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2013 Will Be a Year of Hope and Growth

By Martina Gmur

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Someone asked me recently, "With so much uncertainty in the world today, how can world leaders effectively plan and implement long-term policies?" The person had a point. Given the unpredictability and instability of our changing world, is it really realistic of us to expect governments to plan for the future?

Let's look at the facts. Five years after a global financial crisis, there is still uncertainty about how we can achieve sustainable global growth. In geopolitics, the dynamic between traditional superpowers and emerging economies is far from being fully understood. Even our virtual personas tread muddy waters, contending with ambiguities over digital rights and doubtful online security. And globalization, the very system that links these spheres together, is equally threatened. Its capitalist underpinnings have been questioned, while the plethora of institutional governance systems it has spawned suggests that we are a long way from true global trusteeship.

Yet one of the side effects of uncertainty is hope. The fact that we cannot predict the future means that we have to be hopeful about what it will bring. There is hope in the sphere

of economics: Nanotechnology, better robotics and developments in the energy sector will be three sources of economic prosperity in 2013.

There is hope in regions that have seen increased volatility in the past two years. Although the Arab Spring is still in its infancy, there is still hope that the area will bring democracy and citizen engagement.

There is great hope in hyperconnectivity, too. By its very nature, it is bringing us together and allows for a much more effective exchange of information, goods and services. Cancer research and treatment breakthroughs are good examples of how doctors and scientists can use technology for the public benefit.

Thus, despite the uncertainties we currently face the positives give us good reason for hope. Let's remind ourselves that we have succeeded in overcoming major obstacles before and will continue to do so. It is important for world leaders to keep this in mind. If you take optimism out of decision-making, the outlook will certainly appear a lot bleaker.

Martina Gmur is senior director and head of the Network of Global Agenda Councils at the World Economic Forum. She is a contributor to the "Global Agenda Outlook 2013" report, which is available at wef.ch/outlook2013.

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