

Taking Action for the World's Poor and Hungry People

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Beijing, China • October 17–19, 2007

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY

Session: **Scaling Up Interventions Focused on the Poor and Hungry**
Co-Chairs: **Johannes Linn, Executive Director, Global Economy and Development, The Wolfensohn Center, The Brookings Institution, USA**
Fu Qin, Director, Institute of Agricultural Economics and Development, CAAS, China

with help of Rapporteur Iddi Samba, Former Minister of Industry and Trade, Tanzania, and Advisor, International Poverty Reduction Center in China (IPRCC)

Speaker: Roy Steiner, Senior Program Officer for Agricultural Development, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USA

Speaker: Daofeng He, Executive Vice President, China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, China

Speaker: Marie Ruel, Director, Food Consumption and Nutrition Division, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USA

Speaker: Jose Graziano da Silva, Resident Representative, Food and Agriculture Organization, Chile

Speaker: Pamela Anderson, Director General, International Potato Center, Peru

Speaker: Sona Varma, Economic Advisor, ICICI Bank, India

This was an exciting panel. We heard about the opportunities and challenges of scaling up many different types of development interventions in support of the poor and the hungry:

- The challenge faced by the largest philanthropy working on development issues, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation;
- China's challenge of blending government and NGO engagement
- IFPRI's involvement in meeting the nutrition challenge;
- Brazil's fight against hunger through its "Zero Hunger" program";
- The International Potato Institute's efforts to scale up innovative solutions for producing and marketing new potato products in Latin America;
- The challenge faced by ICICI, India's largest private bank, to scale up micro finance for the poor;
- Earlier in the day we heard from Kathy Spahn of Helen Keller International about the challenge of scaling up nutrition interventions around the globe.

The good news is that there was lots of agreement on what it takes to scale up development interventions, i.e. to reach more people over greater geographic spaces for a longer time. And there are success stories, among them those recounted by the panelists. Twelve key points were stressed by the panelists:

1. Scaling up is essential for reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
2. It's not the "what to do?," it's the "how to do it?" that is at issue.
3. We need to be clear about who we are scaling up for – it's for the people, for the poor, for women especially.
4. We need to have a vision, a new idea and effective leadership.
5. We need to have a long time horizon, and a stick-with-it attitude.
6. It helps to be deliberate and systematic – with a clear design and a scaling-up plan built in from the beginning.
7. Adaptive management systems help, with learning and feedback built in from the start.

8. This means that monitoring and evaluation of results, not just inputs, is key; for that you need good information from the community level up.
9. We need to embed sectoral and thematic strategies as integral parts of national poverty and development strategies and plans.
10. We need to reach out, communicate and build constituencies.
11. Resources matter—sustained financial support is essential, external to start with in many cases, but ultimately financing has to be based either on self-financing or on sustainable public financing.
12. Effective and broad-based partnerships are essential, even though managing these partnerships is often not easy.

Special points were added by individual speakers:

- Roy Steiner noted that NGOs need to be clear about their “exit strategy”, if their intervention is to be scaled up and sustained, i.e. who they will hand their initiative off to eventually—the private sector (in which case there has to be commercial viability) or the public sector (in which case there has to be political, organizational and fiscal support in government). In any case, a successful exit usually requires long-term engagement by the NGO.
- Sona Varma’s example of successful scaling up of micro finance by a private bank in India shows that the private sector has a built-in incentive to scale up initiatives that are profitable, but she also noted that the role of government in India is important in three respects:
 - It created an incentive for private banks to get into micro finance by requiring targeted lending for priority borrowers;
 - It did not set a ceiling on interest rates; and
 - It could and should do more to provide a good enabling environment (infrastructure, good regulatory practices, etc.)
- Daofeng He noted that China needs to have stronger, more effective NGOs and civil society organizations, which requires action both by the government and NGOs; he suggested that a competitive grant system for NGO financing would be helpful as a scaling up tool.
- Marie Ruel stressed the complexity of the challenge in nutrition programs, but also showed that there are clear success stories, Thailand and China in particular. China, however, also shows some of the possible pitfalls of success, as the country is now beginning to face an mounting obesity problem.
- Jose Graziano da Silva noted that top-down programs, such as conditional cash transfer programs, are not enough; they need to be complemented by initiatives to help individuals find productive jobs for long-term solutions to the poverty problem.
- Pamela Anderson gave us an example of a unique mix of actors coming together – an international agency, private firms, individual producers – to provide commercially solutions to the challenge of creating new products and markets for potatoes. Her experience also is a good example of a creative link between development research and development action. At the same time, she stressed the need for more research on how to meet the challenge of scaling up.

This panel discussion was of great benefit to me as a participant and listener. It serves as an excellent input into our work at the Wolfensohn Center for Development at the Brookings Institution, since we are focusing squarely on the challenge of scaling up.

There are of course many examples of successful scaling up experiences, and we have heard about some of them from the panelists today. But all too often fragmentation of development interventions, lack of replication of successful projects and programs, a prevalence of one-off initiatives, pilots that don’t lead anywhere, fads that come and go, a lack of stick-with-it attitudes hamper the impact of what we do to help the poor. So it should come as no surprise

that while we are all proud of the many individual success stories that we can cite, in the aggregate there is still too little progress in many countries and in many areas towards meeting the MDGs.

The most important change we need to work towards in my view, if we are to make real progress in achieving the MDGs, is to change our attitude and the values of the institutions that we work for, so that all of us focus systematically and continuously on scaling up and sustaining the effects of the interventions that we support. This requires better incentives top-down and greater accountability bottom-up. This may seem a huge task, and the challenges to scaling up and sustaining development efforts may seem great, but as we have learned from today's panelists, it can be done. So let's do it!

Thank you.