

# Foreword

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Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Cisco Systems

Everyday around the world, people are facing difficult challenges: poverty, unemployment, lack of access to quality education, and climate change, to name but a few. At Cisco, we have learned that technology helps people find innovative solutions to address these problems.

That is why we are pleased, again, to collaborate with the World Economic Forum and INSEAD to produce *The Global Information Technology Report* (GITR) and the Networked Readiness Index (NRI). The NRI provides policymakers, business leaders, and concerned citizens with valuable insights into current market conditions and the state of connectivity across the world, and it helps to identify where more can be done to accelerate the Internet's positive impact on the world in which we live.

We believe there has never been a better time to combine human ingenuity and technological innovation to help people and the planet. Everything is coming online, and we are connecting more of our world every day. At this very moment, over 12 billion devices are connected to the Internet, and that number is expected to increase to over 20 billion by 2020. These connections provide more data for better decision-making and improve the way governments, businesses, and individuals operate. This is the Internet of Everything, and it makes networked connections more valuable and more relevant than ever before.

The Internet of Everything offers countries around the world the opportunity to provide better, richer lives for their citizens and to create new ways for companies to do business. Whether these take the form of connected education and healthcare, smarter cities, more efficient government services, or job creation, we believe the societal benefits of the Internet of Everything will impact our lives in ways never before imagined. It is not the act of getting connected—or even the number of connections—that creates the value, it is the outcomes those connections make possible.

With companies, individuals, and governments working together, we can help improve societies worldwide. Governments alone cannot solve the global challenges we face today. We can tackle many of the inequities in society—such as those in education, employment, and healthcare—by bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders.

For example, more than 4.25 million students have participated in the Cisco Networking Academy since 1997; this involvement is the result of partnerships with over 10,000 educational institutions, governments, nonprofits, nongovernmental organizations, and community centers in 170 countries. Annually the program trains over 1 million students, 20 percent of whom are female, although in certain regions, such as the Middle East, girls and women make up more than 35 percent of the students. This program provides greater economic opportunities for individuals and builds a pipeline of innovators for the future workforce. Many of these students go on to pursue further education, successful ICT careers, or business ownership, advancing economic growth in communities worldwide.

In healthcare, our Jordan Healthcare Initiative is an example of how broadband can connect medical specialists to patients at rural hospitals, saving patients the time and expense of travel and enabling doctors and specialists to collaborate on patient care. Technology can multiply positive impacts for society and through networks, both people- and technology-based. Together we can make amazing things happen.

Throughout our 30-year history, we have been committed to developing world-class Internet technologies to help businesses, governments, and individuals. Ultimately the success and impact of Cisco and the Internet of Everything will be measured by the extent to which we are able to harness the Internet's benefits for humanity.