News Release

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

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Companies, Governments Must Work to Vault Best and Brightest into Public Service

15 November 2010

New Delhi, India, 15 November 2010 – There was a time when public virtue was its own reward. Today, companies and governments need to restore the allure of politics and bring the best and brightest back into the realm of policy, panellists said on the second day of the World Economic Forum ' s India Economic Summit.

India ' s political system is not unusual: its corridors of power have become crowded with special interests, dynastic politics and venal rent-seekers. " India seems to be accepting the principles of caste and dynasty, " warned Arun Jaitley, the leader of the political opposition Bharatiya Janata Party in India ' s Parliament. " It ' s replacing meritocracy. "

The most talented young people no longer strive to lead their nation ' s government; they strive to run their nation ' s largest companies and earn the highest pay checks. Companies need to respond to this imbalance by creating rotations between business and government, encouraging employees to consider public office as part of their career development, even a key performance indicator when climbing the corporate ladder. " The private sector needs to encourage the movement of talented individuals into the public sector, " said Dennis Nally, Chairman of PwC International and a co-chair of the Summit. " There needs to be an expectation that, to progress in an organization, you should have this kind of experience – either on secondment or rotation. "

At the same time, though, governments need to abandon the assumption that the promise of power draws the best talent. They must adopt the same tools corporations use to attract and retain talent. " Governments think they don ' t have to actively attract talent. They believe they are just innately attractive to leadership, " said Oyun Sanjaasuren, a member of Mongolia ' s Parliament. " Governments need headhunting, just like companies. "

On a more basic level, governments and civil servants should be paid salaries commensurate with what they could earn within the private sector. " To get the best people, you do have to pay market rates, " said Jitesh Gadhia, Senior Managing Director of the Blackstone Group in the United Kingdom. That said, salaries should not replace a desire to do public good as the main incentive for political leadership, said Naveen Jindal, a member of India ' s Parliament and Vice-Chairman of Jindal Steel and Power. " You do it as your duty to making this the country of your dreams, " he said.

Ultimately, voters have themselves to blame if they do not get the leaders they think they deserve. Too often, voters reward demagoguery and tolerate allegations of corruption in their leaders. " The electorate has a responsibility, " said Jaitley. " The electorate must deal with such candidates and condemn them. "

Prominent business leaders serving as co-chairs for the Summit are: Jon Fredrik Baksaas, President and Chief Executive Officer, Telenor Group, Norway; Ajit Gulabchand, Chairman and Managing Director, Hindustan Construction Company, India; Ellen Kullman, Chair of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, DuPont, USA; Pawan Munjal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Hero Group, India: Dennis Nally, Chairman, PwC International, PwC, USA.

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