

# Preface

BØRGE BRENDE AND ROBERT GREENHILL

World Economic Forum

The 12th edition of *The Global Information Technology Report* (GITR) is being released at a time of cautious optimism after a long period of economic uncertainty that has transformed the global economic outlook. While uncertainty in the euro zone and the risk of political deadlock in the United States still persist and could derail the tentative economic recovery in developed economies, the risk of a financial and economic meltdown with unprecedented consequences seems more remote than it did a year ago. Overall, developed economies are striving to return to higher levels of competitiveness while fighting the stubbornly high levels of unemployment, especially among youth; at the same time, developing and emerging economies are focusing on innovation as a prerequisite to sustain the high economic growth rates they have experienced in the past decade and leapfrog toward higher levels of economic and social prosperity.

Against this backdrop, the role that information and communication technologies (ICTs) can play to support economic growth and the creation of high-quality jobs has never drawn so much attention and research. There had been some initial concerns about the risk, in some developed economies, that ICTs could accelerate the delocalization of certain economic activities toward developing countries. But the benefits of ICTs are now widely recognized everywhere as an important source of efficiency gains for companies that will allow them to optimize their production function and liberalize resources toward other productive investments. Moreover, ICTs are also increasingly recognized as a key source of innovation that can generate increased economic growth and new sources of high-value-added jobs. This ability to innovate is essential in the current information revolution that is transforming economic and social transactions in our societies.

The GITR series has been published by the World Economic Forum in partnership with INSEAD since 2002. The *Report* has accompanied and monitored 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 is 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 by national strategies for enhanced networked readiness.

*The Global Information Technology Report 2013* 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 144 economies, accounting for over 98 percent of global GDP. A number of essays on the role of ICTs to promote growth and jobs in an increasingly hyperconnected world, as well as policy case studies on developing ICTs, 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 54 indicators.

We would like to convey our sincere gratitude to the industry and international organizations' experts who contributed outstanding chapters exploring the links between ICTs and economic growth and job creation, 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 the Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University, Bruno Larvin 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: Thierry Geiger, Danil Kerimi, and Elena Kvochko. Appreciation also goes to Alan Marcus, Senior Director and Head of the Information Technology and Communication Industries team, and Jennifer Blanke, Chief Economist and Head of the Global Competitiveness and Benchmarking Network, as well as her team: Ciara Browne, Gemma Corrigan, Roberto Crotti, 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 167 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.