

Preface

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Over the past decade, the world has become increasingly hyperconnected. We live in an environment where the Internet and its associated services are accessible and immediate, where people and businesses can communicate with each other instantly, and where machines are equally interconnected with each other. This hyperconnectivity is deeply redefining relationships between individuals, consumers and enterprises, and citizens and governments; it is introducing new opportunities but also new challenges and risks in terms of individual rights and privacy, security, cybercrime, the flow of personal data, and access to information. As a result, our economies and societies will undergo fundamental transformations.

Mastering and leveraging these transformations to maximize the positive impacts and increase resilience against the risks that ICT can bring to the economy, society, environment, and healthcare are crucial for boosting economic competitiveness and well-being. The present edition of *The Global Information Technology Report* (GITR) analyzes in detail the main drivers and impacts of this ICT-enabled hyperconnected world and contributes to the work of the World Economic Forum's recently launched Hyperconnected World Initiative, which establishes a holistic means of understanding the systemic nature of change in a hyperconnected world.

The GITR series has been published by the World Economic Forum in partnership with INSEAD since 2002, accompanying and monitoring ICT advances over the last decade as well as raising awareness of the importance of ICT diffusion and usage for long-term competitiveness and societal well-being. Through the lens of the Networked Readiness Index (NRI), the driving factors and impacts of networked readiness and ICT leveraging have been identified, highlighting the joint responsibility of all social actors—individuals, businesses, and governments. Over time, the series has become one of the most respected studies of its kind. It has been extensively used by policymakers and relevant stakeholders as a unique tool to identify strengths on which to build and weaknesses that need to be addressed in national strategies for enhanced networked readiness.

The Global Information Technology Report 2012 features the latest results of the NRI, offering an overview of the current state of ICT readiness in the world. This year's coverage includes a record number of 142

economies from both the developing and developed world, accounting for over 98 percent of global GDP. A number of essays and case studies on living in a hyperconnected world as well as policy case studies on developing ICT are featured in the *Report*, together with a comprehensive data section—including detailed profiles for each economy covered and data tables with global rankings for the NRI's 53 indicators.

We would like to convey our sincere gratitude to the industry and international organizations' experts who contributed outstanding chapters exploring the drivers and impacts of living in hyperconnected world to this *Report*, as well as to policy analysts for providing their valuable insights in the policy case studies. We especially wish to thank the editors of the *Report*, Soumitra Dutta at INSEAD and Beñat Bilbao-Osorio at the World Economic Forum, for their leadership in this project, together with the other members of the GITR team: Roberto Crotti, Thierry Geiger, Danil Kerimi, and Derek O'Halloran. Appreciation also goes to Alan Marcus, Head of Information Technology and Telecommunications Industries, and Jennifer Blanke, Head of the Centre for Global Competitiveness and Performance, as well as her team: Ciara Browne, Margareta Drzeniek Hanouz, Tania Gutknecht, Caroline Ko, and Cecilia Serin. Last but not least, we would like to express our gratitude to our network of 150 Partner Institutes around the world and to all the business executives who participated in our Executive Opinion Survey. Without their valuable input, the production of this *Report* would not have been possible.