INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION

Globalization has generated new, complex puzzles for the world economy and the corporate world. At the business level, globalization has had a big impact in terms of opening up new markets for products and services, and for outsourcing and offshoring. The next trend among some of the largest Western companies is to locate R&D operations in new emerging markets.

In facing the next decade, there is a deep and relevant question for companies trying to tackle the challenge of globalization. It has to do with talent development and diversity in a more integrated world.

Most of large Western international companies are still managed from headquarters, far away from emerging markets, not only in terms of physical distance, but in the cultural understanding of those countries and their cultures and values. Very few Western companies have senior managers from those emerging markets sit on the executive board or have global responsibilities within their organizations.

Those companies also have a tough time in recruiting local young talent in those emerging markets. Smart young people increasingly want to work abroad, in the West, or they prefer working with some growing local champions. Moreover, the levels of loyalty and commitment of those young people to multinational companies operating in emerging markets seem to be very low, lower than in mature markets.

There is also a big challenge for companies that do well in recruiting local talent. It is the challenge of integrating them into the global company and use and leverage their unique knowledge and expertise. In other words, part of the learning process that occurs at the local level is seldom transferred to other parts of the firm.

Finally, as those companies keep investing in new emerging markets in terms of capital goods or even research facilities, the big question is how well positioned they are in terms of management and leadership to develop and retain local talent in those markets, and make them successful over the long term, so that the whole firm can benefit from.

These issues are more pressing as we see local champions in those emerging markets growing globally and increasing their capacity to attract the best local talent. Multinational companies need to think beyond market penetration and offshoring, and to develop a business strategy and an HR strategy fully aligned with those new realities. Otherwise, their efforts in emerging markets may end up in failure.

This Conference wants to tackle those issues. Its main specific approach would be to combine the perspectives and experiences of CEOs, senior HR VP for international companies, leading scholars in this field and deans of international business schools. The main papers of the conference will be published in a special edited book in 2012.