

# Preface

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Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum

The key for the future of any country and any institution lies in the talent, skills and capabilities of its people. With talent shortages projected to become more severe in much of the developed and developing world, it will be imperative to turn our attention to how these shortages can be met in the short term and prevented in the long term. For the individual, as well as for societies and economies as a whole, investing in human capital is critical; even more so in the context of shifting population dynamics and limited resources.

Through the *Human Capital Report*, the World Economic Forum seeks to provide a holistic, long term overview on how well countries are leveraging their human capital and establishing workforces that are prepared for the demands of competitive economies. By providing a comprehensive framework for benchmarking human capital, the *Report* highlights countries that are role models in investing in the health, education and talent of their people and providing an environment where these investments translate into productivity for the economy. In addition, through extensive additional information on the 122 countries covered, the *Report* seeks to provide a fuller picture of the context within which human capital is operating in any particular country.

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Using the *Report* as a basis, we aim to provide a platform for a much-needed dialogue across multiple sectors and stakeholder groups on how best to invest in human capital—both in the short and long term. Over the coming year, this discourse will take place through regional summits, industry dialogues, Global Agenda

Councils and the activities of other World Economic Forum communities. In particular, we hope to mobilize key constituents from governments and the business sector to address human capital gaps through public-private collaboration. It is also our hope that this first edition of the *Human Capital Report* will inspire further research, policy changes and new projects by business, governments, civil society and universities and serve as a call to action to transform the pace of change on an issue that is fundamental to the growth and stability of the global economy and society.