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OPENING UP AID: BETTER DATA, BETTER USE

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Introductory Remarks:

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Keynote Speaker:

HECTOR CORRALES
Director of International Cooperation, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
Republic of Honduras

PRESENTING THE 2013 AID TRANSPARENCY INDEX (ATI):

DAVID HALL-MATTHEWS
Managing Director, Publish What You Fund

Moderator:

TESSIE SAN MARTIN
President and Chief Executive Officer, Plan USA

Panelists:

CAROLINE ANSTEY
Managing Director, World Bank

ROBERT GOLDBERG
Director, Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources
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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. INGRAM: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm George Ingram. I'm a senior fellow here at Brookings, and I have the honor of chairing the U.S. Advisory Council for Publish What You Fund. And it's my pleasure on behalf of both institutions, organizations, to welcome you to this small, but very important element of the global data revolution, and that is the launch of the 2013 Aid Transparency Index.

Brookings is proud to have hosted three of the four events around Publish What You Fund publications, and I especially want to thank Oxfam American for helping us support this launch. I also want to welcome all of you who are joining us via the Internet, and to let you know that there will be an opportunity for you to engage in the conversation.

All of us in this room share a common interest in aid transparency and open government and open data. We know that better data won't ensure better decision-making, but we do know that without it we're leaving everything to chance. In the past year, we've seen considerable political commitment to aid transparency and to IATI. Almost 90 percent of donors have now committed to join and to publish their data, bringing us closer to the day when we will have comparable, timely, comprehensive, and accessible data. Today, we'll look at some of the trends, we'll celebrate some of the U.S. successes, and we'll talk about what else needs to be done.

Open data can serve multiple masters. It provides donors with current management information to better inform decisions and coordinate with other donors. It enables partner countries to make better decisions on how to allocate their budgets. It provides citizens, both in donor and recipient countries, with the information to make better decisions and to hold their governments accountable. And finally, the private sector is now beginning to access that data and use it in its own business activities.

The index, which is the only global measure of donor transparency, is not an easy task to compile. Publish What You Fund works with many donors to help them improve the quality of their data. Three researchers spent four months collecting the data and analyzing the data from 67 organizations, and over 40 organizations contributed to reviewing the donor surveys and to providing feedback on the initial assessment. Some of you are in this room today, and I thank you for your work in this area.

Our program today involves three parts. We'll start with a keynote speaker who is very knowledgeable and experienced in the area of leading government into aid transparency. We will then have a presentation on the 2013 index, and then we will hear from a panel of leaders from the U.S. government, the World Bank, and civil society.

Now, it's my honor to introduce our keynote speaker, Hector Corrales, who is director of International Cooperation at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation for Honduras, a country that has been a leader in using and sharing data for many years. It was one of the first countries to integrate its data across all ministries. I foresaw this about 10 years ago, and it's probably what introduced and educated me on the value of open, accessible data. Honduras has recently launched an Aid Management Platform, which is a government repository for all aid activities, including financial data. Honduras is an active member in IATI, and has contributed to the development of the IATI index standard. Mr. Corrales comes to us with experience in government, the World Bank, and as a private entrepreneur.

Mr. Corrales, we are looking forward to your remarks, and I welcome you up to the panel.

(Applause)

MR. CORRALES: Good afternoon, everyone. I am really pleased to be here and to be able to share with you what we've been doing in Honduras.

For countries like Honduras, aid is a crucial aspect of our development financing. Aid makes up almost 12 percent of our national budget, and it makes up 65 percent of our public investment. That's really huge. It means that we don't have full control over how public investment is decided and how it's implemented. My job specifically is to align international aid to our country's priorities, and good quality information is a crucial component for me to be able to do my job.

First, good information is the pillar on which aid management must rest, and I want to tell you a little story about how the government transition from 2009 to 2010 evolved. After the political crisis in 2009, we received very little aid information from the previous government, and it was in a state of disarray. So what you're seeing right here is a cargo container that we found in the parking lot just when we received the government. I'm not saying this was their filing system, but this is what happens during a transition. So this is the type of thing that we want to avoid. We recognize that aligning aid to our country's priorities requires us to be a stronger counterpart, and good information makes us a stronger counterpart. We need to be equipped with good information to be that strong counterpart.

So what is good information? I believe there are two aspects to good information and both of them are equally important and complementary. One of them is delivery. And the delivery for data has to be accurate and comprehensive, and it has to be timely and regular if it is to be of any use. And the second aspect of good information is its usability. And for it to be usable it has to be easy to access, it needs to be tagged sectors and it needs to be mapped geographically, and it needs to be searchable.

So when Honduras endorsed IATI, we moved very quickly to establish an Aid Management Platform that would accommodate this good information that would ultimately be fed automatically with IATI data. And I want to show you a little bit of how our Aid Management Platform looks and what we can do with it now.

We now have an e-Government tool that is accessible to everyone, and they can just access it through a regular webpage. And you'll see that it's a very simple, easy-to-use page, and we have an e-library here. We have a project search box over here, easy access to maps, graphs, and reports, and just general financial information on past six month's disbursements and so on.

I want to show you a video of our Aid Management Platform. I'll call it AMP for short. And say I'm looking for a specific project in the energy sector. I can just start typing and then I'll drop down a little up here and I can choose comunicaciones energias, which is the Honduran sector mapping. And you'll see that we had 847 projects. And as I added the filter, the number of projects changed. And let's say I want to look at only the energy projects that are financed by certain donors. So I'm adding filters for the IADB, the World Bank, UNDP, European Union, and I believe Spain is the next one. And I can also filter by location and which municipality projects are present, and I can also search by a key word.

So now we have only 44 projects that are in energy and financed by these donors, but now I only want to look at the ones that have to do with renewable energy. So I add that keyword and now the number of projects is filtered down to three. Now, we have really general information here on starting dates, end dates, commitments, disbursements, where they're located, what sectors they're in, and who's the development partner. And the name of the project will take us to a project profile that has very, very detailed information about what the project is doing. So you'll see here the total commitment, ID information, what stage it's in, development objectives, description, expected results, et cetera.

We also have it geo-referenced or geo-coded, and we have this project mapped to our own indicators. Our national country -- well, our country development plan. So this is the first step. This is a baby step in alignment, getting all this information tagged and mapped.

Let's see. So talking a little bit about the users and the uses. The first one, obviously, is government. And let's say a donor calls up my boss and says we want to do a project in Honduras and we want to do it in the western part of Honduras, and we want it to be an education project. And before the Aid Management Platform, my boss would have no other choice but to say, "Yes, you're welcome to do whatever you want, wherever you want in Honduras." But now we can overlay this HDI map, the Human Development Index Map, at a municipal level in Honduras, and overlay that with the projects that are present in Honduras. Now, we can have a more sophisticated conversation about what's going on in Honduras in this initial stage of negotiation, and my boss can now say, you know, yes, the HDI index is a little bit low in the western part of Honduras. But I want you to look at this part right here which has a low HDI but there's almost no donor presence there. You know, so we can now go into a better discussion about what we should be doing with the aid that we receive.

The next use is donors. And let's say a donor has a geographic constraint and they can only work in the western part of Honduras. So they're interested in going in and seeing what's going on at the municipal level and seeing what projects are there, what sectors are mapped to, and what things are they basically doing. Are we going to support something that's already underway or are we going to do something new? But keeping in mind not to duplicate efforts. So that's something that's really helpful when preparing country strategies or individual projects, et cetera.

Then academia. We've been working closely with academia and exploring the uses of this Aid Management Platform as a repository for all those consultancy products and sector strategies and whatever that you saw in that container. Or they would be gathering dust on a shelf somewhere. And CSOs. We have a little bit of a problem in Honduras where there's a huge demand for financing but there's about 18 different formats for filling out a project proposal. So what we're trying to do is make our Aid Management Platform be a place where CSOs and other people that demand financing can enter project proposals here. And it would be just as easy as filling out a form, this type of form, and we could then have a menu or a list of demands that a donor could come and look at and yet this aligns with our country strategy. We could pick that and we can have better alignment that way.

So it means empowerment for the government of Honduras to decide where its aid goes and how it's used. It means donor coordination. It means knowledge. This is a treasure-trove of documents, of data that can be mined, and a lot of empirical data can be pulled out of this. And it means most of all transparency, of course.

So IATI and data quality. IATI is what breathed life into our Aid Management Platform. This is why we set up our Aid Management Platform. We did it to be compliant with IATI. And Honduras is committed to IATI. This is why we're doing it. But seeing as IATI implementation schedules go up to 2015, there's no way we can wait that long. We have to do it manually for the time being, but we're waiting eagerly for IATI data to become useful and detailed and comprehensive enough for us to use it and feed our AMP automatically.

IATI implementation needs to happen faster. Data entry is a job that is in none of the terms of reference of my staff. It's not in their job descriptions and it takes too much of our time. We routinely or quarterly become a call center and we start badgering and bothering donors for their information. And it's not an easy relationship, but we have to do it if we want to have that information to inform policymakers and decision makers, et cetera.

Transparency is lucrative. I think this idea -- well, we see that IATI has multi-speed progress. There are some donors that are moving faster than others, and I think that has to do with this notion that transparency is expensive. But I think it's just a really crucial investment. We all know that transparency is good, but we just haven't been able to measure how good it is. And once we start thinking about how portfolio performance can improve when you have closer monitoring or when you have better social auditing and demand for more accountability, you get better results. You get better bang for the buck, so to speak.

Motivation. I think all those aspects of improving donor coordination, better portfolio performance, they should be motivation enough. I remember a meeting once where we were talking about how we can score, how we can evaluate, and consequently rank donors. And their reaction was fierce. They don't want to be scored, they don't want to be evaluated, and they don't want to be ranked. And that meeting was very inspiring for me because I knew exactly what to do.

(Laughter)

MR. CORRALES: So we, inspired by Publish What You Fund and this meeting, we designed a methodology to score their data quality. And after we were done we called them up for a meeting and said, "Hey, we have a baseline ready." And we gave them their scores privately, and then we gave them a chance to meet with us privately to improve their scores before we published. And immediately there was a change of heart about data quality. My week filled up immediately with meetings of people wanting to meet on how to improve their scores and what is it that we need. And they know what we need, but they hadn't really paid attention to what we need until now.

So this comes from this idea from Busan of global light and country heavy, and we set up our foreign aid policy framework, our national framework, and then the national performance framework. And we inserted this aid quality indicator into our national performance framework, so they are actually measured on this and scored on this and hopefully punished on this.

So the national data quality, I talked about this. But the results of this meeting were very rewarding to see after so much time, you know, trying to get them to give us their data and trying to give us quantitative data which is the hardest one to get. And that result I felt was mutual accountability in action. You know, donors and countries coming together, democratizing the data about projects that are funded by the taxpayers, both in my country when we pay back our loans and by your countries when you give out, you know, taxpayers' money.

Monitoring is key. We plan to publish this quality -- this data quality indicator on a quarterly basis. We can't just do it on a one-time basis. We have to keep telling them that they need to improve in order for them to improve. And this sets up a competition. Well, the European Union was number one then but maybe Spain is going to be number one next quarter. And this gets a healthy dynamic going. And I think we need to do this at both levels. We need to do this at the country level and we need to do this at the global level. We need to squeeze from both parts. And Publish What You Fund is doing this crucial aspect of monitoring. If we want to get results, we have to be on top of things and we need to be pushing and pushing and pushing and letting people know how they're doing in order for them to improve.

That's why I think the IATI is so important. It really lays out how things are going and what's going to take -- what more is it going to take for us to reach IATI's full potential, and how we can take IATI to the next level and how we can start using IATI in a really productive way.

So IATI data for us means it's a long-term transformation and in the culture of all development actors it's imperative for us if we want to do our jobs well. If I want to inform my boss about what's going on in aid, I need to have good information and I need to have complete information.

Honduras is committed to IATI. We made our AMP because of IATI, and if you pay close attention to the project profile, the fields there are the IATI standard fields. We've added some of our own fields to measure that alignment for projects and everything, but this is why we set up our AMP, and Honduras is ready to receive that data.

That's it. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. INGRAM: Hector, that was superb. A lot of people in this room have spent the last two or three years trying to get the data in the systems, and we've spent some time this year starting to focus more on how do you use it. And you've really upped our knowledge and understanding about how this data can be used by our development partners. So I thank you very much. It's really useful.

It's now my pleasure to introduce the chair of our panel. Tessie, why don't you come up and get mic'ed while I brief you -- I want to briefly introduce you.

Tessie San Martin is CEO of Plan USA. She is a seasoned executive with 25 years of experience in the development area working on education, economic growth, capacity building, corporate governance, political reform. You name it, Tessie has been there. She's held senior positions at APT, at the World Bank Multilateral and Investment Guaranty Agency, and with IBM Consulting. Most importantly for our discussion today, Tessie has been, and is, leading Plan USA into IATI, one of the few U.S. NGOs that is making that commitment. And I would note that yesterday, Tessie says she pushed the button. I don't know if she really pushed it or not.

MR. SAN MARTIN: Figuratively.

MR. INGRAM: But the first plan data went up on IATI yesterday, and we all thank you for that. That's great.

(Applause)

MR. INGRAM: And so Tessie is going to share the next two parts of the program.

For those of you who are data geeks and read carefully and pay attention to the data and have looked at this form, you don't actually have to wait an hour after this session is over before the reception starts. This says the reception starts at 6:30. In fact, it starts as soon as we finish. So don't run off and do something for an hour.

Tessie.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Great. Thanks a lot, George. And thanks for that introduction. I think it just means that I'm old, but I appreciate it.

So now actually it's my pleasure to invite David Hall-Matthews up on the podium. He's going to present the 2013 Aid Transparency Index. David is a well-known authority in governance accountability. He has researched this area and is now, of course, the managing director of Publish What You Fund.

David.

MR. HALL-MATTHEWS: Thanks very much, Tessie. And thank you all for coming.

This is the fifth year of our campaign, and 2013 has been a big year for aid transparency. The high-level panel on post-2015 goals called for nothing less than a data revolution. The G8 agreed to a radical open-data charter and specifically reaffirmed its commitment to implement the Busan common open standard which includes IATI by the end of 2015.

These new promises have built on a strong base. Donors accounting for over 85 percent of official development finance have now committed to publishing to IATI. And this year we've also seen a lot of new delivery against that promise. Much of it, I have to say, during the data collection period for our Aid Transparency Index, the IATI registry saw a huge amount of activity in the run up to our July deadline. In total, there have been 10 brand new IATI publishers since data collection started in April, and nine more publishers significantly improved their data between April and July.

But more is not enough. Quality is also critical, because as we've just heard from Hector, the data needs to be useful. And to be useful, it must be comprehensive, it must be timely, it must be comparable, and it must be accessible. So this year for the index we updated our methodology to reflect the change in global environment and the needs of users like Hector. We assessed more or less the same information points, but we also took account of the format that information is in. So data published in less useful formats, such as PDFs, score lower than information published on a website, which in turn scores lower than data available in a spreadsheet. And the higher scoring format is IATI XML because that's the only form that is both comparable and accessible.

So our method this year became twofold. As before, we did a survey of all the current information we could find, and then in addition, because IATI data is machine readable, we designed the Aid Transparency Tracker to test the quality of data published in that format and then award additional points accordingly. It's a new method and of course, we welcome feedback.

It also means that our scores are calibrated on a different scale, so please don't try and compare organization scores with last year. But you can compare the rankings. Some agencies, those that take data quality seriously, have made big leaps in 2013. Others that perhaps haven't changed very much since last year have dropped.

So let's have a look at the 2013 Aid Transparency Index ranking. Coming atop this year is the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation with 89 percent. Congratulations.

(Applause)

MR. HALL-MATTHEWS: Congratulations to MCC for leading the way with some incredibly well-structured and comparable data. This is the first year that a U.S. agency has made it into the top category, so I hope that's a sign of more to come. And we can also see excellent scores from Garvey, from DFID, and from UNDP at the top. All of these organizations are publishing extensive information on their current aid activities automatically in useful formats that can easily be accessed, compared, and used.

At the bottom comes China. But perhaps what's most surprising is the length of the tail. As of last year, we grouped organizations into five categories according to their percentage scores, but back then there weren't many in the bottom category. This year there were 26. That's well over a third of all the organizations in the index scoring under 20 percent. That is important. Low ranking donors are not making information available in a comparable format. So if you receive development funds from one of them, you will struggle to collect and analyze data about those funds. And as Hector as shown us, that makes it hard to plan your own strategies around them.

So, the overall average is very low, but that means there's a lot of room for improvement. We've seen this year that some organizations, for example, the African Development Bank, the European Commission institutions, UNICEF, Canada, and the U.S. Treasury all making strong progress. And I'm sure there will be some more big leaps from bottom to top next year.

We also expect that some leading organizations that already score very well, such as the World Bank, will further enhance the quantity and quality of their published data. And in recent weeks, three more very different types of organizations, all important, have announced plans to publish to IATI in the coming year for the first time -- the European Investment Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the French Government. That is really exciting. It means not only that IATI is continuing to grow, but it's being implemented by a greater variety of organizations.

Back to this year's index. What has our data collection and analysis told us? First, a leading group is showing real commitment and real ambition in delivering useful data, but many others need to stop up their implementation if they're going to fulfill the international commitments that they have already made. And then by looking more closely at the quality, as well as the quantity of data, we found some nasty surprises. A lot of aid information is patchy, incomplete, out of date, or hard to use because it's hidden away in PDFs or on the back pages of websites. Plus, the most useful data that we looked for, what we call the added-value fields -- such as precise location, project documents, impact assessments and results -- those are the indicators that the fewest donors scored any points on at all. And that matters.

We focus on usefulness because everyone has an interest in seeing IATI information used. If the information people most want isn't there or isn't complete or isn't in a comparable format, that's not user-friendly. The list of potential users is a long one -- agencies, partner countries, NGOs, legislators, journalists, citizens. If they all start using transparently published aid information, then two things can happen. First, data quality will be driven up as people start telling donors what they want to see and where the gaps are. Second, it becomes possible to fulfill the original goals of aid transparency, such as coordination, real partnerships with recipient countries, and accountability. The end goal is better development outcomes.

We've heard from Hector that the demand for high quality, comprehensive aid information is out there, so our recommendations this year are really simple -- publish more aid information. Publish better aid information so it's easier to use and easier to access. And start using it. All of you -- agencies, NGOs, and don't just look at your own data. Use each other's data. Explore it. Help to improve it. You never know what you might find. It could just transform your whole agenda. It could make your organization more effective and better fit for the complex world of development finance that we now live in. Now that's what I call a data revolution. Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. SAN MARTIN: Actually, David, if I could ask you to stay up here, take some questions.

MR. HALL-MATTHEWS: Okay. I'm running away.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Don't run away yet.

Questions. And we have microphones so that people can be heard.

Any? Yes, up here. And actually, what I'll do is I'll take three questions.

MR. HERSHEY: I'm Bob Hershey. I'm a consultant.

Has there been any effort to get some transparency in the decision-making of how the money is given out and what participation the donors have in these decisions?

MS. SAN MARTIN: Okay. So decisions from donors.

Another questions? Yes, sir.

MR. SUMKA: I'm Howard Sumka, a former USAID Mission Director in a number of countries.

I have a little bit of a problem linking some of the things you said with some of the things that Hector said. In one mission where I was the director, we had a geographically-based information system which could allow us to do everything that Hector asked for -- sector, amount of money, amount of beneficiaries, geographically located in the country. In the other countries where I worked we had nothing that came close to that, although that was years before IATI.

The question is when you say USAID is in the fair category and the Millennium Challenge Corporation comes out at the top of the list, I wonder how you base the USAID evaluation. It's not just for USAID, but it's mission by mission, the ability to do donor coordination and to coordinate, in particular, with host country managers. It varies very widely. And to say that USAID has a score of 50 or 75 or whatever, I would say AID probably has 80 scores, and it has more to do with what's going on on the ground than what's happening in Washington, either at AID headquarters or at the State Department's Office of Foreign Assistance. Thank you.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Okay. So some questions about how that was compiled. And we will have an opportunity to talk more about USAID in the panel, but yes, let's take one last question there.

MR. RITTERHOFF: Hi, I'm Robin Ritterhoff. I'm a consultant.

Some of the work I've been doing and the job I've been working on has to do with new donors, nontraditional donors. And I see relatively few of those on your list. China, of course, in its unfortunate bottom place, and a few others. What about the Gulf States? What about India? What about Russia? Were they not asked, or their data simply wasn't good enough to be included? Thank you.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Good question.

All right, David, do you want to take those three?

MR. HALL-MATTHEWS: Thanks. Okay. They're three very good questions.

I'm afraid the answer to the first one is the shortest, Bob, because there isn't a field which specifically says how do you make your decisions, partly because I think that's a very political thing. However, you are asked to have a program, and indeed, a whole institution rationale. So you can talk about what is the basis on which you make decisions. Are you an agency which primarily focuses on health? Are you an agency which predominantly focuses on a particular region? And that is all assessed. But we don't have a specific question, you know, what was the debate inside the committee room? I think that's an area of transparency which we've not yet got to.

In terms of the method and what we look at for an individual agency. So there's a two-part method as I said. So the first thing we do is we look at the IATI registry, and we look at the information that's been published there. Now, USAID published 53,000 activity files to the IATI registry about two days before we stopped data collection but fortunately, in machine readable format. The machine read it and that's what we assessed. So that covers all the activities that USAID published. Then, on any field that isn't captured by that data we then do a manual survey. So if a country or an institution doesn't publish to IATI at all, the manual survey is 100 percent. In the case of an agency like AID, it's just for those fields which they haven't published to in the case of IATI. And the way we do that survey is we pick one country, and we pick the country that that institution gives the largest amount of aid to, which we tend to find is likely to be the one they're most transparent about. Is that random sampling? Obviously not, because as you know, if you know statistics, you can't do random sampling until you know the size of the universe, and we won't know the size of the universe until all institutions publish all the information about all the aid they do.

So it may be -- in fact, I'm sure you're right -- that if you pick one country, it's going to be a very different from when you pick another. In the case of USAID, I believe it was Afghanistan. So I'm guessing for various political reasons there's probably more transparent information about Afghanistan than there is if we had picked some other countries. So it's a system, if anything, that is biased towards the agencies. But in the case of MCC, why did they do so much better? It's because pretty much every single field in IATI is populated by MCC data. We hardly had to do a survey because their information is so excellent. And it really is. If you like data, you'll love MCC's data.

The final question from Robin about the new donors. I mean, this is, you know, a new area. So the Busan agreement, the south-south cooperators were in the room but they asked for an up-tab. Okay, so when we talk about the promises that countries have already made, it didn't apply to China. We hope -- in fact, I went to Colombia last month to try and persuade some south-south cooperators to start their own process about what would work for them. It's mostly what we would call technical assistance. There's relative little financial information. I think it's really important, but the related question is how did we select which agencies went into the index?

So we set up three criteria. First, how much money are you spending? Is it over a billion dollars? Second, did you ever make a promise? So, for example, there are some very small European member states in the index because the European Union collectively made a promise on behalf of all the member states that they would do transparency. So those that have made that promise and then didn't do anything about it are appearing in the bottom end of our index. And thirdly, and specifically in relation to those kind of countries, are you the main agency? So we're not going to go to Lithuania and say you made a promise and now we're going to look at five of your agencies. Where it's a case like that, we're just going to look at the main development agency.

So if you hit two of those three, then you're in. So it's true that there are some organizations -- Gulf states is a good example, where they've spent more than a billion dollars but they're not in. But that's because we can't measure everybody. It would be 200 or 300, and at the moment we haven't even gotten to square one. We haven't even got the commitment out of them. But watch this space. I'm really interested in seeing what happens with those organizations and those countries as well. And once all the countries that are in this index have delivered in their promises, then we will have a collective power to persuade those new and emerging powers which will be much stronger.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Great. Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. SAN MARTIN: Thanks a lot, David.

I'm trying to keep us on time, so I want to move to the panel. I'm sure there are other questions, and perhaps when we open it up for questions we can come back to some of that.

So let me ask my panelists to join me up here.

So let me begin the introductions of the panel. I think it's a great panel. I think it's going to be a lot of fun. As fun as this can be.

Anyway, let me start. Hector has already been introduced, so let me go to his left. And it's Caroline Anstey. She's managing director at the World Bank. Among her many responsibilities in the World Bank would include oversight of the work being done on gender; fragile, conflict-affected countries. I know you're also working with Dr. Jung Kim on the science of delivery among the many things, and of course, has been also responsible for looking at the Bank's systems, operations, and figuring out how to align that for maximum impact. This obviously is one part of it.

To her left is Rob Goldberg, who is the director of the Office of Foreign Assistance Resources at the State Department, and is also -- I will call him not just the person overseeing the foreign assistance dashboard, but perhaps the guru on that.

Next, to his left is Sheila Herrling, who is the vice president for Policy and Evaluation at the Millennium Challenge Corporation. And in that capacity, oversees a variety of things, including the Compact and Threshold Programs, the technical and economic analysis that the agency does, and of course, you know, what the agency does around rigorous impact evaluations. I think we all recognize that the MCC has raised everybody's game in that regard as well.

Next to Sheila we have, last but not least, is Tony Pipa, who is the deputy assistant administrator for USAID's Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning, for PPL. And as a result, very much looking at and responsible for this whole area of aid effectiveness in USAID. And as I was telling him earlier, also an alum of the Kennedy School of Government. Obviously, a brilliant man, just like me.

Okay. So with those introductions done -- actually, you know, Sheila, the MCC is the happy news story, I think, so let me start with you. First of all, congratulations on the number one ranking. Coming from number nine to number one in one year is a tremendous, and I know very, very difficult task. So I'd like to ask a little bit for the benefit of the audience. So how did you do that? And maybe share with us a couple of sort of lessons learned as you begin to look forward to what's next.

MS. HERRLING: Sure. First of all, congratulations to Publish What You Fund. Running an index is really hard, I know from experience, and it's really a tribute to you that you've got more people in the index, more god performers, so keep up the good work. It actually does incentivize good things in the world.

How did we get there? I feel a little bit like we're at the Oscars presentation and they're showing those five pictures and I'm the one that's looking down because there's no way I'm going to get it when I look at my nominees. And so I really, you know, we're so proud of getting to be number one, but also really humble when we look at the people -- the groups that we've looked to to inspire us to push the frontier -- the World Bank; DFID; Tony, with all of his transaction data -- we were inspired by those efforts. And so find ourselves at number one is also a wow for us.

How we got there. Three steps, none of which are easy. The first was really just declaring that you're going to. It was a natural starting place for the MCC. We're a young agency. We were built with transparency in our DNA. A lot of what we do is already out there, not in a very accessible format. And so getting the political will within the agency to move particularly in the open data space, while it may have seemed obvious just to be honest in front of this audience and everybody else watching, it's not always easy. You have to break down the psychology of fear. You have to be willing to answer questions about your data. And so that takes some time. So the first is political will.

The second is making the business case. So, for us, the business case was not to be number one on Publish What You Fund. I'm sorry, Sally. That helps. It really does, but the business case was threefold. One was internal. We are an agency that uses data to make decisions at every step of our process from what countries we choose to what sectors we're going to work in, to making sure we get a return on our investment through the economic analysis, to the monitoring, to the ultimate evaluation work at the end. Every single step we are putting in front of senior management data. And when our own data was not accessible, it's a problem. So that was the large inspiration.

The second is external. We want particularly our partner countries to be able to manage their own resources -- ours and others -- but we want them to certainly be able to manage ours and to follow that line out through impact. We also had private companies that were saying, you know, put your data in machine readable format so that we can help you and we can also, of course, help ourselves. And so we were getting that demand. So there was an external push on that side.

And then there's the global public good side of it, which is really my own personal inspiration. I think a lot of the inspiration at the MCC is just the learning that can be done by everybody, by the amounts of data that we have to share, particularly in the evaluation space, our survey data, so we hope to get that out there soon.

I guess the biggest lesson is have good partners inside the agency. So I will say the approach -- we started at a very policy level. Just declare you're going to do it. I learned very soon that I better match up with my partner in crime, the VP for administration and finance on the technical side so that policy and technical are hand-in-hand and they are constantly saying tell me what you see. Right? So Chantal would be saying, "Move faster." I would say, "You don't understand where I'm sitting." And making sure that both sides are listening to each other and really listening and really learning each other's space.

And then assemble a good team within. So Heather is here. There are others. It's a task-oriented job to get there, so you need a good team. And that means you're taking them away from other priorities in the agency. This is not an add-on. Hector said, and others will say it, you are doing this on top of everything else that you're doing. I do believe it has a payoff.

The second lesson learned is that it's hard. We knew it was hard. We knew it was going to be hard. It's harder than we thought. So I suspect you'll hear that across the panel. And so therefore, patience within your agency and patience within our stakeholders is something that is needed to continue to push us to move, but sometimes respect a pace that feels unsatisfying.

And beyond that I think it's just be ambitious. You know, be ambitious. Keep pushing, even when you're out on the forefront. And now, you know there's only down for us. But that's the point. Inspire it.

MS. SAN MARTIN: The pressure is on. All right. Thank you.

Caroline, let me turn to you. The World Bank again had another very strong year, and obviously the World Bank's commitment I think has been behind a lot of other donors saying, "Yes, we're going to do this and we're just going to take the plunge." So thank you. And I think your leadership has been very important.

So I'm kind of curious. Why is the Bank so interested in this? How is this important for the World Bank's mission? And in fact, how, if at all, does it matter for how you manage the organization?

MS. ANSTEY: Thank you. Well, first of all, let me also thank Publish What You Fund and congratulate the Millennium Challenge account.

I think maybe George in his introduction summed it up. He said, "This is a small but very important element in the data revolution." And I think the way -- the reason the Bank is involved in this is because we do think that freedom of information, releasing data and releasing it free contributes to better development outcomes. So it's not just good in and of itself; it's good because we think we can track that the outcomes will be better.

I think, and I agree with you, it's politically sometimes very hard. It's politically hard I think in multilateral agencies. We have 188 shareholders where not everybody believes that transparency is a good thing. Transparency is still seen as quite political and you have to overcome that hurdle.

I also think we have to talk about the way we do it because I think it's very important. David talked about you can't really compare this year's index with last year's because the methodology changed, and the Bank has suffered from not having everything in machine readable. We have a lot in PDFs still. And here's the question. Do you wait until everything is machine readable until you release it? Or do you try and get a momentum going, release everything you can, and in the Bank we wanted to get that spirit of openness to penetrate our board, our management, our task team leaders. And that's going to mean it's not all going to be machine readable from the get-go. But I think why it's important again, and I was very interested in this word that keeps coming up, is usability. And I think we have to think about the usability of the data for governments, but more than that, we have to think about the usability of data for citizens. And David, when you gave your list of who uses this data, I was interested that citizens came at the bottom, because I think actually we've all done a very good job now on the supply side. Yes, we have to do better in the format that it's used, but the real key now is on the demand side. Are citizens able to use this? Because in all honesty, a lot of these are complicated spreadsheets with a lot of numbers on it. I think a lot of the citizens in our projects are not going to be able to use it except with intermediaries. And what we want to do is now make sure that the information is getting to the level where it needs to be. So I think we do have to think it's great to have a standard. We need to do it. We need to try to make it compatible, but are we working enough on the demand side? And that's where the Bank is trying to factor in beneficiary feedback into all our projects.

But I think, again, why do it? It's not because we all woke up and said, you know, transparency is a great thing. I think it is because we remembered, first of all, you had a Supreme Court justice who said sunlight is the best disinfectant. Bad things happen in projects. Transparency helps. It helps get good outcomes. But we have to keep proving the case. We have to be able to show that releasing data, being transparent, letting citizens know is improving the delivery of healthcare, is improving the way budgets are put together. And I would say because there are still skeptics out there and it is so political. And maybe as the last thing I would say why is the Bank doing it? I think the big -- the brass ring, if you like -- is the whole budget. This is looking at aid and donors' aid, and it's very important, but we want to be able to integrate that with the entire budget so that citizens can see what other choices are being made and how is the national government spending not just aid money but all money. So we have to think of this as really one piece in that very important bigger puzzle.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Well, actually, thank you. And hang on to that thought because I want to come back to the issue of usability because that we need to explore a little bit more.

But let me go to Tony now and talk a little bit about USAID. You know, there are, what, like 25 or maybe there are more agencies in the U.S. Government that have some role in foreign aid, but anyway, but USAID is the key one, and obviously, to a certain extent, how well the U.S. Government does as a whole in terms of aid transparency depends on how well USAID does because you account for a big chunk of it. And in fact, USAID again, congratulations, because you continue to improve. This year you improved quite a bit again from last year, and I know I heard this morning that you also have plans to continue to improve. You know, I've heard that there's a lot of information out there which is great, but there are certain information, certain value-added fields, like activity, budgets, results, and so on, that are not available. So explore a little bit about what is in the plans in terms of improving the availability of data.

MR. PIPA: Okay. Well, thank you. And you know, I'll offer my congratulations as well to Publish What You Fund and to MCC for providing a model to us all. And also I just want to provide some kudos to having Hector here today as well because that makes this conversation about development, not about transparency as a concept, not just about transparency as accountability but about development. And that's where we come from with what we're trying to do. This is what we see as a core element. This is about development impact, and it is about sort of aligning how we develop or how we deliver our development resources and how we do that in a way with our businesses processes, how we use data to deliver to the highest impact possible.

This has been a big year not just for USAID but for the U.S. government in terms of IATI in that we did put together an implementation plan and put our first IATI data out there. And for USAID, we moved from aggregate level reporting to transaction level reporting which was already discussed. Now, that was a big lift when you talk about 53,000 records that are just from three-quarters. That's not even a full year's worth of activity data yet, and it's interesting to hear Sheila talk about the teams, both the technical and the policy working together, and hats off to the team within USAID which is a combined management bureau team with the policy team to do that, and that's what it takes. And it does take political will, and it takes persistence to put it out there.

You know, we've got a whole set of records coming from the fourth quarter as well. That will be the next big lift. And so to answer your question directly, that's our immediate focus because we are focused on making this a timely release. And so we're committed to doing it on a quarterly basis. And doing it is difficult, frankly, because it's coming from our systems of record, our accounting systems of record. They weren't set up to be able to post this information; they were set up for our own uses. And I think that's one of the things you're starting to hear as a theme as people talk. It's about how do we align our business processes and do better for our own management of our aid, do better in working with host countries and partner countries, and do it in a way also that facilitates more openness for citizens.

But I think the point is about being transparent about our aid is more than just publishing to IATI, and the question about citizens' usability is actually a really important one, I think. Looking at the demand side, I mean, we're partnering, for example, through our Higher Education Solutions Network with a data to geocode information -- our project information in 15 different countries, but doing it in a way that we're working directly with those country governments to build capacity so that it happens on a sustainable basis. Our mobile team is looking at mobile as a huge opportunity to get real-time feedback from consumers of our data and actually developing guidance for all of our missions and looking for ways to embed that language from that into our contracts and so it becomes part of our DNA and the way we do business when we deliver.

And we launched a grand challenge in development with partners like DFID and Sweden and the Omidyar network this year, Making All Voices Count, which is about helping close the feedback loop from citizens to governments, and how governments can respond when citizens have feedback. And so I think it's really important to keep in mind that this is one part of the data revolution, but that point about usability from developing countries and ensuring that we're aligning there, and you heard even in the question from our former mission director about the variability and the decentralization of us as a U.S. agency, getting that, and we've been very focused on developing some consistency there so that when we do take the data we can roll it up in a more consistent package and be able to report it. But at the same time, you know, being able to do that in a way in which we're working alongside the countries where our presence is and building the capacity to do that and to build the capacity of citizens to do it I think is really important from a development perspective.

MS. SAN MARTIN: All right. Thank you. And we'll come back again to that issue of usability.

Rob, before I turn to this theme of usability, I just wanted to ask you again as the person sort of in charge of or overseeing the foreign assistance dashboard, the guru -- no, and look, you know, let's also give a lot of credit because I think the foreign assistance dashboard was a huge step forward when, you know, and let's remember that it existed before IATI. And it really started to bring coherence where no coherence existed, and that was huge. Now, what I've also heard, and I wanted you to comment on it, that is, okay, that was before IATI. But now we have IATI, so if we're concerned about things like coherence and comparability and so on, IATI gives us that. So in a post-IATI world, what's the role of the foreign assistance dashboard and what do you see going forward?

MR. GOLDBERG: So thanks for good questions. These are persistent questions that we are wrestling with. And again, I want to extend my congratulations to Publish What You Fund and to MCC and to other members of the panel here for all their enormous efforts. And I just want to say again I was sort of inspired by Hector's presentation. I think we want to get to some of the visualizations and some of the data that he showed in terms of being able to map and link dollars and projects. That's sort of the gold standard that we're trying to get to.

And to get to your question, let me just take a step back and sort of start people at kind of where we have been, which was zero information, out in the public domain. And that was just a couple of years ago. And we created the dashboard as a tool to not only help publicize the foreign assistance data, not from just state and USAID but for all U.S. Government agencies. And this is a challenge. You know, we have a very complicated government. We have a lot of agencies spending foreign assistance dollars, and each one of those agencies has different systems, different ways of tracking, different ways of coding. And it was our challenge to figure out how do we present sort of a single U.S. government picture of foreign assistance, which we have been criticized for four years as not being able to do. And so this was an effort, and yes, it did predate IATI and all that. But this was an effort really to kind of bring all U.S. government agencies together who spend foreign assistance data, spend foreign assistance dollars, so we can actually have comparable information across agencies, which I don't think has ever happened before, and we've made enormous progress since then, and we've made enormous progress since last year's rollout of the index in terms of bringing other agencies on -- DoD, Treasury, all the USAID transaction data we talked about. The African Development Foundation just went up on the dashboard, so we're making steady progress.

This issue of what's the role of the dashboard and IATI I think is a good question, and we -- there's a perception out there that we're sort of stopping everybody from reporting, that we're slowing things down, and we have to have sort of that debate about where agencies are in terms of publication of their data. What we're trying to do, both to help the development piece of this, but also our own understanding of the data, is to bring self-coherence, comparability and quality to the fore. And so we are not, as the State Department, as the folk who do work on the dashboard, we're not manipulating agency data. We are not improving the quality of the agency data. That's up to the agencies to use their systems. What we're trying to do is make sure that everyone is using the same standards. And even though the IATI standards are, you know, the same for everybody, there's different ways that agencies might interpret. And we just don't want to have an apples and oranges set of data out there that will confuse more than help folks use the data.

We are providing a service to agencies to help them publish to IATI through the XML format, which not every agency in our government has the capacity to do. And I think one principle that we're trying to instill is sort of institutionalization of the data. So Sheila and Tony can harness their agency's data and update routinely, quarterly, without having to manually do a lot of work, it becomes part of how we manage our systems, how we manage our data. That's incredibly important. The agencies in our government who don't have the capacity to do XML or don't have the capacity to sort of mine the data and figure out how to work with XML, we're trying to help them do that. But left of their own devices they would never do it and that would be a continual gap in the data. So I think we're providing the service that will help bring more data to the fore and do it in a way that is timely because it's going to be a quarterly update and it's going to be regularized the way Tony is mentioning, you know, fourth quarter data for USAID. That's going to be substantial data load that's going to be out there but it's every quarter.

MR. HALL-MATTHEWS: Be ready, Rob.

MR. PIPA: And I would just suggest that, you know, this issue of political will that Sheila mentioned is not a small issue. For the U.S. Government and even pieces of the U.S. Government to have obligations data, expenditure data, budget data, contract data on a website that can easily be searched, easily manipulated, downloaded, played with, there's no other -- I'm not aware of any other government agency in the U.S. that has that level of transparency right now. And I think we are leading sort of the effort in that regard. And that took a leap -- a political leap. It took a leap of our leadership to expose the agencies, expose the U.S. government to the questions we'd get asked and the kinds of things that transparency does. It's sort of a double-edged sword.

So we are committed to this. We are sensitive to issues of timeliness and the issues of equality. We're trying to also make things more institutional. And as Sheila said, this is not an add-on. This is a carving out of things from things we were already doing. So it has been a challenge. But for the fact that we have great partners in agencies represented here, we've got a great team. I point out Jessica Kline, who is really the guru, who runs this for me at the State Department and goes agency to agency and works on the data -- but for those folks, we would be in a far less good place. And I think we all want to get to where MCC is and that's the goal.

So I'm happy to talk about those issues as we move on but that's sort of the broad overview.

MS. SAN MARTIN: All right. Great. Thank you.

So let's actually turn -- before I open it up for questions -- to this issue of usability that has come up as a theme. Do we have like visualizations that are going to be shown? There.

Because, I mean, look, the question is, okay, it's a means, not an end, so the question is what do we do with all this information? It's machine readable, so what? I mean, if you've looked at the data yourself you're going, well, okay, I'm not really sure what I do with that information.

So just four screen shots. This is from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it's open source code. And you know, anybody can use it. Anybody can access it. Anybody can download it and do all kinds of things with it. And actually, if you haven't been there, I encourage you to do it because it's really kind of cool. But let me move on.

The development trackers, I understand that it's kind of a pilot, right? Are we not showing more about that later? Is there not a demo on it? On our own aid tracker. Okay, but the cool thing about this, right, because DFID has made -- the U.K. government has said we're going to publish everything but we're going to make sure that all our implementation partners also publish. I've got a few things to say about that. And so the interesting thing is you can really track a project from sort of the funder all the way down to the field. And in terms of what are the visions of what this could lead to, I mean, I think that's important. It's also important to remember, as Caroline said, what we're talking about here that the agencies are publishing is one sliver of a much bigger pie. And so the question is how do we get everyone publishing everything? Not just how do we get these and other agencies publishing in my view.

So this actually was put together by Publish What You Fund. And it was put together, as I understand, in like an hour, and it would have taken probably like, I don't know, not years but certainly days to put together. And it was, again, with information that's already available. Right? So you can see, okay, so what are we doing in various countries in a specific set of areas and so on.

And then let me go to the last one. And this one is interesting because it took -- this one really did take a long time. And the most recent data up there is like 2007; right? And it's just, you know, it's kind of what, you know, the holy grail is and the golden standard, right, because if we get to a world where everybody's publishing everything, and if you click on each of these things, right, you can see what is the government publishing, what are donors publishing, what are coming from a variety of sources in a variety of sectors. So it starts giving you -- it's actually the picture that Hector was painting for us. That really is very useful in order to have coherent conversations between governments and donors and civil society in terms of what's needed where. And we can provide it, right, but the links are there and I encourage you to play with them. But not right now.

Because I want to go to one last set of questions about usability and sort of get every agency that's here's view of, okay, so great, we all agree usability is really important, and then actually, Hector, I want to come back to you and ask you to comment on that. So what's important for you? Because we've all been inspired by you and I think we need to end with you kind of having the last word in terms of what matters.

But so, Caroline, let me start with you in terms of -- because you started us on the theme of usability. So what is the Bank doing then or what can the Bank do to enhance that, to work with partner countries and with shareholders as it were in that regard?

MS. ANSTEY: I think for us we think that the part that's missing in this, what you call chain from the donor right down to the disbursement into the field, the part that's missing is the real-time feedback on that project as it's in the field. So what we want to do is put in real-time feedback loops. This used to be second nature and it is to the private sector. You ask your customers what they want the whole time. In development, it tends not to happen, not by donors and not necessarily by governments. So I'll give you an example.

In Karnataka, in India, we have a maternal healthcare project for illiterate women. When they come in, they rate the quality of their service. They can't be using complicated spreadsheets. They have a handheld device with a series of smiley faces. If the service was good, they press the smile. If it was okay, they flat line. And if it was bad, the handheld device frowns. And then that goes into the local health ministry where then there has to be oversight that there is real-time correction taking place. That kind of data I think is going to be key as part of this chain, and that has to be usable for those illiterate women. It's going to look different maybe in each case. So I would say that is a prerequisite.

And then the second one is how does this fit in with the budget as a whole? So we've geocoded all our projects so we can map them like that, and hopefully we can map them with others. And then you can map them against not just where is your antipoverty project but where is poverty the highest in the country so you can make sure the projects are in the right place. But we then have to have the national budget data to go with that. And I think the danger is we set up parallel systems. So in Kenya, in Moldova, and now in Bolivia, we've worked on open data systems. And trying to design what is usable for the government, what will be compatible with this system, but what makes sense of them. And then you have to also work with apps. I talked about usability but apps can be usable for people in terms of if they work with handheld devices now, which as you know, more people now have a cell phone in the world than have access to a toilet. So what you can put on cell phones in a user-friendly way to make corrections, to make people have that -- if you like that, Brandeis-effect about the sunlight and the disinfectant -- because I think in the end governments having the information, very important. Parliaments having the information, very important. Donor agencies having the information, very important. But what at the end is going to make the development better is probably the citizens having it because they will make the pressure -- did the textbooks arrive? Is the road in the right place? Is the local budget spending actually creating shared prosperity?

So I think for us, yes, David wants to know about machine readability. Yes. Extremely important, but the demand side now, there's a huge amount of data out there, and making that demand for it be something that can improve development outcomes I think is our goal. And we're just in the process of negotiating a new IATI replenishment and we have said that we will do citizen feedback in our projects. That's big for the Bank, and it's going to require a lot of focus, a lot of resources. And not one size fits all. What works in Karnataka may not work in Nairobi and vice versa.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Okay. Fascinating. I hope we have some questions about that.

Sheila, let me go to you and ask you a similar question in terms of how you're working with the MCAs and your countries.

MS. HERRLING: Well, you know, this is what I mean by being a little bit humble about your number one position because that sounds really cool. And I will say that from where we sit all the cool stuff is on the frontend, right? And where we are going to be just honestly focused is the backend because the frontend is only as good as all of your backend information. And so right now we are just continuing to plug away at essentially setting up an API so that we have one single authoritative source of all of our data that can then spit it out in whatever format folks are demanding. And so if that format continues to be IATI, we will continue to produce it in IATI format. That is something that we are going to be testing actually, and I think there is still space on proof of concept on that, on whether that is the format that is in the most demand, particularly by our partner countries. So again, Hector, that was a really important presentation.

It could be for our own, you know, U.S. Government things. It could be Congress, it could be private sector, whatever the demand of our data is, this API will be able to spit it out. We're going to put a lot of effort into that. From there -- and that will essentially consume an awful lot of our time -- we are also going to be putting in an effort within the dashboard on taking the lessons that we've learned on how to develop an IATI XML file, have it be open code, and basically have learning within the U.S. Government agency. So there's a whole source of activities that we'll be doing collectively to learn from each other through this process and hopefully leapfrog and move up the timelines on things.

We'll be spending a very large amount of time on trying to clear through a vast amount of survey data from our impact evaluations. We are essentially sitting on a gold mine of data right now that we are getting through a disclosure review board to protect personal identifier information. It's a humungous effort, and so this effort of declaring you're going to do so and then realizing the steps you have to take along the way to actually do so are probably about 10 times as hard and long as you thought. And so that sounds kind of boring after what the World Bank is doing but it's going to be critical to moving our space forward and focusing on some of the cool frontend work.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Great. Thank you.

Tony, let me ask you what's on the agenda. And we've heard this issue -- well, the USAID, of course, is very decentralized. So what is being done in this vast decentralized agency at the mission level and then obviously, you know, with embassies.

MR. PIPA: So I'll start with usability for us as an agency because, I mean, frankly, through our USAID forward reforms we have elevated and improved what we call the entire program cycle at USAID. Everything from our country level strategic plans to our project design, performance monitoring, our evaluation, and all of those policy and processes have been elevated and made more rigorous. So we're actually working with missions to both standardize processes and look at systems by which we can link all of that for our own use frankly, so that we better manage our own programming. And at the same time as we do that, we're doing it with an eye toward how do we also open that up as we do that.

So Sheila was talking about sort of that backend effort. We're going to continue to be immersed in that backend effort. Now, we already make things like our country development cooperation strategies. We were transparent. We post them online once they're complete. Our evaluations are online. But they're not linked and we can improve by getting them into machine readable format, so there's a lift there and an investment of time and effort to do it. It won't happen immediately but that's what we're looking at towards the future.

But I think there is the usability for developing countries in which we're working. And that means integrating the data that we are making available into their platforms for their management and use as well. So I mentioned some of the geocoding that we're working with, both through our higher education solutions network, but as well as the geocenter that we've stood up recently at USAID. And that is not just about geocoding our data but it is about building and integrating with the systems. We did a project in Nepal which was as much about building the capacity and working alongside the government there to integrate into their AMP, as it was about getting our data geocoded. And we're also going to be doing some learning. I mean, we're going to undertake three country pilots where we go out to countries and ask how they're using our data, what we can learn from there, where the gaps are, how can we refine it and make it better.

And I think the final thing I would say, at the very global policy level, we're going to continue to push the conversation. So we're on the steering committee for the post-Busan global partnership, and that global monitoring survey will provide a platform for developing countries to go out to donors and understand what's going on in their country. We're going to continue to push it from our space on the IATI steering committee and look for ways to build that ecology of users. So we're intentional about getting others to build apps or to look at the usability of this data and how it can be used. And we're going to be a big part of a conversation that's going to unfold over the next couple of years that we've been referring to as the data revolution, but the post-2015 development framework and more data and the importance of data within that. So I'll leave it there.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Okay. Thanks.

Well, Rob, sort of, I don't know if you want to add or complement what both Sheila and Tony have said in terms of the USG effort in this regard.

MR. GOLDBERG: Sure. I think we're always concerned about and looking to find ways to make the data usable. I think we have still some work to do to bring on information from agencies, so we're still working with agencies like the Peace Corps and the Inter-American Foundation and HHS and Agriculture. There are big chunks of the foreign assistance world that we still need to bring on and then to sort of amplify the data that MCC and USAID are working on. So I think we're looking for the next year to be a real big year.

And in addition, we're starting to have conversations about sort of the next generation of what this is going to look like and how you, you know, how people are really using the data and what kind of, you know, what folks outside of the U.S. Government, outside of the State Department, outside of those agencies are doing with the data that will help inform what we do in the future. And so I haven't -- just because we're sort of stuck in our little tunnel, I haven't sort of seen how are people accessing the MCC data, the USAID data. What are they doing with it? How are they -- what's the entrepreneurial spirit out there with this data, which there's an enormous amount of it. And what we need to do is think through not how do we take the dashboard and just statically adding information to it but also how do we turn it into something that people can use, take the data away, analyze it, combine it with other kinds of data, and what power that has to inform where money is going, what decisions are being made, how donor partner countries are using it. That's sort of the next step. And so there's going to be sort of a series of decisions we're going to have to make because it's going to be a tradeoff with other work on sort of taking this to the next sort of technological level and also trying to figure out, again, the word entrepreneurial comes to mind. It's what are people doing with the data that we haven't even thought of. And is that something we can harness as a way to improve the quality of our own data and kind of the work going forward.

MS. SAN MARTIN: All right. Well, thanks. And that's a great segue to Hector. So, you know, you're the user, you're demanding the data, you've kind of heard sort of plans what is being done and so on. From your perspective, what do you need done? What do you need done in the short term and in the medium term?

MR. CORRALES: Well, I think one of the most important things is just to keep in mind that there are two sides to this data quality, and what is really usable for us. And I think Caroline touched an important point -- what are we doing on the demand side. And I'll put an example. If we didn't have our AMP in place, all this information just could be parked in this cargo container in the parking lot. So we need to have the tools on the field for it to be really usable. It's not just about the delivery; it's about the tools about how we use it.

And I've got to be really frank here. I mean, this isn't as easy as putting a smiley face on a remote control or on a handheld device. I mean, you need to know how to access the Internet. You need to know how to use a computer. So expanding the user base is a really tough challenge, but it's something that needs to be done and you need to really market it. You really need to push it. And one of the things that we're doing is we're working on creating little like e-learning modules on how to use the AMP, even though it's something really simple to use for us that we know how to use computers and the Internet, but not for the common citizen.

In terms of what we need, like I mentioned, we need to move away from manual data entry and we need to start moving into automated information exchange. That will really push the usability of this information. But we can't do that right now until IATI's information is better than the information that we collect on the field. And that will happen. I really hope that that will happen. I'm sure it will happen, I'm just thinking when. And until that happens I will consider our AMP underutilized because there is so much potential there. And yeah, we need to tap into that.

MS. SAN MARTIN: All right. Well, thank you.

And actually, let me open it up for questions. If we can have a microphone up here.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

MS. SAN MARTIN: And if you can again introduce yourself, and if you have a preference in terms of who you want to see answer the question or is it for the whole panel, that would be helpful.

MR. DAVIS: Hi, I'm Will Davis with United Nations Development Program, very proudly coming in at number four on this year's index. So thank you for recognizing our efforts.

My question is for Rob and Tony. As you go through the process of deciding which multilateral partners to work for in making your -- or work with in making your allocations, is transparency something that factors into your decisions -- nudge-nudge, wink-wink? And relatedly, when you're up making the sometimes difficult case for international spending to our colleagues on Capitol Hill, is again transparency something that still weighs very strongly in their considerations? And I'm sure it goes without saying but Happy United Nations Day to everybody. Thank you.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Thank you. Let me take a couple more and then we'll have people answer.

Other questions from the audience? Yes.

MS. KLINE: Hi, Andrea Kline. I'm a consultant.

This is for Hector. In the capacity that you serve with the data that you already have, how is the use and implementation facilitating your ability to do projections? And then what are the conversations that you're having with the economic development planning, the commercial side in creating the path for an increase of businesses coming or development within your country that's to the benefit to the people?

MS. SAN MARTIN: Okay. And a third question up there. Thank you.

MR. PALMER: Hi, Andrew Palmer from Development Initiatives.

Firstly, many congratulations to Publish What You Fund and great efforts in producing the index this year.

My question really is what does it feel like to be at Everest base camp and what's your motivation for the climb? I say Everest base camp because it takes a lot of effort and planning to get to where you are and that should be recognized. Because as soon as you arrive, suddenly the focus shifts from the publishing journey that you've been on to the usability mountain in front of you that's left to climb. Because it's clear that no one really can get to the top on their own, you're going to need a lot of help from others who know the mountain better.

And then finally on motivation, hopefully, unlike mountain climbers, you'll publish into IATI not just because it's there but because it's a useful component for social economic change. So Everest base camp, what does it feel like and your motivation to climb.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Okay, great. Thank you.

Well, let me stop here. Actually, if I can ask Rob and Tony both to comment on the first question.

MR. GOLDBERG: Sure. We only give money to multilateral agencies that score three or higher. (Laughter) Sorry.

So the question is a complex one. I'm going to punt because when we do allocations of resources there are a number of factors that go into why we give money, why we allocate money. It's a function of what's in our appropriation. It's a function of what the political imperative is. There is an aspect of transparency but I cannot tell you here that it's a driving force in terms of our criteria at this point. Maybe down the road it will be there. You know, we're trying to learn as agencies and as organizations and our own U.S. Government gets a feel for the kinds of data that's out there in the public domain. I think we have a ways to go in terms of incorporating that in our decision-making. I would say the same for the kinds of questions we get from the Hill. But like the first question that was asked that was posed to David, the allocation process on any kind of budget or any kind of foreign assistance budget is multifaceted and there's not one single driver that we use to make those decisions. And so I would say when you get a three or above next year you can ask the same question.

MR. PIPA: So I'll take the punt and I'm going to kick it even further.

I mean, in a negative aspect, frankly, not having good transparent systems in place can be a negative thing and sort of take you -- certainly take multilateral institutions potentially out of the running because it might increase risk. However, I think what Rob is saying is that there is just a complex array of criteria and transparency in the strength of the systems being one of them. And so being able to point to it as the thing that is going to sort of make decisions for where the investments go, I don't think we want to go there and say that.

In regards to the Hill, I would say every time I'm there I hear about the foreign assistance dashboard, and there is great interest not only in the ease and the usefulness, being able to understand very quickly and intuitively where funds are flowing, and I think, you know, probably, and I don't know, maybe Jessica has the analytics here, but I would suspect that some of the most regular users of the dashboard are colleagues on the Hill. But also, there is just a continuing and important actually focus on results. And what does it mean? How do we link, you know, what we're spending and understand the results that we're getting from it? You know, our evaluations, both MCC and USAID I think, and the State Department, the policies that we put in place and the work that we're doing to be able to show what our results are, as well as what we're learning from them -- good, bad, or ugly and being transparent about that I think is very important. It was a political challenge because it's not always safe to put out an evaluation that might not be the most positive that you want it to be, but we feel very strongly that it's important for it to be out there. And obviously, the next wave of this is going to be how do we link that up? How do we link the results back to the dollars, and that's just an ongoing and continuing challenging conversation.

MS. SAN MARTIN: All right. Thanks.

Hector, do you have any comments on the question that was directed to you?

MR. CORRALES: Yeah.

I think there were a couple of questions in there and I want to touch on the implementation side. Having this data is really transformative for us. I mean, when we do portfolio reviews with specific donors and my team, each person on my team carries a certain amount of portfolios. They have a certain amount of donors. And they're constantly monitoring the projects, monitoring their portfolios. So when we do these portfolio performance reviews, this data just becomes way -- it makes it just way easier for us to prepare for that. So that's one of the things.

And with regards to planning forward-looking financial data, it's not a matter of IATI implementation. Only a handful organizations really have some type of idea about their forward-looking data. But the qualitative data that we've gathered lets us at least know about where we are right now. And how can we start aligning aid into the future portfolio that Honduras will have, the future macro portfolio that Honduras will have and really align that into our country's priorities.

And you mentioned something about the commercial involvement and how this all plans out. I think transparency tends to help, tends to build more confidence in rule of law and it shows a little bit of openness coming from the government. But there's also, I mean, a wealth of information that companies can use. I mean, they can start researching about how certain donors function, what their projects look like. And for the really ambitious donors, I mean, we have their procurement plans published. You can start modeling a business plan or a business strategy around a certain amount of projects. So the uses really are very wide-ranging.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Thank you.

I'm going to ask for a couple of comments on how it feels to be at base camp before you ascend the summit. And I guess I will specifically ask actually both Sheila and Caroline to comment on that because, you know, okay so you're at base camp and presumably acclimated to the thin air.

MS. HERRLING: No, but look, the peak keeps changing. That's okay though. It's okay. I mean, one of the things that I love about the data space, I mean, my own personal motivation is data is very unforgiving. And so in a discipline of development, which has notoriously not been data driven, when the data is actually in front of you and then in the public, there's nowhere to hide. And so there's no great story you can put around that. If there is, you've got to defend it against the data. I would like to see more and more of that. And so that is what drives me.

If the peak changes, that's okay because the other thing that drives me, the motivation, is don't be complacent, ever. We have a great track record of being transparent. I don't think anybody questions whether MCC is a transparent organization. And yet we had leadership that was saying not good enough. Keep pushing the frontier. Right? Don't wait for others to catch up. Keep pushing it and bring others along with you. So that is another personal motivation.

On the professional side it is twofold, and I think you've heard them. One is finding efficiencies in the way we do business. We're wasting money with the current inefficiencies. That's not right for taxpayer dollars. And so finding ways to reduce the manualness of it all brings huge cost savings and that increases the timeliness and the things that Hector was talking about.

And the second one is the one that we should all care about and I think we do all care about which is results, which is the impact, and taking a cold, hard look at that data and hopefully being able to tell a track record that transparency and accountability with citizen is actually driving greater results. And we say it all the time but there's very little research on this. And so getting more research from us with our data, and others who are in this space will be hugely hopeful.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Okay.

Caroline, do you have anything to --

MS. ANSTEY: Great question about Everest base camp. I would say it would be nice if when the peaks change there would be a bit more notice. Is that fair to say? But enough of peaks.

I think the most important thing is not to think of it as a peak.

Development is full of -- is riddled with fad and fashion. One year it's fad; five years later everybody has forgotten and it's all about the new, new thing. And I think it's not a quick up, plant your flat at the top and then go back to base camp. You've got to stay up there. And in a world of finite resources, in a world where everything is about a choice. In big institutions like mine, you've got to keep your eye on the ball and not let the whole institution move onto the new, new thing at the expense of this.

So I think base camp is a good kicking off point, but you don't ever expect to return to base camp and that's very important. If you get back to base camp you haven't succeeded. And I think that's what I see is the greatest danger. As we go forward, other things come up. Not just for the Bank but for the development community as a whole and we forget about transparency. And we don't finish the agenda and that is the citizen part and that really has to be the next step.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Tony, did you want to add?

MR. PIPA: Just to shortly say, I mean, I think it's just we all realize that transparency is the means, not the end. And so getting to base camp -- I don't know about the analogy, but I mean, we understand that being as transparent as we can is going to help us get to where we want to go which is sort of maximizing the impact of the resources that we're putting out. And, you know, personally, I get motivated by our leadership at the agency as well. Our administrator has an enormous amount of energy for continuing to open up both the financial data that we're talking about here but other data sets, like our Demographic Health Survey that we made available. And about the results because it's about finding the place where we know that that one particular intervention or that thing that we just realized really worked and can go to scale and can have huge breakthrough potential, I mean, that's where we're trying to get to. And the steady work that we're doing with countries and helping to build their capacity to be able to deliver development for citizens, that's where we're trying to get to. And so it's not just about being transparent; it's about actually getting to the end game which is maximizing our development impact.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Right. Very good.

We've also been taking questions from the folks that are watching the webcast or whatever we call it. And I see that time is running out so I'll just throw out a couple of these. And one of the ones that I'm going to throw out, only because there are two or three questions that relate to it is, really, U.S. agencies don't have the capacity to publish in XML?

So the answer is yes. Let's not belabor that point.

There's a question actually for you, Rob, and then I want to ask a question of all of you that kind of segues from the last one. But one for you that basically says when will the State Department itself start publishing IATI? Because that's a pretty large chunk that's left behind. And maybe if you can say a few short words on that.

MR. GOLDBERG: Sure. We know this is a huge shortcoming. It's not a comfortable position to be sort of managing the dashboard and have the State Department sort of lag behind in all the data. That's not where we want it to be. But it does highlight the fact that our financial systems are our financial systems, and the State Department financial system was not set up to deal with this. And so we're working sort of every day internally to make sure that we can begin to publish some of that data. And I think we're getting close. I think we're weeks away, I think we're a couple of months away, but we're certainly getting there. And I'm optimistic we'll sort of fill at least some of that gap in the short term. And so we totally realize it's a shortcoming and a vulnerability but it's a priority for us to make sure that State Department data, which represents a fair chunk of foreign assistance information is up on the dashboard and begins to publish to IATI.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Okay. We'll remember that.

And actually then that leads me to sort of a last question for all of you that was also transmitted, which I think is a good last question.

So we're celebrating year 2013. Great, we're at base camp, whatever. We've got great aspirations in terms of going to those other peaks, but a big question around so what's in store for 2014? If I were to ask each of you what do you want to accomplish in 2014, you know, in a very brief way tell me. And then Hector, from your perspective, what would you like to see in 2014?

So Tony, I want to start with you and come back here.

MR. PIPA: So, I mean, again, I think I'll come back to we want to ensure that we've got our processes down, automated, we're meeting the quarterly commitments that we've put out, and we're just continuing to refine and make more efficient the work that we've done in getting the activity level data out there. We will be undertaking these pilots with three different countries so that we learn better the capacity that's in-country and how can we refine and do better and make that data more usable to countries themselves, and then we are doing work with missions to standardize our business processes and look to develop information systems that will enable them both to manage better their portfolios through the program cycle but then have that feed into more robust data that we're putting out there. And we're going to continue to push on opening up our data in a whole range of ways, not just our financial data but data sets like the Demographic Health Survey, the data sets that we do through FuseNet and things like that. And continue to build the ecology of folks who can use that data, and as Rob said, be entrepreneurial with that data and use it in ways that we might not understand can be used because we're not the technologists or we're not the ones that have the ideas of how that can be applied.

MS. SAN MARTIN: All right. Great. Thank you.

Sheila?

MS. HERRLING: So 2014, we will hopefully have this API in place by the start of the new year, so maybe we'll get it in under this year.

We will have launched a decent set of our survey data from our Impact Evaluations which, as I said, is just a wealth of information for us and everyone.

We will have launched our website, which will draw on and visualize better a lot of the data, and that will be big for us in terms of taking what is a vast amount of data that is in an entirely inaccessible space and making it accessible.

We will also be running some pilots with our partner countries to establish an IATI generator because yes, I mean, we can do it and that's important and running through the dashboard, but the most important thing is that the countries can do it. And so we will be trying some pilots in that space. And then we will be sharing our ability as the one agency so far that is able to produce the data in IATI XML and is working to produce it in a dashboard XML and sharing that open code with our partners in the U.S. Government to hopefully enable them to submit easier to the dashboard freeing up some of Rob and his team's time to keep advancing in that space.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Great. Thank you.

Rob?

MR. GOLDBERG: I've touched on it already. We're going to try to bring as many agency data, agency data onto the dashboard as possible, including tackling some of the bigger agencies -- HHS and USDA. We're also going to work on this API which hopefully will come out -- I'm looking at Jessica -- either this year or early part of next year. We're going to hope to work with our colleagues, MCC and USAID, on amplifying their information, just deepening the kind of information that we put out there and put out there through IATI so we can begin to tackle some of those harder fields. And then begin to make progress on what I talked about earlier, which is sort of what is this going to be down the road in terms of the entrepreneurial part of this. What is the next version of the dashboard? What's the next version of how this data -- how it should look, how manipulable it all is. And so that's a big priority of ours.

MS. HERRLING: Which we'll all be.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Great. Good. Thank you.

Caroline?

MS. ANSTEY: I think obviously meet our commitments. I think really drill down on what the demand side means, so trying to integrate beneficiary feedback in our projects where it's applicable, and try to integrate our information, IATI information with national budgets. A couple of years ago we said we wouldn't do any budget support with countries that don't have transparent budgets. That was a fairly rudimentary definition of what a transparent budget is. I think we can take it a lot further now. And then we need to work to build the capacity of the citizenry to make use of that information. So I think still a lot to do, but I think everybody is very committed to trying to see that we can get it done.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Excellent.

Hector? Last word.

MR. CORRALES: In general, I'd like to see better scores in the 2014 aid transparency and Publish What You Fund. But we're really looking at improving the qualitative data fields or the added value fields -- so expected results, actual results. We're really looking for related documents. We mine all of your agencies' websites for documents regarding projects, implementation status, results, et cetera, and we do it at a rate of one intern every three months.

We're also looking at expenditures. We only have the disbursement side of the story, but we need the expenditure side of the story as well. And we'll either get that from your agencies or from our own systems, but hopefully, the latter validated by your agencies.

And the last one is that I just wanted to make a general comment that the relationships that we have with agencies in the field somewhat mirror what the aid transparency index shows, but some of the agencies that scored terribly in the Publish What You Fund publication scored very well on our end, on our National Data Quality Indicator. And that's really inspiring because it means that the data exists and the will at least at the country level exists, so we just need to push that out to the headquarter level and get that published.

MS. SAN MARTIN: Great. Well, I think a lot has been said. I have to say, you know, there's no one here just sort of lying down in a tent at base camp. Everybody is actually very much getting ready to continue to ascend, which is terrific. I think this is a very ambitious agenda that has been laid out here. And I can't wait to see where we are in 2014.

The last thing I'll say is something that Sheila alluded to earlier, and I think it's worth underlining. This is really hard. And we're doing it not because we feel good about ourselves because as development practitioners, everybody here, right, we really believe that it ups our game. But it does mean that it takes resources. As Sheila and others have said it, it also takes -- what did you call it, the psychology of fear? Because you're exposing yourself when you put it out there. And look, I mean, you know, my own organization, as George said, we published yesterday, you know, I alluded to it in an earlier blog about this other blog that has the title, "My CEO will tear my head off if I talk about publishing to IATI." And I can understand why you would threaten to tear somebody's head off, not because it's -- well, because it's hard, and also because, you know, a big risk is you get distracted from the mission at hand. So it really has to go hand-in-hand and it has to be very value-added to your mission.

But the last thing I will say is that, you know, IATI sort of allows you to do that. It allows you to publish as you can and at the end of the day I think we all aspire and we all share one vision which is let's get as much from everyone, you know, published. And that will make it easier not just for Hector but for all the citizens of the countries that we are trying to support and enable and empower and help.

So the last thing that remains is to thank the panelists. They've been terrific. And George, I'm going to invite you to come up. But a big hand of applause.

(Applause)

MR. INGRAM: Very brief wrap up.

Special thanks to Tony, Sheila, and Rob, because their being here for two hours today at a time when they're trying to play catch up from a certain nonevent in Washington the prior two weeks is a demonstration of their commitment to this and how much they're devoting to it. And we really appreciate that.

Caroline, nice to meet you. Thank you for bringing the World Bank here today. It's nice having this bilateral, multilateral collaboration.

Tessie, you did a fabulous job keeping the discussion moving, introducing a little humor here and there, and you were a great moderator. Thank you.

Hector, you brought reality to how we can use this data. It's something that we're just trying to get into, so you really advanced our knowledge and understanding of that. Thank you.

David, congratulations on getting the index out. You and your staff are fabulous to work with, and you really - I don't know of any other non-American organization who over the last three to four years has come to Washington and had an impact on American policy. It really is a very unique record. You're more than well represented in Washington with Sally, who put our even together for us and keeps us all on track.

Greg, thank you and Oxfam for partnering with us today. I thank you and Larry Knowles and Rodney Bent and Tessie for serving with me on the Advisory Council to Publish What You Fund.

And I thank the audience who have sat here for two hours, partly because it’s been a very interesting discussion, but obviously because of your commitment to this. So I think we can all have a round of applause for all of us and the progress that’s being made.

(Applause)

MR. INGRAM: And now you have two options. One of them is not to leave. You can remain in this room and Mark is going to take you through in more depth the index. We also -- the second option is to move to the room next door and have a libation and celebrate. And you probably can even grab your drink there and come back and listen to Mark. So thank you all very much.

(Applause)

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