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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA 2030
AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT:
AREAS FOR U.S.-JAPAN COOPERATION

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[Transcript prepared from an audio recording]

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MIREYA SOLIS: Good morning, I am Mireya Solís. I am the Knight Chair in Japan Studies. It is a pleasure to welcome you to this morning's panel on the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, women empowerment, and U.S.-Japan cooperation. In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a very ambitious set of goals, the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, with a focus on people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership, the world community agreed to deliver on 17 development goals with 169 targets.

This is clearly a tall order, tackling a very complex set of issues. But, undoubtedly, gender equality and women empowerment are critical to make progress across the range of sustainable development goals or SDGs. Women disproportionately lack economic opportunity, access to basic services and education, and are often most vulnerable to conflict and violence.

So, today, we have planned a very rich discussion that will seek to provide a better understanding of the role that women empowerment plays in the 2030 agenda, the progress made so far and challenges remaining, and prospects for U.S.-Japan cooperation in areas such as promoting girls' education and greater economic opportunity for women. So we have a lot to cover and we have a terrific group of experts to address these issues. And obviously we'll invite all of you, at the end of the presentations, to have a conversation with us.

So let me introduce the group of experts that we have here with us this morning. I will introduce them in the order in which I will ask them to come to the podium and make their presentations, and later we'll all move to the front to have a conversation with all of you.

So John McArthur is a senior fellow in the Global Economy and Development Program at Brookings. He's also a senior advisor to the UN Foundation and in his previous position as deputy director of the United Nations Millennium Project, he helped launch the Millennium Development Goals policy efforts.

Yumiko Tanaka is senior advisor on gender and development at the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Tanaka-san has a long trajectory working on women and development issues and prior to joining JICA, she worked in the women in development section of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. And a special note of thanks to Tanaka-san who traveled all the way from Tokyo to be here with us, and actually she is flying back tomorrow, so a very tight schedule.

Next, we have Christina Kwauk who is a post-doctoral fellow in the Center for Universal Education at Brookings. She manages the Echidna Global Scholars Program and her research focuses on girls' education in developing countries, gender equity in education, and 21st century skills and youth empowerment. And last, but not least, we have Abigail Friedman who is senior advisor to the Asia Foundation and founder and CEO of the Wisteria Group. She directs the Asia Foundation's cooperation with Japan and Asia and prior to joining the foundation, she served for more than two decades as a U.S. diplomat in conflict affected regions including Afghanistan. And Abigail has really been at the forefront of the U.S.-Japan dialogue on women empowerment.

So we have a lot to cover. We have very very thoughtful speakers for us, so I'll let them take the podium. Thank you very much. So, John, you come first, thanks.

JOHN McARTHUR: Thank you, what a pleasure. And it's a privilege to be here with colleagues, and to discuss the global agenda but also this aspect of partnership with Japan and the U.S. And I am a Canadian living in the U.S. and so this notion of how countries cooperate on this issue is about as profound as it gets, in my view, in thinking about this sustainable development agenda.

As was mentioned, I had the privilege to work on the early days of the millennium development goal agenda and working with people like Geeta Rao Gupta, who many of you will know used to head the International Center for Research on Women back in those days and she was the co-chair of our task force focused on that goal. And it's very interesting for me even preparing for today to reflect on how far the world has come and not in the past 15 years or so.

So as many people know, the MDG had a single target for gender equality, the one for educational equality, which was seen as a dramatic understatement of the issues but a little bit of an accident of history in terms of what was included in the millennium declaration. Of course, it was coming off the 1995 Beijing agenda, which was much more comprehensive, much broader, and it was seen as really, in many ways, an excessive dumbing down of the issues. And I think that was an important context because even though it was that, I would argue that the millennium development goals did play a constructive role in elevating several of the key issues, including the fact that there was, in this very shorthand of extreme poverty priorities, a strong marker at every step for gender equality. But also, I would argue, remembering back to those early days, the issue of maternal health, for example, was absent in many ways from the international agenda. And people like Glen Friedman, who had been a real human rights advocate focused on maternal health, had spent really decades working on this issue without much public attention. And I would argue that the millennium development goals, through a bit of a cascade effect of breakthroughs in global health, first with AIDS, also with issues like vaccinations and child survival, brought attention over time, where the world would say, "Well, we are doing really well on this goal for -- we seem to be making progress for child health and we seem to be making progress on this issue of infectious disease but what about this one in the middle, goal five, for maternal health?" And it was through -- even the attention on what wasn't happening that we saw really around 2008-2010 an elevation of maternal health as a global policy effort. Too late, inadequate, but my colleague Christa Rasmussen and I, we recently did a study where we looked at how many lives have been saved due to accelerated progress on maternal mortality. And it turns out it's at least 400,000 extra women alive, as many as 650,000, so that's actually pretty discernible progress.

The only problem is that if the world had met the goal, at least another million or we estimate roughly 1.3 million women would have also survived. So it's a good news story but it's not nearly good enough.

So I say that as context for where we are now in thinking about the sustainable development goals. The SDGs are, just as a first point, in my view, deeply misunderstood as an agenda. I don't love the word agenda because it makes it seem too singular.

I was talking with a colleague recently who was complaining about, in a very friendly way, all these 169 targets. It was just so much, and here are these UN bureaucrats sitting down, telling the world that they have to worry about 169 things. And, actually, I think that's backwards. And as I've reflected on it, what I see is that what the diplomats and the negotiators and everyone was doing was actually writing down what the world already cares about. It's a very different way to think about the problem because each of those 169 targets and each of those 17 goals has a constituency that said this issue is not going away, this issue matters, we are already working on it, and more people need to pay attention to it.

And even the other day, I got a survey from a very reputable organization saying which of these 169 targets -- of these 169, which 40 should the world focus on first? And I responded and said I'd suggest thinking about the problem in a different way.

There are more than 7 billion people on this planet. If each person just focused on one, you'd have at least 40 million people focused on each target. I don't see that as a problem. And I think we need to think about how we tackle these. Now, an issue like gender equality, which is so profound, we need seven billion people focused on every target because this is every aspect of life. So there is a goal and the world has made progress, of course, to shift from a world where there was one MDG target, even though that was just a wedge for speaking about many more things but it was one target. There are now, I would call it six outcome targets and then three process targets, so there are nine targets. But really, the gender equality agenda is everywhere in the SDGs, and it needs to be understood as that. But it's helpful to have goal as the central reminder. And I am guessing most people here know, but just to make sure, it's everything from ending all forms of discrimination, to ending all forms of violence, ending harmful practices like early and forced marriage, recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work, full and effective participation in equal opportunities for leadership. It interestingly brought back and reinforces the Beijing platform of action, something that was a fight in the MDG early days. And then these questions of how talk about undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, using enabling technology, strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation. Pretty broad, but

appropriately broad because this isn't a narrow issue and it's not something that gets tackled through any narrow approaches.

And with that said, I would also suggest that we have gone through, in ups and downs, a bit of a transformation both in our politics and in our economics of the past 15 years. So I was reflecting again, it was less than two years ago when Prime Minister Trudeau came into office in 2015 and was asked "Why is half of your cabinet women?" and he said: "Well, because it's 2015." And that was a viral comment around the world. And in that country now you have everything from the Minister of Justice, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Climate, Minister of Health. These are very -- some of the most prominent politicians in the country are women. And you have amidst everything else, one can say, that's going on in the world, when Prime Minister Trudeau came down to meet with President Trump, they had a meeting of women CEOs as one of the headlines of the day.

It's not quite so simple as we might, I think, often frame it. At the same time, colleagues in the UN Foundation worked with BNY Mellon to put out a report at Davos this year on the business and investment opportunities around tackling gender equality. They just looked at five sectors. They came up with a number of about 300 billion in market opportunity. I think it's dramatically too small for a 75 trillion global economy. But it just showed this change of mindset in terms of thinking about, given the economics of what the business community might try and do.

We're also, at the same time, I would argue, still operating -- flying blind too much in terms of what are the problems we are trying to solve. And this is where the question of the data revolution that underpins the SDGs is so important. There are so many loose factoids floating around about what is the problem we are trying to solve. A classic one, I was just reading a paper yesterday about -- a classic one is women farmers represent 60-80 percent of the labor in Africa. Well, there is a new paper out in *Food Policy* that did household surveys all around Africa, and guess what? There is huge variation within and across countries. So I just looked at the numbers this morning, it ranges from in Uganda about 56 percent of the household labor that estimates going to agriculture is women, Tanzania it's about 52 percent but in countries like Niger, it's 24 percent, Ethiopia it's 29 percent, dramatically different from these simplistic numbers. It doesn't mean it's good or bad, it just means the problem you are trying to solve for gender equality in each country is dramatically different.

If we think about what that means then, I think this notion of segmented data, data revolution, understanding that there are general issues of equality of opportunity, equality of empowerment, but there are hugely differentiated problems within each society and each community that need to be tackled to address them. And here's where I think that the universality of the SDGs is so important, and again, it's nowhere more important than this issue because this is the most universal issue of the world is gender equality and ongoing inequalities.

I gave a talk on the weekend, just as a footnote, to a few hundred farmers up in Canada. Where I just mentioned, if we look at life expectancies, it's one of the few areas in the world where women still have -- where women actually have an advantage is that they get to live longer. And an older woman in the audience said, "Who said that's an advantage?" But it was interesting because it just forced this question of what are the things that we are actually trying to solve? And if we think about universality, we have a partnership here at Brookings with JICA where we actually had a workshop a couple of weeks ago. It's a tremendously exciting project looking at -- we call it Summits to Solutions. What are the frontier issues of the SDGs? We're editing a book here and it's looking at frontier issues. We have one chapter that's being written by Jeni Klugman and Laura Tyson, I was just looking at the draft again over the weekend, and it's related to this high level panel on women's economic empowerment that the secretary general has commissioned, drawing on a lot of related work. But we have these new questions, still inadequately measured and understood around things like the care economy, unpaid work worth about 10 trillion dollars a year, that's about 13 percent of world GDP. We have initiatives even in this country, led by people like Sheila Marcelo, the CEO of care.com, and Ai-jen Poo, working with the Aspen Institute and others, to see how do we take on what is about to be a forthcoming economic revolution in the formal and informal care economy just in this country, which is crucially linked to the SDGs.

We have issues of financial inclusion, massive gaps in financial inclusion, and it turns out massive gaps in even digital inclusion in many places where digital access is the leading opportunity for

building financial assets. And in places like South Asia, in particular, you have massive disparities in gender access to digital technologies that would allow access to things like mobile money, But very different than in some countries like Kenya, and so understanding the distinction is huge. And even at a basic level, the rough numbers are that in paid work there is about a gap of 700 million people. It's about two billion men in paid work around the world, that's the best estimate, it's only about 1.3 billion women in paid work. That's 700 million, there is something going on there. Some of that would be voluntary but a large amount probably is not. So how do we understand that problem and how do we solve it in a better way?

So, I would just point this out as a mapping, the big picture of -- I know we are going to get a lot more specific insight from our colleagues here. But I would make just one final point, which is I am struck and I feel and I hope that one of the earliest SDG breakthroughs, kind of like AIDS treatment was for the MDGs, will be universal access to girls' secondary education. This, in my view, is the absolute lowest hanging fruit in the world. I don't know anyone who is against it, anyone reasonable, and pretty much everyone is for it but we just haven't done it yet. And we have Malala winning the Nobel Peace Prize, we have people like Julia Gillard in charge of the Global Partnership for Education, but it's 23 years since Larry Summers, as chief economist at the World Bank, made the argument that the highest return investment in development is investing in an extra year of a girl's education. It's 23 years we haven't acted upon that insight yet. But if we do, and I believe we can, in the next couple of years, this actually could be a game-changer among many that are needed to show how the SDGs can be different from anything that's come before.

So I look forward to learning from our colleagues and thank you so much.

YUMIKO TANAKA: Okay, thank you for inviting me to this symposium. It is a great honor for me to be here to participate in such an important event. I am Yumiko Tanaka. I am a gender and development specialist at Japan International Cooperation Agency. We are called JICA. And I have been working with grassroots women's organizations as well as governments in Asia and the African region on such issues as economic empowerment and anti-trafficking in persons, women's land issues, and disaster risk reduction.

And this is our agenda for today. The Agenda 2030 says that the achievement of full human potential and our sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities, so the agenda declared that no one would be left behind. And there are 17 goals for the sustainable goals, and goal number five is to promote women's and girls' empowerment and gender equality. It is not only a standalone goal but also recognized as the overarching goal or cross cutting goal for achieving all the 17 goals. So for more than three decades, we continuously took initiative to promote women's empowerment and gender equality.

And our humanitarian and human security issues caused by conflicts, climate change, and disasters are emerging as new agenda for development challenges. So this morning, I'd like to bring your attention to women's empowerment and gender equality in disaster risk reduction. And as you are aware, more than 60 percent of the natural disasters happen in Asia, and we are a department store of disasters. We have typhoons, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruption, flash flood, landslides, tornadoes, to name a few.

So moreover, the frequency and scale of disaster seems to be elevating not only with climate changes but also with human-made disasters such as nuclear power plants failure. And the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted at the UN World Conference held in 2015. And it was the first time that such global initiative clearly stated the importance of participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups of people in the disaster risk reduction. However, the framework does not give us a good explanation on how gender relates to disasters. It does not look into the mechanism by which unequal power relations, associated by gender and other socioeconomic factors, shapes human vulnerability to a risk and exclusion from the decision-making processes.

This is the women NGO forum we had at the Sendai Conference. There are more than 100 seminars and workshops we organized and so many women raise their voice from Northeastern part of Japan. And natural hazards are not always produced as disasters, since disasters are products of the

intersection between hazards and human vulnerability. And the power relations and inequalities structured by gender, class, ethnicity, age, and physical ability should be central to how we understand that complex concepts of vulnerability and disaster. Gender has been a key factor to determine vulnerability but gender has been invisible or systematically simplified and stereotyped in the field of disaster. And vulnerability does not lie in being a woman but it is related with the lack of access to resources, information, opportunities, and power necessary for coping with disasters.

As you know, the mass media and aid agencies often spread women's images as helpless victims of disaster, just crying and shouting, and there are always masculine firemen or military men who jump into water or fire to rescue poor women and children. They hardly broadcast brave and strong women in rescue teams, women's excellent coping capacity, aftermath, or leadership and diversity among women.

So in fact, women are the victims of the disasters and diseases. Disasters kill more women than men and hit women's livelihood hardest. For example, when the huge cyclone hit Bangladesh, about 90 percent of the deceased persons were women and girls. And even in Japan, the same thing happened at the Hanshin Awaji earthquake in 1995. About 1,000 more women than men died, crushed under the broken houses. They were mostly single, elderly, and poor women living in old houses. And today, I don't have time to talk about gender biases in pensions and social security systems in Japan, but it was obvious that social and economic factors affected the levels and nature of women's vulnerability to disaster. And maybe you wonder why so many women died in Bangladesh and there were several gender based causes for this case.

Firstly, women were not able to escape as quickly as possible since they had to take care of children, the elderly, and the cattle. And it is their stereotyped role to take care of family matters. And secondly, due to gender biases against girls' education, women's and girls' literacy rate was low, so they could not get information from the written notice on disaster warning and preparedness. And thirdly, women were less healthy and nourished than men to be able to escape and survive. And usually women are the last ones to eat at home. And fourthly, due to traditional purdah norms, which segregates women's living space from men's, women didn't know where the shelters were and could not get there without being accompanied by men. And they didn't learn how to swim and they could not swim in saris anyway. And lastly, due to their subordinate positions, women felt they were not allowed to make decisions to escape by themselves. And I am sure that these situations in Bangladesh have improved a lot since then, but we still face similar situations in many other countries.

And let me tell you a little bit about what happened aftermath in Japan. These two earthquakes brought our attention back to the persistent gender biases existing in our society. So many people stayed at the emergency shelters aftermath but they were mostly managed by elderly men, especially in the Tohoku area, and women's voices were not heard and they could not get any partition for privacy, for example, and women felt shy and had a difficult time getting kit from those elderly men.

And after the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, most of young and middle-aged men went back to work soon in the aftermath, but women were not able to do the same due to the heavy duty at the emergency shelters, such as cooking and caring for children and evacuated people. Therefore, women lost their jobs and their chances for promotion, though their income was quite significant for their family's survival. And there were also gender discriminations about subsidies for reconstruction of damaged houses. And usually sexual and gender based violence increase in the aftermath but they were neglected and not many measures were taken.

It took them about more than four to five years to move from emergency houses to more permanent earthquake proof houses. But many were not happy to move into the high rise apartment buildings made by the government, especially the elder women and men. They are farmers and fishermen, and they are not used to living in compartmentalized space. So despite the government spending such a large amount of budget for buildings, the occupancy rate is not very high.

So these are the high sea walls that the government has built with a large budget. And these are the very high rise apartment houses the government has made for the resettlement. But we have good examples, like there is a community based and participatory resettlement planning, and women voiced

their opinions and they rearranged the plans and they made very good town planning for themselves. So what can we do? Our organization and many international aid agencies overlooked that women do have coping capacities to disaster, have a greater possibility to become agents of change, and leaders in public spheres, and in fact, disasters should be rather regarded as opportunities for women to transform their positions. And if you only consider women as beneficiaries of emergency operations, we would miss a great chance for women to become empowered, take active roles for recovery and reconstruction, and prepare better for the future disasters, and increase the resilience for disasters for the whole community. So based on these backgrounds, we did joint research with the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security on Disaster Risk Reduction and Gender last year. And Georgetown did a policy analysis on the Haiti earthquake case and JICA did case studies on Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines and the Indian Ocean tsunami and landslide in Sri Lanka. And you can find these reports on our websites, so I cannot go to the details. These are the reports, one is on Haiti and one is on the Philippines and on Sri Lanka.

And among others, I can share with you some key findings from the case that is in the Philippines and Sri Lanka. And more women died in Sri Lanka than men. And we found a similar situations we saw in Bangladesh in that the tsunami hit Muslim areas in Sri Lanka. And we found that the problems with housing subsidies. And also we found that the policies on disaster risk reduction was not very responsive to the gender issues. And there was not much collaboration between ministries concerned with disaster and ministries concerned with the women's issues. And we also found that there were great gaps between policies and implementation, and women were not included in management and rescue teams and committees.

And also regarding the emergency camp management, we found that in the Philippines, women took a very good initiative to participate in the management and decision making but we didn't find the same thing in Sri Lanka. And JICA supported women for the livelihood recovery and microfinance programs and we found that some positive economic impacts were generated, but they did not necessarily lead into women's empowerment and leadership. In the case of Sri Lanka, many women just borrowed money for husbands and sons. These are the tsunami hit areas in Sri Lanka and microfinance women's groups.

And we also found very positive findings. Women friendly space was made by UNFPA for protecting women and girls from sexual and gender based violence (GBV). They created peer support groups and they became very active, not only in the GBVs but in livelihood programs. And also, the Philippine government dispatched a team of policewomen to emergency shelters, and they helped a lot for keeping security for women and girls. And we also found that Oxfam aimed at the transformation of stereotyped gender roles and unequal gender relations, and they tried to appoint women to the early warning and relief and rescue committees. And Oxfam also valued the indigenous knowledge and experiences of women, based on which they supported for the construction of a reservoir for floods, which also became useful for drought control under climate change in Sri Lanka. So, the left hand side (of the slide) is the women friendly space. And these are the women's income generating groups that we supported in the Philippines. And at the bottom, you can see the policewomen in the Philippines. And these are the reservoirs made by the women groups in Sri Lanka supported by Oxfam. And we also found that the Suriya Women's Society group was very active.

So, we have to work more on policies and implementation mechanisms to be more gender responsive, not only in developing countries but also within our own organization. So JICA is now developing guidelines on the gender mainstreaming in the disaster risk reduction. And women's economic empowerment is important from very early stages of recover but it must go hand in hand with gender awareness and transformational leadership trainings. And as women in Tohoku said, what we cannot do in normal times cannot be done at time of disaster. So tackling sexual and gender based violence is necessary not only at emergency times but in our daily lives. And women have to raise their voice every single day.

And also, preparation for disasters is extremely important. And we have to support conducting awareness raising campaigns, contingency plans, community hazard maps, and community based early warnings and evacuation exercises. So, these are some of the hazard maps we developed for the

Philippines.

And the Sendai Framework gave us more chance to work together for gender issues, so we had a series of collaborative activities. And we had the Asian regional conference on gender and disaster risk reduction in Hanoi last year. It was funded by the Government of Japan and organized by the UN Women. And this Hanoi declaration on gender was brought to the Asian ministerial conference held in India. And we also had the joint symposium on gender and disaster risk reduction commemorating the World Tsunami Day in Tokyo together with the World Bank Disaster Management Hub in Tokyo, Japan Women's Network for Disaster Risk Reduction, to which I am also a member, and Japan's society for civil engineering, and also the Japan Foundation provided some funding. And JICA started gender diversity and DRR workshops since last year, inviting several Asian countries to Japan. And the cabinet secretariat of Japan started launching a research committee on gender and statistics and indicators on DRR. And we are going to bring all of these issues to the global platform to be held in Mexico in this May, and we would again organize the society event with the World Bank and action aid and community practitioners' platform.

So this is the Hanoi workshop we had. And this is the Asian Ministerial Conference that we had in India. And this is the training workshop we organized for seven Asian countries, and we will continue this kind of workshop for the next coming, next three or four years. So we can all learn from the past and we can choose and we can work together for the future.

And last but certainly not least, we are grateful for all of you here for your great humanitarian support for the East Japan earthquake. And we are also so grateful for all the U.S. citizens and Operation Tomodachi, your first responders. We, our children, and for generations, we remember that so many individuals from all over the world and more than 25,000 military and Marines personnel with ships and airplanes from the U.S. bravely joined rescue operations on the coast of Tohoku in such a difficult time. So I'd like to thank you again for your lasting support and friendship, thank you very much.

CHRISTINA KWAIK: Good morning. So, as our speaker prior to us, John, mentioned, in order to think about the challenges and opportunities in girls' education in the SDG era, we need to go back and understand that we are in the middle of a long journey that began in the 1990s with the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien and the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. So we've had a lot of strategic direction and extra momentum in the MDG era, which puts us at a good place to start with the 2030 Agenda with a lot to celebrate but also a lot to work on.

So just to give you an overview of what we have accomplished, so far, what we have done right. The number of girls out of primary school has been cut in half since the early 2000s. And from 1990 to 2012, the number of countries closing the gender gap and enrollment in primary school rose from 86 countries to 124 countries and those countries closing the gender gap in secondary education rose from 40 to 69.

Women and adolescent girls are completing more years of school today on average than ever before. Today, women are achieving approximately seven years of school compared to only five years in 1990. So we have made some progress, and we have done that primarily through a number of different interventions. About a year ago, my colleagues, Gene Sperling and Rebecca Winthrop and I tried to kind of get a sense of what kinds of interventions, what works in getting girls to school. And we saw that there were seven primary types of interventions that have shown good evidence or promising evidence of helping girls to get into school. And those primarily revolve around making schools more affordable, reducing the time and distance to go to school, overcoming girls' health barriers that prevent them from getting an education, and then also other kinds of interventions like making schools more girl friendly, improving school quality, getting communities mobilized and engaged in girls' education, as well as ensuring that education for girls is continued in emergencies.

So what are some of the key areas for greater engagement in the SDG era? What do we still have left to do? Some of our research at the Center for Universal Education, we've identified five key priority areas that we see are some of those places where we can get some of the biggest returns if we invest in girls' education. And the first one is still access. So even though more girls are going to school today than ever before, there are more than 130 million girls who are still not going to school, and this is

primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education. The issue of getting to school is one piece of it, the other piece is keeping girls in school. We know that in sub-Saharan Africa, 75 percent of girls start primary school but only 8 percent are finishing secondary school.

The second issue is quality of learning. We are learning very quickly that just getting girls into school does not mean that they are actually learning. Globally, about 250 million children in the world still cannot read and write, do basic mathematics. And of those 250 million children, 130 million of them, over 52 percent or around 52 percent have been in school for at least four years. So there is a global learning crisis indeed. And a recent study put out by some of our colleagues at the Center for Global Development recently found that if low and middle income countries were to be able to achieve universal sixth grade education, 43 percent of low and middle income countries would still see over 1/3rd of their adult women population illiterate. So this is not even getting into the issue of whether girls are developing a breadth of skills or whether they are learning that their destiny is in marriage or that their future is in the home, we are just talking about basic reading and math skills here.

The third key priority area is transitions. Transitions not only from primary to lower secondary but especially from lower secondary to upper secondary, and to either higher education or to the workforce. We know that in the MENA region, and particularly in Jordan, that girls are completing school. They are even enrolled in pursuing university degrees at higher rates than men but are not participating in the workforce.

The fourth area is safety, and this is not just talking about girls' safety on the way to school or in school. We are talking about physical violence on their road to school or school related gender based violence in the schools by teachers or students, but also thinking about how girls are specifically targeted for attack in places where their education goes against some of the cultural values or the ideologies of extremist leaders. As we've seen in the case with the assassination attempt of Malala Yousafzai in 2012 in Pakistan and the kidnapping of 300 school girls in northern Nigeria by Boko Haram. So, the continuation of girls' education is especially at risk in humanitarian crises as well, both natural and manmade, as JICA has recognized through its engagement and disaster risk reduction.

The fifth area that we have identified as a priority area for girls' education is in leadership. And again this is not just speaking about girls' leadership or the development of leadership skills amongst girls themselves but also and especially in supporting the local leadership of grassroots champions for girls education. Those individuals who really understand the challenges that their communities are facing and who have sort of on the ground insights into what are the kinds of solutions and the kinds of opportunities that can be leveraged in support of girls' education.

So I want to take a few minutes to just zoom in on two particular issues that I think are the most promising out of these five priority areas. The first one is on quality learning and transitions. So last year, the Education Commission put out a report on the Learning Generation and predicted that two billion or almost half of current jobs today are projected to disappear in 2030 due to automation. If we continue to progress with our education goals at the current rate, half of the youth or over 800 million young people will still not have the basic secondary education skills needed to keep up in that economy.

Even by 2050, while Korea, Japan, and Taiwan will be delivering higher education opportunities for over 80 percent of their school graduates, countries like the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Niger will struggle to even put five percent of their students into higher education. So we know that the quality of learning opportunities is different from the number of years in school but we also know that this quality of learning is extremely critical to the prosperity of hundreds of millions of girls and boys in the 21st century. But beyond the hard skills of reading and math, we also recognize the importance of a larger breadth of skills and supporting the transitions of these youth from school into successful livelihoods.

For girls, this means particularly the breadth of skills looking at life skills, and how these life skills are needed to navigate a world that discriminates against them and is just laid out for unequal outcomes for them in the first place. So at CUE, we are currently developing a girls' life skills education framework that will help organizations, NGOs, and governments widen the breadth of skills that are conceptualized in girls' education programming so that they are not only equipped with the right kind of skills but so that

they can also translate these skills in different kinds of environments that they are navigating in their day to day lives, as well as to help catalyze the social change that is really needed to achieve some of the larger gender equality goals. Our framework is also looking at how empowerment is a lifelong process and not just to be addressed in adolescence when the most challenging -- when the most pressing challenges facing girls emerge but also the time when most NGOs are beginning to focus on girls' education interventions.

The second point that I wanted to zoom in on is the point that our colleague Yumiko raised earlier on, this disastrous risk reduction area. So for us in the education space, it's really education for sustainable development and particularly the role of girls' education as a policy solution to help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

So with our work, we are trying to link, trying to start linking climate change and girl's education for the same reasons that JICA has engaged in the space. Engaging in women and girls is usually a little explored area in the field of disaster risk reduction and climate change in general and especially outside of the sort of the niche area that it's looking at gender and climate change specifically. But as JICA has noted, or Yumiko has noted, previously, women and people with disabilities were victims at far greater rates than others. And we are trying to look at this and think about initial ways of shifting some of this reality, particularly in expanding the focus from just merely including women and girls in the space of disaster risk planning but also looking at how girls' education, specifically, can address gender inequality issues early in life that set up the girl and later the woman to be more vulnerable to climate change and disaster later. So we are trying to look at how girls' education starting on the challenges that she faces earlier in life can give her the skills that she needs to see risk, to plan for risk, and to cope for those actual disasters.

Climate change education conversations have been around for more than a decade but they've often been gender blind. So I think what we're trying to really help push the field to think about ways of incorporating girls' education issues in the mitigation debates. And this is beyond also just the arguments around increasing girls' education and seeing dramatically reduced rates in her fertility, so this goes beyond family planning arguments and into more areas around how do you -- how does increased levels of girls' education put more women into leadership positions and decision-making powers, where studies have shown that they are more likely to pursue sustainable futures for their communities, pursue pro environmental policies. So we'd really like to kind of shift some of that discussion to look a little bit earlier in women's lives, in their education.

The next thing, the last thing, I wanted to discuss was how do we strategically pursue this agenda? The five priority areas, some of these different kind of cutting edge issues in girls' education, what's the landscape of girls' education in the SDG era?

We recently conducted a landscape analysis of the girls' education space, trying to map out the most influential actors as well as their priority areas, their strategic direction, and the trends in the functions that these actors are fulfilling.

We found that key bilateral actors have some of the most direct influence over the priorities and strategies in the field, primarily because of their large investments, their large financial investments in the space. So far it's been the UK with their £400 million investment in the Girls' Education Challenge, it's been Norway with their \$80 million contributions to UNICEF's thematic fund on gender and education, it's been the United States and the combined \$1 billion investments in the former First Lady's initiative Let Girls Learn. But with the anticipated decrease in the engagement from the U.S. in girls' education, there are definitely key opportunities for new bilaterals to step up.

We've seen Japan grow its engagement in the space in recent years. In particular, its ¥42 billion, approximately over \$350 million, in overseas development assistance to specifically girls' empowerment and gender sensitive education. Their commitment or their partnership with Let Girls Learn back in 2015 is a clear demonstration of Japan's commitment to prioritize girl's education in international cooperation. And their recent engagement with Peace Corps and JICA under the Let Girls Learn initiative really demonstrates some of that on the ground support that they are building to put forward.

So we've learned a lot about the challenges and opportunities in girls' education during the MDG era. We have identified several strategic priority areas to pursue in the SDG era and we have a better sense of the actors, the global actors, and the local actors in the space, so now it's time for us to get to work, thank you.

ABIGAIL FRIEDMAN: Thank you so much. You've all been very patient so I will try not to take too much of our time and then we'll have more time for discussion. I'd like to start by keying off with what John started us out with, talking about the complexity of the issue. It's very easy to talk about women's empowerment as if it were one item and just go out there and do it. But not only is it a challenge in terms of the subject matter, are we talking about women's economic empowerment, are we talking about gender based violence, are we talking about the rights and safety, political participation, there are all of these different areas, but also when we take it down to the next level in different regions, in different countries, in different communities, the issues are different.

What I thought I would do today is talk a little bit about what the Asia Foundation has been doing in this field. The Asia Foundation has been in existence for over 60 years. It is based across Asia in its 18 field offices in Asia, working to advance development, economic development well-being across Asia. So because we have so many offices in Asia, that allows the Asia Foundation to develop a bottom up approach by looking carefully at what is going on in each country and what are the best fit practices. I thought I would focus today on women's economic empowerment, women's entrepreneurship.

As I mentioned before, the Asia Foundation works across the board in all of the different areas for women's empowerment but I think especially with a new administration in Washington and the efforts to work with Japan on a lot of these issues. My sense, and we can talk about this later, is there will be a focus on women's economic empowerment and women's entrepreneurship in terms of the U.S. approach going forward. I personally hope that that is not at the expense of the great work that has been done up to now on girls' and women's education.

So some of the things that the Asia Foundation has done in the economic empowerment area is first off based on surveys and research, because the first thing you need to know is exactly what the issue is. There was an APEC funded study that was done on what are the barriers to women's economic empowerment in several countries, targeting several countries in Asia. And out of that came a sense that in some areas the challenge is women's networks and other areas the challenge is information technology, another is access to information, so based on all of those, then programs are developed to address it.

Some of these programs -- so let me just go through some of the programs and some of the things that have been done. The whole point of this is so that as many of you in these rooms start doing research or working further in this area, you are aware of the range of possibilities, what we ultimately want to see is a best fit rather than best practice. I am a strong believer in that there is no one best practice. Gee, it worked here, let's make sure it works everywhere. What works in Sudan may not work for women's economic empowerment in Japan, that's sort of obvious, but let's look at it. So one of the things that the Asia Foundation has seen as necessary is building the capacity of women's business associations and chambers of commerce and developing women's networks. In many countries, there are chambers of commerce but they are not easily accessed by women. They do not address specifically some of the challenges that women are facing. Sometimes the answer is to expand the capacity of the existing chambers of commerce to have it address women specific issues. In other areas, it's the idea of setting up a separate women's chamber of commerce. Again, it depends on the country.

Another thing that is really useful has been exposure tours across the region. And this is also something that, I think—we will later talk about the U.S. and Japan—but I think Japan can do very well, in terms of helping women entrepreneurs in one country see what is going on in another country, sort of talk to people who have been in likeminded situations who have been able to address that specific issue. So it sounds pretty simple but -- and we all, some of us take for granted, I certainly take for granted the fact that if I need more information on something—I happen to run my own business—I just google it, I get information, and I read it. Well, a lot of people across the world don't have that capacity. There are language barriers so maybe the answer in one country is sitting right there but you don't have the language capacity, so these exposure tours can be very useful.

Cross country collaboration, it's sort of the same -- it's connected to it. But the Asia Foundation has supported efforts of Malaysia and Thailand to get together to work on financial literacy for girls and women. The ability for them to use ICT to improve their businesses and online fora.

Another area that I see is important and I think we'll be seeing more of are public/private dialogues. In one area, one effort was to get representatives of banks, women's associations, women entrepreneurs, and business owners to all sit down together and figure out what policy recommendations are needed for women friendly banking environment. Banking, by the way, can be targeting the poorest and neediest and the most sophisticated businesses. So there are microfinance issues but there are also in more developed countries and those midlevel countries, other kind of financial, how do you really help women figure out how to get loans to take their business to the next level.

Alliances of women in the informal economy, one of the things that was worked on was women weavers in Timor Leste helping them develop marketing strategies, helping them figure out development of collectives for traditional tapestries, figuring out maybe if they made certain kinds of tapestries, they would have a better ability to sell them.

You'll notice that I am sort of jumping from sort of first world gender economic entrepreneurship issues to developing countries, and again, that's because if we want to tackle these issues, we've got to tackle them across the board. And I also like John's point about the billions, if everyone tackled one issue, we would have a lot.

Laws and policies. Here is another issue. One of the questions is how do we approach this? Do we just give money? Do you try to change policies? Do you try to make regulations? Do you try to go for cultural change? One has to really address all of these. I would say in Japan today, going to the first world issues, empowering women in Japan is going to require a lot of cultural change and policy regulatory changes.

You go back to a country like Vietnam, where one of the issues is working out global banking platforms. So what the Asia Foundation did is it started working with Vietnam's largest microfinance provider to increase and approve access to a full range of financial services for low income households, especially women led microenterprises that lacked access to traditional banking services. So there you have a civil society, an international NGO, the Asia Foundation partnering with banks in a country like Vietnam to provide access to low income women entrepreneurs. And as an aside, I should underscore that the Asia Foundation, the way it does this is it identifies local partners and it empowers those local partners to execute these plans or to implement these plans.

Bangladesh is another example where the Asia Foundation, working with local partners, joined with the country's second largest telecom operator, Banglalink, to launch a mobile phone network to help women entrepreneurs in rural districts. That initiative connected women entrepreneurs to a business hotline, business directory, ecommerce platforms so that they could buy and sell products, and that also ties to the network. You can imagine a woman entrepreneur, she may be a farmer, part of the family farm. She doesn't necessarily have a community of people who are doing the same thing she is doing or she may not have access to this knowledge, and so reaching out to some people through the mobile cell phones, mobile banking networks is essential.

Access to finance for migrant women entrepreneurs. In Bangladesh, expanding loan opportunities for women entrepreneurs by commercial banks. The Asia Foundation there worked with the international finance corporation to do that, market access programs. In Myanmar, the Asia Foundation is supporting a local social enterprise to provide vocational training for very disadvantaged women so that they can successfully enter the market and become pastry chefs.

Again, we go back to this educational issue. Primary school education is important, secondary school education is important but education, vocational training is also critical. With Nepal, the Asia Foundation partnered with the GoodWeave Foundation to provide better employment opportunities and working conditions for women in the handmade carpet industry. And that's a great example where it's not just to help women economically but there was a trafficking in women issue going on because women who can't afford to provide for their families in their home country are the most vulnerable to trafficking, to

being seduced by trafficking issues, so these issues are all interwoven.

Lobbying -- implementation of laws and policies designed to end violence and sexual harassment in the workforce. Christina mentioned earlier these issues of violence against women and how it affects their educational opportunities. The same issue comes up in the workforce, so that is something that needs to be addressed.

Another one that is probably increasingly understood to be key is developing male champions for change in the workforce and communities and later we'll talk about what are we doing differently, what is working, where does the future lie? I think one of the lessons learned is the importance of winning over male champions of change.

In Afghanistan, interestingly, if you just try to sit down with women and say you have the right to do this, you have the right to do that, that's not going to get them very far, but if you sit down with the mullahs and you work with them so that they have a capacity to talk about violence against women in the Islam religious context, then you are really going to make some headway. So being pragmatic about this is key.

Use of government procurement policies. Again, this goes back, I jump from the local level working with mullahs to really engaging parliamentarians in different countries and executive branch people to change the government procurement practices, to encourage preferences and companies to have representation on boards and senior positions. When we talk about women in leadership positions, in Japan certainly one of the things that's being worked on is how do you get more women as board members, how do you get women managers, and voluntary targets is a direction that the Japanese government is going in, which is having some success, it's certainly bringing attention to the issue.

I think that's pretty much some of the examples that I wanted to throw out there. I've placed them all in the Asia context because that's where the Asia Foundation works but obviously some of these can work in other areas and are being worked in other areas. So, thank you.

MS. SOLIS: -- the mic is on. Thank you so much. What a terrific set of presentations. I learned so much and I want to start with a couple of reflections based on what we've heard, putting all these presentations together and then ask you a question and then open up for the public.

Two things really struck me in thinking about common themes that were emerging from these presentations that were addressing very different topics. One is how much learning has taken place in the last 15 years. When you think about the outlook, the approach, the policies that individual countries or the global policy community has undertaken. So you know, for each one of you, I could point to elements where you talk about significant learning. The importance, for example, of male champions, when you are thinking about providing opportunities for women. The transition from the millennium development goals to the sustainable development goals where gender is not just seen as one single target but is seen as pervading the entire set of objectives, the same with girls' education. And also I thought in disaster risk management, I thought it was really powerful, Tanaka-san, when you talked about how for the longest time, there was no awareness of how important the gender dimension is in thinking about who is most vulnerable and where is the greatest potential in becoming more resilient and responding best and trying to minimize human loss and tragedy from these natural disasters.

So, in general, that left me very optimistic, even though you all mentioned the daunting challenges ahead. We made a lot of progress in the last 20 years or so but, nevertheless, it seems that we do take back lessons along the way, and we can refine, we can target better, we can think about programs, and where to invest our efforts and our money better.

And the second commonality, I thought, is that there was a lot of reflection about common challenges. When we think about gender equality, when we think about women's empowerment, we are not talking about a world divided in industrialized countries and developing nations. It's a set of issues that really again cut across the board. But nevertheless, the difficulty comes with the fact that it is not one approach that fits everybody. Every country is going to need, will require a different policy mix that has to do with institutional legacy, with cultural traditions, and so forth. But I thought it was interesting again, going to the disaster relief aspect, for example, that you had cases from Japan's own tsunami experience

but also Bangladesh and how this question about the awareness of the role that gender plays is very important. And we had that realization also, for example, Christina, in your presentation. If you think about one issue that this country is really confronting and can explain a lot of our politics, it has to do with the fact that technology in many ways has surpassed us, and the nature of jobs is changing and the impact, the disruptive impact of automation. It does provide a lot of opportunities, but also we are asking ourselves, what kind of jobs are going to be available for the youth? And that is important for the people in this country as well as many other developing countries. So I thought that those were really interesting elements that cut across the presentations today. And for all of these reasons, I feel very optimistic. But let me tell you where my pessimism or the politics start coming in, and then how you react to this. And again, several of you already alluded to this, and the fact is that there may be a very different position coming from the United States on these development topics, and just in the past few days the Trump administration budget proposal was revealed and it announced or it hinted at major cuts in aid and contributions to the United Nations. Granted, this is just a proposal, this might not be the final numbers. But what I think is important is that it really highlights what is a list of priorities, if you will, of this administration and it could be that some of the most pressing issues, a game changer, like girls' education in the developing world, might not be front and center and that we may have fewer resources to go about.

So my question to you is, you know, obviously this is reading tea leaves, obviously this is requiring you to project into the future but what do you think might be the role of the United States going forward, in moving away from the sustainable development goals? And if the United States indeed cuts back, if it's not in the leading front of these efforts, can other countries step up? Because I really feel that this is going to become a recurring theme in many of these panels that talk about global policy efforts. We are going to turn to other countries, Japan clearly in this conversation but other countries and ask them, can you step up? Can you play more of a leadership role? How do you make sure that indeed we have the kind of positive learning that I highlighted first applied and then we don't see the effort fizzle because of domestic political realities. So what happens with the U.S. role going forward and can Japan do more? So, John, I guess I'll put you on the spot and ask you to take a stab at this.

MR. McARTHUR: I would say the first thing is we simply don't know what's going to happen, and that is so important in my view to stress. I even just wrote a piece last week about, who would have guessed in 2001, after a very controversial election, that George W. Bush would be a global hero in the AIDS and malaria efforts? Just no one would have guessed it, not many people, at least. And things that could happen are -- the story is very much yet to be written on what's out there. We are seeing it doesn't take a PhD in politics that there are a lot of debates going on right now, both within the administration and between the White House and Capitol Hill.

You have people like Senator Corker in foreign relations saying protect PEPFAR, this is a huge priority, anti-trafficking, huge public statements. And you have the military leaders coming out saying we need to support investment in foreign aid. General Mattis makes this argument very strongly. So Bill Gates had an op-ed on the weekend how foreign aid makes America safe. So I think this debate is yet to play out.

I would also stress, Dina Powell, who just got a major job as deputy national security advisor, who I had the privilege to work with previously on the millennium development goals. She was leader of the 10,000 Women initiative at Goldman Sachs, and a real advocate for investing in women's business leadership and was very active in a lot of the broader policy conversations and, of course, had a role in the Bush administration previously. So a lot of these strategic things are to play out and let's see. I would also stress, you know, President Obama or candidate Obama had in the official platform in 2008, launching a global fund for education with a major scale up and that never happened. So these early statements are not the story that gets written. So I am very cautious.

I think there are only so many countries in the global economic environment with a real capacity to step up right now fiscally. We'd love to see Japan do everything it can but Japan has a very complex economic situation in fiscal situation. I don't think there is a huge movement afoot for a lot more money, for international budgets in Japan but if there is, that's fantastic. I think even the UK is one of the few countries that has this commitment to 0.7 in law, as long as the economy keeps growing a little bit. And

they are going to be figuring out, as they pull out of the European Union, whole new changes in budget allocation strategies that used to go through the European Union, that's going to be up for debate. I think that's a real opportunity. Whatever happens in the German election, Chancellor Merkel is putting Africa in front of the G20 this year, whether she wins or not in the election this fall. We'll see that there is probably some space for ongoing leadership there. But even Canada, where everyone has such huge hopes, politically I think the Trudeau government has done so much to send signals but fiscal situation is very very difficult with a new budget coming out next week, and all of the signals are it's going to be a flat line. So I think we are going to have to understand the difference between politics, budgets, and strategies and that's why we have to be, in my view, not optimistic or pessimistic but just pragmatic on how to solve the problems.

MS. SOLIS: Thank you, that was great. Any comments from the panel?

MS. TANAKA: We've had excellent collaboration between U.S. and Japan and also U.S. and JICA in Afghanistan since 2002. And we collaborated a lot on the education programs and also women's economic empowerment programs, so I don't know what's going to happen to the Trump administration but we have made a very good foundation for the collaboration in different areas, so we'd like to continue collaborating. And regarding the women's economic empowerment, we have already developed training programs for the African women, and we've been inviting so many women to -- African women to Japan. And also we've been sending some people to the States to get the further training on the women's entrepreneurship training. So collaboration has been going on for the past three or four years and I think this collaboration will continue. And we will not increase our ODA budget but I am trying to work more on the loan programs that Japan has been expanding. And gender has not been a very gender mainstreamed in the Japanese loan programs but I have started promoting the gender integration in the large scale irrigation programs, large scale forestry conservation programs in India and the southeast Asian countries so -- and we have been very successful. So I think there are many areas that we can still expand and collaborate. And just before I came here this morning, I was talking to Ambassador Verveer of Georgetown University and she said since Japan is so much advanced in disaster risk reduction issues and she said that we should collaborate more on the conflict peace issues, disaster risk reduction, and all kinds of climate change issues, which are all the human security issues. Those areas, we can still collaborate on a lot.

MS. SOLIS: Thank you. Other comments or should I -- let's invite the audience so if you can please raise your hand, wait for the microphone, identify yourself and keep your question short. I am going to take two questions to begin with because our time is very short. At the back and here in the middle.

QUESTION: Thank you so much for a wonderful panel. Evelyn Cherow from Global Partners United. Next month I'll be in Bhutan speaking at the autism and neurodevelopmental disorders conference for ministers of health and my topic is going to be telecommunications and women's entrepreneurship in the inclusive early child development space. I got here a little late so I wasn't sure if John did address early childhood development but that has been identified as a very big priority of the World Bank, UNICEF, of course, and UNESCO, and so it seems to me that there are great opportunities in women's entrepreneurship in the early childhood development arena, especially for women with disabilities so we can develop role models in those spaces.

How are we going to get the ministers of education, the ministers of health, the ministers of social protection, and the ministers of telecommunications to work together so we really can start doing something broadly in systems development across sectors, so that we can create the jobs, and so that we are not going country by country like we have for mobile health and having problems, having to negotiate with every telecom company? And the minister of Japan at the UN -- just one last thing -- made a comment last week. I was watching the women's economic empowerment forum and he was the only one to admit that we don't have women economic entrepreneur and STEM role models in Japan and it's a problem but we know that's a problem across many countries, so how do we show role models in a broader way?

MS. SOLIS: Thank you very much. And one more question.

QUESTION: Just a quick thanks to all the panelists, a very interesting discussion. I am Raelynn Campbell with Panorama and I wanted to ask about one of the areas that's really important in terms of access that was not mentioned as much. I think we all agree that access was one of the themes and particularly access as a means to empowerment, not the goal itself. And we talked about financial access, digital access, economic access, job access, education access, but one of the areas that I didn't hear mentioned that much was health access. And I thought the point about vulnerability being really important and the time that women are most vulnerable and children are most vulnerable are at childbirth. And I worked a lot on different partnerships for maternal and child health with Japan both at the Gates Foundation, UN Foundation, and now in private sector, consulting work and I just wanted to see if anybody wants to speak to the importance of health access and health empowerment as a key area for collaboration.

MS. SOLIS: Okay, thank you very much. Brief answers from the panelists? Anybody that would like to take on the questions.

MS. FRIEDMAN: I just have a few comments, one is I was a little confused with the first question when we were talking about early childhood education and entrepreneurship. I am not quite sure what age early childhood education starts but the red flags of child labor sort of came up for me. So I hope we are talking about early childhood education and giving people the skills they need so that at some point in the future, they are not afraid of IT, they kind of understand some of these things, but I think that we have enough to do with entrepreneurship that we don't do it at the early (inaudible) that's my personal opinion I am not an expert on this so I can understand totally if afterwards you want to enlighten me about that.

In terms of the health issue, I think you raise a good point because I think that one of the things that we always need to keep in mind is that when we are talking about gender and women's empowerment and the SDGs, yes, you have SDG 5 but it's across the board. We are not going to make any progress on poverty, we are not going to make progress on health, if there isn't a gender component to it and understanding on how gender plays in this. That's why we talked about things in the future, is this gender mainstreaming issue is essential because that's how we work at it.

MS. SOLIS: Thank you. Christina?

MS. KWAIK: One point on the access to health issue that you raised. I think what was probably the most alarming thing for me was that not even before the dust settled on the National Mall after the Women's March on Washington, the Trump administration issued the executive order, the global gag rule. And put NGOs who are doing extremely critical work in women's access to healthcare, especially with abortion counseling, referrals, all of the gamut, putting NGOs in positions where they have to choose between accepting those funds and offering those services has tremendous implications not only for direct negative implications for women's health but then there are girls, adolescent girls access and continued participation in education. So I think that's a tremendous issue and not something I think that any of us had deliberately ignored but I think it's a critical piece and I think seeing the wave of governments that have stepped in to fill that void is extremely reassuring.

MS. SOLIS: Great, we are actually at the end of our time. I know there are questions from the audience that have not been answered. Maybe if the panelists don't mind sticking around for a few minutes and if you want to approach them and ask your question, we would certainly welcome that option. If you can please join me in thanking the panelists for a fantastic talk today.

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