

## Systems level pressures and trends

While business leaders arrive to our programmes increasingly aware, and experiencing the impact, of the changing global context, we take time to deeply understand systems level pressures and trends based on the latest science and thought leadership.

These are just some of the critical challenges that bind us together, wherever we are in the world, that we consider in our executive education programmes when exploring how to lead businesses fit for the 21st Century:

- For the first time in history, there are [more people aged over 65 than people under the age of 5](#), and our growing population will predominantly be in Africa, with [urban populations there expected to triple](#) by 2050.
- [68% of the world's population will live in cities](#) and 95% of urban expansion will take place in the developing world.
- Economic activity will increasingly move from West to East and the global 'middle class' (individuals with a daily expenditure of between US\$10 and \$100 and a desire for better food, new homes, cars and more products) will rise, with a [tripling of spending power in India](#) alone to USD 10.46 trillion.
- Youth unemployment will create a surge in demand for new jobs, particularly in Africa where [18 million new jobs](#) will need to be created annually to compensate for the youth entering into the labour market, with [technology](#) being positioned as an opportunity to reignite job creation and accelerate development.
- By 2050 the population require 57% more [electricity](#), 20-30% more [water](#) and 59-98% more [food](#) and our extraction and use of materials (biomass resources, fossil fuels, metals and non-metallic minerals) [will double between now and 2060](#) (with a fifth of all material extracted - 12Gt per year - going to waste).
- The need for more water, food and energy poses a significant threat to the world's [natural capital](#), which underpins the flow of natural goods and services on which businesses depend and since 1970, [60 per cent](#) of the world's population of mammals, fish, birds, reptiles and amphibians have been lost.
- A changing climate creates increasingly extreme weather events that will exacerbate existing instabilities and conflicts, inundate coastal cities, displace populations and disrupt supply chains, with economic losses for flooding-related disruption alone estimated to reach [\\$1 trillion by 2050](#).
- There is a widening gap between the rich and poor and it is recognised that [growing inequality](#) will determine global development, posing a significant risk to business continuity.
- An increasing number of people are displaced, with over [80 million forcibly displaced people](#) globally in 2020 due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order. Of the 80 million forcibly displaced, 42% are children.

[\*\*\*Discover how Alice Spencer, Programme Director for the Business and Sustainability Programme globally, works with leading businesses to tackle these global challenges.\*\*\*](#)