Prominent international guests conclude the European Forum Alpbach 2013

UN Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos, EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso, President Heinz Fischer and Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete speak at the final event.

The European Forum Alpbach 2013 will culminate today, 31 August, with an impressive line-up of featured speakers. First, the US economist Jeffrey Sachs, the Chairman of UN Energy, Kandeh K. Yumkella, the Chairman of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Rajendra Kumar Pachauri, and the founder of the Internet platform WAMDA, Habib Haddad, as well as the Chairman of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis – IIASA, Pavel Kabat, will discuss the potential contribution of entrepreneurs as central players in a globalized economy towards fairer distribution. Following an opening concert by the Vienna Philharmonic, UN Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos, President Heinz Fischer, EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso and the Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete will discuss “New Ideas for a Fair Globalization: The Role of Politics.”

The prominent group met in Alpbach already on Friday for an informal retreat on the featured topic. “I am very pleased that the European Forum Alpbach can serve as a platform for the vital issues of our time such as energy, climate change and food security,” said Franz Fischler, President of the European Forum Alpbach. “This clearly demonstrates that the Forum is perceived internationally both as a bridge builder and as a catalyst for new ideas.”

Franz Fischler announced today in his closing speech that the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis - IIASA in Laxenburg, and the European Forum Alpbach, will join forces to create a global Think Thank. “IIASA’s systematic approach and its internationally acclaimed scientific excellence, coupled with the extensive experience of the European Forum Alpbach as a platform for interdisciplinary dialog and exchange of ideas, will form a strong foundation upon which to build such a Think Thank”, said Pavel Kabat, Director of the IIASA.

Following three weeks of conferences and meetings, the Forum draws a positive balance. “This year, our objective was to introduce an element of positive tension and discussion to our Alpbach talks, adding depth to the entire Forum,” stated Franz Fischler. “We invited emerging leaders from throughout Europe to Alpbach to explore and develop joint proposals for the economic system of the future. Fifteen young European journalists collaborated to report on the Forum within the framework of the Alpbach Media Academy. With the increased integration of art as a stimulus to individual talks, as well as a BarCamp held during the Seminar Week, many refreshing and new components were added to the mix this year.”

“One of the most positive aspects was the active role played by the 777 young scholarship holders from more than 50 countries. Their participation and input adds an incomparable vitality to the Alpbach experience,” pointed out Philippe Narval, Managing Director of the Forum. “It is impossible to imagine the Alpbach Forum without them.” A total of 4,300 visitors from 74 countries took part in the European Forum Alpbach 2013. Some 754 lecturers or artists contributed to 153 presentations, 77 working groups, 16 one-week seminars, five summer schools and 23 cultural events.

Preparations for next year’s European Forum Alpbach 2014 are already in full swing. Under the general theme “At the Crossroads”, the Forum will be held from August 13th to 29th, 2014.
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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.