Address to the Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) Donor Meeting

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by
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The World Bank Group

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Mr. Wolfensohn addressed the meeting by recorded videotape

I would like to welcome you to this, the first TDR Donors Conference in 25 years and in doing so really remark on the fact that, for us in the World Bank, it is truly quite remarkable that an institution should have existed for so long with donors support without the need for conferences to raise money.

This in itself is a tremendous tribute to this remarkable organization. An organization which was not heavy in terms of building overheads, but which has built a network which is quite unprecedented in terms of international research. The numbers indeed are quite compelling: 6,700 scientists and 160 institutions in 127 countries. The donor base has been extraordinarily stable and well rewarded for what has been done.

We have, in fact, been very effective as a group; a group which has been led by WHO, UNDP and ourselves, but which in the end has been extraordinarily responsible to a Joint Coordinating Board - a Joint Coordinating Board which is comprised of those supporters of this remarkable endeavor, and the scientists that that make it possible. It's a network that's been stable which has been effective and which has looked not just at scientific research but also at issues of delivery and ways of which we can ensure that the results of our research are carried through.

We are all here today because we want to expand the operations and indeed at the last meeting it was agreed that we should. Not only to meet the needs of two new diseases (dengue and TB), new to us in terms of research and focus and challenging in terms of the impact on the people that we serve, but also so that we can get in social and behavioral questions more deeply and into economic questions so that we can be more effective in the work that we are doing.

This is a truly unique endeavor; an endeavor which the Bank has supported over these years with over 50 million US dollars. And an endeavor that we will continue to support because we recognize that to deal with the
questions of poverty, to deal with the issues of equity, to deal with the issues of justice in this world we must deal with the issues of health - and TDR is at the centre of those activities and deserves our support, and deserves your support.

Thank you for being with us at this meeting which I wish great success and I know we can count on you with your continued enthusiasm.