

## Remarks at the Second Glocalization Conference

by

James D. Wolfensohn  
President  
The World Bank  
Rome, Italy, May 23, 2003

I work, as you know, in the Bank and it is a development institution and it is a financial institution formed initially to deal with post World War II reconstruction, but thereafter it mutated to deal with the pressing issue of poverty. When we think about global development, we think in global terms. We think of a world of six billion people and five billion who live in developing countries. We think of a world in which three billion people live under \$2 a day, and a billion, two hundred million people live under \$1 a day. We think of a world in which there is great inequity, in which there are two million people that do not have clean water or sanitation. We think of a world in which there are far too many children living on the streets. We think of a world in which women are abused. We think of a world in which there is far too much suffering. We think of a world which in the Year 2000 the leaders of all countries came together looking at what the issues were facing the world and agreed in the Declaration of the Year 2000 that what was central for the next 25 years was halving the level of poverty, was dealing with infant mortality, maternal mortality, getting 130 million children into schools, dealing with the questions of preserving an environment for our children and for the generations to come, for getting clean water to people, for getting sanitation to people, for dealing with the human issues. They barely talked about economics. They talked about the goals in terms of humanity and in terms of people.

And that was a hugely significant step that our leaders took. And since then we have had meetings in Monterrey and we have had meetings in Johannesburg, we have had meetings in Brazil and other places on the environment, and the rich and the poor countries have agreed that no one can confront these issues alone. That this is a partnership. That there are no longer days when a decision is taken in Washington or in Frankfurt or in Rome or in any developed country about what developing countries should do. That the real responsibility for the future rests with the people that run developing countries, with the citizens of those countries, and that we have no right in the developed world to impose a system or to suggest mechanisms by which the aspirations of people can be achieved. This is something that must be set by the citizens of countries in which they live. And we have evolved into a dialogue in which it has been agreed between rich and poor countries, between those that are developed and those that are developing, that the developing countries should set their own objectives within the framework of their culture and their history and their beliefs, and that they should establish within those countries the system of governance, a system of equity, of justice, of financial systems that provide help for everybody, and that they

should combat the corruption which has affected so many of their countries.

And this was not something that was imposed by the rich countries. This was something that the leaders of developing countries decided themselves. They said you cannot have equitable development, you cannot have equity, you cannot combat poverty unless you get the governance system right, and that they would develop their programs of education, of health, of infrastructure that would be carried on by them but with the assistance and partnership with the rich countries.

And then the rich countries said: if you do all that you have set out, then we will help. We'll provide support for building capacity in governance and in leadership areas. We'll provide additional resources in the form of overseas development assistance, and we will open our markets for trade. We'll give you an opportunity to trade with us, because our future is your future.

Before September 11th, many people in the United States thought that there were two worlds. There was the rich world, separated by a wall from the developing world. On September 11th, at least for Americans, in the image of the World Trade Center collapsing there is the image of that "wall" coming down, but in the image of Afghanistan intruding in Wall Street--but they were not Afghans but others who had used Afghanistan to create terror in the United States. We have seen since then terrorism traversing borders, and we have become aware that there are not two worlds. There is only one world, and it is linked by trade and finance and crime and drugs and trading and commerce and banking and migration, and that for our children education in the developed world cannot just rest with education about European and American history. We need to know about Islam, about India, about China, about Africa. We need to understand that our planet has changed. We need our children to be trained for a different and more diverse and rich world.

And our leaders are looking also at the future because in the next 25 years the world will grow by two billion people to eight billion and the five billion out of six today in developing countries becomes seven billion out of eight, and in 50 years it becomes eight billion out of nine. And Europe, as we know it today, will be smaller and older. And Jacques Diouf, who is here from FAO, is spending his time looking at the issues of food and subsistence for that world. And we are becoming aware of the fact that we are not just citizens of Italy and other countries but that we are planetary citizens and that we have to think of things in terms of global considerations.

But that's what I talk about each day. That is what I will be talking about at the Summit on June 1st when the leaders of the G8 and the leaders of 20 largest developing countries come together to talk about this new partnership.

And so why is it that I am here? Why is it that I believe in the Glocal Forum? It is very simple. We did a study of 60,000 people that live in poverty in 60 countries, and what you come up with is not statistics. You come up with stories of individuals that relate to hope, that relate not to charity but to opportunity, that relate to a chance for their children, that relate to women who wish to be safe from physical abuse,

that relate to issues of equity and freedom from corruption, that want for their children an opportunity, that want freedom, that want voice and a chance to express their views, that want a sense of community, that want to live together in peace. And those are not statistical issues. Those are human requirements. And the place that humanity touches people in poverty is in rural areas, but also in ever increasing numbers at the level of cities and towns, and these issues cannot be dealt with by central, federal administrations.

In the next 25 years, two billion more people will move into cities and towns. The administration of those cities and towns will be by mayors like you. It will not be by prime ministers and presidents. The delivery of services will be done in local communities. The voices of poor people will be heard in local communities, not at the level of federal governments. The help will be created in communities, and that is why we, at the Bank, have been so anxious to be supportive of this enterprise. It just stands to reason that if you can engage the administrations of cities and towns in the pursuit of poverty alleviation, you are engaging the people that know about people and know about delivery of services, that can interface with communities and can build a passion for development. There is no sense in talking just about an extra few billion dollars in money or even about the importance of trade if you do not also talk about passion, commitment, human commitment, human relationships with people in our communities. This is not a statistical exercise.

We will have a statistical exercise in Evian and we will talk about money and we will talk about global issues, but the place that the heart and soul will be met is in the communities, and all of you who have come to this meeting as mayors of cities and towns throughout the world must understand that your individual contributions are going to be the things that make the difference. I truly believe that. I truly believe that if we can build a sense of hope and a sense of passion and a sense of love in communities, that we have a chance of dealing with the question of poverty and peace. And that if we do not build these relationships, you cannot build them statistically. It requires people, it requires commitment, it requires passion and it requires you.

This group has grown since last year and you can say that we have lots of groups in the world of mayors and sister cities' programs and mayors' programs and cities alliances and so on, but the one thing that distinguishes the Glocal Forum is that you understand the relationship between development, hope and peace. That is what is special about this group. It is not just about exports and imports important as they are, it is not about charity. It is about peace, and about hope, and it's about individuals.

I know Mayor Veltroni knows that here. He is coming to a meeting we are running on the Roma communities in Budapest. I just had to mention it to him and he was ready to be there. But it is not just Roma communities in Europe, it is the disadvantaged around the world who will make the difference between peace and between a future for our children. It is about partnership and commitment of rich to poor, of developed to developing, of city to city. So I am really thrilled to be here with you who are on the frontline of this effort, and I want to offer you the

total support of my institution and, more than that, the total respect of my institution for stepping out of local politics and understanding that if you want enduring peace and you want hope, then institutions like the Glocal Forum need your support.

So I thank you for allowing me to be with you. I am especially thrilled that in my discussions with Quincy [Jones] earlier today we also recognized that culture and music are central to that activity and we hope that we can join some of our efforts with those of Quincy in terms of his efforts as we move forward together. You should think of the Glocal Forum as a family. You should think of your cities as part of a global family, and you should think that peace will only come if you give that family love and commitment, and I appreciate so much what you are doing. Thank you very much.