

12 April 2018

Dear Students

Your generation stands on the threshold of an exciting new world.

Although accelerating change will be the main determinant during your lives, the broad factors that influence events will be much the same as they have always been: demographics, climate, technology and competition between social and ideological systems.

Global population growth - which is expected to peak at 11 billion in 2050 - is unsustainable. Yet in many advanced economies in Europe and East Asia fertility rates have fallen *below* sustainability levels.

Everywhere people are on the move. Climate change could lead to virtually unstoppable refugee flows. The days of the single nation state are fading - and everywhere the main challenge will be the accommodation of cultural, religious and ethnic diversity.

There are no longer wars between countries: virtually all the conflict in the world since 2000 has been within countries between communities. Sometimes - as with the cases of Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria - such inter-communal conflicts are internationalised.

Climate change is a reality - and will be a game changer as it has been on so many occasions during the history of *homo sapiens* during the past 60 000 years.

Much will depend on the ability of the technological and information explosion to find solutions to the problems that climate change will cause: abundant and inexpensive energy; huge-scale affordable desalination; new crops and agricultural systems. Quantum computing, artificial intelligence and robots will dramatically change the way in which your generation will work; will enjoy recreation and will continue to search for meaning.

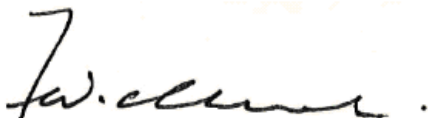
Competition between social and ideological systems will continue - between the free market social democracy of the West and the free market neo-Mandarinism of the East. Competition for territory and resources will continue - probably centred on the millions of square kilometres of virgin agricultural land and enormous mineral resources of Africa.

Human motivations will remain much the same: the search for love, fulfilment and meaning will continue.

This exciting new world will continue to depend on courageous individuals committed to the reinforcement of the best values that our species has developed - to the advancement of human dignity and freedom; to the achievement of a just and equitable life for all; and to the peaceful resolution of the disputes and conflicts that are bound to arise between human beings.

I wish you all well on this exciting journey!

Sincerely



FW DE KLERK
Former President of South Africa