

THE ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM – 2009

4–6 JUNE 2009, ST. PETERSBURG

EDUCATING FUTURE WORLD LEADERS

Moderator:

Sergei Guriev, Dean of the New Economic School

Panellists:

Andrei Fursenko, Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation

Hans-Paul Buerkner, President & CEO, The Boston Consulting Group

Craig Barrette, Chairman of the Board, Intel

Andrei Volkov, Dean of the Moscow School of Management Skolkovo

Birger Steen, Vice-President, Microsoft Corporation

Dr. Xiang Bing, Dean, Cheung Kong Graduate School of Business

Ruben Vardanyan, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Troika Dialog

William Couser, Dean executive MBA programs The University of Chicago Booth School of Business

Helen Teplitskaia, President, American-Russian Chamber of Commerce & Industry & President,
Siberian Energy Group, Inc.

Sergei Guriev, Dean of the New Economic School, and moderator of this session on educating future world leaders, commented that a recovering economy requires people with new skills or new leaders to manage innovation within the economy. According to Minister of Education Andrei Fursenko, education systems typically adapt to the current and past environment, not to future challenges. The delayed reaction is a problem; however, new business leaders should be able to meet these challenges and focus on the end result, even if it means adopting unpopular measures. He concluded that the quality of education will play an important role after the crisis.

Participants, including the CEO of BCG, Hans-Paul Burkner, and Intel Chairman Craig Barrette, noted that leaders are the most important resource of a company. Business leaders should have a long-term global view, create value, and focus on people development. In order to be innovative, businesses need people with problem-solving skills and specialised engineers to represent a sizable proportion of business leaders. It was agreed that they should be able to adapt to changing rules, and be able to transfer knowledge gleaned from international experience.

The panel commented that business schools should collaborate in order to develop more education programmes that reflect the challenges faced in the real economy. It was agreed that a global perspective was needed. Chinese business school practices were cited as an example. The rapidly changing environment underscores the importance of a broad skill set and the importance of having global insight, experience, solutions and analysis. Creativity and the development of entrepreneurship were also agreed as important.

The Russian education system was good in the Soviet era, it was noted, but it should now adapt to the new environment. Providing opportunities for talented people, not just the elite, and the provision of a good education system in the Russia regions were deemed to be important. Ruben Vardanyan, chairman of the board of directors of Troika Dialog, said that, in Russia, the population has limited career mobility. In addition, education standards should also take account of the criminal and corruption issues being faced in the current environment. The participants said that the lack of competition has restricted the formation of business leadership. They concluded that the education system should encourage future leaders to take risks, resist the status quo, and have ethical business values.

Finally, the minister of education said that, Russian universities should adopt new technologies, including innovative education programmes, increasing the number of experienced specialists, and should meet global standards. The exchange of international experience and leading education programmes will help to modernise the system.