

Preface

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In the last two years since the publication of the previous edition of the *Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report*, the framework conditions for the Travel and Tourism (T&T) sector have changed significantly. The world has been facing geopolitical tensions from the Middle East and Ukraine to South-East Asia, growing terrorism threats and fear of the spread of global pandemics. Should they persist, these global challenges could have significant further repercussions on the T&T industry, as they touch on the pre-condition for the sector to grow and develop—the ability of people to travel safely. To date, the effect of such events on travel & tourism has been mixed. While some countries have witnessed significant decreases in the number of international visitors, other destinations have remained unaffected. Going forward, uncertainty with respect to future development of the sector will persist and complex forces are at play. On the one hand, advanced economies face persistent low economic growth while the growth of emerging markets is starting to decelerate. On the other hand, the world continues to become more interconnected and globalized. With this in mind, the theme of this year's *Report*, “Growing through Shocks”, reflects the current global context and the many complexities that must be tackled to ensure strong sectoral growth going into the future.

Interestingly, it is notable that the T&T sector has actually continued to grow over these past years. International tourist arrivals reached a record 1.14 billion in 2014, 51 million more than in 2013, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates that the T&T sector now accounts for 9.5% of global GDP, a total of US\$ 7 trillion, and 5.4% of world exports. Encouraging the development of the T&T sector is all the more important as the T&T industry continues to play a key role as a driver of growth and job creation, growing at 4% in 2014 and providing 266 million jobs, directly and indirectly. This means that the industry now accounts for one in 11 jobs on the planet, a number that could even rise to one in 10 jobs by 2022, according to the WTTC.

The World Economic Forum has, for the past nine years, engaged key industry and thought leaders through its Aviation & Travel Industry Partnership Programme, along with its Global Agenda Council on the Future of

Travel & Tourism, to carry out an in-depth analysis of the T&T competitiveness of economies around the world. The resulting *Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report* provides a platform for multistakeholder dialogue with the objective of achieving a strong and sustainable T&T industry capable of contributing effectively to international economic development.

At the core of the *Report* is the sixth edition of the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI). The aim of the TTCI, which covers a record 141 economies this year, is to provide a comprehensive strategic tool for measuring the “the set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable development of the Travel & Tourism sector, which in turn, contributes to the development and competitiveness of a country.” By providing detailed assessments of the T&T environments of countries worldwide, the results can be used by all stakeholders to work together to improve the industry's competitiveness in their national economies, thereby contributing to national growth and prosperity. It also allows countries to track their progress over time in the various areas measured.

The *The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015* includes detailed profiles for each of the 141 economies featured in the study, as well as an extensive section of data tables with global rankings covering 90 indicators included in the TTCI. In addition, it includes insightful contributions from a number of industry experts.

The *Report* could not have been put together without the distinguished thinkers who have shared with us their knowledge and experience. We are grateful to our Strategic Design Partner Strategy&, and our Data Partners Deloitte, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) for helping us to design and develop the TTCI and for providing much of the industry-relevant data used in its calculation. We thank our Industry Partners in this *Report*—namely AirAsia, Al Nippon Airways, Bahrain Economic Development Board, Embraer, Emirates, Etihad Airways, HNA, Hilton, Intercontinental Hotel Group, Jet Airways, Jumeirah, Lockheed Martin, Marriott, Safran, Starwood Hotels

& Resorts, Swiss/Deutsche Lufthansa and VISA—for their support in this important endeavour. We also wish to thank the editors of the *Report*, Roberto Crotti and Tiffany Misrahi, for their energy and their commitment to the project. Appreciation goes to the Global Competitiveness and Risk team as well as to the “Mobility industries team”. We would also like to convey our sincere gratitude to our network of 150 Partner Institutes worldwide, without whose hard work the annual administration of the Executive Opinion Survey and this *Report* would not be possible.

Finally, we would like to dedicate this report to Ms. Thea Chiesa, whose vision was behind the creation of the *Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report*. It was through her passion, drive and strength that this *Report* exists and has become what it is today.