



Concept Note

CURRENTS OF CHANGE: NEW HORIZONS IN SYSTEMIC RISK, A SYMPOSIUM & RETREAT

Les Fontaines, France, 7-9 June 2025

Introduction

In an era of unprecedented global challenges, humanity faces a polycrisis—a confluence of interconnected risks that threaten the foundations of our societies, economies, and ecosystems. Critical systemic risks—from geopolitical tensions and humanitarian crises to unregulated technology and climate breakdown—are growing more severe, abrupt, and complex, their cascading impacts already reverberating through both natural and human systems. Our institutions and frameworks are straining to address these interlinked risks, revealing a growing misalignment between existing capabilities and current realities, from the local to the global. Yet, it is here that we also find the currents of possibility.

It is in this context that ASRA (the [Accelerator for Systemic Risk Assessment](#)) presents [Currents of Change: New Horizons in Systemic Risk](#)—the first transdisciplinary, global symposium dedicated to action on systemic risk. Set in the serene environment of Les Fontaines, France, this invitation-only symposium brings together over 250 world-leading experts from diverse sectors to explore the interconnections driving our polycrisis, what's working and not working in risk assessment and response, and pathways toward more resilient futures for all living beings. The program integrates inspiring speakers and conversations with hands-on working sessions, and space to discover new possibilities at the intersection of crisis and opportunity.

ASRA aims to mainstream systemic risk assessment and response with action galvanized toward the vision of "honest hope"—an unflinching acknowledgment of the realities of the challenges we face paired with a resolute commitment to catalyzing bold and transformative action so that all people, societies, species, and ecosystems thrive.

Objectives

In the lead up to UNFCCC COP30 and the second World Summit on Social Development to be held in 2025, and delivered directly after UNDRR's Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2025), the Currents of Change symposium and retreat creates a unique space for leaders and practitioners to advance systemic approaches to global risks. Our aims are to:

1. Advance understanding of systemic risk and cascading effects, bridging gaps between theory and practice
2. Showcase innovative frameworks and methodologies for assessing and managing complex risk, providing hands-on experience with emerging tools
3. Identify actionable pathways for transformative action across scales, exploring real-world examples from diverse contexts
4. Foster cross-sector collaboration and knowledge exchange, bridging sector and discipline siloes and nurturing lasting relationships

Format and approach

The symposium adopts a distinctive format that moves beyond conventional conference structures, incorporating retreat-like activities and creative installations to create space for deeper engagement and transformative dialogue. Taking river tributaries as an organizing conceptual metaphor, we'll showcase how ASRA, its partners, and participants are working to radically rethink risk and create positive impacts for sustainable futures.

Key features include:

- Expert-led plenary sessions on systemic risk
- Interactive working group sessions, focused on specific risk domains and critical issues
- Cross-sectoral networking, side-events, and creative installations
- Reflection moments for synthesis and meaning-making

Practical details:

- June 7-9, 2025 (Saturday 15:00 - Monday 13:00)
- Full accommodation and meals provided
- Visa support and travel stipends available, if needed.

Venue and participation

The gathering will be hosted at Les Fontaines, France, chosen for its conducive environment for focused deliberation and strategic thinking. Participants will include:

- Government officials, policymakers, and UN representatives working on resilience and foresight
- Investment executives, insurance leaders, and financial regulators
- Environmental organizations, Indigenous knowledge holders, and humanitarian leaders
- Leading risk researchers and practitioners, systems change experts, and ecological systems scholars
- Foundation leaders and strategic donors
- Next generation leaders and risk practitioners, drawing from ASRA's network

Participants must attend for the full duration of the symposium.

This event is by invitation-only. To find out more, contact Kasia Murphy, Director of Communications, ASRA: kmurphy@asranetwork.org