

Preface

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As the world economy begins to recover from one of the worst economic crises in decades, information and communication technologies (ICT) is bound to play an increasingly prominent role as a key enabler of renewed and sustainable growth, given that it has become an essential element of the infrastructure underpinning competitive economies. ICT will continue spreading its revolutionary power to modernize economies and societies and improve living conditions and opportunities around the world. ICT performance will remain crucial not only for developed countries for sustaining and enhancing their innovation potential and long-term competitiveness, but also for middle-income and developing countries in fostering structural transformations, increasing efficiency as well as reducing the digital, economic, and social divides within their territories and vis-à-vis more advanced economies.

If ICT plays a central role in ensuring economic sustainability, it can and must play an equally central role in promoting environmental and social sustainability, both as an industry and as a key element of enabling infrastructure. We believe sustainability, in all its components, should be a priority for policymakers, businesses, and civil society alike to foster a more just, more inclusive and crisis-resilient world. ICT and the ICT industry must now rise to the challenge.

The Global Information Technology Report series, produced by the World Economic Forum in partnership with INSEAD and published annually since 2001, has contributed to illuminating the drivers of ICT performance and the importance of ICT diffusion and usage for long-term competitiveness and societal well-being. The Networked Readiness Index (NRI), featured in the series, has provided a methodological framework that identifies the enabling factors for countries to fully benefit from ICT advances while highlighting the joint responsibility of all social actors, namely individuals, businesses, and governments, in this respect. The *Report* has become one of the most authoritative studies of its kind, providing a unique international benchmarking tool that policymakers and all relevant stakeholders can use to identify national shortcomings and strengths and to design national policies that set their economies on the road toward enhanced networked readiness.

The Global Information Technology Report 2009–2010, the ninth in the series, features the latest results of the NRI, offering a snapshot of the state of networked

readiness in the world. Under the general theme of ICT for sustainability, the *Report* explores the central role of ICT in fostering economic, environmental, and social sustainability both as an industry in itself and in the overall economy and society.

The *Report* has established itself as one of the most comprehensive assessments of ICT readiness, covering 133 economies from the developing and developed world, representing over 98 percent of global GDP. A number of essays and case studies on sustainability and best practices in networked readiness 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 68 indicators.

We would like to convey our sincere gratitude to the respected academics and industry experts who contributed excellent chapters to this *Report*, investigating the diverse links between ICT and sustainability as well as highlighting best policies and practices in ICT diffusion and leveraging. We especially wish to thank the editors of the *Report*, Soumitra Dutta at INSEAD and Irene Mia at the World Economic Forum, for their leadership and long-lasting dedication to the project. Appreciation goes also to Jennifer Blanke, Head of the Global Competitiveness Network Team and to the other team members: Ciara Browne, Margareta Drzeniek Hanouz, Thierry Geiger, Carissa Sahli, Pearl Samandari, and Eva Trujillo Herrera. 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 whose valuable input and support the production of this *Report* would not have been possible.