The world today is at a critical inflection point. The twin triggers of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine rattled an already brittle global system. Economic growth in the world’s largest economies is stalling, while navigating headwinds from rising food and energy prices. For the first time since the 1970s, the world is facing a precarious disequilibrium with growth and inflation moving in oppositive directions. This is occurring alongside heightened geo-economic fragmentation, financial sector vulnerabilities, including stretched asset prices and high debt levels, and a climate crisis spiralling out of control, which could magnify any growth slowdown, particularly in emerging markets. Unless these systemic and interconnected risks are addressed, the promise of a “decade of action” may become a decade of uncertainty and fragility.

Against this unprecedented backdrop, the World Economic Forum is convening its 53rd Annual Meeting in January to reaffirm the value and imperative of dialogue and public-private cooperation, not only to navigate the current cascading crises but, more importantly, to drive tangible, system-positive change for the long term. For over 50 years, the World Economic Forum has provided space for leaders to engage in peer-to-peer deliberations in the spirit of improving the state of the world. Never has this mission been more important. Therefore, finding ways to reinstitute a collective sense of agency and to turn defensive measures into proactive, vision-driven policies and business strategies will be at the heart of the meeting. The magnitude of current crises and the potential of future ones demands no less.

The Programme

The basic tenet of the programme is the premise that the current crises, as serious as they are, are manifestations of larger systemic deficiencies accrued over time. They are also the result of a narrow vision of systems as sectors rather than true multidisciplinary, networked entities that are highly dynamic, particularly in the context of the meta trends of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and climate change.

Therefore, thematically, the programme will have the dual focus of looking at levers to address the current challenges while at the same time setting them against the backdrop of attendant system transformation imperatives.

Concretely, we will look at:

**Addressing the Current Energy and Food Crises in the context of a New System for Energy, Climate and Nature**

Energy transition and climate change are inextricably linked, with its impact being felt in recent months. While a global energy transition is under way, further action is needed to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change. Critical measures to accelerate energy transition include decoupling economic growth from energy consumption, particularly in emerging economies, mainstreaming breakthrough technological innovations and addressing equity. Rather than using the ongoing crisis as a pretext to forego policies that support the transition to more sustainable energy sources, this moment should be utilized to develop more ambitious, comprehensive, and sustainable infrastructure investment plans that helps the world to meet the 2030 targets.

**Addressing the Current High Inflation, Low Growth, High Debt Economy in the context of a New System for Investment, Trade and Infrastructure**

Policymakers are now operating with limited fiscal space, while inflationary pressure is forcing a tightening of monetary policy. Tighter monetary policies are also having knock on effects on emerging markets, with many now struggling to service their debts. Protectionist measures also threaten the global trade agenda which was at the centre of economic prosperity of the last 30 years. This comes following the COVID-19 pandemic which has pushed 120 million additional people into extreme poverty and exposed the underfunding of critical infrastructure across markets. In a multipolar world, refashioning the economic agenda along strategic lines and rebuilding trust in the international system will take careful collaboration between all stakeholders and a new vision for economic prosperity and development.
Addressing the Current Industry Headwinds in the context of a New System for Harnessing Frontier Technologies for Private Sector Innovation and Resilience

Industries are being forced to reassess their investment, production and innovation decisions with the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), climate change and geopolitical fragmentation of recent years. To navigate the current friction points and to strengthen future competitiveness, companies will need to foster emerging technologies of 4IR as well as optimize for agility. They will also need to realize stakeholder capitalism through core business and operating models not only to drive resiliency today but also to shape the future socio-environmental prosperity. To do so successfully, collaboration must be strengthened across increasingly diverse ecosystems, including competitors, companies in other industries and innovators.

Addressing the Current Social Vulnerabilities in the context of a New System for Work, Skills and Care

Official statistics show that despite a growing global economic crisis, workers are continuing to leave – or considering leaving - their jobs. Notwithstanding high numbers of unfilled jobs and tight labour markets across many of the world’s biggest economies, real wages are also declining across many job categories in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. In parallel, emerging markets are facing pressure of significant unemployment driven by the economic slowdown, leading to heightened social pressure. This moment calls for a new social contract that supports strong investment in education, skills and healthcare that fills unmet demand, lays the ground for social mobility and ultimately future-proofs economies.

A special workstream across these themes will be dedicated to leadership, with a particular focus on resilience both at the individual and organizational levels.

The meeting will also enable the Forum’s Global Collaboration Village, a pioneering effort to further scale public-private cooperation on the world’s foremost challenges utilizing immersive digital environments.

The Meeting

The meeting will take place from 16 January to 20 January. The four days will cover a wide spectrum of formats for interaction and learning, giving leaders the necessary tools to address the current complexity and build for the future. They will revolve around the following three archetypes:

- Dialogues to forge understanding and alignment and exchange insights
- Gatherings of communities of purpose to drive tangible action on key global issues
- Opportunities for foresight and discovery to scale society critical innovations

The meeting will feature addresses by key heads of state and government as well as various geo-economic and geopolitical deliberations such as the Country Strategy Dialogues, Diplomacy Dialogues and the Informal Gathering of World Economic Leaders (IGWEL) meetings. It will also gather the Forum’s foremost business communities, such as the International Business Council, the Community of Chairpersons and the Industry Governors.

Many sessions will be livestreamed publicly on the Forum’s website and social media channels, as well as its state-of-the-art digital app, TopLink, providing an opportunity for the Forum’s Digital Members community and the public to engage in deliberations. In addition, timely expert briefings will help participants and the public gain insights on the latest developments in current affairs at the time of the meeting.

Participation in the Annual Meeting is by invitation to the following Forum communities:

- Chief executives and chairs of the Forum 1,000 Partner companies actively engaged in initiatives and communities such as the International Business Council, Community of Chairpersons and Industry Governors
- Public figures from across the world including G7 and G20 countries, as well as heads of International Organizations
- Leaders from the foremost civil society, labour, media organizations as well as top thinkers and academics
- Members of the Global Innovators and Technology Pioneers community, the Community of Global Shapers, the Forum of Young Global Leaders and the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship

Health and Safety

The World Economic Forum attaches the highest priority to protecting the safety and well-being of participants, staff and the local community. For our Annual Meeting, we are working closely with public authorities to develop policies and protocols covering every aspect of the meeting, including health, safety and security.