Ban Ki-moon and José Manuel Barroso meeting at the European Forum Alpbach

(Vienna/Alpbach, Austria) - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso will participate in the Closing Event of the European Forum Alpbach this year. They will discuss new ideas for a fair globalization on August 31 together with Kandeh K. Yumkella (Chair of UN Energy), Habbib Haddad (CEO of WAMDA), Heinz Fischer (President of Austria), Pavel Kabat (Director of IIASA), Jakaya Kikwete (President of the United Republic of Tanzania), and the Indian Nobel Prize Laureate Rajendra Pachauri.

It is not the first time that Ban and Barroso participate in the European Forum Alpbach. Ban Ki-moon has already been to Alpbach twice (2009 and 2010); José Manuel Barroso attended the Economic Symposium last year. It is the first time, however, that they are visiting Alpbach together. “We have always acted as bridge builders among a diverse range of disciplines and decision-makers from the economy, science and politics,” Franz Fischler, President of the European Forum Alpbach, explains. “I am delighted that Alpbach is recognised on the international level as a venue for informal gatherings and exchanges of ideas.”

Under Fischler’s new leadership, the European Forum Alpbach is increasingly devoted to the question of how to build a society based on sustainability and the preservation of natural resources. The so-called Millenium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in order to fight poverty are coming to an end in 2015. This is why the speakers of the Alpbach Closing Event will discuss which paths to take on the global level in order to find sustainable and equitable prosperity for all on the post-2015 horizon. Above all, Ban Ki-moon and José Manuel Barroso will reflect on the role of the European Union and the United Nations in this regard.

A variety of well-known personalities and intellectual pioneers will also join the European Forum Alpbach. In preparation of the Closing Event, Nobel Prize Laureate Jeffrey Sachs will debate the question of “Green Growth: A New Concept for Sustainable Development?” on August 26 at the Political Symposium. During the Built Environment Symposium, Amina J. Mohammed, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, will talk about the future of urban development. The EU Commissioner responsible for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, and Valerie Amos, UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, will give insights into current challenges of international crisis management on August 29.

In spring 2013, the European Forum Alpbach and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) entered a strategic partnership. The two organisations will jointly establish a think tank with selected international decision-makers from business, politics, science and civil society. Franz Fischler will present the project together with Pavel Kabat, IIASA’s Director and CEO, at the end of August during a joint press conference in Alpbach.
The Closing Event on August 31 is open to participants registered for SEM, HLT, PER, TEC, POL, LAW, ECN, FIN, BLT and the Alpbach Summer Schools. Participation is free but subject to registration. Further information on registration can be found at the website of the European Forum Alpbach at www.alpbach.org. The event will be broadcast on a live stream available on the website of the European Forum Alpbach.

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About the European Forum Alpbach
Established in 1945 as one of the first international politico-academic events to be held in war-torn Europe, the European Forum Alpbach has developed into one of the most pivotal inter-disciplinary platforms for science, politics, economic matters and culture on this continent. With its activities and events, the European Forum Alpbach is working towards a forward-looking, democratic society and contributes stimulating input for the evolution of the European integration project.

In March 2012, Franz Fischler succeeded Erhard Busek in the office of President of the Forum. The Vice-Presidents are the former Austrian Minister of the Interior Caspar Einem, the political scientist Sonja Puntscher Riekmann, the President of the Austrian National Bank, Claus J. Raidl, and the Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Optometry at the Medical University of Vienna, Ursula Schmidt-Erfurth. In matters of content, the 2013 European Forum Alpbach is shaped by the Scientific Advisory Board under the leadership of Peter Aichelburg as well as Expert Advisory Boards for the 12 Alpbach Symposia.

Every year, more than 700 students and young graduates participate in the European Forum Alpbach as scholarship holders. More than 20 countries meanwhile boast their own Alpbach associations and initiative groups founded by former participants with a view to disseminating the “spirit of Alpbach” in their home countries and support the scholarship regime of Alpbach.