

Closing Remarks at the Shanghai Conference on Scaling Up Poverty
Reduction

By
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Vice Premier Hui Liangyu, my co-chairman and friend, the Finance
Minister, Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentlemen.

Let me, first of all, return the compliment, on behalf of all of us, to
you, Mr. Vice Premier, to you, Mr. Minister, and you, Mr. Mayor, for the
great contribution that you have made to the success of this meeting. I
don't think any of us could have imagined a more well-organized
conference or a more warm welcome than you have given us here in
Shanghai, and I would like everyone to join me in expressing our thanks
to you.

[Applause.]

We have I think made some history at this conference. The first thing is
that it is the first international conference that I've ever been to
where the communiqué was not written in advance of the conference, and we
were struggling in the last period to try and come up with what the
conclusions were not based on what we thought the conclusions should be,
but actually what emerged from the discussions.

And I think the beauty of the conference has been that all of us have
come to this conference in a way as students. We have come with the
belief that we all have something to learn from each other and that there
is no single message that emerges from this meeting. Each one of us will
take away something different. And I will take away from it some
programmatic thrusts for the Bank and some things that I think I will do
differently, and it is my hope that every one of you will do the same
because I think the result of this conference is really a personal one.

It will be one that each of us can draw lessons from. We know that there
is no silver bullet, there is no single way to achieve our objectives.
But I think we'll all go out from here with a feeling that we have got a
lot to learn from each other and that mutual respect, and tolerance, and
the understanding that we will never achieve scaling up unless we work
together is a message that we can all (take) from this conference.

The other thing that I think is really important here is that we've had
the remarkable opportunity to look at China, which is a particular
experience in itself. How could we have found a place to deal with
scaling up that was more an example of scale than China itself?

And so having the opportunity to be here as a yardstick has I think been extraordinarily important and of great benefit to all of us. But even our Chinese hosts would not suggest that everything that has been done in China immediately applies in every other country, nor would they I think suggest that there are things that they could not benefit from in the debate and discussions with all of us.

And the result of this remarkable interchange has been that there are no heroes at this meeting, there are no leaders emerging. Every one of you is a leader, and every one of you has made a contribution. So, for those of us that took part in the creation and the organization, I want to thank all of you for coming and for contributing in as open a way as you have at these discussions. The conference would not have been successful, as an organizational matter, had it not been for the contribution that each of you has made. And I'm personally very grateful to you, and I know that I and my colleagues have learned a great deal from this meeting.

I don't want to cover at length anything very much because it's covered in the preamble that we put forth in the paper that's been given to you, but I would like to make just two general comments.

The first is that all of us has to work politically to ensure that poverty and the alleviation of poverty is central on the global agenda. I believe that today it is not central on the global agenda. I believe that today lip service is given to the question of poverty. There are safe statements made by just about everybody about the issue of the Millennial Goals and about poverty. But the real issues today that seem to be on the mind of the world, terrorism, Iraq, Afghanistan, strains in the Trans-Atlantic Alliance, budget deficits, parochial problems, the visible problems that must be dealt with that are immediate, while attention is given less to the equally inevitable and the equally dangerous problems that come with poverty.

We must deal with the question of social equity and social justice. Because without dealing with that question of poverty, there can't be any peace, and \$900 billion being spent on military expenditure, \$300 billion being spent on agricultural subsidies, and \$50- or \$60 billion being spent on overseas development assistance is one of the absurdities that we have to change.

And so I think all of us have to go out of here with a certain missionary zeal to try and remind people that poverty and the environment in which we live are the real challenges for peace and that we need to give them priority.

And the second, and last, thing I'd like to say is that we have talked about economics, we have talked about advances that must be made for social justice, and we've talked about steps that need to be taken in empowerment and in the methodologies that we can use to scale up.

But the one thing that we have not talked about and that I think all of us need to recognize is that if we are to be effective in advocating the

case for poverty reduction, and hopefully eradication, is that we have to do it with a sense of moral principle, a sense of ethical principle, and a sense of belief that what we are doing is right. We should be addressing the question of poverty not just from economics, but because dealing with equity and social justice is right.

We should not be afraid to say that there is a human content in what we're doing, but there is also a moral and, if you like, spiritual content in what we're doing. We are not here just as economists. We are here because we owe every human being in the world an opportunity and a chance to fulfill their destiny.

And so going out from this meeting I hope that we're enriched with the methodologies, we're enriched with the economics, but we can also feel a little bit uplifted and a little bit responsible to go out from here to deal with the question of scaling up of poverty alleviation because it's right, and as members of the human race, it's something that we should do.

Thank you very much to our hosts, and thank you all for being here.