

## Message from Independent Directors



**I hope to leverage my nearly 15 years in leadership roles building successful global companies to move us more swiftly down the path of digital transformation and contribute to good governance.**

**Ravi Venkatesan**

Independent Director

First, I am honored to join the Board of Directors of Hitachi, which is one of the world's great technology companies.

As an independent director, I hope to contribute to Hitachi in several ways. For instance, Hitachi is making a big bet on the digital transformation of its businesses and building out Lumada as a platform for this. The Company has been proactive and is well positioned for leadership, but other large technology companies and competitors are building similar platforms. Many crucial decisions will determine our success, including investments, partnerships, M&A and strategic governance. I hope to draw on my nearly 15 years in leadership roles with Microsoft and Infosys to bring useful perspectives to accelerate our digital transformation journey.

One opportunity is in India, which has a large market and a critical pool of engineering talent. It also presents an extremely difficult business environment. Having helped build several successful companies in India, including Cummins, Microsoft, JCB and Volvo, I aim to advise and assist our Business Units to successfully build market leadership there.

In my role as UNICEF's Special Representative for Young People and Innovation, I find Hitachi's commitment to the Social Innovation Business fascinating. This aspect of the Company is distinctive and extremely important; society is increasingly holding companies to account for behaving responsibly, operating in an environmentally sustainable way, and reducing inequality. Hitachi can show the world that doing well and doing good are entirely compatible, and we can communicate this at a scale that the world will notice and hopefully emulate.

Finally—and most importantly—I will contribute to good governance. Over the last 20 years, I've led and served on the boards of global companies in the U.S., Europe and India. I have helped guide firms through transformation, crises and stakeholder activism. A large, complex and global company like Hitachi benefits from having

independent directors who understand their fiduciary duty and have lived through such experiences.

Hitachi's board needs to have diversity that mirrors its complexity. I think the Company has been proactive and thoughtful in assembling a diverse, accomplished and independent group of global leaders with varied expertise. Second, board members must be engaged effectively so we have a sound understanding of our businesses, leaders, opportunities and risks. My experience so far with the thoroughness of my orientation process and the information provided has been very positive. Third, the board culture should be transparent, disclose and confront problems early, and encourage frank discussions. Equally, board members need both the wisdom and independence of mind to ask the right questions and challenge management constructively. If these conditions are met, and a high degree of mutual trust and respect exists between board members and management, things usually work out.

It is already clear to me that the Company has enormous opportunities and fantastic technological depth, talent and resources. Any company that has survived and flourished for more than 100 years must also have a very strong mission and values. But we are now experiencing the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which will be extremely disruptive. We face huge challenges like climate change, a changing world order and its impact on global supply chains, as well as "Black Swan" events like COVID-19.

The future is uncertain and volatile, and to maintain leadership, companies must be adept at managing risks and agile in adapting to change. Most large, successful companies are built to last rather than built for change; this often becomes their central challenge. But I see that Hitachi has a clear and coherent vision and has made an enormous number of difficult changes since the crisis of 2008. I am optimistic that we will be able to consolidate leadership in the industries of the future.



**Hitachi and its customers are on a journey to bring together technologies, platforms and people. I will draw on all my experience in digital transformation to support this journey.**

**Helmuth Ludwig**

Independent Director

The digital and physical worlds are growing together. To create and capture value, we need to understand both. In my former roles at Siemens, I had to do exactly that: bring together technologies, platforms, and most importantly, people. A transformational journey. Hitachi can be a leader in this journey for its clients: with the Lumada platform at its center and a strong focus on combining Information Technology with Operational Technology, and the crucial domain knowledge (ITxOTxProducts). The magic ingredient? Our people. Empowered employees who learn, grow and co-create. I expect to be a partner and sounding board for Hitachi's business leaders along this journey.

I am deeply impressed by the discussions with Hitachi's top management; I am also humbled to support such a strong team, and to serve as guide where it matters most to them. Their balanced focus on social, environmental and economic value is an industry benchmark.

Hitachi is a global company with a strong base and longstanding heritage. I have enormous respect for its strong track record in markets abroad. This international success story will be even more important going forward, since the Internet of Things and platform business models are global in nature: more users and more data drive greater customer benefit – and thus our own success. I am excited to apply my own experience of having worked and lived in different countries in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

The vision of "Improving the Quality of People's Lives, Raising Customers' Corporate Value and Achieving a Sustainable Society" resonates well with top talents in and outside of Hitachi. The vision also shows clearly where the company is going: Hitachi has a strong innovation culture dating back to its founding by Mr. Odaira in 1910, and the Company has a clear view on the next generation of

businesses. Forwardlooking portfolio changes over the past years are a clear proof point. This vision is most relevant for our stakeholders. In today's highly interconnected world, no one can go alone, and Hitachi's values are a strong foundation for building an ecosystem with partners and customers. Hitachi Ventures headquartered in Munich is a good example for the open mindset of the Hitachi culture.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us powerful lessons: humility, inventiveness, and resilience. It also showed that technology can help us cope even with existential threats. I am inspired by the way we all managed to move to remote work, building on existing technologies and inventing new ones. In the end, however, it is all about people, our resilience and our willingness to collaborate.

New technologies and new ways of working are exciting – but they come with risks. One area where I would like to contribute is in the "Democratization of Artificial Intelligence (AI)", one of my academic research areas. We need to experiment with AI. But we need to do it safely, so people will trust AI and understand its limits. I am convinced that we will see AI and other platform technologies become mainstream in Hitachi. We can be a trailblazer, if we find the right balance between opportunity and risk here.

But technological advancement is no value in itself. It needs to be human; it needs to serve us, humanity. My first board meeting in July left me convinced that I am supporting a team that embodies this mindset. The meeting began with a review of the health status of the employees. People matter at Hitachi. I am honored to be one of them.