

Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University Partners with the WFSF for an International Conference on Futuristic Studies

AL-KHOBAR, EASTERN PROVINCE, SAUDI ARABIA, September 29, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The future comes at you fast, as the expression goes, and for humanity, that future holds both great promise and great peril. On the one hand, agricultural innovation, technological breakthroughs, medical advances, and social progress should continue to make life better, easier, healthier, and more equitable for billions of people around the globe. Yet, on the other hand, resource limitations, digital threats, emerging diseases, and climate change pose daunting challenges to humanity's flourishing.

Proactively addressing all of these issues and more is the province of the interdisciplinary field known as futures studies. To move this increasingly critical field forward, [Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University \(PMU\)](#) is partnering with the [World Futures Studies Federation \(WFSF\)](#) in convening the [WFSF 24th World Conference](#). This international conference, held from 26 to 29 October 2021 in Berlin, Germany, will bring together organizations worldwide to collaborate in effecting positive change in the present by expansively envisioning the future.

"The importance of all people in all places on our shared planet working together to forge a bright future grows more urgent every day, and in this critical effort, the forward-thinking of futures studies plays a vital role," said Dr. Issa Al Ansari, President of PMU and a keynote speaker at the WFSF 24th World Conference. "We are honored at PMU to be a main partner in the World Futures Studies Federation."

A global non-governmental organization, WFSF is a consultative partner with the United Nations



The poster for the WFSF 24th World Conference is a vertical graphic with a dark blue background. At the top left is the PMU logo, and at the top right is the WFSF logo. The text 'WFSF' is in large white letters, with 'WORLD FUTURISTIC STUDIES FEDERATION' in smaller white text to its right. Below this, '24th' is in large white letters, followed by 'WORLD CONFERENCE' in smaller white letters. On the left side, 'FUTURISTIC STUDIES' is written vertically in white. A large orange circle on the right contains the dates '26 to 29' in large white letters, followed by 'OCTOBER' in large white letters, and '2021' in smaller white letters. Below the dates, it says 'at the Humboldt Carré, Berlin Germany' in smaller white text. A small text block below that describes the conference as 'Three full days, five separate halls of programming involving world-leading thinkers, ground-breaking keynotes, scientific papers, panels, workshops, open debate, and networking.' A 'REGISTER NOW' button is at the bottom of the orange circle. Below the circle, it says 'In Partnership with' followed by the PMU logo and 'Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd Center for Futuristic Studies'. At the bottom, the PMU logo and 'pmu.edu.sa' are on the left, and 'PMU_KSA' is on the right.

The Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University partners with the World Futures Studies Federation to host an International Conference on Futuristic Studies.

Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations. The organization has members in over 60 countries and has been a driving force in futures studies since its founding in 1973. WFSF has sought to move the study of the future from the realm of prediction of possible and probable futures into the charting and shaping of preferable futures.

PMU has recently emerged as a global leader in this exciting endeavor. In 2019, the university founded the Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd Center for Futuristic Studies (PMFCFS), a multidisciplinary institute at the Al-Khobar campus, and opened a chapter of the WFSF representing the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The mission of PMFCFS is to research, identify and spread the best and most sustainable policy solutions worldwide through futures studies. The center's activities promote these gains by engaging a diverse set of scholars and students and disseminating their ideas and data through international collaborations.

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The world's response to the coronavirus shows how a deep embrace of modern science's insights and cutting-edge technology can address the most severe challenges, such as once-in-a-century pandemic”

Dr. Issa Alansari (President)

"With the Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd Center for Futuristic Studies, we have created and cultivated a world-class institute," said Al Ansari. "At the WFSF 24th World Conference, we are looking forward to collaborating with other partners and global stakeholders in holding a meaningful, successful conference that helps empower all people, without exception, to use futures thinking efficiently and effectively in order to create changes that benefit societies."

Challenges both here and now and there and then

As a compelling example of how new crises can suddenly impact the world, the last WFSF World Conference was held in Mexico in September 2019—mere months before the world began to face one of the biggest social, economic, and political challenges in modernity: the COVID-19 pandemic.



In a sign of worldwide progress in the battle against the novel coronavirus that causes the dangerous disease, the WFSF conference organizers anticipate holding a physical gathering in addition to the teleconferencing-based video sessions that have become standard practice in the COVID-19 era. With millions of people every day receiving doses of the numerous highly effective vaccines available, in-person meetings—while still following social distancing and masking protocols, as mandated or advised locally—are becoming possible once again.

"The world's response to the coronavirus shows how a deep embrace of modern science's insights and cutting-edge medical technology can address the most severe challenges, such as once-in-a-century pandemics," said Al Ansari. "And while the fight against the coronavirus is far from over, just like with so many of the other serious challenges we all face, thinking ahead and rethinking past approaches via the lens of futures studies can help ensure that we move forward prosperously as a global society."

Fruitful discourse and finding solutions

The WFSF 24th World Conference will assemble world-leading thinkers in futures studies and related fields in a series of keynotes, panels, and workshops. Open debate will be fostered and scientific papers will be presented and discussed.

The topics covered at the conference are multitudinous, ranging from security and preparedness in communicating risk more effectively and conceiving of future conflicts, to the rise of artificial intelligence and human-machine integration, to sustainability and climate change adaptation strategies, and much more.

In addition to Dr. Al Ansari's keynote address, other PMU faculty and PMFCFS members will be presenting at the conference. Among them is Dr. Federico Fusco, an Assistant Professor of Law in the College of Law at PMU. Fusco will be offering a talk about the future of legal research given the inroads of artificial intelligence in this aspect of the profession. Another presenter is Dr. Thomas F. Connolly, a Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences at PMU. Connolly's talk will explore how literature and film have historicized the future and what lessons may be drawn from some of these fictional—at least at the time of their making—portrayals.

As these examples illustrate, the WFSF 24th World Conference will be a richly interdisciplinary forum for harnessing futures studies to foster creative problem-solving and -mitigation strategies.

"Through our partnership in the World Futures Studies Federation, Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University is demonstrating our commitment to future generations," said Dr. Al Ansari.

"Everything is at stake. But with futures studies and the many promising paths forward that this field can afford us, we should be optimistic that we can overcome even the world's most dire challenges."

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