

Outcomes from the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2009, Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, 28 January – 1 February

In his opening remarks at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2009, Klaus Schwab, Founder and Chairman of the World Economic Forum, outlined various objectives for this year's programme.

One objective is to give support to governments and governance institutions – particularly the G20. To this end, the Annual Meeting 2009 succeeded in:

- Providing a global platform for four heads of government from the G8 (Germany, Japan, Russia and United Kingdom) as well as China, to help the international community to understand the origins of the crisis to begin to work on solutions based on a common understanding of where we are.
- Bringing together the Chair of the G20, Prime Minister Brown of the United Kingdom, with heads of government of G20 members from Africa (President Motlanthe of South Africa), Asia (Prime Minister Han Seung-Soo of South Korea) and Latin America (President Felipe Calderón of Mexico) in a public discussion on addressing systemic risks in the financial system and stabilizing the global economy.
- Launching a new World Economic Forum task force of business leaders, economists and other experts to provide advice to the UN climate negotiations at the request of United Kingdom Prime Minister Brown.
- Agreeing on a process of public-private consultation during 2009 on the reform of the international financial architecture involving World Economic Forum Financial Services Industry Partners, academic experts and G20 finance ministries and central banks.
- Facilitating a private meeting of central bankers, finance ministers and other government leaders with the private sector to brainstorm on systemic financial issues in the run up to the April G20 summit.
- Organizing a World Economic Brainstorming with over 200 economists, business leaders and policy-makers as well as numerous sessions to identify the policy assumptions, regulatory deficiencies and market failures that led to the global economic crisis.
- Convening key trade ministers from 17 economies plus the 27-member EU to deter “beggar-thy-neighbour” policies that would set the world back into a protectionist spiral reminiscent of the 1930s.

Another objective was to ensure that global challenges were examined in a holistic, systemic way whereby the financial crisis was not considered as the only issue that requires a global multistakeholder response. In this regard, participants at the Annual Meeting were provided the most comprehensive overview to date of pressing global challenges in an integrated manner to prevent them from triggering future crises. This was achieved by:

- Refocusing international attention on climate change by underscoring the need for governments to agree by December in Copenhagen to the successor treaty to the 2005 Kyoto Protocol. Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen of Denmark, the Chair of the UN Conference on Climate Change and Nobel Laureate Al Gore appealed to leaders to do their utmost to arrive at a shared vision and common goals in the months ahead. Rasmussen expressed that he was in Davos “to convince people that there is no competition between ambitious climate change policies and the resolution of the financial crisis.”
- Reinforcing the commitment of industries to climate change, Chairs of the Forum's Industry Governors Meetings reported in Global Industry Outlook sessions that business is “hardwiring” climate change into their future plans. To this end, presenting the findings of the Forum's report, *Green Investing: Towards a Clean Energy Infrastructure*, to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations. Industry executives agreed to move forward with half a dozen specific initiatives to accelerate the integration of sustainable practices into business.

- Advancing public-private cooperation on food security, climate change, water security, sustainability, education and international financial stability through the development, publication and discussion of the following reports:
 - Green Investing: Towards a Clean Energy Infrastructure
 - The Next Billions: Unleashing Business Potential in Untapped Markets (report produced by Forum)
 - The Next Billions: Business Strategies to Enhance Food Value Chains and Empower the Poor
 - The Bubble Is Close to Bursting: A Forecast of the Main Economic and Geopolitical Water Issues Likely to Arise in the World during the Next Two Decades
 - Sustainability for Tomorrow's Consumer: The Business Case for Sustainability
 - Educating the Next Wave of Entrepreneurs: Unlocking entrepreneurial capabilities to meet the global challenges of the 21st Century
 - The Future of the Global Financial System

A third objective of this Annual Meeting is to start a year-long process to develop recommendations on how the structures and strategies of international cooperation should be updated to confront contemporary global challenges more effectively. In this regard, the World Economic Forum:

- Launched a new initiative to improve global cooperation under the auspices of Qatar, Singapore and Switzerland – three small countries that have benefited historically from a stable and open international system. The Global Cooperation System Initiative will examine how the international system can be reoriented to increase collaboration and innovative solutions in light of the mismatch between 20th century institutions and 21st century challenges.
- Synthesized and presented the analysis of over 700 members of the Forum's Global Agenda Councils – a network comprised of many of the world's leading thinkers on global challenges – to assist leaders from government, industry, media and civil society to collaborate more closely.
- Upgraded the capabilities of the Forum's WELCOM platform, which was designed in partnership with Adobe Systems, BT Innovate and Microsoft. WELCOM is a collaborative Web-based platform developed to allow world leaders to consult on global issues via video technology; to share expertise and knowledge in real time; and to create online communities focusing on specific global challenges.

A fourth objective of this Annual Meeting is to improve the ethical value base for business as a constructive social actor. To this end, the Forum was able to:

- Launch an initiative led by its Young Global Leaders (YGL) Community to develop a model code of ethics and conduct for business and other leaders. The year-long process will culminate at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2010 and include inputs from all regions and all stakeholders, as well as experts on business management and ethics.
- Engage in much-needed debate on the values behind market capitalism and leadership shortcomings in both industry and government.
- Celebrate the 10th anniversary of the UN's Global Compact, which was launched at the Annual Meeting 1999 in a major plenary session in Davos featuring UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and CEOs from foundation members that are Global Compact signatories.
- The Young Global Leader initiative to "Deworm the World" announced the roll-out of treatment programmes to India, Kenya and Guyana, bringing the total coverage of the initiative to 28 million schoolchildren in 35 countries in 2009. While 400 million children still suffer parasitic worms (keeping them out of school), this initiative is helping to bring better profile and concrete action to a long-neglected tropical disease.

The fifth and final objective of this Annual Meeting was to restore confidence in our future. In this regard, the Meeting provided a platform for:

- Various governments to explain how they are using public spending to rebuild needed infrastructure and to accelerate green innovation.
- Industries to highlight how they are developing innovative new products and business systems to respond to the present crisis and to prepare for the post-crisis world.
- Leading educational institutions such as MIT, Oxford, Yale and INSEAD to give presentations on emerging technologies, scientific discoveries and new strategies for industry.
- Japanese Prime Minister Aso to offer Asian countries more than US\$ 17 billion of aid over three years to fight the global financial crisis and reiterate Japan's offer to lend up to US\$ 100 billion to the IMF from its foreign currency reserves.
- German Chancellor Merkel to call for the creation of an international economic body similar to the UN Security Council to prevent future financial crises as well as a "new charter for the global economic order" that would enshrine core economic principles.
- The Community of Religious Leaders to launch a Call for Peace in the Middle East. The unanimous statement from Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders comes at a crucial time. It highlights the great importance of engaging the religious perspective as a necessary complement to the political process in the search for a settlement which will lead to two independent states living in peace and free from violence, incitement and terror.

The greatest outcome of the Annual Meeting 2009 was that, despite the economic turbulence, people chose to come together in record numbers from industry, government and civil society to reflect on the seriousness of the global challenges we face and to connect and respond to such challenges.