

# Introduction

In a time of unprecedented change, how can we prepare for the year ahead?

We live in a fast-moving, highly interconnected and complex world. Breakthrough technologies, demographic shifts and societies in transformation are reshaping the world and have far-reaching social, political and economic consequences. More than ever, leaders need better information and understanding if they are to guide nations, organisations and societies successfully.

The Network of Global Agenda Councils was created to foster greater understanding and collaboration around the major issues of our time. Each of the 86 Councils is driven by top experts and thought leaders from around the world, who are not only recognised for their unique contributions to thought, but also for their commitment to cooperating in search of pioneering solutions.

The flagship publication of the Network, the **Outlook on the Global Agenda 2014** provides a top-of-mind perspective from the Global Agenda Councils on the challenges and opportunities of the coming 12–18 months. It offers a comprehensive overview of the world, drawing upon the foremost global intelligence network and its collective brainpower to explore the most important issues we all face in the coming year.

To better understand the complexity of these issues, the **Outlook** also provides deep insights into specific regional challenges, highlighting the perspectives of different stakeholders and those of the next generation. It illustrates the connections across issues and explores some of the outstanding questions our experts are grappling with, and finally, it looks ahead to the emerging issues and technologies that will shape our world.

The launch of the **Outlook** is timely as it provides input to our Summit on the Global Agenda, held from 18–20 November 2013 in Abu Dhabi. The Summit brings together members of the Network of Global Agenda Councils to discuss the findings and jointly develop recommendations for the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters and other relevant Forum activities.

We are convinced that the **Outlook** will be an intriguing read for leaders who want to get ahead in understanding important global issues. I invite you to join the Global Agenda Councils in their efforts towards a greater understanding of the global, regional and industrial transformations shaping our future, and the collaborative actions that can be undertaken to improve the state of the world.

**Klaus Schwab**

Executive Chairman

World Economic Forum

