Dear esteemed colleagues,

I regret to inform you that I am unable to attend this time. There are a number of private matters that require my attention at this time.
According to the latest updates on the WhatsApp group channel, it appears that you are engaged in the annual MP meeting, this time in Monterrey.

I have prepared a brief document to express my gratitude for the work of the MP, including its ongoing efforts to garner global attention for developments in the field of artificial general intelligence (AGI). Rather than presenting a dystopian vision, we are encouraging critical thinking about the potential effects of these developments on human beings, which are likely to be unfavorable. The pivotal question is how these developments can be managed in a way that is not merely rejected, but rather, incorporated in a way that is beneficial to all.
Furthermore, the 20th edition of the SoF is of the highest quality and serves to exemplify the exceptional standards associated with the MP. Furthermore, I would like to reiterate that being associated with the MP is a great privilege.

In light of the considerable sums of capital invested in infrastructure (e.g., Microsoft's investment in the development of AI infrastructures worldwide), it is evident that the advancement of AI will inevitably lead to an acceleration. It is evident that there is no indication of a reduction in investment or a shift in perspective among investors regarding the preferred future, which appears to be one of continued growth and accumulation of wealth. The narrow view!
At the global level, there is a dearth of effective oversight regarding the development and implementation of AI governance models. It appears that the international community has opted for a hasty approach wrt to the dynamics of AI. One effect of this is a directly proportional accumulation of power on a global scale of a few companies.

The MP group, which is dedicated to addressing this issue through the lens of AGI legislation, currently comprises 24 individuals. It is imperative to transition to the next phase and establish a structured approach to achieve tangible outcomes that can be disseminated in various formats.
I would like to continue to contribute to this and the next action will be to schedule a meeting with the whole group to talk about a structure for this task.

In regard to the Dutch node, I must express my disappointment. Initially, I encountered difficulties in garnering support from individuals who shared the MP's vision and were willing to contribute in a meaningful manner. At the outset, there was considerable enthusiasm, but when it came to taking action—in areas such as research, writing, networking, and so on—I appeared to be the only one who was invested in the process. Should I simply accept this as a lost cause, given that I have been trying for two and a half years without success? It seems that people are preoccupied with their daily responsibilities and the MP action is being relegated to the background.

Although the government has recognized the importance of AI, it has been subsumed into a ministry and it is not clear what the direction will be. The secretary of state responsible is not really aware of AI. We have some entrances to officials working on it, but has not yet materialized.

The following section comprises personal commentary. I anticipate relocating to Portugal in the near future and will be concentrating my efforts on integrating into the local community. Such a process will require a significant investment of time. This consequently renders it impossible for me to continue the requisite work for the MP in the capacity of chair of the Dutch node. I am obliged to concede that I am unable to proceed with this separation at this time, as I do not yet possess the requisite digital twins. I will endeavor to identify a suitable replacement. This will undoubtedly present a significant challenge.

Moreover, I have devoted a significant amount of time to examining the impact of technological advancements, yet I have not yet addressed the fundamental question of what progress truly entails. I

have also studied the work of Iain McGilchrist (Master and Emissary) and a substantial corpus of his related research, including 'The Matter with Things'. In my estimation, this provides a solid foundation for grasping the nature of technological advancement. One of the conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis is that the use of technology has the effect of impoverishing individuals, as the distinctive qualities of human beings are marginalized in favor of technologies that provide greater comfort to those who can afford them. This creates the 'paradox of comfort'. I will not elaborate on this here.

I also discussed Ray Kurzweil's latest book, 'The Singularity is Nearer'. While the technological prospect may be brilliant, it is completely in line with McGilchrist's observations and, for me, a disappointment because it completely fails to include those unique qualities in its predictions.

Furthermore, in accordance with the pervasive advancement of technology, the contributions of Jonathan Haidt, as evidenced in his work "The Anxious Generation," warrant acknowledgment. The advent of social media has led to the emergence of a new phenomenon, whereby a significant proportion of young people, particularly those belonging to Generation Z, have become identified as constituting what has been termed the "anxious generation." The long-term consequences of this phenomenon are difficult to predict, yet those with a techno-optimistic outlook appear to disregard this possibility.

These factors, along with others, provide the motivation to continue advocating for a critical perspective on technological developments and their potential future impact, with the aim of facilitating necessary adjustments.
Ultimately, given my status as a grandfather working with the younger generation, I am collaborating with my granddaughter on a book about AI. Set in 2035, the work of fiction explores how the current "anxious generation" will interact with AI in the future. It posits that the aforementioned qualities—such as understanding, love, empathy, awareness, and care—will eventually regain value.

With love!
Paul Epping
Chair Dutch Node
September 27, 2024