained. Where duplicate responses had the same completion rate, the latest response was retained.

4. Responses with ambiguous stakeholder group classification were removed from the stakeholder comparisons as all responses needed to be classified into the five main stakeholder groups and six regions for their respective sub-group analyses. 14 responses were deleted from this step.

Respondent Profiles

The survey data encompassed a broad age distribution, ranging from individuals in their early 20s to those in their late 80s. The wide age range indicates that the survey captured perspectives across different life stages and experiences.

Gender representation in the survey was fairly balanced, with 658 respondents (59.2%) identifying as male, 445 respondents (40.1%) as female, and 8 respondents (0.7%) preferring not to specify.

The survey achieved fair geographical distribution, with 79 respondents from Central and Southern Asia (7.1%), 90 respondents from Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (8.1%), 514 respondents from Europe and Northern America (46.3%), 111 respondents from Latin America and the Caribbean (10.0%), 71 respondents from Northern Africa and Western Asia (6.4%), 27 respondents from Oceania (2.4%), and 219 respondents from Sub-Saharan Africa (19.7%).

The survey focused on five main groups of stakeholders, comprising the following breakdown: 83 official respondents from UN Member States (7.5%), 387 respondents (34.8%) from Civil Society Organizations, 106 respondents (9.5%) from the Private Sector, 436 respondents (39.2%) classified as Risk Experts, and 86 respondents (7.7%) from the UN. There were 13 respondents (1.2%) who did not fall exclusively within any of the predetermined stakeholder groups and were therefore classified as "Others."

Data Analysis

The responses from the GRS were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods tailored to the design of each survey question. The table below offers a summary of the treatment methods applied to each survey question, along with references to their corresponding sections in this sensemaking report. More comprehensive information on the measures employed can be found at the outset of each respective section within this report.

Table 4: Summary of data treatment by survey section

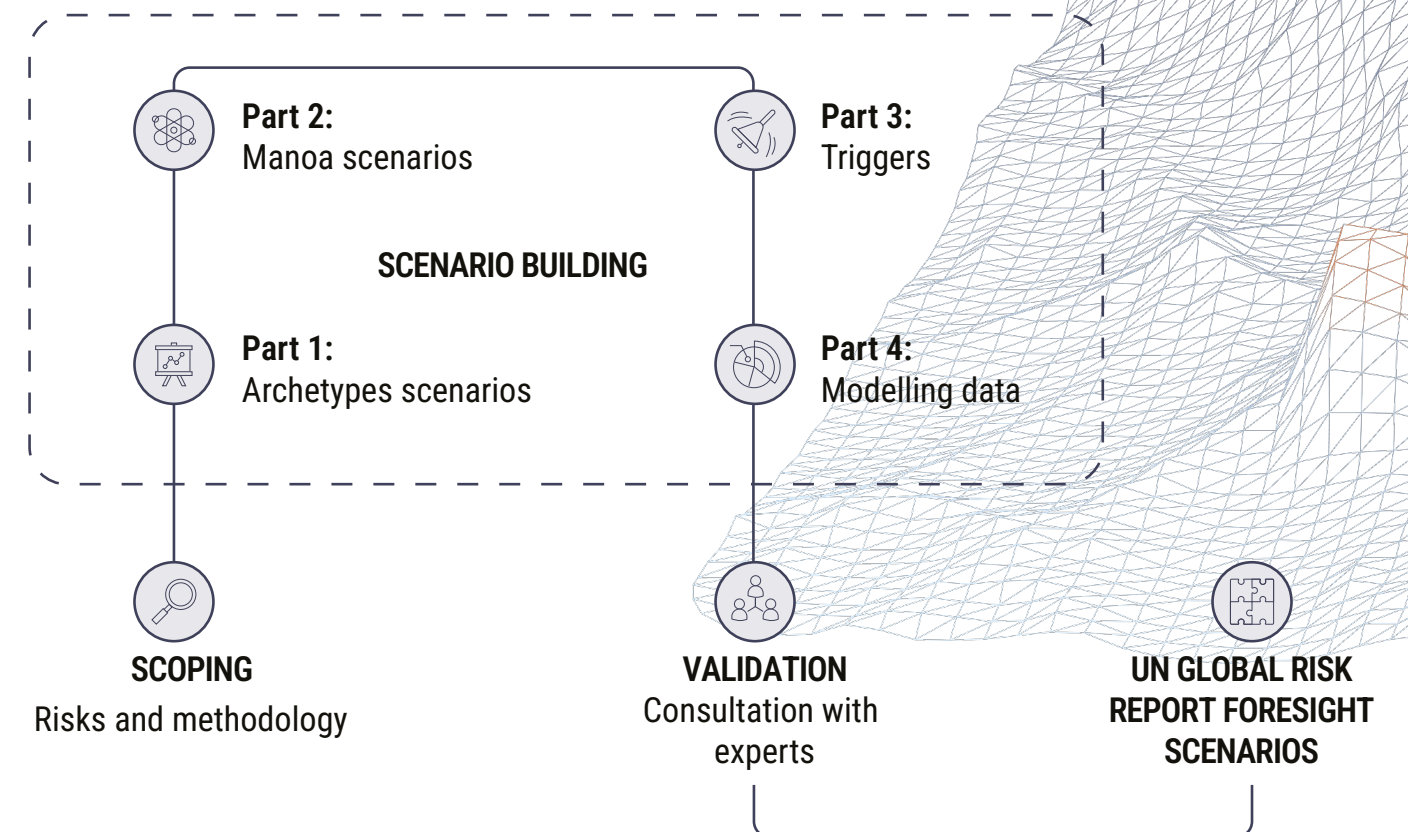| Survey Section	Question(s)	Analysis
Demographics	Primary nationality/country of residence or representation	Descriptive statistics
		Used as variable for sub-group heterogeneity analyses
	Organization type	Descriptive statistics
		Used as variable for sub-group heterogeneity analyses
Global Risk Outlook and Perception	Likelihood	Statistical analysis of continuous variables with scale 1 to 7
	Severity	
		Compounded variable for defining "risk importance"
	Imminence	Descriptive analysis
		Used as a categorical variable to indicate the imminence of a risk
		We also used group mean to compute an alternative continuous measure of imminence
	Risk Prioritization	Computation of sum of votes, with weights (top 1 = 5 points, top 2 = 4 points, …, and top 5 = 1 point; any risk not selected will receive 0 point), as a proxy for risk prioritization
	Risk Interconnections	Network analysis
		Computation of risk closeness measures (e.g., degree centrality)
Global Risk Preparedness	Risk Preparedness: Identification	Statistical analysis of continuous variables with scale 1 to 7
	Risk Preparedness: Reduction	
	Risk Preparedness: Mitigation	Average of the 3 preparedness measures was used to define "risk preparedness"
	Risk Governance: Barriers	Computation of sum of votes, statistical breakdown
	Risk Governance: Actions	Computation of sum of votes, statistical breakdown

ANNEX 3: FORESIGHT SCENARIO BUILDING METHODOLOGY

The four foresight scenarios in the UN Global Risk Report aim to analyze the implications for the multilateral system, provide a nuanced understanding of the Global Vulnerabilities (Chapter 3) with a focus on their interconnectedness, and support proactive planning, policy formulation, and decision-making. To meet these objectives, the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub developed the scenarios using a hybrid approach, integrating elements from three established foresight methodologies (*Archetype Scenarios*[1], *Manoa Scenarios*[2], *and Triggers*) and modeling data from Denver University's International Futures integrated framework (IFs)[3]. This approach ensures a comprehensive exploration of the key vulnerabilities and assesses the preparedness of the multilateral system to manage them.

The scenarios are based on the top 10 risks by interconnectedness, as identified from the survey results (Figure 13). Using these risks, the **Archetype Scenarios** methodology frames four distinct future patterns for the evolution of the multilateral landscape:

- **Breakdown:** Fragmented joint action exacerbates the cascading effects of natural hazard risks.

- **Status Quo:** Uncoordinated joint action leads to uneven consequences after a global disinformation attack.

- **Progress:** Improved joint action mitigates the impacts of a new pandemic outbreak.

- **Breakthrough:** Strong joint action overcomes an acute global cybersecurity incident.

Figure 13: Scenarios Methodology

SCENARIO BUILDING

Part 1: Archetypes scenarios

Part 2: Manoa scenarios

Part 3: Triggers

Part 4: Modelling data

SCOPING
Risks and methodology

VALIDATION
Consultation with experts

UN GLOBAL RISK REPORT FORESIGHT SCENARIOS

1 Dator, J. (2009). Alternative Futures at the Manoa School.
2 Schultz, W.L. (2003). Systemic Scenarios: Creating Synergy through Scenarios and Systems Thinking.
3 The IFs model is a large-scale, long-term, recursive dynamic tool that includes broad and integrated projections for 188 countries over long time horizons (B. B. Hughes 2019). The tool is open source and freely available (pardee.du.edu) and has been under development since the late 1970s. The tool has been published frequently in analysis by international organizations and governments (Hanna, Bohl, and Moyer (2021); B. Hughes et al. (2020); Meisel et al. (2021); Moyer et al. (2019); Moyer, Kabandula, et al. (2020); Verhagen et al. (2021-2022).

Building on the Archetype Scenarios, the **Manoa Scenarios** methodology delves deeper into the dynamics of risks interactions within each scenario. Each scenario prominently features a risk (e.g. natural hazards, mis- and disinformation, new pandemic and cybersecurity) from one of the vulnerability clusters. Recognizing that risks are interconnected and rarely occur in isolation, each scenario depicts additional risks and their cascading impacts based on the degree of interconnectedness as identified by the survey results. This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of risk dynamics and helps anticipate potential cascading effects, which are crucial for effective risk management and strategic planning.

Expanding on the above analysis, the scenarios incorporate the potential impact of disruptive risks using **triggers**. This aspect examines potential outlier events that could significantly alter the global risk landscape and for which the multilateral system may be least prepared. This analysis encourages proactive planning and decision-making to enhance resilience against unforeseen disruptions.

As a final step, modeling data from **Denver University's International Futures integrated modeling framework** was used to strengthen the robustness of the scenarios. The narrative of the scenarios was transformed into parameters introduced into modeling framework by making assumptions about which key variables are impacted as well as the magnitude of the effect. To do so, each narrative was synthesized, the core drivers were isolated, and mapped to the IFs model. The results of this scenario building process were then presented to a **group of experts** for feedback and validation before the scenarios were finalized. Summarized, shorter versions of the scenarios, which do not include the results of the modeling data, are featured in the main body of the report.

By integrating these methodologies, the UN Global Risk Report provides a comprehensive, multidimensional exploration of future global risks and assesses the preparedness of the multilateral system to manage them.