

EMBARGOED UNTIL WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 6:00PM EST

FORBES PUBLISHES 24TH LIST OF THE WORLD'S RICHEST PEOPLE

Mexico's Carlos Slim Helu Takes Title of World's Richest Person;
Stunning Uptick in New and Returning Billionaires after 2009 Fall-Off

New York, NY (March 10, 2010) – What a difference a year makes: the number of billionaires has soared from 793 last year to 1,011, still shy of the 1,125 billionaires that existed in 2008. Today, the world's billionaires have an average net worth of \$3.5 billion, up \$500 million in 2010. Mexican telecom titan **Carlos Slim Helu (#1)** added \$18.5 billion over the last year, and claims the title of world's richest person with a net worth of \$53.5 billion, marking the first time since 1994 that the #1 spot has been held by a non-U.S. billionaire.

Forbes' 2010 ranking boasts 97 new billionaires, including 62 making their debut from Asia, a region that saw swelling stock markets and several large public offerings during the past year. Asia now trails Europe in total number of billionaires by only 14, and for the first time mainland China has the most billionaires outside the U.S (403), with 64, followed by Russia with 62, many of whom are returnees who had fallen off last year's list amid a meltdown in commodities. Eleven countries have at least twice as many billionaires as they did in 2009, and there is a record number of billionaires returning to the list this year at 164.

The list represents 55 countries with Pakistan (**Mian Muhammad Mansha, #937**) and Finland (**Antti Herlin, #773**) adding their first-ever billionaires this year. Despite being up \$13 billion over the past year, Microsoft founder **Bill Gates** slips to #2 with a net worth of \$53 billion, marking only the second time that he has not held the top spot since 1995. The value of **Warren Buffett's** Berkshire Hathaway shares caused a \$10 billion increase in his personal net worth to \$47 billion, which places him at #3. Cracking the Top Ten for the first time is this year's biggest gainer Brazilian **Eike Batista (#8)**, who is up \$19.5 billion since last year. **Bernard Arnault (#7)** is Europe's richest person for the first time with a net worth of \$27.5 billion, up \$11 billion in the past twelve months.

The Top Ten have a combined net worth of \$342 billion, up from \$254 billion from 2009:

RANK	NAME	NET WORTH	UP/DOWN FROM 2009	ORIGIN OF WEALTH	COUNTRY (By Citizenship)
1	Carlos Slim Helu & family	\$53.5 billion	Up	Telecom	Mexico
2	William Gates III	\$53 billion	Up	Microsoft	United States
3	Warren Buffett	\$47 billion	Up	Berkshire Hathaway	United States
4	Mukesh Ambani	\$29 billion	Up	Petrochemicals, oil & gas	India
5	Lakshmi Mittal	\$28.7 billion	Up	Steel	India
6	Lawrence Ellison	\$28 billion	Up	Oracle	United States
7	Bernard Arnault	\$27.5 billion	Up	LVMH	France
8	Eike Batista	\$27 billion	Up	Mining, oil	Brazil
9	Amancio Ortega	\$25 billion	Up	Retail	Spain
10	Karl Albrecht	\$23.5 billion	Up	Supermarkets	Germany

For the full list, interactive map, slide shows and more, visit www.forbes.com/billionaires after 6 p.m. EST on Wednesday, March 10, 2010.

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