

# Preface

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The benefits of free trade are well known: trade opens new markets and allows countries to gain from specializing in producing those goods and services they do best, it provides greater choice for consumers at a lower cost, and it improves global efficiency in resource allocation. The past half century has seen a significant opening to international trade around the world, contributing substantially to global economic welfare and reducing poverty. Yet, despite the key role that international trade plays in economic development, many obstacles remain to realizing its full potential. Given the importance of trade for industrialized and developing countries alike, the fundamental objective of *The Global Enabling Trade Report* (GETR) is to explore the factors enabling trade in individual economies.

Trade barriers extend beyond the tariffs and quotas traditionally considered to factors such as border administration, infrastructure, and the domestic business environment. Over the past year, the World Economic Forum has engaged key industry and thought leaders through its Logistics & Transport Industry Partnership Programme to carry out an in-depth analysis and assessment of the obstacles hindering trade in economies around the world. The goal is to construct a platform for multistakeholder dialogue to explore how best to remove these obstacles, in the interest of fostering international economic development.

Drawing on our expertise in developing tools for benchmarking economic performance, the World Economic Forum has developed the first Enabling Trade Index (ETI), which is at the core of this *Report*. The aim of the ETI, which covers 118 economies, is to provide a strategic tool for measuring a range of policy-related issues that contribute to hindering trade. It ranks nations according to the factors and policies facilitating the free flow of goods across national borders and to destination. By providing detailed assessments of the trade-enhancing environments in countries worldwide, the results can be used by all stakeholders to work together to increase their economies' participation in the global economy, thereby contributing to national growth and prosperity.

The *Report* contains detailed profiles for each of the 118 economies featured in the study, as well as an extensive section of data tables with global rankings covering all of the indicators included in the ETI. In addition, the *Report* includes insightful contributions from a number of trade experts and industry practitioners. These essay contributions examine different aspects

of enabling trade, exploring issues such as the role of logistics and transport efficiency in facilitating trade and global efforts being made in the area of trade facilitation.

*The Global Enabling Trade 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 data partners—the Global Express Association (GEA), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), The World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO)—for helping us to design and develop the ETI and for providing many of the trade-related data used in its calculation. We thank our industry partners in this *Report*—ABX LOGISTICS Worldwide, Agility, Deutsche Post World Net, DP World, FedEx Corporation, Stena, TNT N.V., and UPS—for their support in this important venture. We also wish to thank the editors of the *Report*, Robert Z. Lawrence of Harvard University and Jennifer Blanke, Margareta Drzeniek Hanouz, and John Moavenzadeh from the World Economic Forum, for their energy and their commitment to the project. We are also grateful to the management team of the Enabling Trade project, Sean Doherty and Qin He, for so effectively driving the process forward throughout the year. Appreciation also goes to Fiona Paua, Head of Strategic Insight Teams, and other team members: Ciara Browne, Agustina Ciocia, Thierry Geiger, Yasmina Makar, Irene Mia, Pearl Samandari, and Eva Trujillo Herrera. Finally, we would like to commend our network of 142 Partner Institutes worldwide, without whose enthusiasm and hard work the annual administration of the Executive Opinion Survey and this *Report* would not be possible.