



As I write this, the Milken Institute is preparing for its annual Global Conference in Los Angeles, an event that has changed dra-

matically since the inaugural event eight years ago. In a way, it's symbolic of how the Institute has changed during that time.

The first Global Conference in 1998 featured a one-and-a-half-day program with nine sessions, 59 speakers and fewer than 1,000 attendees. The ninth conference will include 100 sessions over three days, with more than 300 speakers and a capacity attendance of 2,400. Some 100 journalists from around the world are expected. Equally important, the GC has grown in stature: It has become a major forum for world leaders and decision makers in a range of disciplines and endeavors, from finance and business to health care and education.

I'm often asked why we mount the Global Conference each year, given the tremendous amount of time and effort it takes to produce. The answer is: because we can – and therefore we should. I don't mean to be flip. Since its founding, the Institute has been able to bring together diverse groups to think about issues facing the world in new ways. The ultimate forum for such cross-pollination is our Global Conference, which takes place this year from April 24-26.

Where else, for example, could you find a winner of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics sitting across from one of the world's most powerful media executives and the deputy director of the CIA discussing international investment flows? Or leading scientists, technology gurus and financial leaders comparing notes on the prospects for breakthroughs in medical research?

Whether the issue at hand is health care, the global economy or the environment, the Global Conference offers fertile ground for new thinking about the most important subjects. And when you assemble influential individuals of this caliber, the results are bound to surprise. That, in a nutshell, is why we're proud to host the annual event.

Come to think of it, that's also why we publish *The Milken Institute Review*. If you are startled by fresh views on subjects ranging from trade policy to flood insurance to creativity, we've done our job.

Not able to attend this year's Global Conference? Visit our Web site ([www.milkeninstitute.org](http://www.milkeninstitute.org)) for panel synopses and more. And by all means, join us in our search for new answers to today's most pressing policy questions.

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