World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim Comments at a Joint Press Conference with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

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World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim
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Transcript

PRESIDENT MUSEVENI: This is the Secretary-General, this is the President of the World Bank, this is Mary Robinson, and all the dignitaries who are here, my goal is a simple one, it is simply to welcome our guests and ask them to say something. That's all I have to say.

DR. KIM: Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Just briefly I would like to say that first I'm very honored to be here in Uganda. I apologize for my voice.

I spent so much time and energy in putting together the $1 billion that I lost my voice.

[Laughter.]

DR. KIM: I want to first of all thank President Museveni for your leadership and your tireless efforts to bring about agreement and peace in the region, and I also want to thank the Secretary-General for allowing our team to travel with him.

We believe it's a landmark framework agreement, and we believe that now is the opportunity to take the next step, and the next step is that we still have work to do in terms of ensuring peace and security, but we can't wait until all the conflict is over before investing
in development. We've got to start right now and, under your leadership, Your Excellency, I think the international conference in the Great Lakes Region could move forward the insistence that we use the platform of the framework agreement to begin talking about energy and agriculture and access to education and health care. These are the very concrete dividends for peace that we think will convince people to lay down their arms and to regain their hope for the future.

You know, the Secretary-General says over and over again that development is the key to lasting peace. We believe that and that's why we're here.

In fact, many people have asked us on this trip, the conflict is not over, why would you be putting $1 billion on the table when the conflict is not over, and the answer is very clear. If, in fact, the roots of the conflict are that people are poor, people don't have jobs, people don't have health, education, and most importantly, people have no hope, then exactly now is the time to begin investing. Our $1 billion, we hope, will encourage others, donors and also people from the private sector to invest in this region. There are enormous riches in this region, but the resource that makes this place the richest of all is its people. We must not wait until all the fighting is over to begin investing in people right now. That's why we're here, that's why we're doing it together.

The founders of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions always intended for us to work together just like this. It is my great honor to follow the leadership of the Secretary-General and begin bringing that vision to reality, and it's a message that we don't want to be lost that, in bringing this new reality of the work together between the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions, I don't want anyone to forget that we're starting right here in the Great Lakes Region. That's how seriously we take the issues here, but that's also an indication of how much hope and optimism we bring with us. Thank you.

[Applause.]

**QUESTION:** What are the special terms we should expect from the World Bank?

**DR. KIM:** Well, I think that the World Bank, if nothing else, we focus intensively on working with governments so that the governments' priorities are prioritized.

You may know that among all the different agencies that provide funding for governments, we're one of the few that provide it directly to many of the governments in the form of
budget support, in which case it's really the governments' priorities which drive forward the programs and projects.

Now, of course, we have participated in designing the projects, we participated in bringing evidence, but if there's one thing that's clear about the World Bank of 2013, is that we do not have prescriptions for countries and for regions.

For this particular initiative, we're adding $1 billion on top of the loans and grants that we're giving to particular countries. And so, we have to have a discussion across the region about what the top priorities are. And what we hear again and again and again is that it's energy. We need energy to keep the lights on in schools, to keep the incubators on in hospitals, but also to drive private sector investment and the growth of jobs.

There's widespread agreement, we need transportation, we need lowering trade barriers. So, the things that we're doing with the regional resources that we've brought to the table are the things that have been identified again and again as the very top priorities across the region.