News Release

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

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World Economic Forum Calls for More Women Leaders

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Adrian Monck, Managing Director, Head of Communications: +41 (0)79 817 0315; adrian.monck@weforum.org

- While more women are entering the workplace, corporations still fail to fully capitalize on their abilities
- The World Economic Forum ' s Women Leaders and Gender Parity initiative encourages women leaders
- The theme of the 42nd World Economic Forum Annual Meeting is The Great Transformation: Shaping New Models. For more information, visit http://wef.ch/Davos

Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, 27 January 2012 – The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters devoted a major plenary session today to the role of women as leaders. Thailand ' s Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, opened the discussion by announcing that Thailand plans to create a national women ' s development fund to counter human rights abuses directed at women. She said that education is the most effective way of decreasing early pregnancies, the death of women in childbirth and infections of HIV/AIDS. In announcing the fund, Shinawatra further stressed that education is essential in equipping women to resist sexual aggression and to defend their rights. She added that Thailand plans to host the World Economic Forum on East Asia later this year and the role of women will be one of the major topics discussed.

Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, said that women suffer from an ambition gap. " We say we want to educate girls, " she said, " but we don ' t really believe it. We don ' t raise our daughters to be as ambitious as boys. " Sandberg added that as early as the age of four, boys are taught to be leaders, while girls are encouraged to stay in the background. A man who demands a higher salary is taken more seriously, while a woman who demands the same thing or tries to be assertive is seen as being bossy. " How many boys have you ever heard accused of being too bossy? " Sandberg asked.

During the session, Archbishop Desmond Tutu said that the empowerment of women is essential to development. " Without women we will miss six of the eight Millennium Development Goals, " he said. Asked what would happen if women ruled the world instead of men, Tutu responded, " Men have tried to rule the world for centuries, and they have made a mess. Let ' s let the other half try. "

With record participation of over 2,600 leaders from government, academia, business and civil society, the theme of this year ' s Annual Meeting is The Great Transformation: Shaping New Models.

The Co-Chairs of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2012 are: **Yasuchika Hasegawa**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Takeda Pharmaceutical, Japan; **Vikram Pandit**, Chief Executive Officer, Citi, USA; **Paul Polman**, Chief Executive Officer, Unilever, United Kingdom; **Alejandro Ramirez**, Chief Executive Officer, Cinepolis, Mexico; **Sheryl Sandberg**, Chief Operating Officer, Facebook, USA; and **Peter Voser**, Chief Executive Officer, Royal Dutch Shell, Netherlands.

Notes to Editors

Find more information about the **Annual Meeting 2012** at http://wef.ch/Davos
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WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM
World Economic Forum, 91-93 route de la Capite, CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva
Tel. +41 (0)22 869 1212, Fax +41 (0)22 786 2744, http://www.weforum.org