

Transcript: World Bank Group President David Malpass at the Center for Global Development

November 5, 2019

World Bank Group President David Malpass

Event at the Center for Global Development

Washington, D.C., United States

Transcript

MR. AHMED: It's our pleasure and our privilege to welcome David Malpass, president of the World Bank Group, to come and share with us a little bit his vision, the way he sees the development process, the way he sees the role of the World Bank. And the way we thought we would run this session is that we'd have a conversation for the next half-an-hour or so, and then I'd like to open it up and invite you to come in with your own questions for him. I'm sure many people in this room have questions.

I also want to welcome all the people that are joining us online. These days, more people join us online than you actually see in the room.

I think some of these cameras must be working and are livestreaming us as we speak.

So, and they will send questions and, if they do, we will certainly share those with you.

So, I thought maybe the first question--I know, David, you have just come back this weekend from a trip to India and Pakistan and Saudi. And over the last six months, now that you've been at the Bank, about that period, you've been to countries in Africa, countries in Asia, countries in South Asia. And you have been able to get a sense of both the challenges they face and their expectations from the World Bank.

And I know you have said that, at a number of occasions that, for you, a really important role for the Bank is to help countries get better development outcomes.

So, I wanted to ask you, you know, after this period, do you see some common challenges emerging? Are there common patterns? Are there things that you've taken away from this six-month journey that you think will help you shape the remainder of your presidency?

MR. MALPASS: Sure, and good to be here. And hi, everybody.

So, I guess the common challenges are world growth is slowing. The governance issues are apparent around the world. That's rule of law. How do you settle disputes, how do you have contracts that are transparent, fair, where do they go, and that facilitate better living standards. So, those are some of the common problems.

But also, it strikes me, I mean--a couple things. One is the differences among countries, but even within countries.

So, in Mozambique, there's a north and a south. In India, there are over a billion people, all with very diverse needs and interests and challenges facing

[Video skips]

and trade in Pakistan. So, that goes to the diverse parts of it that deal with different levels of development and different levels of income.

So, those are kind of fully engaged in these Regions. We have offices, often sizable offices, in quite a few countries, very focused on what the specific circumstances of the country are and what might be a way forward.

In India, I gave two speeches. There were lots of meetings, but two formal speeches, one attended by the Prime Minister that was on the reform of the financial system in India where they have big, state-owned banks that have a lot of the deposits. And they're trying to find ways to have more lending to small business and so on.

So, how do you increase the dynamism of the financial sector? How do you deepen capital packages? So, those are challenges they want to try to move forward on.

And the second speech was--so, that first speech was to people who are already policymakers in India; so, more senior people. And then, I spoke to the civil servants in India, which is the new class. They have a very formal process of inducting people into the civil service, and I'd been asked to inspire them, to talk about what--how could they make a difference with India's system, which I tried to do.

MR. AHMED: So, obviously, both of these are countries that are becoming middle-income, and one set of countries in which not just the Bank but most international agencies, have had a harder time trying to find the right set of instruments, right set of policies, is what you might call fragile states and conflict-affected countries.

And increasingly, all the projections are that, going forward, a large number of--the vast majority of poor people actually end up being in these countries. And I know the Bank has, for the last year, been trying to put together a strategy to--its strategy for working in these countries.

I know that the IFC, under the window from IDA, is not only trying to support private sector in poor countries, but particularly focusing now on the sort of fragile states.

And I want to get a little bit of your sense of how you think that set of challenges is going to play out in terms of the Bank. Do you feel we kind of have a game plan for dealing with that? Is it going to be harder? So, it would be good to get your sense on that.

MR. MALPASS: Okay, I don't want to go on too long, and I'm not the expert on this, but I'll name several parts of it.

One is the personnel impact. So, how do we have people who are really interested in helping with development in hard-to-live-in places, either because of the violence or because of the fragility or just the very poverty of the country? And so, that changes the recruiting patterns that we want to employ. So, that's part of it and we call that the global footprint of the Bank. So, that means people living in different spots having more of their concerns be security-related, meaning both physical security, their own health, and the office itself. So, that's one aspect.

The thing that's most important to us is how do you get growth or poverty alleviation?

How can the Bank participate in trying to help the countries not fall into fragility?

We do have a--so, we really actively would like to see countries that are--try to avoid a situation where they slide into fragility. If they are in very difficult circumstances, how do you help get them out?

And then, if they emerge from that, how do you keep them from sliding back? Because one of the patterns of this is countries coming in and out, meaning not making steady progress forward. So, we're trying to do that.

In the Annual Meetings, which we just concluded a couple weeks ago, we had substantial discussion of what's called JET, Jobs and Economic Transformation. So, it's a very focused effort of how do you have jobs for young people, for women, for small businesses in fragile states? So, what are the keys to allowing that to happen?

So, there's this big effort, driven both from inside the Bank, meaning people want to do it; but also with the engagement with donors, and with shareholders, with stakeholders. The world wants this to be tackled.

And so, final point is, then, if we think of it regionally, there are quite a few regions--so, there's the Sahel, which is the south side of the Sahara and is--has lots of young people who don't have jobs, who then migrate or flow--and security issues; the Horn of Africa, where we think there's been progress. I mean, excuse me, there has been progress, peacemaking between Ethiopia and Eritrea; but Sudan, even South Sudan having the possibility of stabilization.

In Riyadh last week I met with the Prime Minister of Yemen. And I don't know if you've seen the news today but there's progress on the south side of Yemen, which has had substantial instability. So, the World Bank has quite--has been involved in Yemen on and off for years.

And I didn't mention--and so, and we're continuing to--or engage and to encourage positive developments in the stabilization or in the positive changes that might be happening, there.

And I said last point, but I'll make a last point: One part of this is arrears clearance for those countries. So, there's a technical challenge for the Bank that we work closely with the IMF on in, if a country owes the multilateral institutions, then there needs to be a financial engagement in order to allow the international community to become more involved. So, specifically in Somalia, we think we're close to that. So, we push on that every day. And Sudan will also face that problem.

MR. AHMED: It will take a little longer, yeah.

MR. MALPASS: So, these are sizable sums, meaning loans that the countries undertook years or even decades ago that are still outstanding.

MR. AHMED: So, you mentioned that other people who want the Bank to be involved, and I think in fragile states, particularly, but more generally, when you're working in countries, now, you know, the Bank has got a sort of program of work, but then there are many others who are working alongside.

So, there are regional development banks. In fragile states, you're working with humanitarian agencies, with UN system, and increasingly now with some bilaterals that

are quite big. So, in terms of investment projects, obviously, China is a big player in many countries in Africa.

How do you see sort of the Bank's role in terms of trying to work within a sort of system of institutions? And what's the way in which you think we can make the most progress? You remember the G20 report that was done, the Eminent Persons Group--

MR. MALPASS: Yes.

MR. AHMED: --came out with this recommendation of country platforms. Those country platforms are sort of, I would say, still in the making a year later. How energetically do you think we should pursue that agenda, or are there better ways to get coordination?

MR. MALPASS: I supported the country--I worked hard and pushed along the country platform idea from Treasury, and we're taking up that from World Bank.

So, really, it's a fancy phrase and term for coordination among the different development community actors within a country to engage with the governments of the countries themselves.

So, the ideal situation is when either a prime minister or a minister of the country is-- she's very engaged, very dynamic, and has a vision for where they want to go and calls together and convenes the various donors which might be bilateral, and also civil society groups, maybe private sector groups, the people that are most wanting to have success and get them to talk and get them to coordinate their efforts to avoid the situation where they are either giving conflicting advice or having programs that counteract each other.

And so, what we've done from the World Bank standpoint is, rather than have lots of planning exercises and international conferences in New York or in Europe, we just asked our Country Directors--I really want our efforts to be focused from the individual countries and the regions in order to try to have these situations improve.

So, we've asked those Country Directors, and they might be IFC, the International Finance Corporation part of the Bank, or the World Bank portion, to examine what the opportunities are to get people to come together and work collectively.

So, we have a set of countries that we call "pilot," but it's really just beginning the process. So, we have quite a few where we think there is--there already were, basically, coordination groups, and they come--sometimes they're in sector-level. So, the people

interested in health in Cambodia may already have been meeting--they have been. And so, they work kind of to reinforce each other's efforts to get good outcomes. So, I've wanted people to have a broad definition of what qualifies as a successful country platform.

And then, I wanted to make the broader point, you know, there's been lots of talk about multilateralism. The way I boil it down is we're trying to have very effective international coordination, and that means in ways that really help the country or the region get ahead. And I think in many cases that's happening and can be even more effective.

MR. AHMED: So, maybe from that, I can go into sort of issues and goals beyond countries, because of course there are quite a few challenges that we face as a world where the solutions don't lie purely in a country-by-country model, whether it's pandemic flu or whether it's looking at climate mitigation or--and the Bank has an ongoing role in all of these. How do you see--but it's always sat a little bit uneasily within the Bank alongside a mainstream organizational structure that was organized around a country-by-country model? So, people did the country work and then, you know, through a variety of trust funds or other instruments, the Bank does these other things.

And some people would argue, well, over the next ten years, actually, this is where increasingly the world faces a gap in action and the Bank's work begins to play a bigger role.

How do you see that balance? How do you see the cross-country or global public goods work sitting inside the Bank?

MR. MALPASS: I was just writing "global public goods." So, I wrote down the learn--so, I wanted to mention several aspects of this.

One is there's lots of value in knowledge, in data, and the Bank maintains a big effort to try to collect data. So, the Bank actually does surveys in, or commissions surveys, in countries to--in order to have a basis for what the programs and policies might be. So, we can continue that.

We continue to innovate in ways to analyze data. We just came out in the Annual Meetings last week with the "Learning Poverty," which--or call it an index. And it's based on a straightforward idea that, by the age of ten, your goal is to have both boys and girls be able to read basic stories in their native language.

And the problem that that finds as you collect the data is that, in some countries, 70 percent can't. And so, the problem that causes is up--or obvious problem even at age ten, but it's very hard to correct at a later age.

And so, think of the outlook for a girl that's ten that's going to--in a lot of countries, not have the option of even going to high school, to secondary school, and this is giantly problematic. So, by having the data and talking about it with the countries as we do, then we can help them improve. The hope is that they will look inside and see that they have a program that is not working and then take steps to try to improve it, because we have to have a better launch for kids by the age of ten.

So, I wanted to mention the Doing Business Index. We published that last week. So, it's a way, around the world, quite meaningful for a lot of countries to look at how businesses are allowed to form in their country and then rate that. And rate a country versus where it was last year.

So, fortunately for my trip, India and Pakistan had both advanced in the rankings, as had Saudi Arabia. So, that was--and a good spot for me to be encouraging the country on. But they all then want to know, "How can we go higher next year?" Which is very specific changes in law or in their process to allow businesses to form.

We want--or we and they--would like an environment where a new business can be formed pretty quickly, where a woman can form the business, not just men, and there's some process--there's confidence in the process enough that you're willing to give it a try.

I wanted to mention two other things.

We'll be coming out next spring with "Women, Business, and the Law." So, an important part of the change going on right now which we're trying to encourage, really, globally is empowerment of women and girls, and that means across a broad range.

That means to be allowed to have education, to be allowed to have documents that allow you to travel within the country and outside the country, inheritance processes, and so on.

There's a substantial number of steps that can be done, and that the economic payoff is huge, because women are half the population; and yet, often--like, in Pakistan, the

female labor participation rate in the official labor force is just 25 percent, which means a big resource of the country isn't available. Now, many of them work at home--

MR. AHMED: Work at home, yeah.

MR. MALPASS: --which we're working to try to allow that--them to have the choice. Are they doing it--are there opportunities?

Two more things.

In the area of trade, this is trade facilitation. So, if we think about countries, they cross borders within Regions and within continents, even, and need some kind of--or there are lots of barriers that are really economically costly because of those--inability to ship goods within a country or across a border, or it takes too long. And so, perishables can't really be shipped because it's going to take ten days in customs.

And global public goods, that's where we started, so, just a point on that. We're evolving our program with China, and with many other countries, to take fuller account of activities that are happening within their country but that have an impact outside the borders of their country.

That might be pollution that flows downriver or it might be marine plastics that go in the ocean, it might be air pollution, and effectiveness in terms of climate changes.

MR. AHMED: And so, maybe just one further point on global public goods, since you said--I think one way, as you say, is that in middle-income countries, whether it is in China or other--the Bank's operational program can shift to emphasize more these sort of spillover kind of activities, you know, the regional or global public goods.

And then, there is a sort of role--you made a set of commitments, which I understand the Bank is following through on in terms of, say, climate--share of total operations, or climate-related funding.

And then, there's sort of a global dialogue and leadership role on that, which I think at the moment is sort of sat a little uneasily between UN or other agencies. Sometimes the Bank's taken a bigger role. And that's clearly also one of the areas in which--because it does get backed up with a lot of financing, can be a big way to move, whether it's climate or pandemics, that agenda, forward. And I'm kind of assuming that's going to be a continued part of the Bank's mandate or work going forward.

MR. MALPASS: That's right. And so, what--what we've wanted to focus on is getting the job done in-country. So, I've not been wanting to spend so much time in the conferences but more time with the countries in them moving forward.

And so, because our commitments and our mission, I think, is quite clear. And so, the challenge, or a big part of the challenge, is actually seeing countries implement their goals and including climate goals and do it in a way that they--that moves them forward. Because if we look around the world, you know, the growth in developing countries, we're just right now working on IDA19, the replenishment of the part of the Bank that works on the poorest countries. And one of the concerning things in that is the median incomes in the poorer countries are going up slower than the median incomes in the middle-income countries.

And the Bank knows--I mean, not perfectly, but knows a lot about the data in these two groups. And so, it gives you concern that the divisions are widening rather than narrowing.

MR. AHMED: Narrowing. I wanted to turn it over--but maybe one last topic that I wanted to get your view on is an issue that you have spoken out on a lot in the last few months, and that is growing problem of debt, and particularly debt in low-income countries where I think about half of low-income countries now are sort of either in or high risk of distress; and sort of the issue of the lack of transparency associated with the debt numbers. And for example, you know, after--Tim Adams is sitting in the front row, here.

MR. MALPASS: I see.

MR. AHMED: And you know, one of the things that the IIF has been doing for the last 18 months is sort of coming up with this voluntary disclosure code for at least the banks who lend to sovereigns. And you know, you can argue that's a small part of the puzzle or it's not complete and it's voluntary, but at least it sort of moves that forward.

I want to get a little bit your sense of both the bigger issue and also how we can advance this transparency agenda. I mean, will it make a difference? How can we do it? Because from where I sit, I see a lot of conversation on it, but 18 months later, I don't feel any closer to it being implemented than I did, then.

MR. MALPASS: Great point. Let me start a little back.

Global growth is slowing, so investment has been weak in developing countries. And so, the challenge is how do you create an environment where investment can occur more readily, and that brings you to the transparency in the debt? So, it's not clear whether it's the amount of the debt or the uncertainty about what the terms are.

So, to--as we think about it from a goal of having people be able to choose their leaders or understand what their government is doing, first principle would be that governments, when they enter into contracts, debt contracts, that there's some disclosure of what's the interest rate, how many years do we have to pay it back? What other things were done on the side, meaning did we agree to ship all of our natural resources for the next ten years? And what did we get for the debt, meaning what is the quality of the project that's being done?

And because part of the problem is, in difficult countries--or really in all countries--it's hard to know what a good investment is, and that's across all sorts of fields, meaning are railroads a good investment? Are roads a good investment. How much should they cost? Are more schools versus more textbooks--and on down the whole list of things that you can think about.

And so, we can't decide that. And so, what we can do, I think, as a principle, is say that there should be some transparency about what the terms are.

And so, now, to your point of, it doesn't seem like any progress. So, I started this hard at Treasury. We established, I think, the idea that this is really an important direction.

At the World Bank, what we are trying to do is--or we struggled with this because the more you dig into it, the more complexity comes out.

There is the issue of what's the collateral, what liens are involved. Were any in--so, and a little-known aspect of this: The World Bank has made loans to lots of countries. They usually have a negative-pledge clause, meaning the country is not supposed to pledge its assets to somebody else, because that undercuts their ability to repay.

Well, that hasn't been--

MR. AHMED: Enforced.

MR. MALPASS: honored--in a few cases, we don't--and so, you dig into it and it gets more. And I could do quite a few more aspects of the complexity of this.

So, what I said was, "Look, just take some countries and tell me all you know about the debt." So, we're working on some pilot countries where we are trying to build from the bottom--you might say, "How long can that take?" Well, it ends up taking three, four, five months, because it involves--because the contracts are really complicated and--well, another aspect I didn't mention, some lenders have been writing into their contract's nondisclosure clauses, even into contracts with governments.

So, the government says, "I'm prohibited from telling you what the debt is that I've got--" or I mean, "I borrowed." Well, that, then does not create an attractive environment for new investment to come in. So, how can we work on organizing that?

So, what we're doing is trying to understand the debt in those countries that really want to help move that forward. And with that information, then we'll better understand the types of debt. This is a fast-moving target, because as soon as you find out a given kind of term in a contract, then clever financiers think up another way of doing it. And so, you're trying to move quickly to get more transparency in the debt so that the projects can have better quality.

MR. AHMED: And of course, you could argue that in some of the countries the Ministry of Finance or the central debt office itself doesn't have the full information because a lot of it is borrowed by state-owned enterprises with some kind of implicit, contingent government guarantee that doesn't show up until it's called.

MR. MALPASS: Exactly right. So, we have active technical assistance programs--or one aspect of what the World Bank Group does is: tries to help countries to have the capacity to really get all the contracts known.

I mean, do you have a full list of all the contracts that you've entered into? Do you have a copy of them? Can we have a spreadsheet of them? And what's the variation of the terms? And so on like that, and that turns out to be a lot of work, and countries need to build the capacity, which we're helping with.

MR. AHMED: And I mean, as civil society, I should just say, from where we sit, it would be great if that information was available for analysts to be able to review and analyze so that--you know, sunshine is the best disinfectant. The more you can get people to look at it, the better.

MR. MALPASS: Right.

MR. AHMED: We can continue with this conversation, but I want to actually make sure we give an opportunity to people in the room to raise comments, and I'll try and take three at a time.

So, let's see, now. One, two, and three, here. Then, I'll come to that side.

So, first is gentleman over here.

QUESTION: Thank you. Mr. Malpass, thanks so much for your review, particularly of your recent trip. One of my favorite parts about--I'm John Coonrod, with The Hunger Project.

One of my favorite parts to the Bank is the Partnership for Social Accountability and it's having its forum in a couple of weeks. And it's been a real interesting innovation of the Bank which is owned by its member countries to really directly work with civil society in improving governance.

And at this time of closing civil society space, how do you see your leadership and the Bank's leadership to expand civil society space and improve that kind of social accountability?

MR. AHMED: Okay. And then, I think I had a second one in the back there. Yes, thank you.

QUESTION: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you. John Fei with the Mansfield Foundation. I wanted to say, can you comment on how the Bank is working with multilateral institutions such as the AIIB and the New Development Bank?

MR. AHMED: Okay, thank you.

And then, there was--right in the front here, and then I'll come to the other side.

QUESTION: Hi, Peter Semler, I'm with Capital Intelligence.

This is just to get back on the transparency on lending to developing world nations, especially China. This was a major issue of contention at the IMF/World Bank. Do you think the World Bank and the IMF could do a one-stop program--since the United States is a 25-percent shareholder and all the shareholders--so that we could have a one-stop so all these documents could be put in one place for review by both the IMF and the World Bank, sir? Thank you.

MR. AHMED: So, this is that information that we're talking about--

QUESTION: Yeah, yeah, Rhode Initiative [phonetic], yeah.

MR. AHMED: --in a repository at either the World Bank or the IMF--

QUESTION: Or both.

MR. AHMED: Yeah.

MR. MALPASS: Well, you phrased it differently. And the gentleman has--is that a camera on? I see.

Okay. So, with regard to this space for CSOs, we're doing several things. One is encouraging the dialogue in-country. And I mentioned, in the country platforms, it's an integral part. And trying to have the civil society input be recognized--and we can help some with that, with rule of law processes.

So, if you think of rule of law, broadly, it involves, in some way, the engagement of various parts of society... and accountability, you know, there are many aspects of this in terms of the interaction between governments, their court systems, and their contract enforcement rule.

So, in India, one of the areas that they don't score so high on in the Doing Business Report is the dispute settlement. Once there is a contract that's in dispute, then it goes into a court system that's backlogged. And so, then that undercuts the ability of dispute resolution, and it would be better if you could find a faster path and move on and do better. So, all of those go together to create more space for civil society organizations. On AIIB, that's the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank, I was on a panel with the head of it in Riyadh. So, we had a good conversation about ways to cooperate, but also ways to have standards that are good, that are discussed. And AIIB has been--has--we've participated in--they've participated in co-financings with the World Bank and it's been an effective relationship.

And the new development bank in China, same--you know, people are--there are new entities coming on. My own view is the World Bank is able to operate in a lot of countries. And so, my job is to try to make it as effective as possible. So, we talk with all the other organizations, but I'm very focused on how do we, either singly or as a group, get good outcomes, help countries get to good outcomes on their development.

Now, with regard to this gentleman, so there is an effort, and the IIF is involved in how do you make public information that you find on debt. And that turns out to have challenges depending on what type of debt. So, the initiative I was talking about on

transparency is to have governments themselves be transparent in the contracts that they are entering into.

MR. AHMED: Okay, there's a lady right next to you, just behind--I'll come to you, later, but there's a lady just behind you over there.

There you go.

QUESTION: Nadia Daar with Oxfam.

Mr. Malpass, given the World Bank's twin goals to eliminating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity, given that the Poverty and Equity Global Practice says that we can't tackle poverty without tackling inequality, and your commitment to SDG 4 on education and the right to education for all, I'm wondering what you think of--or do you think the World Bank Group should be supporting for-profit schools that charge fees to poor families, sometimes up to 40 percent of a poor family's household income to send one child to school, and that risk deepening inequalities?

Thank you.

MR. AHMED: Okay, thank you.

And then, this lady right over here.

QUESTION: Good afternoon. This is Javaria Tareen and I'm from Pakistan. I live in Balochistan, and I'm heading a first-ever think tank in Balochistan, Balochistan Institute of Research and Development, and I'm a journalist by background.

Well, the normal perception in Pakistan is that when the World Bank come and help the Government of Pakistan, the public goes against the government.

So, you being a new President of the World Bank, what are--you know, what will be your strategy to tackle that challenge for the World Bank?

And the second, being from Balochistan, I have felt and have experienced that the World Bank does not work with the civil society much, but they worked mostly with the stakeholders, with the government department. So, what are your plans--how you will improve World Bank participation with the civil society? Thank you.

MR. AHMED: Thank you. And then, this gentleman right over here.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. Carlos Santos-Burgoa from The George Washington University School of Public Health, and the Department of Global Health.

Thank you very much for the opportunity. You mentioned governance and good investment. My question is, what are your thoughts in terms of investing in institutional development and improving governance, especially in health governance stewardship on information financing, health protection risks? What are your thoughts on this issue of investing in institutional development?

MR. AHMED: Thank you. Governance.

MR. MALPASS: Maybe I'll go backwards, this time.

So, on health and governance, that's--I'm very interested in your views and I think academia can make suggestions on how developing countries can do it better.

You know, there's a big challenge because a lot of times the countries--it's hard to have enough capacity. So, they certainly don't have enough doctors, in many cases not enough nurses. So, that brings to community-based health care workers can contribute. Then, you get the issue of, do you have a payment system that can get money to people that are providing health care.

It goes to your pandemic--one of the biggest challenges--I'm just listing. This conversation could go--this is a huge area of challenge for the world of how do you, as a practical matter, provide better health care, or give people access to better health care, as they're growing.

So, the Bank focuses on children. A starting point is the thousand days across pregnancy. So, we have major programs to try to improve health of the pregnant mother; and then, both mother and child after birth. Then, the early stage nutrition programs are vitally important.

Stunting, we have lots of data on what is causing children not to grow, and we know a lot about it, that it also affects their later development severely. So, we are working desperately, really, to reduce the incidents of stunting. That means clean water; that means, in some cases, more calories, but in many cases, it means more nutritious calories. And so, there's active programs to try to help countries evolve their agriculture systems toward more healthful food.

I mean, I just really skimmed the surface.

And so, part of this is, how do you get enough money into the system, but then also how do you engage in a way that's effective, because a lot of times it's not the amount of money, but it's the way it's either used or not-so-well-used in the country systems.

The previous question was on Balochistan. And so--hello, on Balochistan--so, inequality is a big issue. Lack of growth is a giant problem, including in Balochistan, a big province of Pakistan. And so, the way we're trying to do it--and this gets very much different, in different countries. So, in Pakistan, we're trying to work with the subnational level, and we have big programs--we are able to work with the provinces.

And so, I was just, three days ago, in Karachi which is in the Province of Sindh. So, there's a Chief Minister who--and these are not small province. Sindh has maybe 60 million people, maybe 65 million people, with quite a bit of executive authority residing in the--and you're right--often elite government of a given province.

So, the Bank can work directly with the Province in order to try to encourage programs that allow people to get more income at all levels, but especially at the bottom, in order to reduce the inequality.

And that can take all different characteristics. One of the most important is basic health, meaning water, clean water, electricity, but then agricultural--some ability to grow crops. One of the things going on in Pakistan is they've been growing a lot of rice and wheat and need to grow value--and sugarcane and some cotton--and so but they need to grow value added crops which might be mangoes. It might be types of vegetables that are better for the diet, but also more valuable as the farmer grows them. But they oftentimes don't have a system that really facilitates that. So, we can work in those granular programs.

And the previous question, also, on inequality but in the context of education: So, we want to work with countries on systems that work within their countries, and that's a variety, as I emphasized--countries have a variety of challenges that they're trying to face.

MR. AHMED: Okay. So, I want to make sure that this side of the room doesn't get left out.

MR. MALPASS: Yeah.

MR. AHMED: So, there's a lady in the middle, there. And the rest are all pretty quiet, so I'll come back to the other side, again.

MR. MALPASS: That's because I--long answers, because--

MR. AHMED: No, there are more people on this side.

MR. MALPASS: Sorry about that.

QUESTION: [Off microphone.]

MR. AHMED: Thank you. And then, there's the gentleman in the back row there in the middle. There you are.

QUESTION: Thank you. Richard Seifman from the One Health Commission.

And wanted to ask a question that's related to One Health, but it's broader. And that is, part of the World Bank is MIGA, and I never hear it mentioned as something that is potentially a wider-risk coverage for various items, and something that is being developed significantly within the context of the Bank Group. So, I'm curious about that.

MR. MALPASS: Thank you. That goes right with number--with the first question.

MR. AHMED: Right, exactly. And then, I think we have a gentleman, here, and then we'll add on the lady in the back, because she had her hand up a long time ago.

QUESTION: I'm Bob Rushi [phonetic], I'm a consultant. What is being done to pursue transparency by having more of the things online, of decisionmaking online, and putting up the money for the various projects online?

MR. AHMED: Thank you.

And then, just the lady in the back, and then we will come back to you, David.

QUESTION: Good afternoon. Roberta Romano, Policy Officer with the International Organization for Migration, IOM.

Two quick questions: one about the World Bank engagement in fragile, conflict, and violence; and, as the Bank is preparing the new strategy, the role of governance in strengthening institutions, which is something that UN agencies usually has less leverage in promoting.

And the second one is, as we talk about models for defeating poverty, how human mobility is considered within the Bank's strategies, both as a consequence of poverty, but also as a coping mechanism, and also, to reduce, like, inequalities between countries.

Thank you.

MR. AHMED: Thank you.

MR. MALPASS: Yes, thank you.

MR. AHMED: So, that's a wide range of topics.

MR. MALPASS: Yeah, that's--so, with regard to infrastructure, so, that's a major priority for the countries. The Bank is heavily involved in roads, in city structures. So, a big challenge of infrastructure is, as urban areas grow--and they're growing very fast. So, Ouagadougou has 1.3 or 1.4 or 1.5 million people--1.5 million people in the capital of Burkina Faso. And so, how does a city constitute itself in terms of the bus system, in terms of the street system, and so on? These are--and the water system--these are vitally important.

And so, we want to mobilize capital from the private sector. If you think about the United States, municipal water systems often issue bonds, and that allows them to maintain and upgrade their facilities in order that we can enjoy clean water. And the governments themselves don't have the money this year to do it. They borrow and then pay over time, as you pay--as we pay our water bills. And so, that's a vital structure that allows that growth.

So, but if we break it down, then, how does a country start into that system?

Having a rule of law, we work with countries on public-private partnership frameworks, meaning what would be the definition of a sharing within a country if some of the money comes from the private sector, some from the government? Who owns the asset? How do they share the maintenance of it? And those models are evolving and they're very different among different countries.

So, we're actively engaged in trying to help country--and so, IFC is important, and then MIGA is important to that. MIGA--the second question was on the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, which was formed in 1988. I was heavily involved in that--in 1987-1988--with the idea that it could guarantee political--it could give assurance to investors on certain types of risk that a country might present that would get them over the hump so that private investment could come into the country.

And so, MIGA is--sits at the World Bank. It just shares offices. And in country programs in many countries, there might be either someone that works for MIGA or they can--they

use--we try to integrate the services of the World Bank and of IFC so that everyone works together to present viable project concepts in order to solve infrastructure problems, for example. That's a good example where MIGA might be used. So, we're in the process of engaging a new--so, there's a turnover in the top Management of MIGA, and we are trying to have MIGA provide products that are also of interest to the other multilateral development banks. So, the Asian Development Bank doesn't have a MIGA facility, because that was kind of a unique World Bank facility created in the 1980s. And so, we're trying to make broad use of it, in order to help countries create an attractive investment climate.

There was a question on transparency and online. So, I don't know enough about this area. So, World Bank has substantial engagement with a resident Board. So, we have 25 Executive Directors from various shareholders from around the world who then have, in total, 270 people who are engaged in helping the Bank and the Management of the Bank study things and make enlightened decisions on various loans and projects and so on. And so, this is a pretty continuous process, some parts of which are then--so, I guess the point I'm making is there's substantial transparency inside the Bank in terms of documents and in terms of availability of information. And so, and then there is a huge amount--I don't know if you looked at the World Bank websites, a giant amount of information on the history of the projects.

There's a whole part of the World Bank called the IEG--

MR. AHMED: Independent Evaluation Group.

MR. MALPASS: --the Independent Evaluation Group, which does studies after the fact of projects and which ones really worked and which didn't, and those are available online.

And I encourage--we encourage transparency in our own processes in those processes, and I would say we can all--so, the Bank has a concept that really originated, I guess, with Bob Zoellick, or maybe even before, that is, as the Bank collects all this data, let's make it read--so, I'm shifting gears a little bit toward the data side--let's make it readily available to the world so that academic researchers, people around the world, can look at the data. So, you'll find on the World Bank websites the--an enormous amount of information provided for free as a service--part of a global public good.

And there was the hard--in a way, the hardest question is migration, governance, and mobility. So, this is the interplay--if you're in a country that's a very hard country to live in--let's say you're a woman in that country and it's a harsh situation that you're living with, how do you balance your desire to move somewhere else with the difficulty that that poses to the country that you go to, as the number of people rises?

So, we have very complicated migrant, immigrant, and refugee situations in Colombia now due to the collapse and the very hard conditions in Venezuela. So, people move to Bogota. They move to the border region of Venezuela and Colombia. That's a desperately hard situation from health care, food, all of the needs--and only getting worse as Venezuela's policies get worse and worse.

In Myanmar, the Rohingya were--there was violence. They were pushed. They are in camps. Many--I don't know the exact numbers today, but a million people in camps in Bangladesh that the World Bank and--you mentioned earlier the UN, various agencies of the United Nations, we work closely with in order to try to provide better--some kind of subsistence conditions for those people.

But then, and of course the Sahel has been sending migrants in both--actually, in three directions: to the eastward, towards Sudan. So, Sudan has migrant flows from western Africa, but they also go south.

I was with--at the Annual Meetings, I saw a lot of the leaders of west--happened to see a lot of leaders of the world, but especially western Africa, and they're feeling the migrant flow southward, which can get into violent situations that are very difficult. And then, also, going northward toward Europe.

And I don't have an answer to the question the woman posed of how do you--so, is there some--so, there's some value to mobility and how do you reconcile that?

So, mostly, what I want to do is create better conditions in the country so that people don't feel they're forced to move to safety somewhere else. And then, if they have moved or been forced to move or they've fled that there's better conditions in that recipient country.

We work heavily with Jordan. Jordan has had huge amounts of refugees over the years from Syria, but also from other countries. And so, very challenging situation for a

country that doesn't have a lot of money to have--I forgot--I'm sorry, I don't have the numbers on my--anyway, so Jordan has--

MR. AHMED: 700,000 official, and then nearly a million-and-a-half, if you include the people who are not registered as refugees with UNHCR--

MR. MALPASS: Huge number, because it's not a large-population nation. So, the world works with that--the World Bank often leads those efforts.

MR. AHMED: All right. Well, I think--I'm sorry, there are a lot of people who still have questions, but you have a hard stop of 4:00, and we've already gone past it. So, with that, can I just ask everybody to please join me in thanking David Malpass for being here.

MR. MALPASS: Thank you very much.