THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

A CALL TO ACTION FOR GLOBAL EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. KOLB: Welcome, everyone. Thank you for coming back to the final panel discussion this afternoon where we are going to talk about "A Call to Action for Global Early Child Development," in other words, what do we do with everything we've heard throughout the morning and first part of the afternoon.

And I'm very pleased to welcome our panelists. We're going to hear from our three distinguished speakers, and then I'm going to ask our host, Jim Wolfensohn, to take the podium and summarize everything and tell us how it's all going to happen. Thank you, Jim.

I'm very pleased to welcome Ruth Levine, Vice President of the Center for Global Development. I think, Ruth, this is the first time we've welcomed you to a CED event. You may have been at Brookings, I suspect you've been at Brookings, and both Brookings and CED are very pleased to have you with us this afternoon and look forward to your remarks.

Gene Sperling, welcome back. I think this is your second appearance at a CED event. We remember fondly some years ago when you were in the Clinton White House joining us for one of our Washington meetings with Trustees. Gene is the Director of the Center on Universal Education at the Council on Foreign Relations, and we're very pleased to have you.

And it's always a pleasure to introduce Joan Lombardi, Research Professor, the Georgetown Public Policy Institute here at Georgetown. As I say always, anything I know about early education I've learned from Joan, who has been a mentor and also someone that I just – I'm enormously fond of. She was a partner with us at CED as we have developed our own early education work, and I know she has inspired those of us at CED, Brookings, and all over the country, and I should add the world, with her work and commitment to early education.

I'm going to ask each of our speakers to talk for about ten minutes, and then we will have dialogue among ourselves and with you, and then Jim

Wolfensohn will close it out for us. So I think, Ruth, we're going to start with you.

MS. LEVINE: Thanks very much. It's really a pleasure and also a little intimidating to be presenting, because I am in no way, shape, or form nearly the kind of expert on early childhood development that many of the people in this room are, but fortunately I know that Gene, and then after him, Joan, will mop up and gently correct anything I may misstate or omit accidentally. So when I think of early childhood development, the image that comes to mind is something about bicycle chains. And that's not just because bicycles are things that often children like to play with, but also because bicycle chains get gears going, get wheels going.

And in the case of early childhood development, I think we can think of two kinds of virtuous cycles that are driven forward by early childhood development. One is really related to the nutrition and the health of young children who would otherwise be more vulnerable to malnutrition, to

infection that's associated with poor nutrition, and, you know, as is well documented in all matter of everything from biomedical to social science, literature, improved nutritional status has – and health status has many positive follow on effects for the lifetime opportunities for educational attainment and for psychosocial development of children as they move into – further into childhood and into adolescence and adulthood.

So that's one and part of the virtuous cycle. The other is directly through education and through the readiness for school that early childhood development programs provide, and then for all the good benefits that accrue when educational attainment is improved, and I think Gene will speak more about that.

So my background is very much from the health sector, and I know that's true for at least some people in this room. And so I was thinking about, well, how do we typically sort of make the case for donor and for national government and other types

of both private and public investment in good health interventions, and there are a few sort of criteria that are typically invoked.

So one is that the intervention or the program benefits, both the individuals who provide private benefits, and also the broader community. This is, you know, typically how immunization programs are at least partially justified, is on the basis of the spillover effect that they have, and also the benefits over the lifetime of the individual.

So one is this kind of, you know, idea of, well, what are the benefits to the individual and the broader society. Second is, does the program or the intervention disproportionally benefit the poor and other socially marginalized populations. A third sort of criterion is whether the intervention passes some version of economic analysis, whether that's cost effectiveness analysis, or less frequent in the health sector, cost benefit analysis. A fourth criterion is whether it's affordable, which is quite a separate

question from whether or not it's cost effective, can it be afforded given the current budget constraints.

And a final criterion that's typically used is, is it technically and institutionally feasible. Yes, it may be a good idea in concept, but can we actually do it given the tools that we currently have, or do we have to invest in research and tools to make it more possible.

So I think, you know, by those kind of generic criteria for whether donors and governments should invest in something, early childhood development is a remarkably obvious win, I think, although there are still some gaps in the knowledge that may require some attention.

So going back to the first one, who benefits from early childhood development? Well, clearly, individual kids do, and there's relatively good documentation around the improvements in nutritional status that accrue to children who are participants in early childhood development programs that have adequate child feeding and micronutrient interventions

associated with them, whether it's iodine, iron supplementation, or other types of programs. There's also the health benefits that come with deworming programs and other more indirect effects of early exposure to health education messages, perhaps around hand washing, good nutrition and so forth.

So there are a lot of benefits that have been documented at the level of the individual child. The broader community level benefits are also relatively clear and have a lot to do with the preparation of kids for better educational performance, higher levels of enrollment and less drop out in both early and then later years. And I think, again, Gene will talk about that.

Let me just mention a few of the research results that have been I think fairly frequently used as part of this argument. There's now a very famous study in Kenya that used an elegant random assignment design that demonstrated that deworming improved primary school participation significantly.

In Pakistan, early childhood nutrition programs had a significant positive effect on school enrollment, and disproportionately for girls in that society. And then in Central America and the Caribbean, there are several studies demonstrating the impact of iodine supplementation on IQ – on increases in IQ. So there's a kind of litany of these studies that are pretty convincing, although they do have some methodological challenges, because with some, few exceptions, many of the studies are essentially observational studies, and so it's a little bit tricky to tell whether or not the kids who didn't participate in the programs are similar in relevant characteristics to the ones who did, you know, maybe there's something different about the families that choose to participate. So I would say there's still some room for advancing the knowledge base by addressing that selection by us.

But on balance, I think the criterion of, you know, are benefits accruing to individuals in the

broader society, that's well met by the available evidence.

Second is also an easy call, and that is whether early childhood development programs have the potential to disproportionately benefit poor and socially marginalized populations. And I think, you know, intuition alone, let alone the documentation that exists, is very clear that kids who come from impoverished backgrounds and backgrounds where the social stimulation is limited disproportionately benefit from programs when they have access. And in some settings where there's clear son preference, the girls benefit more than the boys do, because they're starting from a lower base typically of nutrition and social interaction. So I think on the sort of equity and merit goods criterion, it does very well.

And I think that there are also likely, if we looked carefully enough, likely to be considerable indirect benefits for mothers from having kind of – from reduced isolation and some modeling of good parenting, as well as freeing up their time a bit to

participate in the labor force. So that's the second criterion.

On whether ECD programs pass cost effectiveness and cost benefit analyses, the resource book that I'm sure is being made available to all of you, the Coordinator's notebook that I think Joan is primarily responsible for, or largely responsible for – who's responsible for this? All right –

SPEAKER: A multiple of people here.

MS. LEVINE: -- great. Well, it's totally great, and it gives lots of good guidelines for how to undertake economic evaluations, and does present some of the cost benefit analyses that have been done. And I think there, too, there's a compelling case that the returns in economic terms, largely through these multiplier and follow on effects of education and long term better earning power, do help make the case for early childhood development. So then is it affordable? And again, the coordinator – the recent Coordinator's Notebook really presents pretty interesting information about how, relative to the

overall education budget, and certainly the overall health budget, it's a relatively small fraction that would have to be allocated to really significantly improve access for low income populations in many countries. And I think among the countries that are covered, I'm not going to – let's see if I can remember, there are sort of worked examples for Cambodia, Louse, Bangladesh, Yemen, and other countries.

And I think the affordability part of the argument also can be viewed in terms of the accrued savings. When you have programs that reduce the eventual need for, for example, remedial education, chasing down kids who have either not entered or dropped out from school, and providing health care to children who are made vulnerable to other kinds of health conditions by malnutrition. And then the final criterion, whether it's technically and institutionally feasible, well, I mean we have a lot of real world examples of different models of early childhood development programs in quite resource poor

settings that function relatively well. If I were perhaps suggesting an area where good policy work, research work could be done that would help to bolster the case, it would be to really showcase in an evidence based way a whole range of these programs, and try to identify what the common sources of success have been, and really demonstrate how models have been scaled up from place to place.

So the bottom line for me is that compared to many of the health interventions, health only interventions that have obtained significant amounts of donor support, I think that early childhood development programs really surpass the threshold for being justified as – more than justified as good uses for donor and national government resources.

That doesn't mean that they don't have a lot of other good things with which they're competing, but they do clearly pass that sort of bar of, if money were available, would this be something that the public sector should be spending money on.

Just in closing, let me say that if we go back to the kind of metaphor of early childhood development programs as this bicycle chains that get virtuous cycles going, you might ask, well, sort of what are the pedals that get the bicycle chains to start moving, and clearly, that's some combination of money and of political will. And it seems to me, from reading from the materials, from seeing a bit of the energy around this conference, and knowing some of the other activities that are going on in this field, that there's starting to be a real critical mass of both technical consensus about the value of this, and through the work of people like Gene Sperling and others, a real recognition that education in general has been underinvested in the recent past by the donor community and others, and so hopefully there will be a real opportunity for stepping up those investments despite the economic constraints which we find ourselves these days. So with that, I'll turn it over to Gene.

MR. SPERLING: I've been a little bit under the weather, and yesterday I had to give this talk, as well, and I had a horrible sneezing attack fortunately five minutes after I left the podium, so I hope my timing will be as good this time, as well.

I think when I looked at the program [agenda] here, I did fear a little bit that this was the ultimate [summary]… and I'm just the last person to say them. So I'm going to try to avoid that as much as I can and just start with the following, which is that I am somebody who has had the opportunity to work on this issue in both the U.S. and the developing country context.

In the U.S. context I was basically Joan Lombardi's banker at the White House, and I was proud of that role, meaning that I was the person at the NEC who fought very, very hard on a yearly basis to get the increases in early Head Start and Head Start, which slowly but surely actually more than doubled, from 2.7 to 6.2 billion, not nearly enough, but an

example of how you can have huge progress and you can also plug away year by year, as well.

When I – another thing that I did in the White House was that I kind of was the point person for our emerging efforts on universal education, and that got me working with Jim Wolfensohn. And I think our fates were brought together in Dakar, where Jim very famously made the comment that the goal of the World Education Forum there going forward and the Education for All Goals was that no country with a strong plan for universal education should fail for simply lack of resources. That was the basic global promise that Jim coined, and has been, in many ways, the unmet global promise going forward. Now, the interesting thing for our purposes is that there were six Education for All Goals. Later that same year, in September, at the Millennium Development Goals, they took out one of them, which was universal completion of primary education as the second goal. But for those of us who were there in Dakar, we recognized

that the first of the six goals was to make dramatic progress on early childhood education.

Now, following the Dakar, and again, thanks a lot to Jim Wolfensohn's leadership, I was in civil society at this time and there was a handful of us who were pushing very, very hard and working mainly with Jim and his folks at the World Bank to try to create some form of financing structure, which ended up being what we now call the Education Fast Track Initiative.

And the Education Fast Track Initiative did take and put its focus on the Millennium Development Goal of universal completion of primary education. And like many things in life, it is a story of a half glass full, half empty, maybe it's a third full, two-thirds empty, but the fact that this financing structure has been created and was created out of scratch is no small bit of progress, as much as the holes are still very large. Now, what's happening on the education front is that you've got the following problem, and it's not that much different than what we face in a lot of domestic context, which is that the

world has kind of put this focus on universal completion of primary education.

Now, what you'd like to do is [to] have succeeded at that goal and then expand to the other Education for All Goals. And the argument that you see more and more is that even if you are focusing on the completion of primary education, you still have to look beyond and before.

Now, the argument beyond – now, you know, the statistic you'll always hear is that there's 72 million children out of school, let's be clear what that statistic is, that is 72 million primary age children out of school in the world.

There is some improvement with that number due to elimination of fees in some African countries, but mostly due to India's economic progress. But there are another 226 million children of secondary age out of school. So when you look at what we would consider universal education, the gap is about 300 million children. Now, what a lot of people are, of course, finding on the secondary school front is that

not only is this important in and of itself, but it's also important as essentially a pull. Parents want to know there could be some further opportunity for their children. They are more likely to complete sixth grade if they think there's a chance of going to seventh and eighth grade, and they're more likely to go to seventh and eighth grade if they think there's some kind of economic opportunity.

Now, I think what you're seeing a little bit more recently, as we've seen rightly, more focus. And I should say that for a lot of us when we talk about, you know, I never when I speak use universal primary education, that's in the Millennium Development Goal, you can't find it in my writings, we say universal basic education.

And basic education has generally been thought to mean at least eight years of quality – of the education necessary, particularly in the developing country context, to be functional, to be able to be productive, to be the kind of parent that

will lead to the higher health and economic benefits that education brings.

Now, what's happened on the early childhood, of course, is that you get into the kind of debate you would expect. People come and show the incredible importance in developing countries, and, you know, there's studies, and I could go through them, I don't know if you've heard them all, but from Nepal, Turkey, Argentina, Uruguay, I mean it's what you'd expect, children aren't that different around the world.

Early preschool has high returns and it has higher returns, the poor, and the more disadvantaged children are. And one thing Joan and I have even worked on is the importance of even having early childhood in situations of conflict and refugee, where children at very young ages have witnessed, you know, traumatic situations, and the importance in a million ways on the social development.

Now, I think one of the things that [have] helped put early childhood into focus is not just expanding beyond primary education, but I think that

now that there's been some greater focus on access, there's been a greater turn on the quality issue. Are you just getting butts in chairs or are children actually learning?

And I don't want to dismiss the former. I mean for a lot of young children, the opportunity to go to school is a chance to have part of their childhood, a certain number of children, even in the worst school situations, thrive and do well. Nonetheless, a lot of the studies on what children have actually learned in schools [are] depressing, to say the least. And I think this is where I think many of the early childhood advocates have been able to make the case for early childhood education as not just an expansion beyond primary, but as a necessity for getting the quality education.

Because where the early preschool studies are showing is really better in the learning front. So one of the things in my many hats in this area, I'm on the Advisory Board of the Newgates Hewlett Quality Education Project, and they are opening their eyes

more to preschool, not because it was on the mandate, but they're seeing that children who have gone to preschool are getting better reading, learning results by third grade, which is a bit of the focus that they have been taking.

Now, it's worth, you know, it's very hard to, you know, talk about a piece of the education puzzle without talking about some of the larger issues. And I think it's important to kind of recognize that a lot of the general issues that plague universal education in developing countries will be similar at the preschool/early childhood element. One is that, you know, you don't really have to convince people that it's good for the child to go to school, or particularly good for girls who are often out of school to go to school. But let's remember, among the poorest parents in the world, those incentives can be less clear for families dealing with extreme poverty. And one thing that we've seen repeatedly is that in developing countries where you do have public

education, you still have fees, and not just fees, but fees per child.

Now, I've often said when I speak that if you were kind of given some evil assignment, and our evil assignment was, we were going to go into a breakout session and you were going to try to figure out how could you set up a financing system, how could a country set up a financing system that would do the best possible in ensuring that the most vulnerable children don't go to school. If you really thought about it for a long time and you were trying to come up with this evil plan, you would come up with fees per child.

Because what happens with fees per child is that, it's not that most parents don't send any of their children to school; they send their two healthiest boys to school. They think their boys are going to be there for them, which they probably are, they're more likely to support their security, but you're not going to send your child who has a disability, and you may not send your girls, who you

think you're going to marry off. Indeed, if you want to see one of the most depressing statistics in all of development, it is estimated that only between two percent, and here's the high number, ten percent of children with serious disabilities go to school in developing countries, two to ten percent.

And so a lot of what we want to do essentially is try to align the interest of the parent with what we know is the interest of all of their children. And I think what you find is, when you make the cost benefit easier for someone to send all their kids to school, parents everywhere do want what's best.

Now, this actually gets into some interesting twofers and threefers, it goes to some of the points Ruth is making. How do you align those incentives? Well, one, make school free, but if a preschool is going to all have fees, you're going to have the exact same problems.

So if it's free, you've taken away at least one of the barriers. If you actually offer a meal, if

you offer the deworming things, if you offer all the things that you can piggyback once you have an infrastructure of school set up, you, not only from our perspective do you have kind of a win win scenario, where you're getting both health and education benefits, you're actually providing that parent a greater incentive to send their kids to school.

So, you know, they asked Willie Sutton why he robs banks, and he says, you know, that's where the money is. Well, you know, if you have a smart health intervention, it is a lot easier, you know, and you have to do it door by door in rural Africa, it's a lot easier if all those children come to one building at a part of the day at a young age. So I think that the incentive issues are – that we've learned for primary education, we also have to understand for preschool.

Now, the other issue that comes up is, of course, resources. And, of course, I will start with all the caveats, that it is not all about money, but I will also remind you of a line President Clinton used

to always say, which is, whenever somebody tells you it's not about money, the only thing you know for sure is that they're talking about somebody else's problem.

The fact is that you can't expand – you can't double your school population. You can't go in there and say, wow, there's only 15 percent of kids getting preschool, I'd like to get this to 45 percent. You can't triple that on pure efficiency without at least doubling your number of teachers.

And now here's the tricky part for all of us in development; books can be a one time cost, tables can be a one time cost, but salaries are a recurrent cost. And we in the development context have never done very well at actually thinking about how we give the confidence for countries to expand their teaching cores, because our funding tends to come in three or four or five year schemes.

And if you look at what's happening on the primary education side, a lot of the education ministers are doing the right thing, they're eliminating fees, they're getting more kids into

school, and the finance ministers are saying, are you crazy, we're not hiring 20,000 – we're not going to hire 20,000 more teachers because our donors gave us a three year pot of money, because in the year it's going to take us to recruit them, train them, and deploy them, the money could run out, and we're not having 20,000 unhappy teachers protesting outside our building. And so if we do not deal with that kind of long term issue, and I think part of it is recurrent cost, but then I think another part of it is another issue that I think starts segwaying into the U.S. context.

When you help preschool education, whether it's in the United States or in Africa, you are helping the economy of your successor's successor's successor. It's a great thing if you do that, but it's not the way most politicians think anywhere.

So when a politician is willing to do this great thing, you at least have to let them know that they're going to be supported. And if right now somebody were to say, boy, I went to the Wolfensohn

Center and I heard all this and I'm going to have, you know, 70 percent of my kids taking preschool, I don't know where they would have the confidence that if they took this step, they would not just expand expectations in their country, and that they would have any certainty that over a five or ten year period.

So I think when you hear Prime Minister Gordon Brown talking about the importance of long term predictable funding, it's not just a frame, it affects behavior, and that aligns the long term incentives. Now, I'll just say quickly, this is more like flagging your book, except it's flagging a publication. I have been – I have a paper coming out now called *A Global Fund for Education*, which is really simply just updating the global architecture for education and talking about the need to do these things. And it is not reinventing the wheel, it is looking at where the Fast Track Initiative is right now and building off its considerable successes, but also looking at these issues of long term certainty, of making sure that we

have a strong compact for the high performing countries, but that we also have more interim strategies for children in conflict and from fragile states. That is a longer term issue that deviates beyond preschool, so I will just simply flag that.

But I will say it is interesting that, in the Fast Track Initiative, that the Fast Track Initiative supported Moldova, including a preschool education component, even though on the primary. And so I think this idea that now somebody even coming forward with a universal primary plan, that they can see that a preschool component is part of quality education learning, is already there. And in the end, we are going to have to rely on countries coming forward with plans. And so maybe what we simply have to do is open that door more and make sure that in new proposals, like what I'm proposing for the Global Fund for Education or the legislation on the Hill, the Education for All Act, that that is incorporated. Now, the last thing I'm going to say is, I'm going to

put my U.S. hat on and I'm going to just make three points.

Number one, we are a horrible example for the rest of the world. I mean it is just, you know, I don't know how we go places and talk about universal education; I mean I think it's embarrassing – I think it's embarrassing.

I mean, you know, you're going to countries that have $300 per capita, and we're in a country with, you know, the near highest per capita in the world, and we're like, you ought to get all your poor kids in education, don't you see the return.

So I mean this is an area where we've got to get our own house in order if we're going to have a bit of global leadership, because it's just not very – it's a little awkward to be giving this pitch to developing countries. And we are very much the – like the examples I've talked about.

I've been eight years in the U.S. government; let me tell you how much lobbying is the difference between the transportation reauthorization

and a Head Start reauthorization. Man, when there's a transportation reauthorization, if I'm giving a talk, I can't get over to the shrimp dish without five lobbyists coming up to me. That doesn't quite happen on early pre K. The second issue is that there's just a terrible double standard in the United States on programs for poor people, there is, and I'll tell you what it is.

If you're talking about a cancer research, or you're talking about a weapon research, if it's not working, well, what do we have to do more, what do we have to do more to fix that. So if you can show with your research that something is not working well enough, it's an impetus to kind of come back and do more, because people have kind of accepted the goal that we have to protect ourselves and we have to cure cancer.

Now, we have to build into our political system that our entire fabric of our country, the entire fabric of Ben Franklin's view of us as a country, where your outcomes in life are not

determined by the accident of your birth are completely dependent on the deck not being stacked so far against you by the time you're five years old and can reasonably be seen to take personal responsibility. And somehow we have to build up in our system the kind of expectation that that is like curing cancer, et cetera, so that when somebody comes up with something negative about a Head Start study, it's not being used at it is now, it's being used in the political system now as a reason to do less, as a reason to cut. And what just kills me about this is that every time there's a study that's a bit negative, I'll be honest, most of us go on the defense.

We go on the defense because the people doing those studies are using this double standard where, when it's for poor children, if it's not working perfectly, that's a reason to do less. If there's not enough follow through, that's not a reason to do more in first, second, third, fourth grade, that's a reason to do less preschool.

If the teachers aren't equipped enough, that's not a reason to spend well more to have college educated teachers or better trained teachers, it's a reason to do less. So we have to beat the double standard.

So my final point is, and this is, I want to be straight on this, anybody who thinks that winning budget fights is about getting an overwhelming majority of people to support your position, you are wrong, you're just dead wrong, and you better understand this. Winning budget fights is about intensity, not numbers. I've been through eight – I've had a box seat on eight United States budgets, and let me tell you, having 95 percent of the American public for something doesn't do anything for you. What does something for you is an intense group that will break eggs to make it happen, that will punish people politically who don't make it happen, and shine glory on them if they do make it happen.

Now, you know, we've seen Bono, and people do a great job on debt relief, on taking an issue, did

not have overwhelming public support in the country, but making clear there was going to be some punishment, and making clear there was going to be some glory whether you were good or bad.

So I'm happy to hear that there's lots of business support, but, you know, it doesn't feel kind of like people like the auto CEO's fighting for their relief. And let me tell you how budgets are. I mean budgets are, you get down to the very end, and I'll tell you, you know, the way I was able to do well on Head Start was, you get down to that final day of the final appropriations, and you come into a room, and it's a very small room, and you decide what are the seven or eight or nine things that your OMB director is going to go to the wall on. And he can almost always get whatever your top seven or eight things are. So if number ten or 11 is supported by 98 percent of the public, it doesn't mean anything, it's about the intensity. And when people start using that intensity and actually committing some people to really advocate and to really punish and to really

provide glory, then we'll start to get some things done. Thank you.

MS. LOMBARDI: Not a bad banker, would you say. Well, thank you. I'm just really delighted to be here. I want to start by thanking Charles Kolb and Elaine and Jim Wolfensohn, who, among so many issues they could have chosen, chose to focus on early childhood, and they found time to do it in such a thoughtful way.

And to share the podium with Ruth Levine, who's got such amazing expertise on health issues, and Gene, whose absolute dedicated leadership on international education and children in conflict, all I can say is, young children are blessed to have them on our team, and I'd ask you to thank them with me.

I have the pleasure of being one of the last speakers, and so when you do that, you have a moment to reflect and summarize some of the thoughts that you've heard, the good thoughts that you've heard throughout the day. And I'm going to be brief, because I know [there are] questions out there. But I

want to talk about three themes I heard and then three action items. As everyone knows, I'm pretty intense myself, so I couldn't leave here without some requests for action.

I think what we heard throughout the conference that was reflected in this presentation, Ruth, and Gene, and certainly Clyde and Chloe earlier in the day, is this integration of health and education.

One of the things that make this issue so difficult to talk about is, it's not one thing. I loved Ruth's analysis, using a bicycle, two wheelers. In the early childhood world we talk about tricycles, and the reason we talk about three things, we talk about health, education, and the piece that's been less talked about throughout the day is family economic security and its impact on the early years, and quite frankly, maternal education.

And we know that both family economic security and maternal education are probably the two best predictors of how young children are going to do.

So when we talk about early childhood, we have to talk about those three wheels working together, and that's what makes it challenging at the national level or at the state level or at the provincial level or at the local level, because getting those ministries to work together, although we're making progress, the reason we want that to happen is not just because early childhood people like people to work together and play nice together, it's because of what Jack and Clyde talked about this morning, and that is the domains of development are integrated. So you can't split these things apart and think you're going to make a difference.

So one theme we've heard throughout the day is this integrated approach. A good friend of mine, Larry Aber, who does a lot of writing about this, talks – says the science of early childhood is as persuasive as the science of climate change. And he talks about it because they're both systems. So you can't affect one piece without affecting the other. So that's one theme we've heard throughout the day.

Secondly is this idea of where we start in early childhood. And I think that Chloe really nailed it this morning when she talked about inverting the pyramid. We are not talking about finishing serving all the kids at the primary level and then moving down a grade, that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about what they talked about in Dakar, which is, learning begins at birth, and I would argue it begins with paying attention to mothers during their prenatal care period. So we are – it was very interesting for me, because I worked and followed both the school readiness indicators work here in the U.S. and the Education for All Goals that emerged internationally, and they were cast very differently.

Here we talk about school readiness, and so that term made people think, okay, after you get through kindergarten, you go down to the next level. In the international world, they talk about learning begins at birth. And I think you have that look up from the very earliest years.

I don't think we want to wait until we take care of all the primary kids, and then take care of all the five year olds, and then take care of all the four year olds. We've got to be thinking about these things simultaneously. Now, I am, you know, very aware of what Gene was saying about if we double the number of children going to school by including the whole age range, the capacity issues, the resource issues are tremendous. One of our problems is we have to think new ways about this. This is not just the Minister of Education who has to take care of this, this has got to be a collaborative approach across the ministries, and we've got to involve community based providers. We heard Chloe talk this morning about the thousands of community based providers in Malawi; they are part of the picture. We don't have to start new preschools; we have to integrate quality into those settings where children already are.

So this notion of inverting the pyramid and starting at birth or prenatally is a theme that I

think was reflected during the day, but I think we have to be more intensive about it.

Finally, on the thematic side, we heard a lot of research, I hope, and I was really happy to hear some of the research cited from the developing world, that we really start talking much more about the Jamaica study, which has long term data that shows that the combination of early stimulation and early nutrition really makes a difference. And I understand they are looking at cost benefit analysis. It's time for us to have a dialogue about this that's north/south, that's south/south, and that we use some of the data that's emerging and help integrate the economic argument out of that data. We do need a tremendous amount more research, I acknowledge that. But what Jack always tells us is, we have the science, the science is clear, the science is clear that this is an area we have to pay attention to, evaluation is really to tell us how to do it and how to do it best, and we certainly need more of that, we need more scaling up studies, and I think the work that the

Wolfensohn Center is doing now, to look at what is working in early childhood, where they attempted to scale it up, is really important.

So those are the three themes, integrated child development, starting from birth up, and the need to look at more research from the developing world, particularly I think was – were things that were reflected during the day.

So what do I think should happen? I am just delighted that the business community is interested. I can say from my perspective here in the U.S., we would not have made as much progress, although we have not made as much progress as I want, we would not have made the progress that we've made so far if it wasn't for the business community, the law enforcement community, and many other non-traditional early childhood friends stepping forward.

We were talking in the back of the room today when the IBM representative was talking about the need to bring more business voices together, and we were scribbling on a piece of paper that we wanted

global business alliance for early childhood development, and so I think today, here at Brookings, and with all of you, I would call for that, a global business alliance for early childhood that would begin to raise the voice of more people about this issue.

He said to us we have to have a goal and I think that's absolutely true. It is too bad that the Millennium Development Goal is related to early childhood, but it's not strong enough in how it explains the interrelation among all those parts. And Nerper I know you've been suggesting us to think about that when we go into discussions about the Millennium Development Goals and 2015.

We need a goal. We are making some progress on indicators. You heard this morning the – UNICEF is looking at putting some child development indicators into their data collection system. We are looking at new ways to collect and develop cumulative risk indexes that can give us a picture of what child development looks like.

The most successful effort I think today has been the Lancet Series, where they actually said, we have 200 million children whose development is at risk, so at least we have a number. I would argue, if the business community wants a goal, that we should cut that number at least in half over the next decade before I retire, since I can't retire now anyway. But we need that kind of thinking. We need a much more concrete goal than we've had. After the Education for All Global Monitoring Report on early childhood came out two years ago, the consultative group, and those of you who don't know the consultative group believes – here, who does – the Coordinator's notebook, it's an international network of early childhood organizations which has representatives from all the multi lateral donors, as well as the regional networks around the world. They've done incredible work since 1983, I think.

We got together as a coalition and said what do we want, because if we can't articulate what we want, how will anybody else be able to help us do it.

And we established these cornerstones that we've been advocating for. We would like, on a zero to three side, better linkages between health and parenting, so that we're not just talking about immunization, we're talking about early stimulation. We would like at least two years of pre-primary or early childhood development, and that was a hard one to come to consensus about. We would like primary – the first three years of primary school to look better than it looks now. A hundred children in a classroom, 80 children in a classroom is not going to get the quality that Gene was talking about. So we want primary teachers that are trained in child development, the classes smaller, and we want concrete materials in their hands so they can really learn the way we know they should. And on the policy side, we certainly want early childhood to be thought of when we're developing poverty reduction strategies, when we're doing FTI plans, when we're doing health plans, when we're doing national planning on HIV AIDS.

So these are the kinds of concrete goals that I think we need. To get there, we certainly need new investments. We had some numbers, talked about the new publication that Ruth held up, that Emily Vargas-Baron, who's also with us here, worked so hard on, was an attempt to try to put together some numbers.

We have not been very good as a community in saying how much would this cost. When the Global Monitoring Report came out on early childhood, they said an extra billion for early childhood. Well, you know, I bet if we pushed real hard, it would be hard to see where that – it's a very small number from our perspective, but at least it's a number, we were thrilled to have a number. I've been spending a lot of time talking to our wonderful friends at Doctors Without Borders, about what they think nutrition costs would be. They estimate that it would cost a billion and a half dollars a year just to treat severe malnutrition. That's not the prevention side, and

they're working on a number about what it would cost on the prevention side.

The fact that we've got 30 – 40 percent of children still stunted, that are not getting adequate nutrition between six months and two years, is a travesty as bad as letting children die.

And so we need to be focusing more on that investment and figuring out with economists, and economists from the developing world, how we can cost these things out. So my hope for the Global Business Alliance for early childhood is that you help us set a goal, and that goal should be at least half, and this is my recommendation off the top of my head, at least halving the number of children that are at risk for development, that we should do a better job of investing and increase those investments, and we need to work with you on that, about establishing better numbers, globally, internationally, and that we should be thinking as we go into the final years of looking at how we've done in the Millennium Development Goals, and I know we have not done nearly as well as we

should have been, but thinking harder about early childhood. This conference makes me optimistic. It makes me optimistic because it's public and private, because it's health and education and families, because it's zero to three in primary, and of course, we can't forget secondary, because secondary effects childrens' development, and because it's going beyond child survival.

It is the revolution of the new child survival movement, which is child survival and development. We know, finally, that more children are surviving, and it's our moral responsibility to not just let them survive, but to have them thrive and reach their full potential. Thank you.

MR. KOLB: We're going to have a few minutes for questions. And as the Moderator, I want to open it up, and I want to go back to something that Gene said and ask all of the panelists if they want to comment on it or not comment on it as the case may be.

But, Gene, you used the term "intensity", and you pointed out, in the case of the United States,

that we're a horrible example and we have a double standard with regard to programs for poor people. Well, here's the hypothetical question; suppose we had a president who decided that he was tired of being a horrible example and of this double standard; to what extent could presidential leadership alter the calculus of intensity?

And then the second question is, is there a parallel result with regard to intensity in the international context?

MR. SPERLING: Well, you know, I think presidential leadership would be huge. I think these things are symbiotic, however, in the following; you – I mean when I think of this president, I'm reminded of Mario Cuomo, who I used to work for, that when God wants to punish you, he grants you your wishes.

I mean this president has such an enormous amount on the plate that – and this is where the support comes in, that it's not just really a matter of kind of what you care about the most, you make an

assessment of whether you think you can get something done.

So, you know, a president can decide he really wants to lead on issue X, but if he doesn't see the ground troops out there, there's no shortage of compelling problems in the world, and part of that is going to – is going to be, you know, that sense of whether something is doable, whether it can get done, what the degree of support is. I think the, you know, I mean first of all, I really do want to compliment you and what CED has done and what Rob Dugger and what Jim is doing now, et cetera. I mean I think – I would love to be back fighting for these issues and have that degree of ammunication and validation, so there really are different things.

I mean I think you need a – I think what the president could do is kind of frame the moral argument in a way that kind of failure is not an option. And I think that to kind of frame this notion that we're not a country that believes that your outcome in life should be determined on the accident of your birth and

link that deeply with American values so that that kind of sets an overall frame.

When my book came out and I was on the radio and I was doing a lot of shows, I mean I found I really had to struggle on these issues, and I found a lot of it was kind of old, kind of welfare debates. It was almost hard to isolate the child. You know, at times I had to say to callers, okay, well, fine, let's say that parent isn't such a great parent, you know, don't you care about that child, doesn't that child have a chance? I think the President could kind of set that tone. I also think that, you know, a president sees the kind of business support out there, I think where that would be very helpful, particularly for a democratic president, is, when the charge comes, aren't you just doing a bunch of big spending. To be able to cite top business groups, IBM, et cetera, that offers – I think in some ways that becomes more important to a progressive president who is – who could be more vulnerable to the charge of the big spending.

So I think it is very, you know, I think it is symbiotic in that sense, and, you know, and I think you can kind of wait for presidential leadership, or you can also let them know that if you want to lead, you know, you've got troops behind you.

And, you know, when there's a big trade agreement that business cares about, you know, they let people know, you know, we're going to – I mean to the level of saying we're going to set up a war room, we're going to spend this much money, you know, on ads, we will defend members of Congress who get attacked for supporting it, I mean you see that level of thing. So, again, I think, you know, I mean this president, I think President Elect really believes in this, I think he's been very effected by the kind of support and the data that's out there, and I think he would probably love to have it be part of his legacy. But, you know, can you imagine being around the meetings right now, and you're looking at financial crisis, you're looking at global recession, you're looking at health care, you're looking at climate

change, you've got to fix Fannie and Freddie, you know, you need – yeah, I mean you need a bit of intensity and a real sense that this would be something that could get done, not just if it's important, but that it's actually worth doing, that this could actually be a legacy item that can be achieved.

MR. KOLB: Joan or Ruth, do you want to comment domestically or internationally or both?

MS. LOMBARDI: You know, it's clear that leadership, both in the public sector and in the private sector, I think if we look at Chile and we see what President Bachelet has done, made an enormous difference on this issue, and we could name several other countries where leadership made a difference. I would also say, though, we've got – the reason I'm excited about the business community being involved, it's really important to keep this a bipartisan issue that crosses administrations. I, you know, Gene mentioned we had wonderful successes during our years and then had to watch as that diminished over the last

few years, so it's really important to keep this broad spectrum of support, but obviously leadership, as we've seen in the UK, where they've really made significant investments over the last few years, so I think both is important.

MR. KOLB: Ruth.

MS. LEVINE: Yeah, just briefly. You know, in the international sphere, I think there is always that tendency to focus on mobilizing donor resources against broad global goals that are set in, you know, Washington and New York, and maybe sometimes in Geneva.

And for this issue – for many issues, but for this issue in particular, you know, I think of early childhood development as being sort of deeply revolutionary, because your – if education is a way to sort of reproduce society, which it clearly is, that's sort of its primary – primarily what it does, then making fundamental changes in the organization and access to education that disproportionately benefits the poor and marginalized populations is really a

revolutionary thing to do. And so it's going to be a relatively unusual leadership in many developing countries that's going to embrace that idea. And so finding those leaders who really have it as their goal, the legacy they wish to leave in their countries, and working with them, I think is really, you know, it's a tall order, but it's – it's I think a more lasting and substantive agenda than lobbying for – no offense, it's great to have goals, I think it's important, but the real work is a country to establish it as national priorities in a fundamental way, not just responding to what donors today or tomorrow think is a good idea.

MR. KOLB: Thank you. Let's go to the floor for questions, and we'll take one or two, and then I will turn the program over to Jim Wolfensohn. Yes, sir.

SPEAKER: Yes, thank you. Two comments; first, we seem to be using the terms, early childhood education, preschool education, and early childhood development interchangeably, and I think we should

not. I think they're very different approaches, different modalities, different constituencies, different delivery systems, et cetera. We probably need both, but I think we should be clear which one we're talking about.

The other comment is, I really don't understand why we feel the need to redo research on issues that were pretty soundly established at least 20 years ago. I don't understand why we need to do research to demonstrate that iodine deficiency and iron anemia have effects on childrens' learning, it seems – it just doesn't make any sense to me, those are well established.

But I would like to ask the panel, anybody I guess, maybe Joan Lombardi, are we more constrained by technical debates as to what works or are we more constrained by lack of consensus as to what modalities work and how to do the said scale?

MS. LOMBARDI: Well, I think Ruth would also want to comment on that, and I think we're – are we constrained? I think we're challenged by both. I

think there's a lot of confusion, just as you raised, about what it is we're talking about here. You know, we use a lot of terms. We are really severely challenged by our nomenclature in this field, because we can never decide, is it preschool, is it early childhood development, is it early childhood education.

I use the term early childhood development because I have a developmental perspective that includes the range of things that effect young children. So I think that is a challenge, that's one of the challenges. I don't know, Ruth, if you want to comment on the research side of this and –

MS. LEVINE: Maybe I'll just say a word about that. I think there is a really strong interaction between the doing of particular kinds of research and advancing policy in particular contexts. So let me just give maybe a somewhat analogous example, and that is tobacco control, so you'll wonder why that's analogous, but it's because, well, of course, it's very well established that smoking is bad

for your health, right, I mean that's – we've known that for many decades.

But in South Africa, in Poland, and in other countries, it wasn't until some of the research about the magnitude of the problem, some estimates about the impact on those populations done by indigenous, locally based and respected researchers, it wasn't until that happened, you know, building on internationally, you know, accepted studies and so forth, but it wasn't until that happened, along with a few other things, that real progress was made toward the kinds of legislation and so forth that led to incredible successes in those countries in tobacco control. So I think there's an interaction, and it's not quite enough to say we already know that, we have to move on. I think, you know, and I'm not trying to, you know, preach or lecture at you, but that's what's going through my mind in terms of part of where the research agenda is.

MR. KOLB: Can we sneak in two quick questions? The lady there and then Jack Shonkoff,

questions, no speeches, because we want to stay on schedule. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Okay. It's a comment, but it's – Victoria -- Global Fund for Children, and I have really enjoyed today, but I feel like I got a great research case, both in terms of science, economics, and policy, and I'm really – and even some great business examples of intervention and engagement, but I'm really missing something around the programs.

And I think good programs can be the best advocacy. And to add to Joan's charge of things we need to do, one of my favorite publications, and I think it is from the Center for Global Development, is millions saved around public health program interventions, from many countries, where we've taken great models to scale, and I'd like to add that to those charges.

MR. KOLB: Would you hand the [microphone] to Jack? We're going to get both questions on the floor and then --

MS. LOMBARDI: Well, can I just respond to Victoria, because I think it's a great point? We have a tendency in our field, in the early childhood field, to write about great examples for ourselves, and we haven't – we haven't put them out there in the public I think the way the health community has, so I think that's a great suggestion.

MR. KOLB: Jack, and then we'll go to –

MR. SCHONKOFF: Just a quick comment. I think it really -- and it comes back to the egg cracking issue. You know, I think this is a conference today about the role of the business community, and I think we've tended to think of that mostly in terms of the influence business executives have when it's time for egg cracking, to decide where the money goes.

But there's another whole area of expertise the field desperately needs that the business community has, and it relates to all of these things. Let's think of early childhood development education as a really great idea that could be a big hit and

that could really be very successful. What it needs is, it has some prototypes that are showing a lot of promise and that really work. But what this field has continued to not do well that business people know how to do is, how do you take a good product and take it to scale as opposed to just know it works in a couple of places without losing the quality. And also, when you take it to scale, and you've got something good, how do you keep making it better? It gets to that issue of what we do with health care when we don't have all the answers.

And we have not as a field – we have a strong science base, we have some good prototypes, we know we can make a difference, but we have not mastered the taking it to scale and maintaining good quality, there's too much variable quality, and we also look at the preschool data.

Is anybody worried about what we should do about the fact that there were gender differences on the preschool, and all of these positive impacts were not – they were due to the big increases in girls

doing well and no high school differences in boys? We need, you know, we need product improvement, we need people who know how to do that. There's no question that we have a good idea here, but we haven't figured out how to bring it to scale yet.

MR. KOLB: Any comments before we go to Jim Wolfensohn? Is it a comment or a question? Quick.

SPEAKER: A comment; actually, I just wanted to say something around the programming and examples. I mean Joan mentioned the four cornerstones. What we're trying to do with the consultative group is, as Joan said, what do we want to see for children prenatal up to age eight, and then per age group, zero to three, three to six, six to eight, in policy, have programming examples, policy, research globally. So to be collecting all these examples, many, many do exist that we don't have collected.

So, for example, the public health examples, so that's something that we are working on, and it includes HIV AIDS, and emergencies, and gender, and disability examples. So we have the four working

groups that look at these four areas, if you're interested, but also it is a great way to see what is already currently happening, and where the gaps are, and what needs to be funded, and what needs to be looked at, so that was one thing.

And the other thing that we really need is, we need the CED people to write us a brief that would keep business engaged in early childhood, that it's still a really big issue for us in terms of the global economic crisis, because the people that are getting cut are the people on the ground working, the NGO's and the – so we need a brief from CED coming out of this particular meeting.

MR. KOLB: Got it; Jay Warenklein, did you hear that? Jim, as you come to the podium, I want to take a moment just to thank you and Elaine once again for your splendid leadership here at your Center, at Brookings, and just to tell you how much those of us at CED have enjoyed the partnership and look forward to continuing in the relationship, so thanks pretty much to both of you and to Brookings.

MR. WOLFENSOHN: Well, you've stolen my line because I wanted to thank you very much for the opportunity to work with you, as I want to thank the people that are responsible today.

Since Joan Lombardi has actually done my job already, which is summarizing the important elements of these meetings over this last 24 hours, perhaps I can be permitted to just make a couple of personal observations in why it is that for Elaine and for me, and I need to acknowledge that the reason I have such an interest in this is that for ten years at the World Bank and since then, every night when I'm about to go to sleep, my wife says early child development, and I didn't know whether that was an invitation to have more children or whether it was to get me focused on the subject, but I can just tell you that that has been a strong force and I'm deeply grateful to her for pursuing me on the subject.

But when I got to look at the numbers and looked at the whole issue of development at the World Bank, some of them have been repeated in these last

couple of days, the fact that we'll have another billion – 400 million people on the planet in the next 20 years, and that means that, if my numbers are correct, that you have 70 million people being added every year.

And if you take the view that two-thirds of the people are going to be at risk, we have, if my numbers again are correct, we have about 800 million people who will go through this area of being one to five cumulatively, and this is going to be ten percent of our global population. If that is true, we're playing not with something that is a fringe issue, we're playing with something that has a material and a hugely important impact on the way our world develops. So this is not an issue just for specialists or for those that have discovered early child development, this is an issue that has a massive economic impact if we could make it understood, and it's not just something for specialists.

The problem is that, as I've learned, is that it is extremely difficult to get people to come

together on issues that are outside a political cycle or outside the near term. We're talking here about implications that are years away. They're certain the evidence is there.

We heard remarkable interventions by Jack Shonkoff, and by others yesterday, and by the structure of this meeting, which took us through the research and practice, to the economics of early child development, to the support of global early child development by business leaders, then the wonderful lunch time address that we had from Jørgen [Vig Knudstorp], and then most particularly, the panel that we have today.

I don't think anyone will leave here without believing that this is an important issue for which the science is there, and where there is a sense amongst all of us that this is something that should be addressed. The problem is, how do you get people to address that, particularly at a time of economic uncertainty, as we have at this moment, of immediate pressures, and these are the sort of things which Gene

talking about, said how could he, with his experience in government, bring this to the floor at this time when we are having such a difficult outlook in terms of our economy.

Well, we may not be able to get it very much further, except that, if I understood correctly, the President Elect has stated on more than one occasion that early child development is something that he both understands and thinks is a priority. And if that is the case, and I hope it is, then we have at least a step up that the President of the United States understands this issue and has articulated the issue well and has indicated that it's something that he wants to pursue. So that would be hugely important if we could get him to do it.

And if we can get him to influence other leaders, then, of course, the opportunity becomes greater as we look both at the developed world, and then most particularly at the developing world. Because if we are going to bring the developing world along, as I learned in the World Bank, if the

developing world population starts with an intellectual disadvantage as a result of lack of nutrition before the child is born and without the mix of health, of development, of educational benefits, of economic developments, if the children of the developing world are disadvantaged on the way through, and that's probably the 800 million that I'm talking about, then it is a tremendous loss to our planet, and we in the rich world need to be giving it greater attention.

Now, I can just tell you that it's not easy. In the work that we did at the World Bank, you tend to get programs for countries which are decided by groups for the next few years, and then you rotate with the inadequate monies that there are to new things that are needed by those countries.

So you may have at a certain moment in time someone who really understands early child development and pushes it. But some three years later you have a different person running that country, and they've

already kicked off early child development, and now they're getting onto something else.

And so there is a tremendous need for us, as in so many other things in development, to bring together in some sort of format all of us who are dealing with this subject in some sort of loose confederation so that we actually talk to each other and try and keep the continuity going. The big problem that I think exists in development is the fragmentation. You know, we're putting $100 billion or so a year into development, maybe 25 to 30 billion of that gets to cash in the projects themselves. But the reason for that is that you have such a multiplicity of people that are dealing with it.

I think what has come through today is that there are leaders who understand this subject. There are people of good will where there are no barriers. I think that, in addition to bringing the business community along, which has been the major purpose of this exercise, as you know, we started in Holland, and we'll do another one in Africa in the early part of

next year, in addition to that, I think it behooves the academics in those that are doing research to think of it how they can come together, maybe with some extra funding to bring it together, because this dissipation of effort which is reflected generally in the development community is also something that I think we need to bring together on this particular subject. We need a Gene Sperling or somebody who can pull it all together. But we must have that, because the evidence is clear, as the gentleman said earlier, the opportunity is there, the limitation is resources and focus, and if we could be organized in a way that we're not now organized, it would make a tremendous difference, and for that I'm especially grateful that all of you are here, because this is not something for the specialists, this is something for you who have attended this conference to really feel a responsibility for.

It cannot be done by the floor people or on the panel, it cannot be done by the speakers that we've had, it has to be done by a much broader group

who are prepared to come together, and I am especially grateful to all of you, and I thank you very much for coming. So could I ask you to join me to thank not just these speakers, not just my colleague, Charles Kolb, who's done such a great job, but to ask you to join you with acclamation for all the speakers and for what I think has been a very interesting program.

MR. KOLB: Jim, thank you. As Jim Wolfensohn said, this collaboration will continue in Cape Town, South Africa next year. We could not have done a conference like we did in Amsterdam, in The Hague, in Holland, or today without really close collaboration between the team at Brookings, at the Wolfensohn Center, and also at CED. So I want to thank both the staff at Brookings and also CED, in particular Sarah Hommel at Brookings, and also Jeannette Fournier at CED, it's just been a wonderful partnership, they deserve an enormous amount of credit, so thank you. We are now adjourned. Thank you.

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