

Russian President Medvedev Opens World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2011

26 January 2011

- The Moscow airport bombing will strengthen the resolve to eradicate terrorism, Russia's president says
- Russia is focused on enhancing the rule of law and modernizing its economy to increase competitiveness
- The Swiss president calls for the creation of a "sustainability council" at the UN
- More information on the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2011: <http://www.weforum.org>

Davos, Switzerland, 26 January 2011 – Just two days after the deadly terrorist attack on Moscow's Domodedovo airport, Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev delivered the opening address at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2011. "All our efforts to further develop the world economy will be for nothing if we fail to defeat terrorism, extremism and intolerance, if we fail to eradicate altogether these evils which are the greatest danger to mankind," Medvedev told some 2,500 participants in the opening session. "Success can be ensured not by states alone but through broad dialogue with civil society." Added the Russian leader: "The pain from the loss of human lives will stay in our hearts for too long, but they only strengthen our resolve to find a solution to international terror." The timing of the bombing indicated that those responsible "expected that their act would bring Russia to its knees" and that the president would cancel his trip to Davos, Medvedev said. "They miscalculated."

In his address, Medvedev also outlined his government's plans for modernizing the Russian economy and enhancing Russia's global competitiveness. "Russia faces many difficulties in building the rule of law and creating a modern economy," he acknowledged. "We are moving ahead in fighting corruption and modernizing the judiciary, though we have not yet achieved the best results from our efforts." He stressed his commitment to openness and technological development and the importance of attracting talent to Russia. "Our task is to turn Russia into a more attractive place for the best minds in the world," Medvedev stressed. "Russia is an open country that is already part of the world economy." Governments "should listen to what people have to say," he concluded. "When authorities don't meet the aspirations of the people, there will be a sad outcome. They will face chaos and instability."

Earlier, Micheline Calmy-Rey, President of the Swiss Confederation and Federal Councillor of Foreign Affairs, welcomed participants. "The gap between rich and poor is growing without relent," she remarked. "Global justice is a prerequisite for sustainable development and we have to understand that our lifestyle is not sustainable." The international community should "guarantee that resources are distributed in a way that benefits those who are most vulnerable." She called for the creation of a "sustainability council" at the United Nations. "The world is so fragile so let's take care of it."

In his remarks to participants at the beginning of the session, Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum, warned of "global burnout", as the world focuses on reacting to crises as they happen rather than on actively addressing challenges. "We are all optimists here, but when we look at the big issues on the global agenda, there is pessimism. We don't want this meeting to be one of despair. You fight possible burnout with renewed self-confidence." This should be "a meeting of constructive optimism," he said.

Notes to Editors

For more information about the Annual Meeting 2011: <http://wef.ch/Davos2011>

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