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Question and Answer with Nancy Birdsall

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Begleiter. I'm going to toss the first question to both of you, and I'm going to lean on the title of Nancy's speech, "Do No Harm…" Ivan, you broadened that obviously to include another region of the world, and I'd like to ask both of you for your assessment as observers in this field, how would you apply the do no harm rubric, if you will, to the elephant in the room that we haven't been talking about very much, that is the conflicts and post-conflict situation in Afghanistan and Iraq?

A: Birdsall. Wow, that's a big question. Well, two things occur to me that are different for the two settings. I think much of what I said applies, more obviously, in the case of Afghanistan. I'll leave the issue of the security situation to Ivan – there, the issue may be avoiding getting out too soon, as in avoiding further deterioration to the level that occurred in East Timor. Looking at development-oriented interventions, I think Afghanistan does offer lessons where, although much good was no doubt done, if the donor community had focused on doing aid in a smart way, a better way, rather than only on doing more, Afghanistan might be better off today. It's about the quality of intervention of aid, not as much about the quantity. In fact, it's still struggling. I think the government has a few good people at the top, but it's been extraordinarily difficult in Afghanistan to create an effective working bureaucracy to do things that we take so much for granted in this country. So, it's about not having too much fragmented aid, too many demands, topping up salaries as I mentioned, in which the UNDP played a role, manning the bureaucracy itself, paying attention to effective government.

I think we have to recognize in the development community that we don't really know how to create a viable middle class. I believe a real, vital middle class has to be fundamentally the outcome of private sector-related activity, so there's a lot of economic work that is a bit arcane for the larger audience about the risks that large increments of money from outside create for an economy that wants to see growth of, say, exports or growth of the trade sector, where there's a lot of pressure on wages and local costs that have effects on the currency. Some of this is not empirically documented in every setting. Obviously it can be managed, but it's another example, along with the fragmentation issue I raised, where the development community needs to learn more. And we have to have some humility and focus as much as possible on ensuring that what aid goes creates minimal administrative burden for the governments and is going to the people who need it most, and not going through too many intermediaries.

On Iraq, it's so much harder to think about the issue because first there's a security problem, which is a fundamental role of the state, so we face a situation in Iraq that is even further behind than that in Afghanistan. The other hard part in Iraq, I believe, is that even if the security situation were magically solved overnight, we have not been very smart on a particular policy about the oil. I wrote an article with a colleague in *Foreign Affairs* that proposes that Iraq do more direct distribution of the net income from its oil directly to people. There are many complications and difficulties, but what we proposed is that the right of the people to get the proceeds could have been incorporated into the constitution. It might have prevented what will be a terrible risk of all kinds of nasty, rent-seeking corruption and payoffs, fights among the three major ethnic groups. We're already seeing that over the oil, and economists have been saying for years now that oil and other resources like oil are a curse, not a blessing, in countries that don't already have democratic, accountable governments. So Iraq is really a tough nut to crack.

A: Vejvoda. Let me spin it to the post-intervention in the Balkans and in Serbia. I think we have two things going—we don't have oil and there was no ground intervention, we were just bombed from 50,000 feet. That makes things easier in the aftermath, and I think, to echo what we just heard, security is paramount. Until you have freedom from fear, uncertainty and insecurity, the other stuff can't take hold because ultimately that's what we human beings are about—to feel safe and go about your business. If you go out in the street and don't know whether you'll come back home that evening, it's not conducive to any form of consolidation of anything, of economic activity, of social certainty, of politics. Iraq, I would say, is somewhat of a very difficult case. Of course, as Kemal Derviş said, it's both about long term goals but about deliverables in the present day. People have to feel that something is happening, something is better in their lives. I guess Afghanistan in that sense is a better case. There are things that have happened, but until we move on this opium thing and there's a sense that they can live off production of a sort that creates that longer future, I don't think we'll be doing the right thing.

Q: Wendy Luers, Foundation for a Civil Society. I want to get down to the specifics of today, which is that there has been a referendum in Serbia, which you well know. There is the general assumption that the Kosovar independence is coming and it will be imposed from high up at the UN. Do you think there will be any reaction on the ground in Kosovo, depending on the very low turnout in the situation with the referendum, in which they claimed that Kosovo was an integral part of Serbia and this was a major part of the referendum, which was designed in my understanding to delay the decision on the independence. First, could you give us a snapshot of the way you think those 70-80% unemployed young are going to react to all of this?

A: Vejvoda. First of all, the fact that Kosovo has been put into the preamble of the Serbian constitution—it was voted in yesterday—has precedence. The Republic of Ireland had an article which said the whole of Ireland is integral and thus the north is part of it. They had to change that article when they became members of the European Union. Now the Republic of Ireland has aspirations to have the north part of it, not to mention the German constitution after the Second World War. This is, in fact, something of an excuse for politicians in Serbia to say they did everything possible to retain the territory of Kosovo for Serbia. When the day comes at the UN that there will be a new Security Council resolution, the Serbian leadership will not accept it formally but in fact, Serbian society will go along with it. I think there's a deeper issue, and that goes to the

issue of democracy. We have democratically elected governments in all of these countries now, in Kosovo as well as in Serbia, so it's about democratic legitimacy and a fully imposed solution. I don't think it will be fully imposed, because there will have to be some sort of acquiescence from the two sides. I think we need it, that's what we call the compromise solution, so that you have at least minimal buy-in for the future stability and peace, and that's what it's about. It's the end game. We've got all the pieces in place, there's this last piece that has to fall into place. If we altogether—the UN, U.S., Europe—we, the actors on the ground, cannot see that there's a price to pay for what happened in the 90s, whatever the responsibilities are, we won't get this right. And yes, you're absolutely right, it is the economy—or rather the absence of an economy—in Kosovo that is probably the greatest task the day after that future state is defined. I often say to people, we will be responsible for helping Kosovo to stand on its feel economically, we're the biggest country in the region. We will have—if we're basing ourselves on democratic values—we will have to help them out. That is a big problem with demographics and there's no real answer to that yet.

Q: Hamide Latifi, Women for Women International. I'm a Country Director for Women for Women International, which operates in Kosovo as well. I want to thank you, Ralph, for giving me a chance to speak and also to both speakers. I mean, really today we are talking about political, economic and human rights. I'm happy and proud to say that Women for Women International designed this program 13 years ago and we go very well with this same program. So, the founder of the organization has been so visionary to target all these complexities together because only together can we make development progress. I agree, Ivan, with what you said about Kosovo completely. I think that we both are in trouble. Kosovar, Serbs, Macedonians—big trouble in economy. We have a long battle to improve economies in our countries and we should work together in partnerships, I completely agree.

I want to share something from the ground. How does "do no harm" apply on the ground? Listen to what people say. Don't design projects in the office, that's not the best way to do it. We have gone with designing a project to establish the return of the Ashkalija Roma community because as a member of the majority in Kosovo, I have a responsibility as a part of that community, for the return of other minority communities that have a legitimate right to go back and live as we do.

So basically it is a question about bringing back the Ashkalija Roma. All they have been asking for is to construct walls around their houses. And this my question: do walls bring security? Walls divide people. If people feel insecure and unsafe, it is legitimate and we should recognize that, and eventually we should create an environment where people feel secure, and then walls can be destroyed. I mean, it's not something built forever but at a certain point, if people want that, you give it to them if it makes them feel more secure, safer. So this is really a version of do no harm. I wanted just to share this and thank you to all of you.

A: Birdsall. There's a very famous poem by Robert Frost that has the line in it: *"Good fences make good neighbors,"* so I applaud your point, it's a lovely example. Listen to what people want. Don't design projects in the office.

Q: Steve Crane, Crane International. Nancy, we spent quite a bit of time this morning talking about the lack of independent evaluation of official aid effectiveness, and I know

you and your Center are involved in that and I wondered if you could share of that some with us.

A: Birdsall. What we have done at the Center is put together a group of people who first tried to understand why there is so little independent evaluation, including of donor-funded programs but also of development interventions that governments undertake. The answer is actually quite obvious, and was captured in a very good paper written by one of our non-resident fellows, called "It Pays to Be Ignorant." This is a really big problem in the aid community, because we legitimately feel, those of us who believe that more aid is needed, that the constituency, particularly in a country like the U.S., is fragile for more aid and that there are risks in saying "this didn't work, this was a failure." On the other hand, we believe that to make aid not only effective but credible, and to create a stronger case for more and better aid, it's important to learn from what mistakes to make adjustments to gather the evidence.

Over the last 50 years, trillions of dollars have been spent on foreign aid and it's really quite shocking how little is known about which interventions work, why, and in which settings. So we have put together an initiative that is making progress to create a very small, lean international institution with members—membership would be of developing countries, first and foremost, of large NGOs, and of the official aid institutions. They would pay dues on a sliding scale, that's what we imagine, and they would help catalyze, in some case subsidize, independent evaluations by third parties, and set standards for what is a rigorous evaluation of impact, with attribution. Some of these studies could be better modeled on what has become now *de rigueur* in the U.S. in the case of pharmaceutical drugs. Basically because of the thalidomide disaster that some of you might remember some decades ago, it became legislation in the U.S. that new medicines in the U.S. had to be tested in a systematic way. The fact is that people do have much more confidence—it's not complete, there are still some problems—but they have much more confidence in the drugs that their doctors prescribe in the U.S. than I think we can have in some of the interventions we make in other countries, particularly when they're designed in the office and not designed by asking people on the ground.

Q: Randall Zindler, MEDAIR. Thank you, Ms. Birdsall, for your talk. It had me reflect on last year's symposium where Jeffrey Sachs gave a really good message on the history of extreme poverty, and he left us with an image of seeing communities get to a place where they can take the first step on the ladder toward development. In light of the fact that so many of our wars these days, unlike decades ago, are now internalized, it's not international and cross-border, they're very much civil conflict, do you see hope for there to be a decrease in internal conflicts in the world, and if so, what would give you that hope, in light of the fact that part of the ingredients for this would be middle class and stable governments?

A: Birdsall. Actually, I do. In fact, there is evidence. It's surprising, but there are fewer deaths from internal conflicts today than there used to be. I was quite surprised by that. I think we're more conscious and more knowledgeable about the conflicts that are going on because of the increase in communications and global access to information. I would see further hope because one of the benefits of globalization is that more people are aware of these issues, that norms are changing, that we know now about the mistakes in East Timor. We know more—we don't always act on it, but we do know more. We have now Kofi Annan and the members of the United Nations defining a concept that governments have to take responsibility for the human rights of people, and if they fail

there is now a new legitimacy associated with some intervention from outside. Obviously, how that's implemented is going to be controversial case by case, but I think it's very characteristic of the 21st century that that issue has been defined that way, so I'm actually an optimist on it.

A: Vejvoda. I'd just like to footnote that with one concrete example, and that's the existence of international war crimes tribunals. Now we can have a huge debate about these tribunals, but in one concrete case, if you remember in Macedonia that actually weathered the whole complete breakdown in Yugoslavia quite merrily without a conflict, but then in 2001 suddenly [it] went into a spiral. The fact was that there were not more—it's terrible, because every human life is a loss—but there were about 30 or 35 deaths, and many people explained it because the international criminal tribunal on former Yugoslavia and based in The Hague, and for Rwanda by the way, was watching and people knew that if they went into overkill they would end up being indicted—just like Charles Taylor, by the way, ended up in that tribunal from Liberia. I think there's a way, maybe, that we can expand this kind of pressure on potential perpetrators of civil conflict that they will be brought to justice, in a year or 10 years' time.

A: Birdsall. Can I say one more thing that occurred to me? At the Center where I work, we have an index that ranks rich countries in terms of, you might say, their development friendliness and it ranks countries on aid obviously, but also on their trade regime, on environment, climate change issues and on security. One of the components of the security index has to do with arms sales and we particularly punish, in the index, governments that sell arms to highly corrupt countries. We would like to include small arms exports as part of this index because a lot of the civil conflicts are fueled and sustained by the tremendous numbers of small arms that are out there in the world. What's amazing is how difficult it is to get information in that area. To me, this is an example of where we need to think more about global governance and those of us engaged in the humanitarian and development communities need to think not only about better policy of our own governments and governments in developing countries, but developing ways to think about global policies and global data. We need to push our own governments to put together information on such embarrassing things as small arms exports, because if we had more transparency about where these arms are coming from, and under what circumstances, then civil society would be in a much stronger position to use all the tools of globalization—the Internet, the pressures, the visibility—to create the same effect as the International Criminal Court in a different domain.

General Discussion (last panel in the afternoon)

Begleiter. I'd like to ask for comments about the proposed idea of independent evaluation of accountability, the whole aid-giving institution accountable for the distribution of its products and perhaps this something the double H or triple H group could take on as a project. That is, setting up an international system of aid humanitarian organizations that offers a kind of Consumer Reports scale of accountability on these programs. Is that a good idea? Give us your thoughts.

A: Veneman. I think the whole issue of measuring results and accountability has multiple aspects. One is the importance of investing in measuring systems. One of the things that UNICEF did many years back was start something called Child Info which has been transformed into something called Development Info, which has been used by many countries now to create their own information systems, to track the Millennium

Development Goals and actually track them into districts so that you can see where you're falling behind. If you're going to make decisions as a country, especially as a developing country without as much infrastructure as we have in this country, you need good information.

I have advocated within the UN system and within the international community system that we need to be working much more closely together in terms of the way we gather statistics, because so often we have different organizations gathering the same statistics and having different numbers for the same thing, so we need an innovative approach for the way we do global statistics and the way that countries can utilize them. I also think that as a development community, we need to invest more in data, in review, in evaluation, in determining what works and what doesn't, but I think part of the problem is that donors often drive a project-driving system as opposed to a results-driven system. As we produce more results and show what works, donors will want to put money into what has proven results.

A: Easterly. I think it's a no-brainer that you can't possibly be opposed to evaluation and accountability, and I don't think anybody is likely to be, but I do think there's an important nuance here, which is not the what but the how the data is used. As someone who spent several decades in the field myself, I've seen data used, evaluations used for policing the way the funds are expended, and by and large that's counterproductive. That happens a lot with Congressional hearings and it's one of the reasons that USAID and established institutions are so risk averse. When you look at what happened with foreign assistance in its early days, there was far more experimentation and risk taking than there is in the mature structure today, because they've been pulled up to Congress so many times. Now on the other side, those who are actually responsible for implementing programs, whether these are national governments, aid agencies or on-the-ground NGOs, when they are given good data that is used to help them, to problem solve, to identify bottlenecks and bring the stakeholders together to work jointly on overcoming these, it's enormously helpful. I think the challenge here—the easy route is always for politicians to say, we're going to collect this data and hold them accountable. That is simply non-productive.

A: Birdsall. I think it's a great idea, particularly the idea of a consortium of humanitarian groups who could somehow work together, minimizing this problem with fragmentation that I mentioned. I wanted to make two suggestions along those lines. One is to try to do it in a way that puts leadership in the hands of those developing country governments that have some capability to take leadership, or that concentrates on making it more possible—through training or assistance—for them to be the ones, because ultimately that's about building those political and economic institutions that secure people's rights, to go back to what democracy and development are about. So that's one. That's harder to do, it's riskier and it takes time but I think this would be a fantastic contribution from humanitarian groups.

The second is to think about whether it should be about monitoring—which is more properly associated with accountability day to day, week to week, month to month—and/or also about impact evaluation, which is more about systematic learning from, understanding, what is it about interventions that worked and what is it that didn't work, and what combinations are most cost-effective and have the greatest benefits for the effort. On both of those, but especially on impact evaluation, I do want to say that this entity that I mentioned, we're trying to catalyze and then we would step away—my own

Center—all of the major players, and we now have a group of Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Lesotho, CARE, the Hewlett Foundation, the Gates Foundation, the British Aid Agency, the Inter American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank—this is a group that's going to write the constitution for this entity. All of the emphasis has been on the need to find a way to ensure that it's the developing countries that eventually join, that they are the moving force. Should this entity be created, then the consortium of humanitarian organizations that you suggested could join such an entity and participate in thinking about the technicalities and priorities across the developing world for monitoring and evaluation.

A: Amb. Danilovich. I would to reiterate that accountability is really at the core of what the Millennium Challenge Corporation is all about, and it's accountability with a very wide umbrella. It includes monitoring and impact evaluation and capacity building and institution building. We look to countries to be accountable for the creation and implementation process, and for the results. We provide the money but the rest of it is squarely on their shoulders—the accountability and responsibility is squarely on their shoulders. We work with them to see them through this process, but we want them to have ownership, we want them to have accountability and we want them to take the credit for the results.

Q: Farshad Rastegar, Relief International. My personal sense is that the NGO community is much more ahead that it's been given credit for. I think, from my experience—I went to one of the donor coordinating meetings a couple of years ago and all I heard were restatements of national interest, there was no collateral efforts, parallel efforts on the part of donors to come together. It starts for us with the very proposal process, the proposal we have to submit is different, that takes you in a very different direction, then you have the procurement policy, etc., etc. In my view, the NGO community has really done its part in terms of coming up with standards, internally set so be it, but at least they try to set standards for ourselves and we have InterAction. We meet regularly and reinforce a set of standards and gradually raise the bar. I don't see that kind of parallel effort on the part of donors, and that to me is where the real gap is which is kind of holding us back.

A: Birdsall. That's very interesting. I wanted to make a quick comment and then ask Ambassador Danilovich a tough question. It's interesting to try to understand why the official donors have trouble letting go, and having common standards, even pooling their resources. Instead of having many projects, why does MCC have to have MCC projects and World Bank projects? Why can't more of the donors do more of what's called, in the official community, budget support? In a country that has good institutions, is a democracy, why not work with government and have government in the driver's seat, deciding what its priorities are and supporting its priorities? Why is that so hard? First, it's hard because governments do have accountability to taxpayers and legislatures, so they do want to report on their own successes with their own projects. And second, it's hard for the same reason---maybe it's not two different reasons. Because they have accountability to their legislatures, they have to invent these reporting and procedures and enforced procurement rules, etc., etc. So I think that the NGOs can help teach the government, official donors—push them to at least have these common standards on things like what a proposal looks like and what an adequate procurement process is inside a government. I think that one of the biggest contributions to better aid may come from those who know the issues on the ground and deal with the official donors.

Now let me come to my tough question for Mr. Danilovich. Some donors, in particular the multilateral banks and the British, are now doing more budget support. I guess you know it takes away from the donor the ability to put a flag on a particular project and say, this is USAID or this is a UNICEF project. They're doing this more general budget support in a kind of contract with governments in Mozambique or Mali, ones that have quite enlightened leadership and reasonably good systems. Is there any chance that the MCC could find a way to participate in that kind of budget support, and that the other donors could actually base their support more around results and more around some measures of intermediate and long term comportment?

Q: Susannah Sirkin, Physicians for Human Rights. I just want to make a comment and then a question. Thank you, Ann Veneman, for talking about sexual violence. We see so much across Africa in particular right now, through our work. The total impunity that occurs, particularly in the war zones as Northern Uganda, Congo and Darfur, Sudan and there are so many aspects of these crimes that are now widely known and well-documented so there's still just a total environment of impunity, so this is basically an appeal that those groups on the ground trying desperately to hold perpetrators accountable are worthy of our support, and they really are necessary complements to the humanitarian operations on the ground, especially in a place like Darfur, where effectively now the government has succeeded in intimidating the humanitarian community such that they can barely document, let alone deal with any of the legal issues, certainly not referring information to the International Criminal Court and so forth. I just want to applaud the International Rescue Committee, which has been very outspoken and courageous in spite of that type of intimidation, in an environment where they risked being kicked out of the country. That's just a comment on the importance of especially locally based human rights organizations that are the ones that are trying to document and bring help to women across these war zones.

My question refers to something that we talked about earlier, about the investment that's required to support human resources for health in African countries. We've heard about the international governmental projects and U.S. bilateral assistance going to governments and large NGOs, but at the end of the day we have this huge dilemma of people who are trained in health and who are leaving their countries because they're not getting adequate rights support and salaries. We had our own experience at Physicians for Human Rights just last week when we honored a 26-year old physician from Northern Uganda who is one of two doctors treating an area of 300,000 people—they're the only two doctors for this region of Northern Uganda. She makes $250. a month and she came here, we toured her around Boston, New York and Washington, and she met her classmates working here in menial jobs, making more money than she can make as a doctor in Uganda. This is a question of "do no harm." One of our recommendations in our report on brain drain in Africa, is that the United States needs to train more of our health professionals here, especially nurses for example, so that we're not stealing them from developing countries. I'm just wondering if people have comments on this huge dilemma of human resources for health.

A: Daulaire. This is unquestionably a huge issue, it's been the elephant in the room for many years and finally, over the last two or three years, it's starting to get discussed. By best estimates Africa has a shortage of health professionals—doctors, nurses and paraprofessionals—numbering about 1.6 million, so we're talking about a huge number. We're seeing a large number of people who are trained as doctors and nurses moving to places where they can get better pay, better opportunities and better education for their

children first within Africa, from the poorer African countries to the more affluent ones, and then between Africa and Europe and the United States. The cost to those societies is huge, because by and large, education of the health professional is supported by the governments, and those people leave. Now there is the issue of remittances. It's not all a negative issue from a purely economic standpoint, but certainly from the standpoint of the capacity to deliver health care, it's an enormous issue. How do we deal with that?

Certainly one way is to highlight it and to make this an explicit issue in the North-South dialogue so that when the U.S. or the UK recruits physicians or nurses to come and work in their hospitals because they're understaffed, is that that recruitment come along with some sort of direct payment for further training to the countries where they come from. This is a very mobile world, it's unlikely that we're going to be in a situation where we'll say, we're going to lock the doors and people can't come. There should be just and appropriate compensation and, probably equally important, we need to work with training institutions and governments in the developing world to help them establish training programs that are highly pertinent to their needs, such as a program in Ghana that trains paraprofessionals who are more appropriate to the health needs in their country than are the Western-trained physicians and probably some of the nurses, and who have no externally marketable skills. They are extremely likely to stay and serve their communities.

A: Veneman. I certainly agree with all that Nils has said. This is an issue that really impacts so many countries in Africa, but it's not just an issue of the United States taking these people in. I actually suggested to someone at the State Department one day that we ought to cut off all visas for health care workers. They really didn't like that…I thought it was one way of addressing the issue. I think that if you look at these human resources issues, countries have two choices. They can continue to train more and more and they do get the benefit of the remittances, there is what's coming back. Some of these countries simply have so few doctors—someone told me the other day that Liberia only has 40 doctors left. Some of them are going to start to come back hopefully, as the country regains its footing. I was going to bring up this program in Ghana. I talked to the Labor Minister or the equivalent over there, and one of the things is that they had so many people who wanted to go into health care but they didn't have enough physicians in the nursing schools for them, so they began this vocational-type six-month program and it's had dual benefits. It's given more health care workers, probably more appropriately trained, and this is the kind of thing that we could take a lesson from one country and suggest it to other countries in Africa and suggest it as a model that could be replicated. There's a program called Mothers to Mothers that's operating in South Africa, and one of the models that they use is they take HIV-positive women and they become the counselors for the next generation of HIV-positive women. But these women are only allowed to do this for a year after they become part of the program. I told them about this program in Ghana and suggested that these would be perfect people to train as community-based health care workers because they've had exposure for a year. I think there are ideas like this that we can look at something that's an alternative to training nurses and begin to look at putting some development money into training community-based workers that don't have the skills to come to the developed world, but actually can work productively in their own communities.

A: Birdsall. I'd actually like to be in a sort of gentle, nuanced disagreement with some of what I've heard, but not with this last point of Ann's. Let me explain. At our Center, I have a colleague who's been doing research on the effects of African health

professionals' emigration, and the bottom line from his initial research seems to be that there's absolutely no evidence of an effect on health indicators in the countries that they're leaving. There's no difference in countries where many people have left—particularly nurses who have gone to the UK. He does this in a very sophisticated way, you know, natural experiments, differences between the French and the British receiving countries which are associated with where you go, given the language you speak. Now it's obvious that there are good reasons why this could be happening. One is that people are more likely to leave systems that aren't functioning well in the first place, and that suggests that, rather than bar the doors, we have to renew efforts to help countries fix their systems. Another is that he's finding evidence of what economists call induced human capital. In South Africa, the year after a change in English immigration policy meant that many more nurses left the country, enrollment in nursing schools, including private nursing schools, quadrupled in South Africa. It more than made up for the losses. So I think there are a lot of things going on in this global labor market that we don't understand and we need to understand better. In Kenya, my colleague brings back the story that many trained nurses would like to set up clinics in rural areas, and they could certainly provide a lot of health care but there's legislation which requires that they have 10 years experience and a more advanced degree. So there are policies within the countries that need to be thought through and looked at, and the reason that policy is still on the books is because the existing, more advanced nursing association members and sometimes the doctors hang onto it.

Now, in addition to the kinds of things that have been raised, one thing that could be done is at the level of the receiving countries. The U.S. immigration policies need to think a lot about encouraging more circularity. My colleague did a survey of African health professionals about their education and that sort of thing, and many of them wrote in letters to us—we're just a small place of 20-30 people, 10 research people—asking us to set up a framework so they could go back to their country for six months or a year, but if they try to go back now it doesn't work because they don't have accreditation in hospitals and the equipment is wrong. If they leave for too long and they're trying to get a green card or the equivalent in Canada they lose their eligibility—so there's a lot that could be done at the policy level to make immigration circulatory, and not just remittances health but brain gain—people going back, bringing their human capital, their management know-how and their ideas. I think we have to sort of get over the fear of immigration *per se* and find ways to maximize the benefits of what could be brain gain.

Q: Karen Lashman, Children's Defense Fund. In June of this year, after several years of quiet consultations, we launched the Global Women's Action Network for Children in Jordan under the patronage of Queen Rania, and with five other organizations, the key goal of which is to reduce maternal and infant mortality to help accelerate progress toward the Millennium Development Goal. I know Ann Veneman spoke earlier about the child survival, but what I haven't heard here and I feel is the greatest threat to democracy and development is the death each year of 529,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth. That's one every minute, in fact I calculated that while we're sitting here this afternoon—between 9 this morning and 5—almost 500 women around the world will have died in pregnancy or childbirth, which is astounding. It's too invisible. I don't know how we can possibly talk about democracy and development or human rights in the context in which so many children around the world today are losing their mothers. We must think, too, that the risk of a child dying when the mother dies—between five and 10 times higher for a child without a mother, the situation that we now face in the world is that even if children don't die physically, they

may die spiritually or emotionally without any support. I really would like to come back to Ann Veneman and especially to John Danilovich from the Millennium Corporation about this resistance to working more on the area of reproductive health, which is so critical to democracy and development throughout the world.

A: Amb. Danilovich. The Millennium Challenge Corporation, in its two new indicators, will in fact address infant mortality and it's something we're very concerned about and have worked on over a year now, trying to find a way to incorporate that into our assessment programs. As I mentioned earlier, a lot of the program that we get don't necessarily focus on public health in general, although there are various components that we do have where immunization, HIV/AIDS are being addressed, but it is something that we incorporate into our programs, where quite frankly at this point we have not had a specific program that does deal with infant mortality, but it is part of our assessment process. We have not had presented to us from the countries that we're involved with programs of that nature (maternal mortality).

A: Daulaire. Actually, this was an area that I touched on this morning. I think that it is critical, and this was highlighted in *The Lancet.* Over the last several weeks, there's been a series on maternal health. Again, this is one of the areas where we have learned a great deal over the last 20 years. We have watched 10 million die since the first Safe Motherhood Summit in Nairobi in 1987, and it's high time that the world took action on these issues, both in the arena of better and more accessible family planning, as I talked about, to reduce the number—55 million plus unwanted pregnancies around the world each year—and to save the lives of women who are pregnant through better child care and pregnancy services. This is a very high item on our agenda in terms of policy, and we're hopeful in the next couple of years that this is finally going to catch the attention of policymakers that it deserves.

A: Birdsall. I'd like to gently, in a nuanced way, make a point. I know Karen, we're old friends, and I think she knows I wouldn't yield to anyone on the point she's making. In fact, I take this moment to announce to many people that I don't know that I became a grandmother over the weekend and I did thank God that my daughter was having a baby in a situation where I didn't have to worry that she actually could die. However, I also want to make the point that we should not bug Mr. Danilovich about whether the MCC is doing or receiving proposals to deal with reproductive health and maternal mortality because we cannot complain that all the donors and all of the NGOs are doing the same thing, duplicating, crowding each other out, creating additional burdens, and then complain when donors choose to use their comparative advantage. Of course the Millennium Challenge Corporation sends signals to governments that these are the things that they might be better at doing than the governments themselves: "We have big money, so ask us for big-money items." I don't know, I think it's really important for the NGO community—the same lesson applies with the U.S. Congress. Each time NGOs ask Congress for more for education, more for health, more for reproductive health, more for this, more for that, more for Africa, more for bed nets, more for malaria, more for the Green Revolution, that leads Congress to tell USAID or other agencies, "do more on this." With all these mandates, we create a nightmare for recipient governments, which you know on the ground. They have to cope with it. It's not smart aid. It may seem like more, but it's not smart and we undermine the effectiveness of the money that w do spend.

A: Amb. Danilovich. I need to clarify a point that Nancy has made. We actually, at the MCC, do not send out signals and messages about what we will and will not do, any more than we do with regards to an HIV clinic in Masutu, or a railroad program in Mongolia, or immunization in Indonesia, for that matter. We really are wide open to suggestions.

Q: Inky Song, American Foundation for the Blind. I had very limited knowledge in the area of democracy and development, [but] I've been fortunate enough to come here the last five years so I thank the Foundation for inviting me each year, and I always learn a great deal. The theme that seems to pop up for me is Africa, Africa, Africa the continent. How much of the past is influencing Africa as it is today, to the degree of slavery, colonization, raping of its national resources, and how much of it do you believe is really—in my opinion—some level of racial discrimination? I just wanted to throw that to all of you.

A: Sy. Clearly, the roots of all the problems of the African continent are in its past, in its colonial past and its past of slavery, but the African population has changed today and it's a very young population. So I think that the main problem is one of internal domestic leadership, the question being how can we relate, as Africans, to the problems of the world and our relationships with the world?

A: Birdsall. Can I just make the quick point that I think that since independence, many people in Africa have suffered from bad leadership and bad governments, and I say this just from what I've heard from Africans. There is a new generation of leaders, so I think we can afford to be quite optimistic. It's going to take time and patience, and it's not easy to build democracies and better markets, but there is a new generation of Africans who are determined to do better and who understand the roots of a long post-independence—three or four decades—of poor leadership. And there are a few countries where we still see the hangover of poor leadership. Zimbabwe is an obvious one.

Q: Christine Karumba, Women for Women International. We're in the process of talking about democracy and governance, and we cannot actually engage in that topic if we don't take into consideration the whole issue of women at the grass roots level. It is true that we need institutional reform at the local level. How could you actually reconcile the reality of the African woman that is a fundamental and critical partner so we can have good governance to ensure that we have sustainable development? We know there are cultural constraints and we know that the majority, half of the population, that are women do not have access to education. We cannot realistically ensure governance or democracy in any context. How can we ensure and reconcile the access of education to women to ensure that stronger women build stronger nations?

A: Sy. I'll reply by using an example from my own country, Mali. The recent decentralization in local governance has responded to this issue of access of women to education and to their place in society. And in fact, we have had the first women mayors thanks to this decentralization process and the whole empowering process that was enabled by local governance. And also this whole question of education of women, it seemed that the prejudice was that families don't want to send young women to school, when in fact we found that the schools were far away. Now that they are accessible, the rates of education for women are rising. And so improving governance, good

governance, is an enabling dynamic for access of women to education, to responsibilities.

A: Birdsall. Can I give two ideas? One is that we should ask the official donors, including maybe the MCC, to initiate conditional cash transfers. That's an idea being picked up now in New York City, taking an idea that came from Mexico, which is that you pay mothers to keep their children—especially girls—in school. You give a small monthly subsidy to create an incentive to make it easier so girls don't have to stay home and take care of the children. The second idea is on good governance. Be sure that we all support the new female president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and her new female finance minister who has left her job in the World Bank where she was making hundreds of thousands a year and is now making maybe $500 a month. We have to support people like that, we have to find ways, including I believe having some official arrangement of topping up salaries at least for a while. We cannot expect people to give up everything without some support when they are going back to their countries.