

## Foreword

The world economy's center of gravity has been shifting steadily towards emerging economies and developing countries. In 2006, the *Economist* reported that according to their estimates, emerging economies produced over 50% of the world's output in 2005 for the first time, and they also accounted for over 50% of the increase in global GDP. In 2008, the *Economist* reported that in the last 20 years, the foreign direct investment in emerging economies had increased by seven times relative to GDP. As we near the start of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, emerging markets and developing economies are becoming the high growth darlings of the global economy. No longer are they viewed by the global community as catch-up economies that need aid, but rather as attractive investment opportunities for high growth.

As emerging economies and developing countries ramp-up for large scale growth, information and communication technology infrastructures become critical enablers, and the adoption of e-commerce becomes key for accelerating economic development within a global framework. In such a rapid growth environment, the leveraging of information and communication technologies is not a luxury – it is an absolute necessity for scaling up high growth. It is thus imperative to better understand the drivers and challenges of deploying e-commerce in such developing environments.

There is much hype and hand-waving in the popular press around the exciting topic of information technology, e-commerce, and globalization. However, there are very few books that present in-depth examination and studies to help better understand the underlying drivers that enable emerging economies to take advantage of information technologies in the context of e-commerce. This timely book fills that gap and is a guide book for both practitioners and researchers who want a better understanding of e-commerce and its adoption drivers in emerging markets. It brings together in 18 chapters the diverse expertise of over 35 accomplished authors. It provides rich insights that will help guide future research on e-commerce, and will guide decisions and policies for the more effective implementation of e-commerce in developing economies.

The digital divide between the developed and emerging economies is shifting rapidly. China is expected to overtake the USA in 2008 as the country with the world's largest number of internet users. We expect to see information technology intensity and e-commerce dependence to increase from Dubai to Mumbai, and from Indonesia to Tunisia. That is why we need specific understanding of the challenges and opportunities of e-commerce adoption in these contexts. This immensely useful book sets us on the right path.

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