

Keynote Address to the Global Partners' Forum on Orphans and Vulnerable Children

By  
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Good morning, and thank you all for coming to this global forum. Let me say that we at the Bank have been particularly anxious to have this meeting and are grateful to you, Carol Bellamy of UNICEF, first for our partnership, and second, for helping us to convene this meeting to take advantage of all the experience that is in this room, which, as you said, comes from all sectors-governmental, civil society, private sector, the academe and scientific community- to help us in this institution pursue a common goal, which is to help vulnerable children, and in particular those caught up in the pandemic of AIDS.

For us, it is a central issue and one that is troubling and one where I think we have made some progress, but by no means enough. But before I get to that, I want to make one general comment, which I think we all should understand and was sparked by Carol Bellamy's last observation. And that is, when she talks about the choices that we make.

The issue of children and getting assistance to them, the issue of AIDS, and the issue of development, are not things that we can just look at in terms of children or even vulnerable children. The overall allocation of resources and the following through programs for development is a much broader issue. It is one which we are not confronting very well at this moment and one which will be the subject of review in September of this coming year, when we take a look at MDG Plus Five. We will take a look in some detail at the promises made in Monterrey, and Johannesburg, and the way in which we are responding generally to the question of development for a lot of people, adults and children. It's worth observing that we agreed in Monterrey that developing countries would do certain things and that the rich would also their part.

The developing countries said we will improve our capacity in all senses, including delivery of services, that we will look at the issue of legal reform for the protection of rights of people, specifically the rights of men, women and children, and that we will change and reflect on the transparency of our financial systems, and finally that we will confront

the issue of corruption. These issues apply not just to the general questions of development, but also deal with the issues of dealing with children, the needs of vulnerable children, and then fighting the pandemic of AIDS.

We all understand the need to not just advocate for children, which is something we all here feel passionately about, but to also advocate for an overall recognition that we need developing countries to show greater leadership in their efforts to achieve faster progress with the MDGs. But then for the rich countries, what have they promised? They promised to assist in capacity building, promised to increase aid, and have promised to open their markets to trade. And when you look at their promises so far, we have a very, very sorry picture.

The picture tells us that in the last several years, aid has increased nominally to a total of \$68 billion. I say nominally because if you analyze the cash transfers, then deduct the special considerations where they have been adding debt relief which is not a cash transfer, and adding in consultancy services and special situations in relation to war, and conflicts and natural disaster, you find that the real amount of increase is less than a billion dollars. And when you look at the actual cash transfer over this period, you are probably looking at about half the \$68 billion. The first thing to note is that there's a sort of game going on in terms of the numbers which is not reflecting itself in terms of the delivery.

And we saw this for a time in relation to the funding for AIDS, and still see it in relation to financing education in the rural areas. You may remember that we tried to get FTI (Education for All Fast Track Initiative) going in relation to primary school education. And we talked about getting \$3 billion a year for primary school education as a minimum contribution to bring 120 million kids to school. The first time around we managed to raise 300 million. We now have a Catalytic Fund, and I am grateful to Jean-Louis Sarbib for his leadership which has allowed us to move forward, but by no means are we near the funding that we need for education in general.

The other aspect, is that we simply have not seen the follow through on trade arrangements which are crucially important for earning income in the poor countries with which we are principally dealing. So we have this crazy situation, in which we made promises in 2000, where we identified the issues broadly, where groups, such as ours, and in particular leaders such as Carol Bellamy have been reminding constantly about the most vulnerable sectors which are the kids, where our future lies, and yet here we are blithely moving along and not keeping the promises, may I say, on either side.

Developing countries certainly face the issue of corruption which is still there. And on the side of developed countries, certainly non-delivery on the issue of aid and trade. While this is going on, \$900 billion a year are being spent on defense, and \$350 billion spent in agriculture subsidies and terrorism. I say this by way of background because we as a group also recognize that in the lead-up to the the meeting in September, we should not only advocate for children, which

as far as I am concerned is central, but we also have recognize that the issue of children fits into an overall package of just non-performance on the whole issue of global equity on the part of the international community.

I don't want to divert attention today away from the issue of children, particularly vulnerable children, but we do need to recognize that we are not dealing with a single issue here . What is a huge need for us at all levels is to try to say "Look the fundamental question here is delivering on our promises which every head of government said were correct in 2000, but where we are simply not performing." I wanted simply to say this is the backdrop against which we are operating.

We are not operating against a perfect background, against which we are concerned about the rights of children and vulnerable children. We are operating against a lousy background, against which we are talking about the rights of children and the AIDS pandemic, and the way it affects vulnerable children, so we really have a double hurdle to get over.

As to the hurdle itself, and for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) themselves, nothing is better, in terms of what our institutions are doing than implementing The Framework for Protection of Children, which UNICEF took a strong lead on and which was laid out in the first global forum in Geneva.

As you will know, there are really five things inherent in the Framework. We should be: (1) strengthening the capacity of families to protect and care for orphans and vulnerable children by prolonging the lives of parents and providing economic, psychosocial and other support ; (2) mobilize and support community-based responses; (3) ensure access for orphans and vulnerable children to essential services, including education, health care, birth registration, and others; (4) ensure that governments protect their most vulnerable children through improving policy and legislation and by channeling resources to families and communities. And this point gets back to my earlier point of the promises that were made to change regulation, and overall focusing of programs, which unfortunately is not developed as well as we would hoped, and then the issue of (5) raising awareness at all levels through advocacy and social mobilization to create a supportive environment for children and families affected by HIV/AIDS.

Let me say that in relation to the World Bank, that we have taken a lot of notice of this framework because it has the merit of being straightforward and being intelligent. It is a practical approach to deal with the issue and it's also one that was adopted by this group. So we, in this institution, have been trying as best we can to move towards implementing this framework.

I think you may know that in the first instance, we have made very significant increases in our approach to youth, and the children themselves. When you think that 1.8 billion people on the planet, a third of its population, is under the age of 14 and 2.8 billion people are under the age of 24; we have really half the world which has a strong youthful element. And I have been meeting in the last several years with

a lot of youth leaders and they brought it home rather sharply several years ago, when I remarked rather patronizingly how we are dealing with their future, and one of the young people said "Mr. President, we are not the future, we are the now". And that changed my way of talking and my perceptions.

And indeed we have been working with young people themselves and I think one of the things we have learned in this organization, and for myself, is that dealing with youth through youth is an incredibly important aspect. I am sure UNICEF knew more about this than we did. But I have to say that now we have groups of young people in more than 20 of our offices are working with us, looking at all our programs. They are amazingly direct in their observations to Bank managers, and this is no more important than in the area of AIDS. And how kids have been grabbing hold of this issue of AIDS, which they understand and which they deal with far more intimately than we do. I was recently in Ethiopia and we had a gathering and these kids had decided that the thing they wanted to do was to give two prizes. The prizes were national prizes, where they had young people around the country write prose and stories about AIDS, and what they could do about it. And with no introduction and no support from us other than a few dollars, we had these two remarkably young AIDS sufferers who came in and who were able to read the poems and who were integrated into the activities and the outreach for our own people and for youth themselves. It was terrific.

I am sure all of you throughout the world have seen the work that you can do with youth organizations, and in our MAP (Multi-country AIDS Programme) programs today where I am told we deal with 30,000 community-based organizations. Many of whom care for young people and I had the privilege to meet with these young people, so the first thing which I think is responsive is reaching out in the communities and in particular the young people.

But the other thing we have also been doing, in accordance with this program, is strengthening the capacity of families and we will hear quite soon from Minister Askalu Menkerios of Eritrea about a program which is working there, which I think is hugely innovative, to strengthen families not just by giving them cash but also by giving them them some productive asset, whether it is a head of cattle, a camel, or donkey that can generate resources for strengthening the financial conditions of families. We are now dealing with 28,000 orphans in Eritrea and the Minister will be happy to talk about it at this forum.

The second thing, which is critical, as Carol mentioned, is this issue of barriers to entry for education. All of us know that if we can get to the education issue we can save incidence of AIDS to start with, and then we can also deal with the question of strengthening the opportunities in the family context and we can deal with one of the crucial issue of vulnerable kids when they don't get education. And may I add here it's not just for AIDS but its for the many aspects of vulnerability that kids suffer from: as orphans, as disabled, as child laborers working in intolerable conditions, probably the million of street kids, who none of us have really counted, although we have tried to reach out, the statistics, Carol, are not available, but their visibility is clear in

many countries. And this is too is an area where this institution is seeking to operate.

I think you know about the criticism of the World Bank that it is trying to bring in fees in schools. I don't think that was ever true, and if it ever was true, it's not true any more. We are working in many countries, including Kenya. Professor Karega, its Permanent Secretary of Education will talk about it later, where the abolition of school fees brought greatly increased numbers of kids into school, as it also has in more than 12 countries where we are also seeking to end the use of fees.

On the question of health care and birth registration, and in particular also the other issue, of preschool education and early child development, we are also trying to keep pressing forward. The belief in our institution, the very strongly held belief, is the issue that preschool education, and education in those early years, is absolutely crucial for the development of children.

We didn't do a lot in that for many years but in the last ten years, thanks to a couple of people in our own organization, we have now taken huge interest in this whole question of early childhood education and the stimulation of children. And there, it's hard enough to do it in families; it's even harder to do it when you have orphaned kids, who are either institutionalized, or where they are living with families that are not used to dealing with the question of early childhood education and early child development. Nonetheless, this is an area in which we are reaching out to do more.

When I first started thinking about these things, I always thought primary school was the place where it all started, but of course it isn't. We need early childhood education and stimulation before the kids get to school otherwise we limit their capacity both in terms of mental stimulation and along with that of course, goes the question of physical development in terms of health, food, and nutrition.

Here what we have been doing is running a number of cash transfer programs which have been quite effective in terms of transferring money to families, or to the supporters of children, on the basis that they will do two things: that they will bring about that stimulus, sometime it's \$20 or sometimes a lit bit more or little less, or whether it would be a project in Kecamatan in Indonesia, which is probably the largest project of its kind, or projects in Africa. This duality of providing funding to the family to allow the kid to go to school, and also in return for the promise of the mother or the supporter to attend class to learn about nutrition, to learn about the physical well being of the child and the preschool stimulation of the children. This is the sort of thing we are trying to do, with some effect. Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) are a methodology which has served us well.

I guess our biggest problem here, to be honest with you, is that we feel that we have extremely good experiences. Many people at the World Bank call these "feel good projects", projects where you have success, you feel terrific because you have dealt with twenty, thirty, fifty thousand

kids until you come to recognize that we're talking about 1 billion kids that need help as Carol has mentioned. So the issue of scaling up becomes really the central issue. How do we take the programs that we all know work, and bring together under a partnership between the bank, international institutions, leadership from UNICEF and WHO, and how do we link up with civil society, and how do we link government, to try to get a concentrated program that has a chance of both strong advocacy, very strong direction, measurement, and above all the issue of trying to advance the scale of the problem we are dealing with. And this returns me to my early point.

We can only do this if we really can change the perceptions, as Carol Bellamy has said. It's the decisions taken by our leaders which are going to do this. She talked about it in relation to poverty and war. It's the same thing with kids and it's the same thing with attributing resources.

Here at the Bank, I think, we have a decent understanding of the issues. I think we have, under the leadership of Jean-Louis Sarbib a passionate commitment, but we are looking forward to, over the course of these next two days, some guidance, a real action program so that we can see how we can scale up together to move from the 300,000, and 500,000 successes we have had to date, to the 500 million successes we need. And we very much appreciate the opportunity to work with you. You can count on us to be a willing and vigorous partner.