

“Smart Development Through Local Leadership: MCC’s Approach to Country Ownership”

MCC and Oxfam Host A Public Outreach Event

Speakers

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Transcript

Rodney Bent: Has everybody grabbed their coffee? If you've got your coffee, you can now take your seat. You should be alert, well rested.

Welcome, and good morning. I'm Rodney Bent. I'm the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. And it's wonderful to see such a good turnout on, frankly, one of the most important issues of development which is country ownership. Effective delivery of that and how we work with it.

Many thanks to Oxfam America, including John Ambler, to my right, for their outstanding leadership and working on this issue to make, to make this event possible.

The international donor community, including Oxfam, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, recognize the critical importance of country ownership to sustainable international development.

Today's event launches what I know will be a constructive, productive and forward thinking conversation about improving the effectiveness of international development assistance and the role that country ownership plays in that process, I should say the critical role. Both Oxfam and the MCC have thought long and often, I would say hard, but I think often is probably more accurate, about the concept of country ownership, what it means, how it works.

One of my colleagues today is Alicia Mandaville Phillips is going to present a paper she's written on that, a very thoughtful paper, which distills some of our experience with country ownership, some of the lessons learned.

Today's presentation from both Oxfam and Alicia on our respective analytical frameworks and the discussion to follow will move us closer to a better understanding of what ownership means.

There are, I think, three principles that we'll be talking about. One, true to country ownership. The MCC asks national governments to control the prioritization process of determining their development goals. That is absolutely key.

The goals cannot come from the outside. They have to be internalized. Like the old joke about how many therapists does it take to change a light bulb, one, but the light bulb has to want to change.

True to country ownership, MCC asks national governments to assume responsibility for implementing their MCC funded programs. And true to country ownership, MCC asks national governments to be accountable to stakeholders. And by stakeholders, I mean not just the government itself, but civil society, business groups, pharma organizations, the whole panoply of organized civic life in every country.

And in these three ways we see country ownership for what it is, an engaging process and a moving target. There's no simple definition of country ownership. And I think probably the panel will get into that in a major way. But I think the question of how you engage it, what it means, and most especially the differing perceptions, differ expectations which is where the friction comes in.

I'm sure the panel will get into this in a major way. For us, country ownership is built into what we do. We start with it, as the very basic predicate of what are the priorities, how do we work.

We want the citizens of any of our countries to honestly view our MCC program as their program. So we talk in terms of partners, not hosts. We talk in terms of what we do together and how we do it.

With over 6.3 billion in large scale MCC compact investments in 18 countries in Africa, Central America, Eurasia and the Pacific, our partners have turned the concept of country ownership into practice.

Let me share three thoughts on why we think country ownership matters. I think I'm probably preaching to the converted, but nonetheless, let me, I think one energy secretary a number of years ago said if you believe in a concept you have to repeat it three times before people believe that you believe in a concept.

First, country ownership matters because it makes our program stronger and smarter. Distinctively home grown programs reflect the priorities of partner countries themselves. Because countries know what they need for their long term economic development and for their economic growth, we find them using their MCC grants to invest in agriculture, world development infrastructure, schools, healthcare, land reform and financing projects.

Many countries are investing in their programs to help achieve the millennium development goals, and for those of you who spent time going through the MDGs, you realize how ambitious they are but also how fundamental to development.

There isn't one I think that isn't directly relevant to going forward.

It's no wonder in a blind 2007 survey of our partner countries some 80 percent of the respondents either agreed to or strongly agreed that MCC's approach to country ownership will help their country achieve development success.

I think that's fairly remarkable. What we're proud of is in fact the degree to which we are aligned with the country's own development goals. In a time of severe financial hardship, and anybody who got their 401(K) statements, my thrift savings plan was a shock, I think it's important when we, therefore, talk about foreign assistance, American foreign assistance, we really know it's being put to good uses, and that that requires a degree of transparency on what we do.

And it requires a degree of congruence between our goals and the goals of our country partners. It's, I think I take a long term view of these things. I think global development will eventually come back. I think that the challenges that countries are going through now, whether it's a BRIC or a lower income country, I take a very optimistic long term view, because a little bit like reverse gravity, what comes down should go back up at some point.

Second, country ownership matters because it more effectively prepares and empowers our partners to realize their long term sustainable development.

When countries own their own programs they're likely to continue them. It's not going to be a case of white elephants that start and stop. We spent a considerable amount of time trying to make sure that the sustainability is built in.

So when we build a road, what are the road maintenance funds? How are they going to be funded? What does it mean? These are all important questions that go beyond sort of a more narrow definition in which some country might say, well, we want to build you the road but that's as a way of giving our contractors business, not as a way of enhancing your development.

But anybody who has driven almost anywhere in any developing country knows that road maintenance is vital. You might build a road, but five or 10 years later if that road has potholes, breaks, washed out bridges, gullies, the rest of it, it won't provide any economic growth.

We expect our partners to establish domestic, independent accountable entities to take the lead in the day to day program implementation. This is important, because it means that instead of a cadre of expatriates winging into a country to do something, it's really the country itself.

As we go forward, I think we can expect our partners, particularly the lower middle income countries, to pick up more of that burden for themselves.

Our goal is not to be in every country. Our goal is not to be there for 20 and 30 years. We want to have one or two, possibly three compacts and then move on.

We hope, frankly, it will be because countries have graduated to lower or middle income status or even more wealth.

We take this responsibility of country ownership to heart. We have our partners pursuing changes that can enhance the impact of their program. Consider Honduras, which set aside funding for sustainable and maintenance to compensate the infrastructure grant. Example of the roads that we're talking about.

The third, country ownership matters because it improves transparency and accountability at the grassroots level. Country ownership is more than the wishes of individuals within a national government. It also includes the wishes of a wide range of stakeholders, as I mentioned, across society.

It advanced the democratization of development, which I think is important. I'm a big believer in civil society. I think getting governments to be accountable to their citizens is a major aspect of what development is about. That requires transparency on what we do.

Shawn Mulveney, who is here, and I think will speak later on, is a keen part of a German Marshal Task Force Report on development assistance, where we in the Europeans are coming together. And I think one of the aspects that I think is fundamentally revolutionary and insidious about what we do is the transparency of our expectations about what a country can do. That requires the donors to be transparent, and it requires the countries to be transparent as well.

This is, for many folks, not a very natural position. Through ongoing debate and dialogue, vigilance and monitoring programs, we want that scrutiny. We want people to look at what we're doing, we want them to judge us.

That involves some risks. On our website, for example, you can find our economic rates of return analysis. When we started down this road, we put the analysis up because we felt that it was important for people to see what our expectations of ourselves were.

Several colleagues in the development community said, well, there's a big risk in that. You could be putting up something that five or 10 years from now will look remarkably flawed. Having spent 20 years at the Office of Management and Budget producing budget numbers that were remarkably flawed, I said, well, I'm, frankly, used to that.

But I think that it speaks to the importance of transparency and accountability. Anyway, I've gone on a little bit longer than I had thought about some other topics.

So let me get to the topic at hand, which is the how of country ownership, which is I think the hard part. Everybody can agree that it's important, but how do you do it. What works? How do you evoke from the countries what their goals are, how do you discern the multiplicity of objectives, how do you discern multiplicity of expectations. And how do you come to closure on all those things? It's very difficult. Although, I think the papers will present a view, I will say that in the trenches on a pragmatic level it's very difficult. There are any number of different expectations within a society. Frankly look at what we've just gone through with the stimulus bill.

And there at least we have relatively known norms of discourse in which both Houses can go through what they do. You can imagine when institutions are not quite so well formed, haven't been around for 200 years. So any-

way. Let me now introduce Dr. John Ambler. John is the Senior Vice President for Programs at Oxfam America. He's going to talk about Oxfam's perspective on country ownership.

Previously, John served as regional director for Asia Care U.S.A. based in Bangkok, overseeing relief development operations for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka [inaudible] Prior to his work with Care, he spent nearly 10 years with the Ford Foundation in Indonesia, serving in India Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. I think John has obviously got a well stacked passport.

He opened the foundation's first office in Hanoi. For many years before his work with the Ford Foundation John worked in Indonesia on issues related to water management, a field in which he is a world class specialist. John and I share something. We both went to Cornell. He got a somewhat more elevated degree than I did, but that means we endured long winters, which makes today's weather outside look almost like spring.

Let me stop there with one final comment, which is on the panel that's coming after John. On the panel I think are three individuals Alicia, Sean and the ambassador. Their bios I think are out there. I won't bother to try and repeat them. They're all distinguished individuals. They've all got major contributions to make, and with that thank you very much. John.

John Ambler: It's a pleasure to be here and engaged in this discussion on ownership with you. I should first preface my remarks by saying Oxfam is interested in smart development, but for us smart development means development that's aimed at overcoming poverty and social injustice.

It's not economic development in the abstract. But it's economic development that has a social purpose. We've been engaged in this activity for some years now, and we've been looking at it from several dimensions.

The first has been trying to elevate the importance of foreign assistance. Development is one of the three triangles of foreign policy. We've got defense and diplomacy. In recent years, defense and diplomacy have really trumped the development card. So we want to try to elevate the importance of development and foreign assistance as part of a complete foreign policy portfolio.

We also want to think about how our foreign assistance can be delivered in a 21st century mode. Not the colonial mode of foreign assistance.

The colonial mode of foreign assistance is the patriarch, the mother in law and the teenager. The patriarch, the patriarch decides on what's going to happen, does the grand planning and is the know it all in the family. The intrusive mother in law wants to detail everything down to the last item. Wants to be down in the trenches telling everybody what to do.

And the teenager wants to just go ahead and do it and not care about the consequences. So that's kind of the colonial mode of foreign assistance. And we want to go beyond that. And we want to develop structures and strategies that accomplish a more participatory and more partnership mode of foreign assistance.

And part of that is the element of ownership. We want to support effective states and active citizens to manage their own development. So we want policies that transfer better aid information, better communication, strengthen local capacity and hand over more control to people.

I apologize for the PowerPoints. It's not my favorite mode of operation. And you know power corrupts and PowerPoint corrupts absolutely.

(Laughter)

So what kind of a theory of development underlies this orientation? Well, there's an economic compact. That's the idea that healthy educated citizens enter the formal economy generate wealth and pay taxes to the government.

The state uses those revenues to create an enabling environment for the provision of public goods and services and also for the enabling of a market economy. And that produces in theory a virtuous cycle whereby the state relies on the citizenry and the state is accountable to the citizenry. The citizenry supports the government and also holds it accountable for what it provides.

There's also a political compact that citizens should hold their governments accountable and rely upon nonviolent political processes. The states in turn would respect political rights and enable citizen participation in decision making.

So, again, the idea that the decisions are made by the government with the participation of the citizenry. This kind of underlies our basic understanding of what we would like to see societies functioning along. And also the idea that it's this basic philosophical underpinning that gives us confidence that we can move forward on the ownership agenda.

There is the resource curse. You may be familiar with the idea of resource curse, countries that have large mineral wealth. Sometimes some of the most inequitably managed countries. If citizens care less about what the state is doing with aid money because that's not their money, that's a problem.

If states get the aid it thinks less about what the citizens think because it doesn't need their taxes. So aid can play a damaging role if it's not linked in with the accountability and the participatory decision making processes.

What the customer wants. Here the customer meaning well the aid recipient. The customer or the aid recipient wants better communication about aid. They want capacity building, and they ultimately want more control over

the way the aid is structured. And as you move from communication to capacity to control, you are getting greater ownership of the process.

And if we think about the different dimensions, the communication dimension, at a minimum you want transparency, you want transparent reporting of the funding. People would like to know how much aid is going where. And I could show you another chart that would curl your hair, and that's the number of foreign assistance programs in the U.S. government, and it's what some 42 or something like that, 42 agencies giving foreign assistance. No centralized way of understanding how much each is giving.

No centralized way of understanding for the recipient country how much is being given. As we move from at least a minimum of transparent reporting of funding, we'd like to move toward a better practice. Maybe it's not best practice, but at least a better practice of three year predictability in terms of what countries can expect to receive.

Right now with an annual appropriation, it's very difficult to plan, especially long term development activities, that require secure funding for multiple years. At a capacity level, one of the dimensions, this is not the only dimension of capacity, but one dimension is the measurement dimension.

For example, at a minimum we would want to measure the outputs. And, for example, if you have a judicial training program, you want to measure how many people are trained, what the curriculum is, but beyond measurement of just the output you want to measure the outcomes and ideally moving toward measurement of impacts. You want to understand how that training was actually utilized, how that influenced the way the justices carried out their mandate.

That's the teenager part there. You know, the teenager just wants to do it and not measure what it actually leads to in the long run. So one of the measurement challenges is developing information systems that look at impacts over long periods of time and actually has a mechanism built in to the structure of monitoring those impacts so that that information helps improve the way things are done on a routine basis.

You need to be able to readjust your plans and your programs based on continuing in flow of information.

And then the control dimension, at a minimum, it should the foreign assistance should align with national plans. So often foreign assistance is basically being driven by what the country, by what the donor country wants to do rather than necessarily what the recipient country wants to be done, or wants to have funded.

And over on the best practice dimension side of things would be actually budgetary support. Now, there may be a lot of questions about budgetary support, and I think we'll get to those later, but I encourage you to press those.

But just one thing about budgetary support is that one of the most effective ways of encouraging long term sustainable development is to have a partnership with the government to change the way routine budgets are spent. Routine budgets. I think, not necessarily special projects but routine budgets.

If you actually change the way and improve the way routine budgets are spent, you're influencing the way health-care systems operate, the way education systems operate, the way agricultural extension systems operate.

You may not be having an enormous effect per person, but you're affecting large, large numbers of population and you're actually working toward a more effective system of government delivery of services and enabling the environment.

Okay. So if we think about the communication, what the customer needs in MCC states. These are states that are relatively, shall we say, have got their act together on a number of dimensions. They're relatively competent. We can be more communicative, we can make longer term commitments that are over on the right end of the spectrum there. We can talk about five year commitments. We can talk about three year commitments. Capacity is sort of in the middle.

Obviously they wouldn't be in this state if they wouldn't be considered for the MCC partnership if they didn't have significant capacity already. So that would be something that we would want to pay attention to in a moderate way. And MCC states have quite a bit of competence. So why not give them more control over the aid process. So the control would be on the right side.

In so called threshold states, states that are weaker, you might not be able to communicate or make long term commitments to the same extent. Maybe shorter periods of time. You would spend more time on the capacity building and you would engage and you would retain more control over the process.

Now, if we could make another slide on fragile states where the control would be even greater, the capacity needs would be even higher and the time frame would be even shorter.

But I know that the MCC has a particular mode of operation that relies on the governments, the recipient governments already being pretty competent in many dimensions. But I think we can think about this same framework of communication capacity, control, as applying to a variety of states. Some of which are quite fragile. Some of which are quite weak. Where the mix of control capacity development and long term commitment is different.

Those are the ends of my remarks. Now, yes, we will make mistakes, but they will be our mistakes. That was in the movie Gandhi, Neru says that to the Governor General of India.

I think the fact that the ownership issue that the mistakes that are made, the triumphs that are achieved are actually the recipient countries' mistakes and triumphs are not to be underestimated.

So I look forward to your comments and I'd like to invite the panel up to the table now. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Alicia Phillips Mandaville: So I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to speak today here about country ownership from MCC's perspective. I really appreciate the model that John laid out. One, because I like alliteration. So the communication control capacity is nice. But, secondly, for two main reasons:

One, I think it's nice that it ends very practically. It talks about what can actually be done. Not why country ownership should be valued or why it's important or what kinds of commitments should be made, but what are the actual technical things that both donors and countries can think about and try to move forward on.

And, secondly, because I think it really emphasizes the link between country ownership and domestic accountability, recognizing that it's not just about how donors and countries define their relationship with each other but also about how country governments define their relationship with their citizens and with their populations.

So since John and Rodney have kind of set the model for country ownership up so nicely and country ownership is one of MCC's founding principles, I figure I'll just dive right into talking a little bit about how we define country ownership for MCC's investments.

What are some of the things we've tried to do to operationalize that; what are the technical practical steps we've taken to adjust our own actions to try to make country ownership more of a reality?

I'll touch a little bit on some of the evidence we're seeing to date. Are we on the right track? Are we off in left field? I'm hoping there's some questions at the end because we've got a constrained time frame for me to speak. So I've got some examples. Hopefully people will draw them out.

And, lastly, to talk a little bit about if you're trying to use a practical approach, you hit some practical realities. And so I want to touch a little bit on trying to manage through some of those things and what are some of the next steps for that.

So in terms of our definition, Rodney, I think, laid it out clearly. There's three pieces to it. When it comes to MCC investments and MCC compacts, country governments control the prioritization process for the compact proposal. Country governments are responsible for implementing the compacts once they're signed. And countries remain accountable to their own domestic stakeholders throughout the course of development and implementation.

So MCC has this three piece kind of definition in part to recognize that country ownership isn't a binary issue. There's not a point in time during our relationship with a country where we say: Is there ownership? Yes, check. Great, now we proceed. We never think about it again.

We've tried to lay out very clearly that it runs through all different phases of our relationship through the development into implementation.

And then MCC needs to adjust how it reacts as well. So diving kind of in, then: Country governments control the prioritization process in terms of what's in a proposal. MCC doesn't have strategic priorities for types of projects. We don't have spending targets. And that's a feature of our model that was set up in our founding legislation that really allows us to pursue, to leave ownership of the projects and leave decisions about what projects will be proposed really in the country's hands.

And so far what we're seeing is that in all of our compacts the projects that come forward in the proposal and are being implemented, all of them can be traced back to either the PRSP, the country's national development plan, its vision 2025, whatever strategy is used in the past to try to identify what are its major development targets.

You can see the things that wind up in a compact have been present in those as well. In some cases in iterations of it two PRSPs plus a vision 2025 plus a national development strategy.

We've put some energy into building a compact development process that gives enough guidance that countries, our country counterparts understand what are the kinds of things MCC can and can't put money behind, what's technically feasible in a five year time frame with the types of money we have available.

But not so much technical guidance that it dictates what actually goes into the proposal. And we can talk a little bit more about that if people are interested. Secondly, countries are responsible for implementation. And we say this quite a bit. What does that mean? To clarify, each individual country sets up its own what we call an MCA accountable entity which is responsible for implementing its directed managed and staffed by country nationals. They range from 12 to 50 people, depending on the size of the compact and the country that they're working in.

MCC has somewhere between one and three people on the ground in those countries. So you can tell from the numbers MCC's staff on the ground, their role isn't to manage the compact. It's not to manage the implementation process. We can't have nobody there in part because we get a lot of questions about what's going on. Happy to have someone on the ground to facilitate the communication and the liaison.

But those MCA accountable entities are accountable to their own governments, through their own board, and much like MCC's board includes our own cabinet level officials as well as private sector and NGO actors, the MCA boards in the countries we work in also include government officials at cabinet level as well as non governmental NGOs and private sector actors.

Kind of maintaining that line of activity to their own government through the board process I think is a big piece of how it's not just that we say countries are responsible for implementation and we hand them the work to do. We also try to keep the lines of accountability such that they match, they keep domestic accountability in place, not just accountability back to MCC or donors.

Similarly, evidence here is anecdotal. It's not been long enough that we have a survey of data in fact on this, but what we're seeing so far is that I think something that signals that countries feel an ownership over the implementation process. Is we do see governments taking steps outside of the compact itself to smooth the implementation process.

And whether that's things like legal or regulatory changes about things like road maintenance funds or changes to the land reform issues so that property privatization, land reform project can proceed smoothly, or locating non MCC resources when that's necessary.

Last year, last year and a half we saw depreciation of the dollar, and intense escalation of construction costs. Commodities go up, transportation costs go up, the dollar goes down, that makes a tricky situation.

A lot of the countries we're working in have taken steps to identify whether that resources whether that's their own resources to put behind a project or resources from other donors, but it really suggests there's an ownership on the outcome of the project and making sure that project actually comes to conclusion.

And we feel like that suggests while we're not done with this country ownership kind of undertaking we might be on the right track.

And then the third piece, we've talked a little bit in the past. Rodney highlighted it here. And MCC's talked a bit before about the links between country ownership and democratization. I think the third piece really emphasizes how domestic accountability is the way towards democratization of country ownership. That phrase has been used quite a bit. Democratization country ownership to apply. It's not just the government in question, it's the NGOs and different actors in that society that have a stake in the development project.

I think it's important to recognize two pieces. I mean, MCC is a bilateral donor. And we recognize the government as our main interlocutor. We respect their decision making role, the role they play in economic development processes.

But we do recognize that country ownership is broader than just government ownership. And we think the way to move towards democratized ownership is to really maintain those accountability links between the government and its population and its stakeholders.

To emphasize, taking practical steps on this is, I think, is a matter of making sure that the accountability and oversight mechanisms that MCC uses don't supplant domestic accountability mechanisms. It's not just that information comes to us, it's not just that we ask questions. We expect that our country partners get questions from their population from their media, civil society actors the way we do.

And we expect they find some way to answer those questions as well. We try to build our systems and our both in compact development and in implementation in such a way that it doesn't prevent them from being able to answer

those questions. So the consultative process that we ask every country to use during compact development. It doesn't look the same in every country because every country's political economy is different. Every country has different kinds of stakeholders, different actors that want and need to be involved.

The transparency expectations we have, they're not identical in every country. Whether MCC units are putting data about project implementation or financials on their own website, whether they're using other methods to distribute that information, I think we do try to make sure we do try to encourage the MCA units to provide as much information for public debate as possible. Whether it's parliamentary debate in Namibia, about accepting and ratifying the compact. Whether it's media coverage that's pretty controversial in Ghana about the content of a compact. Both of these things cause all kinds of anxiety and stress back in Washington because it questions what's going into the compact and will it move smoothly. But I think they're some of the best indications that the content of a development project is actually owned by the political processes in the country.

And in some ways that's possibly some of the best evidence of all, that while this is still an evolving process, we're starting to see if an MCA unit and the compact are subject to the same political pressures that other things in the country government are, maybe we're on the right track here.

So kind of having talked through the three different pieces. If you've got a practical approach, you ran into some practical realities. There are a good number of them. I want to touch on two very specifically. One, there is tension with other goals. Country ownership and, say, the logical economic framework behind a program that's intended to stimulate economic growth and poverty reduction. A colleague puts it nicely when he asks what do we do if a country owns a bad idea? That's a legitimate question to ask. Just because someone has thought of an idea does not necessarily make it us thinking of it doesn't make it the end all, be all and the counterparts thinking of it does not make it the end all be all of an economic framework.

We try to manage that by trying to be clear about what the technical requirements are, what the expectations about the return on a project will be both in terms of beneficiaries that reaches economic returns. But it can create friction I think and sometimes misunderstandings about how much is MCC trying to push a particular, saying this project is not as much of a good idea.

Sometimes that's because there are other issues that are at play, like economic logic behind things.

Secondly, the trade offs that I think sometimes people have or are asked to make. It's very difficult to simultaneously address a desire for country ownership, a desire for rapid implementation, and a desire for universal quality control over all projects MCC puts behind. That's a reality that every donor faces, every bilateral and multi lateral agency. Because we're newer I think it's something, we don't have two decades of programs that are already done that we can point out to say these are the results, be patient with us. These are the results, this model makes good sense.

I can't overemphasize that the tension in those things really makes it a challenge sometimes to be practical about how you pursue country ownership and the steps that you take to adjust MCC's own actions.

So all of that said, and I'm running up on my time, I think Rodney mentioned that we did do a blind survey a year to a year and a half ago asking our partners how they felt about what MCC was trying to do with regards to country ownership. And 70 percent of the folks responding said that, yes, they felt MCC's approach to ownership was a good one.

This was a survey of our partners both in the compact development phase and in implementation. So people staffing the MCA accountable entity as well as the country individuals working on developing the compact. And perhaps more interesting, 80 percent of them said that they felt like MCC's approach to country ownership was actually going to help their country achieve its development goals. I'm not sure where that 10 percent difference is. All of this to say, we recognize this as an evolving process and MCC doesn't have an answer to what country ownership, how you best pursue that. We continue to adjust our compact development process. Our compact implementation team continues to look at how we use a sliding scale of either oversight or audit features so we really adjust to the experience and the capacities of the MCA implementation units themselves.

We're still working on this. I hope that today triggers some questions that cause us to think a little bit more. It can trigger them now and call me later. People can call anyone at MCC later about this. It's something that someone who recently routed a paper on country ownership through our process, everybody has strong feelings about it in MCC. With that, I'll turn it over to my colleague.

Sean Mulvaney: Thanks very much. Good morning. My name is Sean Mulveney, Director of the Economic Program at the German Marshall Fund. And as many of you know, the German Marshall Fund is a nonprofit grant making institution that aims to foster Trans Atlantic understanding and cooperation.

And I come here today not really providing comments for that organization, but I come here to share a perspective, because what now is six years ago I worked up on Capitol Hill as a Sherpa serving one of the principles, Congressman Jim Colby, as he played his part in creating the MCC and providing for its authorization and its appropriation.

And I wanted to give you a sense of congressional deliberations, congressional debates. And frame how country ownership was achieved as a part of an incremental reform of U.S. foreign assistance. Taking a step back, the congressional intent behind the MCC more broadly was to have a major reform, a major innovation and a major increase in the implementation of foreign assistance.

That is to say, for some members of Congress, you know the MCC was a major reform. It was intended to be a correction for failed foreign assistance of the past. For other members of Congress, it was simply an innovation.

Something new to incorporate lessons learned and development and to spur economic growth through poverty reduction, alongside other traditional forms of development assistance.

And still for other members of Congress, it was simply a way to argue for more foreign assistance, because in these members' minds it was the quantity of resources, the quantity of foreign assistance that mattered, not necessarily the quality of the effort by developing countries.

Congress is not a monolithic institution, as many of you know. So I just wanted to point out that there was all these different motivations that came together, that contributed to this incremental reform and the creation of the MCC.

It was a herculean effort. It wasn't easy. The administration, the Bush Administration and the Congress, as if magicians, were actually very fortunate to pull a rabbit out of the hat at the end of the show. When the MCC was being debated, it was far from clear that the authorization and the appropriation process would go smoothly for it.

The MCC creation was a large challenge because it was akin to achieving significant reforms in three dimensions of the U.S. government. Those dimensions are: Within the executive branch, between the Congress and the president, and the last dimension was reform of the U.S. government interface with developing countries themselves. And this is where country ownership is critical and comes into play.

Any one of those dimensions is difficult to reform. When you're doing all three at the same time, it's really complicated. In the context as it relates to country ownership. You know, it's really also impossible to achieve that goal unless you're able to achieve reform within the executive branch and between the Congress and the executive branch.

And unless you reform those two dimensions, the aspiration to have country ownership that that U.S. government interface with the developing country is impossible to achieve. It will just get suffocated as the two branches conflict with one another or as there is tension within the executive branch between different parts.

Let me kind of categorize kind of three themes or major changes that were achieved in the MCC authorization. All of which relate to the concept of country ownership. You know, first, there's no other account like the MCC in the function 150 budget within the federal government. At the time of its creation, and even now, you know there really is no presidential request or congressional account that performs the same role.

One can look at all the other accounts of foreign assistance like DA, ESE, child survival, PEPFAR. None of them provide an incentive for developing countries to attain sound political economy as a precondition for eligibility or they also don't have the same degree of local ownership, if at all.

The DA and child survival account are largely requested and allocated by development sectors, whereas ESF requests and appropriations are largely driven by geostrategic necessity or foreign policy priority in the United States.

The MCC is unique in the sense that it isn't requested that way. Second, the appropriation for the MCCs are not earmarked by country or by development sector. You know, starting with the House and Senate appropriations committees, the Congress agreed to provide the resources not earmarked or allocated by country as a means to foster this environment for country ownership.

The authorization represents one of the rules of the road between a Congress and a president where if the president agrees to follow those rules of the road, Congress will take a step back and allow the executive branch to engage a developing country in a process where local ownership and accountability can step forward in the implementation of foreign assistance.

The third area I would point out in terms of a major theme or area of reform, the authorization itself actually looks to put requirements on the executive branch for local ownership. And for the first time in foreign assistance it was legislated where an indigenous civil society would be invited for input and consulted during the development of a compact. That's Section 609 D of the authorization. It was expected that a developing country national government and civil society would be the partners. Local ownership and indigenous civil society oversight would be incorporated into the provision of foreign aid.

Other U.S. foreign assistance programs don't include these components. They often do a great job of kind of supporting civil society growth within a country, but they don't look to kind of why are the civil society input back into the nexus of the provision of the foreign assistance.

In closing, let me also say that as a means to help create this environment of local ownership, Congress specifically didn't put the MCC inside the Foreign Assistance Act. It actually legislated it outside of the Foreign Assistance Act. It was a conscious decision. It wasn't an easy one. The feeling behind that is, since 1961, there's some 40 years of bureaucratic barnacles that get created inside an executive branch. And the Congress wanted to give the executive branch a degree of flexibility to try to create something anew.

My last comment before I'll turn to the Ambassador, and I think it offers kind of this lesson in Washington and the political process, particularly as we look at potential for foreign assistance reform.

I think one of the lessons from the creation of the MCC, which is now six years ago, is that if we want country ownership, opportunities and the implementation of foreign assistance, it means that a president, a Congress, stakeholders, they have to articulate that as a goal, an objective, a virtue to achieve.

They then have to build a prevailing policy view within Washington. And it's not over yet. Because after that you have to legislate it, between the president and the Congress, have that agreement that is a grand bargain between branches. And that's kind of what happened with the MCC.

And I think that it's great to be here six years later and kind of hear how country ownership was implemented. Because it wasn't clear back then. The goal was, but the how wasn't. And certainly many at the MCC have certainly paved new ground in U.S. foreign assistance policy.

With that, let me close and let me thank Oxfam for the opportunity to share some of these views.

Ambassador Sefue: Thank you very much. Good morning, everybody. I should also like to thank MCC for inviting me to this event. I'm really pleased to be here. And I thank Oxfam America for the importance that they're rightly attaching to the issue of ownership and country led development.

The founding president of Tanzania, Williams Nkomo, used to tell Tanzanians that our pockets may be empty but our heads are not.

And he used to exhort Tanzanians to think for themselves. This is the essence of the development process. It's about creating time and space for the developing countries to think for themselves, to identify obstacles to their development and to formulate appropriate ways to surmount those obstacles and to set priorities and sequences and to determine the kind of partnership and support they need to realize their objectives.

And this perhaps explains why Tanzania was among the first African countries to really embrace MCC's approach to development cooperation. And this also explains why Tanzania is one of the pioneer countries when it comes to the broader issues of aid effectiveness, of harmonization, of alignment and of ownership.

Today, Tanzania's engagement with its development partners is largely based on nationally determined Tanzania joint assistance strategy, which in turn is driven by a nationally determined strategy for growth and poverty reduction.

Known very much for its Swahili acronym [Inaudible]. [Inaudible] is a product of a comprehensive consultative process, involving the government, meaning the executive branch, the Legislature, the private sector, civil society, political parties and the media.

And then [Inaudible] document, therefore, captures what can rightly be called a national consensus or national challenges. The national consensus on where we want to go, why, and how. It's also a national consensus on how to engage development partners and measure commitment and progress on all sides. We believe that while a democratic elected government has the mandate to provide leadership and ongoing consultative process, continuously legitimizes that mandate between elections.

An electro mandate does not restore fundamental or monopoly of thought on those in part. When opening the [Inaudible] forum in July the last year, former Secretary of state Dr. Condoleezza Rice said what the U.S. wanted in its engagement with Africa was core partnership not partnerism. And I think Africa deserves not period but partnership.

This is what also lies at the heart of ownership. Ownership works best when a developing country enjoys genuine partnership with its development partners.

It's also when the culture context in which it struggles with its development challenges is brought into play because the culture context is important. And no one knows it better than the people in the country themselves.

One of the greatest challenges facing African countries is the issue of capacity. To us in Tanzania, ownership and partnership must lead to [Inaudible] capacity building as well as human resource development in both public and private sectors. Ownership and partnership have to prepare us to stand on our own feet. A substantial complement of the implementation of Tanzania's MCC's compact will be handled through national institutions. We are grateful because that's the only way to build the capacity and confidence of national institutions. We learn by doing. And this also makes ownership more meaningful and development more sustainable.

Now, there are a few things that ownership is not meant to be. Ownership certainly cannot be a negation of sound policies for economic growth. Programs and projects must make sense to all the partners.

Secondly, ownership cannot be the absence of oversight, accountability and transparency. Governments have to be accountable to their own people, as well as for the proper use of resources from the partners. Accountable for results and accountable for processes of good governance.

And, lastly, ownership is not an excuse to ignore solid analysis and experience, what works, what doesn't work.

In conclusion, let me say that Tanzania has always been on forefront of the country led development agenda, and of genuine country ownership of the development process. We determine needs. We set priorities. And we welcome genuine partnerships. We like compacts with clear goals, benchmarks, and firm multi year commitments that make planning and budgeting easier and more realistic.

We strive to pursue sound tested policies and welcome rigorous analysis. And that is why the MCC approach is such an important contribution to Tanzania's country ownership and the development process and why we value it so much. I thank you for your kind attention.

(Applause)

Paul O'Brien: I'm Paul O'Brien. I'm the director of Oxfam, and I'm going to moderate questions. I hope you all enjoyed that as me for different perspectives. And it's nice to be having a discussion about what really works in development.

We have a microphone here, so we're going to ask people to make the long walk, and then if you wouldn't mind saying who you are before you ask your question, and if you could do your best to make it a question, that would be great.

And our panelists will respond appropriately. Feel free if you want to come up behind whoever's asking the question, we can move it along.

Question: Thank you very much. I'm Jim Michael with ARD/DPK. First of all. I just wanted to congratulate Oxfam and the Millennium Challenge Corporation for this program which was very encouraging, very positive to listen to these different perspectives, and the emphasis that's given to practical ways to make local ownership a reality.

My question has to do with something that is I think an intersection between Sean's comments and Alicia's, which is the subject of a evaluation.

The expectation of Congress that foreign assistance will be effective and that the effectiveness will be evaluated is something that I think is becoming a stronger, and again a positive dimension in U.S. foreign assistance programs. At the same time, you don't want to have U.S. evaluators going in and evaluating the program to the exclusion of local ownership, you want to encourage local capacity ownership.

So you have, it seems to me, again, one of those tensions where you need to provide an assurance of credible objectivity and at the same time you need to encourage local accountability to citizens and to the donor.

And I just wonder how MCC sees the balancing of those competing interests in the context of program evaluation. Thank you.

Alicia Phillips Mandaville: Thank you for actually raising that. Because I think when I saw the first slide from your presentation this morning, the quote about yes we will make mistakes but they will be our own mistakes, I think as time has gone on people see that as a really important piece of a country ownership argument. But that evolution has occurred simultaneous with a push in the U.S. both legislative side and executive side to show every single project has achieved great results so you have a natural tension.

I think the way we're trying to address this question of how do you evaluate so that it's credible, it's locally accountable, answers questions on both sides of the Atlantic, two different pieces. One, I think each of the compacts has built into it an evaluation component. And that is part of the proposal process, is the country proposes how it wants to evaluate the programs that it's doing. And yes, it needs to meet certain evaluation standards. It needs

to answer the kinds of questions that will have that our stakeholders will have, but also that their stakeholders will have. That's, I think, the formal piece, and that is in every compact.

The second piece, though, is about, comes back to this transparency and availability of information question.

In a handful of countries we're starting to see the beginnings of civic monitoring efforts and media monitoring efforts. Not media monitoring, but basically investigate active journalism about the implementation of an MCA compact.

And so in Georgia and Armenia both we have independently funded civic groups that are monitoring the implementation process, and that relationship has been great at times and rocky at times, as you would expect from a civic monitoring group and an implementation entity.

We are also hearing more about different journalists either undertaking longer term monitoring exercises or doing more critical investigation into how exactly particular pieces of project wound up in the proposal or how the implementation process is going.

But I think it's a combination of those two, both the formal pieces of the compact that are devoted to evaluation, plus the institutions already functioning in the country looking at how government sources are used and implemented. It's the combination of those two that I think helps us address that.

Question: I wonder, ambassador or John, who runs all our programs overseas, if I could ask: Do you feel that the culture of development is changing in the sense that we'd like to think Tanzania and Oxfam are in the forefront of learning around challenges of development, do you feel that you're rewarded for being honest about the risks that you have to take in taking on a leadership ownership role, a leadership role that donors are willing to work with you in terms of a culture of experimentation, or you feel you're really expected to do both, both to lead but always to lead and get the answers right?

Ambassador Sefue: Well, we all want to get the answers right and the challenge is how do we do that and one way is the what MCC is doing, from the beginning part of the compact includes an evaluation of how we are going to do this and how we are going to measure the results at the end.

And here then is the question of capacity building, that through this process you also build the local capacity, to make sure that you can manage this project, some of them getting more complex, in a way that you have results and you can show the results at the end.

So it's something that has to be built into the process, and the process must involve capacity building, and it must lead to results that are verifiable within a great benchmark at the end.

And we are perfectly happy with that.

John Ambler: If I could add a couple of notes. I think the investment and the capacity to measure and to evaluate should be really part of the long term program of MCC or any development agency. But the key issue is what do you measure? As you get into a longer term program, the effects that are demonstrated have less and less to do with the particular interventions, because all kinds of other things intervene, too.

History, other programs, inflation. Revolt in province X, drought in province Y. All kinds of other things intervene that sometimes influence the way that you measure the outcome of a particular intervention.

So I think we have to build in some humility as we strive for more accountability in the measurement aspect. We also have to be we have to recognize a lot of other things are at work, too, that determine the particular outcome that we notice.

>>: If I can add real quickly. One part of the MCC authorization indicated how it was different from other forms of foreign assistance to the U.S. government, I mean the authorization said that there would only be one compact with each country. Countries could have compacts sequentially, but those compacts gave a degree of specificity, transparency and a finite plan for evaluation to then be based on.

And that was very different from other forms of foreign assistance back in the budget process. It was very hard to measure for results and to evaluate in a clear, concise way. So Congress made those changes to try to improve kind of the public policy process at large. You could point to a tangible plan to go evaluate.

Question: Carrie Braxton, Global Business Solutions, Inc. We're a small business that implements some US programs as well as other agencies in the government. I have a question probably about the MCC process.

I know in many countries, traditional societies, women are not allowed as part of the formal structure of consultation. I'm very glad that the ambassador spoke about the process in his country. I think it sounds like a wonderful idea to spread in other nations, but because women often aren't part of the formal process and in fact there's pushback against women coming forward in a formal way what can MCC do to make sure that women are not forgotten in this process of the compact planning? Thank you.

>> Thanks.

Alicia Phillips Mandaville: Actually, this is something that we've put a lot of thought into in the past and have actually taken some steps on as well. I never want to start by saying we have a gender policy, because we have a policy is never a good place to start on something. Let me tell you what it requires to do as opposed to it exists.

One, during the compact development process, there are specific questions that our transaction team asks our country partners about the way they've looked at including perspectives from both genders.

For example, if there's a proposal for an agricultural development program, we explicitly ask whether or not both men and women will be affected in a positive way based on the results of this program. That's one example but there's different questions for different types of investments.

During the implementation – second to that, during the country team that is working on the proposal process as well as on implementation, in both cases we asked the country to make sure they hire someone who has gender expertise so that they can, one, ask these questions about how a program will impact. But also in some cases run consultations with different groups to reflect what's necessary in a consultation to actually get information both from men and from women.

During implementation we ask for gender disaggregated data. There are a couple of different touch points where we ask this question about whether men and women are both being positively affected by MCC investments. We can talk more about it later if you're interested.

Question: My name is Sharon Howard. This question is mostly for the Ambassador. Because a majority of the compact recipients are African countries, I'm wondering how African countries are working together, either through SDEC, to help each other through their compacts or maybe even helping countries that are applying for compacts to work together to kind of get the best results, if there are any formal meetings or conferences that are happening through that as well.

Ambassador Sefue: We certainly share experiences. I don't think we have a formalized way, but if, you know, a neighboring country wants to – is in the process of developing its compact they can always send people to our country to see how we have done it. And this is something we've done before and it's something we're continuing to do with others in different stages of developing their compacts.

Paul O'Brien: Sean or Alicia, do you want to talk at all about the MCC effect that was there at the inception now that we're getting a sense that there's recent publication about it. Do you want to say a couple words about what it is or what it's supposed to be?

Alicia Phillips Mandaville: The MCC effect, as a definition, the idea that it's not just the investments that MCC makes in terms of actual, money that is spent on actual programs, but also because the eligibility process is based on comparison of different country's commitment to ruling justly to invest people into economic policy that you see countries making changes to those policies in an effort to demonstrate that they should become eligible.

So it's actually my colleague who is not here today who has done the majority of work on this. We do have a new publication out. I think it's splashed on our website, or it was at one point. But it talks about examples, places where we've seen specific policy reforms undertaken by the executive branch, by other parts of the government, things that they're doing to improve performance on the indicators that MCC uses. But at heart that means improved different types of policy performance.

Question: My name is Margaret Noisa. I'm a foreign service officer, retired from the USAID Health, and I had two questions or would like your reaction to two issues as I see it.

You mentioned that the MCC is really dealing with lower middle income countries that have reached a certain ability to handle these kinds of activities and these kinds of plan this kind of planning. What do you do about all the fragile states that were alluded to but then you kind of moved on? So the question is: What happened to the fragile states?

Secondly, as we move into this economic crisis and what I perceive as a stronger push for responsiveness to what happens to the U.S. taxpayer dollar, and this has always been an issue with foreign assistance, what are we buying with our foreign assistance dollars?

What is the impact and why should we be supporting foreign governments and foreign assistance programs when we have so many problems here at home? So what do you see as the implications of this for pushing for more country ownership where the development process takes longer, yet there's a huge push for results, immediate results. And I think PEPFAR has reinforced that approach and looking for output level impact, if you will, rather than outcome related impact that's going to take longer and would be required if you're going to really get the country ownership you're talking about? Thank you.

Paul O'Brien: So on the first question, I suppose what does the U.S. government do about fragile states? I don't think the question is solely what should the MCC be doing.

John Ambler: Let me just frame this a little bit where, recall back in 2003, fragile states was being discussed and being thought through within an executive branch and Congress. I remember the Commission on Fragile States the Center For Global Development had. And they had a white paper that focused on fragile states. What I would point out was that the MCC was not supposed to focus on fragile states. That was not its purpose or mandate. It was only supposed to work in 20, 25 countries, and it would be in the countries where good governance was better than average, and there would be opportunities to take more risks with U.S. taxpayer funds.

So it wasn't intended to be for fragile states, Paul, I would just point out.

Paul O'Brien: Any other thoughts on that question? Okay. Let's take the second question. And this is in an economically constrained time, every dollar is precious. The people who are ultimately paying for the MCC U.S. taxpayers are not ultimately the beneficiaries in a sense at least directly, we'd like to think long term they are of these dollars. How do we cultivate ideas like ownership which are long term, which are more about complex development process and address this question. People want to know where the dollars are going. John?

John Ambler: I'll take a stab at that one. It's a complex one. But I think part of the issue that's important for the American people to understand is the relationship between development worldwide globally and America's own

security. I think increasingly we find so many interconnections, financial, economic, political, trade. These are connections that are now completely global, and if we ignore these forces and think that we can retreat to just attending to the issues at home, I think we're actually sacrificing the long term security. And so making that linkage between the investments in the security and prosperity of other poorer states and America's own long term viability and security I think is important.

Paul O'Brien: Great.

Alicia Phillips Mandaville: I think that this touches on something that is a real challenge. And I think and if others have good ideas about how to communicate this more effectively, I think a lot of people here would be all ears about that.

I think there's a need to understand that to think about development as being both short term and long term investment. And MCC was really set up to be a long term investment, not an immediate, tomorrow turnaround. And once upon a time when people had 401(K)s that they liked here, we thought or made investments in college savings funds or retirement accounts, you thought about the things that returned quickly but you also thought about the things that returned over the long term.

And if MCC was set up to be a long term investment in our partners abroad, in a relationship with our partners abroad, in development in the countries that are our partners, then that implies that you need to work with them in a way that respects their leadership of their development as well.

And so it's kind of a four step argument to make. MCC is about long term investment. Long term investment is about therefore about partnerships. If you want to work with partners, you need to do it in a way that respects their leadership and their decision making as well, and that means country ownership.

If I sit down with someone tell them I've got a four part argument that explains why you should support MCC people generally kind of tend to tune out about after about argument 2. But I do want to put it out there because one if you can think of a way to say it in two steps then please stand up and do it.

But 2, I think it goes right to the heart of understanding what it is, why we spend time talking about country ownership. It's not because we think it's good for everyone's health, it's because we think it's the answer to the long term investment side of development in part.

Question: My name is Carolyn Rosie Lang with Plan International U.S.A. in the policy area.

First of all, I just want to congregate the underpinnings of MCC. I think after so many years of being, working at community levels that we are finally taking some of those lessons learned and working at a national level.

I also want to say about the point you just made about saying how to persuade. I think Colin Powell just made an interview a couple of weeks ago and he completely linked security with international development and eradication of poverty.

And I really believe we all have to be very clear in our message and really draw upon Obama's background in this new administration, so these strengthened to be able to make this argument.

I wanted to ask about failed states as well but I was happy my colleague made that question. We're very interested in the role of youth. I think the demographics of the world have changed pretty dramatically, and when we look out over this audience that we're probably in a minority of the age that the world is made up of.

It's very young. And youth have a lot to say, and they are going to be the future of many of the countries that we're working in, obviously. How are we working with them? How are we tapping their creativity? And are we using any kind of modern technology really for them to be able to participate in shaping the direction of development in many of the countries you're working in? Thank you.

Paul O'Brien: Thanks very much. I really like that last point. I was at a time in Uganda when I saw cell phones transform not just the economy but the polity, and how people engage with each other and putting the country together.

Any thoughts on youth and whether technology is changing the engagement of youth? Ambassador, I don't mean to put you on the spot too much, but Tanzania's participatory process in governance are well known around the world. So you're ahead of the game on most fronts, but does that include bringing youth into the discussion in a way that you've noticed?

Ambassador Sefue: Let me say something about the youth, also about the women. There was a question about women before. In our consultative process in Tanzania, a process really doesn't qualify as having been consultative if you cannot establish that a significant number of women were present. And this applies across the country. In the villages, for instance, I'll give you an example, we have a program with a called the Tanzania social action fund where the entire village would sit and set its own priorities and get a little support to get things done.

Now, for them to decide they have to we have to see minutes of the meeting. And those in attendance, there must be at least 40 percent of them as women. And of the committees they formed to manage those programs, at least 40 percent of them have to be women.

We don't have something specific for the youth. But my own experience is that the youth are actually the most active ones, especially within the civil society movement. We have a lot of civil societies that are run by young people, and they're very influential. And, of course, there's young people everywhere they're more tech savvy than everybody else and they always use technology.

Paul O'Brien: I'm afraid we're almost out of time. And I apologize to those who have been waiting patiently but I think I'm only going to be able to take one last question. And we'll need to let you all go. Thank you all of you for waiting patiently. I apologize to those who have waited patiently to ask a question, please.

Question: Thank you very much I'm Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika and ambassador of Zambia. I stood up to contribute to the question about what's the benefit for Americans. But I wanted to start by saying our elect president for a long time was asking, if you're a country like Zambia, where it's, you don't kill anybody, he used to say are we going to be punished for being good? I think the Millennium Challenge Corporation was really the answer for that category and because of time I can't go.

But I wanted to contribute, if I could, for the benefit I've been a bit surprised since I came here. I've been here for six years, but I also went to school here, so I've been coming for a long time, and the view of this partnership we started with donoring most Americans think they are giving. They are not conscious of what they are getting.

And my response is in general to the partners who take the Peace Corps, for example. You have young people who go to the village and they really give. But when I came back here I found Peace Corps volunteers, Congressmen and women in leadership. They gained so much from that experience that they are just in the category of their own. They're better citizens, better citizens of the world, and what they have gained is much more, but the American people don't know.

And when we come to Zambia, for example, for the threshold when we're working on the threshold, the people who worked in that threshold most of them are still in Zambia. They really went to they improved, got to a level they connected with the international community and they didn't want to come back. But they are contributing. So I think we don't really explain to the American people the benefits so they have this thing that they're always giving. But if you think even if the resources of Africa that have come, the [Inaudible] in your house, where you determine the price we didn't, that tea, that coffee from Starbucks, from Zambia, you know, which may be 20 here someone pays \$5 but the person who made the coffee is five cents. I think we need to help them, that they're in a global village where they are benefitting much more from other people, not only the money, and then when it comes to Africa, I think we have to really tell them the percentage, because they think a lot of money is going to Africa. But if you compare, you know the percentage what's going to other parts of the world, they might be more relaxed and let me say something about youth and women. Again from partners, if you look at most of our traditional society, the inclusion of women was always there. But not obvious. You know like we went to advise the king at night or they were singing a song, you know, about what the problem was. But when you have a formal delegation, usually it started by men. Now there are a few women.

It is so structured that the women don't fit in. So I think we really need to capture that both ways.

Paul O'Brien: Thank you, Ambassador.

(Applause)

I couldn't think of a more fitting end to a discussion around ownership. And I'd love to take more questions comments from the panel but I think I'll just thank them. Thank you very much for taking time today. Thank you very much. And it's great to see this kind of discussion going on in Washington around what really works and what the challenges are in development. And I hope particularly as development has been elevated in the discussion by the secretaries of defense and state, that these kinds of discussions continue to be a very important part of what we actually do at development in the years to come.

So thank you very much.

(Applause)