WOSC 2014

Our self-organising world: from disruption to reparation

Systems and cybernetics applied to technology, design, governance and power

WOSC's 16th Congress: Organised by the Universidad de Ibagué, Colombia

15-17 October, 2014

This communication is a revision of a similar document published by WOSC before moving the Congress from Santiago, Chile to Ibagué, Colombia.

WOSC 2014, the 16th Congress of the World Organisation of Systems and Cybernetics, will take place in Ibagué, Colombia, from the 15th to the 17th of October 2014.

WOSC and the Congress

One of WOSC's purposes is fostering international collaboration between parties interested in Systems and Cybernetics. WOSC wants to bring together people with a wide range of local experience of *universal issues*, such as ecological and social challenges, energy, health, education, agriculture, business management, catastrophe management, urban development and many more and also global issues such as the financial crisis and climate change. We believe that people's encounters in a shared conversational space have the potential of strengthening transdisciplinarity and holism without indulging in generalities. WOSC's aim is supporting social transformation processes and influencing policy-making at the local and global levels. For this purpose, among other aspects, it wants building up in society, and in particular in the younger generations, an appreciation of cybernetics and systems as epistemologies, methodologies and tools to support policy and decision making, increasing transparency and avoiding the excesses of computer modelling and control processes.

As part of its activities WOSC disseminates systems thinking and cybernetics among those working in these fields and between these and people focused on all professional and creative avenues with a potential to benefit from systems and cybernetic thinking and practice, such as art, design and technology. Major activities to achieve these encounters are WOSC's triennial congresses and contributions to conferences and symposia organised by others. These are activities carried out with the collaboration of a distributed network of cyberneticians and systems thinkers operating throughout the world.

WOSC's 16th Congress will be held in Ibagué, Colombia, from the 15th to the 17th of October 2014. Its aim is offering a platform to debate how our human communications disrupt and/or hopefully repair our world's self-organising processes.

Congress organisation

WOSC 2014 will take place at the beautiful campus of the Universidad de Ibagué, city close to Bogota, and is planned in coordination with the European Union of Systems -EUS- (http://www.ues-eus.eu).

The EUS runs triennial conferences and its next one will take place in Valencia, Spain, in parallel with WOSC's 16th Congress. Its main focus will be "Globalization and Crisis: Complexity and Governance of Systems". It has been agreed with them to hold coordinated meetings, sharing on-line plenaries and presentations in both ends.

A Senior Advisory Committee, a Thematic Committee and an Operational Committee to steer the Congress activities, have been set up.

A 'Communications Team' of marketing and information technology specialists is already building up the Congress's website and developing tools to support social networking (see below)

The Congress conversations will be organised around *systemic issues* constructed by virtual and face-to-face conversations among all those interested in the Congress. Contributions to this construction process will be moderated by issue organisers. In the end we expect that about a dozen integrating issues will emerge from these conversations. Organisers will see that contributions to the initial themes, as proposed below, converge into integrating issues before the end of the year (i.e. end of December 2013). From there on they will promote individual symposia, invite contributors and steer the refereeing procedure to accept, improve and reject abstracts and papers. Submissions and reviewing of papers and posters, either at the stage of abstracts or full papers, will be done electronically.

The Congress is planned as a three day event with daily plenaries and at least four half-day blocks of 3 parallel sessions each (10 papers in each), adding up to about 120 presentations. We also want to invite younger scientists to submit and display posters during the Congress. Abstracts of intended papers and posters will be reviewed before their acceptance.

The official languages of the Congress are Spanish and English; provisions are being made to have Spanish and English simultaneous translation for the plenary sessions.

Initial Congress Themes

WOSC's 16th Congress wants to acknowledge the large complexity of our natural and social worlds and the problems that have emerged and are emerging from the fragmented nature of our decisions and activities throughout time. Difficulties to see the big picture of the world we live in, as well as of the patterns of relationships and processes that we produce through our interactions, are constantly producing unexpected outcomes and consequences, which often are detrimental to nature, mankind, societies and people. The challenge, presently, is enabling positive disruptions of ecological and social processes and repairing the negative unintended consequences of our actions. Ingenuity,

innovation, effective organisation, enabling technologies, inclusive and caring communications may offer, among others, positive forms of disrupting self-organising processes. It is with this view in mind that we are inviting established and young scientists to submit contributions to the Congress *"Our Self-Organising World, from disruption to reparation; systems and cybernetics applied to technology, design, governance and power".* Through this Congress, from now until its realisation, we want to create a platform to reflect upon communications, culture and coordination of actions; governance, organisation and management; technology, design and art; ingenuity, creativity and innovation; politics and power; democracy, citizenship and inclusion. We see self-organisation as the engine for social change, transformation and evolution and purposeful design and action as means to channel in a desirable direction these self-organising forces.

We will rely as much as *practically* possible in self-organisation to construct the issues for debate in Santiago. Enabled by the Congress's website, social networks and also emails the interested people will be able to build from the initial *themes*, as proposed below, and construct together *issues* for further debate during the Congress. We may expect that meanings for these themes, including additional themes, will evolve into shared issues as virtual and face-to-face conversations proceed. However, in the end, organisers are responsible for the convergence of themes into issues.

Thus, the list of themes as proposed below is only a starting point. Our expectation is that themes will evolve into shared meaningful issues that most likely will cross over several thematic boundaries. As a Congress in systems and cybernetics, with the specific purpose of overcoming the fragmentation of social and ecological problems, we want to encourage both constructing issues as totalities and increasing our understanding of the communication processes underpinning their emergence.

The themes below are proposed to start processes of meaning creation and convergence into transdisciplinary issues.

- Design and Innovation
- Technology and the disruption of social processes
- Institutions and organisational systems
- Cybernetics and epistemology
- System methodologies, social issues and transformation
- Complexity and governance of social systems
- Business ecosystems and sustainability
- Energy systems and climate change
- Education, social and health systems: crossing their boundaries
- Democracy and inclusion
- Computer modelling and the management of complexity
- Arts and design of communication systems
- Transdisciplinary modelling of decision processes
- Decision-making, politics and power

These themes are proposed as catalysts for debate and we may expect that they will change and evolve over the next 6 months before they are firmed up as the Congress's agenda. The platforms for these debates are explained below.

Involving people in the Congress: Information Technology and Social Networks

The Universidad of Ibague, with WOSC's support, is currently setting up a dynamic website for the Congress. This website will be the focal point for the use of social networks and other communication technologies. The purpose is the dynamic involvement of as many as possible potential contributors to the Congress in the articulation of the issues to be discussed in Ibagué. Additionally information about the Congress will be disseminated through WOSC's webpage (www.wosc.co). WOSC Already has a Facebook Group page (https://www.facebook.com/pages/WOSC/347313232017817), an account to upload YouTube videos and a Dropbox account to share large files. We will add pages in LinkedIn and a Twitter link to support further communication channels.

Congress publications

WOSC's official journal is Kybernetes (https://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0368-492X). Papers submitted and accepted for presentation to the Congress, after a refereeing process, will be published in one or more special issues of the journal in 2015. Additionally we expect that the journal Business System Review of the Business Systems Laboratory in Italy will publish some of the papers delivered to the Congress and focused on business organisations and management.