

Keynote Address at Visions, Voices, Visibility Symposium For Broadcasters on International Development

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Ladies and gentlemen, let me first of all, thank you for coming to this conference. It's a real privilege for all of us that you're here. I know that with visa difficulties and just the pressures on your time that it's quite a contribution to come here and I want you to know how much we appreciate it.

I am not totally new to the broadcasting business. I was on the board of CBS for 10 years and we had a few radio stations and a few television stations and a few other things as well, so I had quite an education during that period on the board. As a consequence of that I have both great respect for the power of broadcasters and a great respect for the pressures that are on you in terms of selectivity and in terms of what you put on in your daily and weekly and annual programming.

My special interest today is to just tell you about two aspects of our interest in this meeting. The first is that we believe passionately that the issue of poverty and the issue of development is under-appreciated in the world as an issue of importance. And the second thing I'd like to talk about is what it is that we could do as an institution that could be of help to you, not just in presenting this message but generally in terms of the work that you do in the countries from which you come, because we depend very heavily on the existence of a free media to propel many of the subjects that we're concerned about, starting, of course, with the issue of corruption. But broader than that, the issue of governance and the issue of direction in which countries are moving where a free press and a free broadcasting system is crucial and where we can have a role in terms of policy and in terms of financing. So those two things I liked to cover and open for discussion.

But the first item is the thing that has troubled me most, given my own modest background in the business and my now nearly 10 years of work at this institution, looking at what are the key issues and what do I see and what do I hear in broadcast media and in television and even print media. The simple facts are these. We have a world of 6 billion people, of whom 5 billion are in developing countries. They have about 20 percent of the world's income, and the one billion has 80 percent of the income. There is a lot of inequity in the world as a consequence of that first split of 80/20. But beyond that, in developing countries there is a further split between the rich and the poor, and the consequence of all that is that roughly half the world live under two dollars a day, and about a fifth of the world live under a dollar a day.

I won't give you all the statistics now. We can provide them to you before you leave, but there are a couple of billion people that don't have access to clean water, and more than that that don't have access to sanitation, and a couple of billion people who don't have access to any form of fuel and therefore they go out and cut down trees, and use biomass to cook in their homes. Very large numbers of them asphyxiate themselves. There are equal numbers of very sad statistics about the number of young people that die needlessly. There are huge statistics in terms of infant and maternal mortality that need to be addressed. We can throw statistics at you by the bucket load, but it doesn't make headlines because somehow it doesn't have a realistic feel.

The other aspect of it is that if you're poor and you die, and if you're poor and you're African and you die, that's a lot less important than being from a rich country and white and dying. The issue of fighting in the Congo or the issue of fighting in Liberia gets fractional attention compared to the issues of fighting in Iraq. So we have this cutting edge issue of what is the value of life which one needs to deal with and which is an issue that everyone morally has to deal with, but which troubles us a lot as an institution as we try and address the question of the issue of poverty and the issue of humanity.

It used to be possible, if you were in a rich country to think of yourself behind a wall, and what happened in the developing world was out there and somehow didn't impinge on you if you lived in Australia or the United States or Europe. That somehow ended on September 11th when all of a sudden the problems of Afghanistan, or at least

problems that found their start in Afghanistan, turned up in Wall Street, and in the Pentagon just down the street, and in the fields of Pennsylvania. In fact the reason I'm leaving you this morning is to go and see Hamid Karzai at 11:15, who is the president of Afghanistan, about what's going on in Afghanistan.

But there too, you will be interested to know, that the interest of the media, and indeed, the interest of the world is declining precipitously in terms of coverage in the press and in terms of the coverage on radio, because it's yesterday's news. Today's news is Iraq. Yesterday's news is Afghanistan. Yet we now have to deal with the Afghan situation, as we do with many other post-conflict situations.

So the first thing that's really happened is that as you talk of globalization, which is a subject which is widely and often misunderstood and difficult to project, the first thing about globalization is that if you have terror somewhere today, it's really terror everywhere. If you have poverty somewhere today, the impact of poverty somewhere is really everywhere. This is something that is not broadly or fully understood. It's not fully reflected in domestic politics, but from our experience and from what we've seen about the outgrowth of not only terror but other things that link us in the world, crime, health, environment, trade, finance, and migration, these are issues which we're all starting to come to terms with but about which the press, the media, the politicians rarely have yet reached a level of understanding where intuitively they recognize that the wall is not there. The fact is the wall is not there.

The wall is not there for trade, environment, crime, drugs, medicine, disease, terror. But most people of my age and of above a certain age still think of it as two worlds, when in fact it isn't. It's not that we are just there at this point in time with five billion out of six billion people, but in the next 25 years the world becomes eight billion, of which then seven billion will be in developing countries. And by the year 2050, which is not all that far away, it will be eight billion out of nine. These are not fantastic statistics or extrapolations which we've made up. They're basically consensus forecasts. Europe will be smaller. The United States will be larger, largely through immigration. But the total amount of development in the rich world will be maybe 50 to 100 million people at a time when three billion people are added to the developing world.

This is the fundamental reality. This is not science fiction. It is not something -- new brilliant insight. But that is the demographics. Within those demographics you have a whole series of other global movements which are not visible in terms of a bomb going off immediately, or a headline, but which are nonetheless real and nonetheless important.

Today, the developing world has a little less than 20 percent of the global income. By 2050 it will be a little more than 40 percent of the global income. The big cities of the world are going to be in developing countries. The weight of a world in terms of people are going to be in developing countries. You will be talking about China and India far more frequently than you are today because these are the countries that both economically and in terms of people will be crucial.

You have 1.2 billion, one-fifth of the world today, being followers of Islam. Islam by nature is a peaceful religion, is a great religion. But it's perceived by many in the world today as being a terrorist source. Improbable and not correct, but nonetheless, the issue of Islam and the confrontation with Islam, or the understandings with Islam, are going to become -- not going to become, are already a fundamental issue for us to face.

The question of Africa, where we have 47 sovereign states with less than 500 million people, and where we have, at the very least, mixed potential, mixed growth. Some very good, some less so good, but with a doubling of that population in the next 25 or 30 years, even with AIDS, becomes an issue that you cannot ignore. Africa cannot, should not be ignored, either as an economic matter, or as a human matter, or as a matter of governance, or as a matter of market, or as a matter of a source for some of the less good things that are happening around the world, but also as a source of some of the very good things that could happen around the world in terms of the development of that continent.

The issue of Central Asia, the issue of Latin America, issues of water which will come hugely important in the next 25 or 30 years as a resource, maybe as important as oil. These are the sorts of things which are not dramatic, but which are dramatic in terms of the lives of our children, and are dramatic in terms of the importance of education of the next generation to the world in which we now live. And yet most people in the media and in the broadcast industry are responsive to the immediate, visible activity.

Someone told me that the three networks did over 4,000 minutes on Iraq and 17 minutes on the issue of poverty. This is the sort of thing that one gets. As an ex-member of a board of a broadcast company, I can understand it. But as a person who now is on the other side thinking about what the world really is, it seems to us --

and it is for you to decide -- that these issues of the real world in which we live and the responsibility of the media to try and bring about an education of the next generation is really crucial.

Looking at ourselves, we thought we're doing a pretty lousy job at getting the story out. That was one of the initial stimuli to this meeting. What can do better to actually tell the story, which we probably know better than anybody else? And then, is there is an interest on the part of anybody else to tell that story? Because it's not headlines. It's not headlines, but it will be headlines for our children. And if we don't get the story out, and if you don't get the story out, are we doing the right thing in terms of preparing the next generation? Do we have any responsibility to the next generation to describe a world which has changed around us?

We talk about globalization without really knowing what it is. For most people globalization is multinational companies taking jobs from one place to another and screwing everything up. That is not globalization. It is an aspect of globalization. The aspect of globalization that I'm talking about is the interdependence of the planet which now exists in which poverty is a huge role, and which inequity is a huge issue, and which if it is allowed to continue cannot lead to a stable planet.

It is not that every poor person takes a gun and goes out and shoots a rich person. That is not the case. It is not true. But environments in which there is no hope become environments in which people of ill will can in fact foster their objectives.

As I look at the Middle East today, for example, and I look at the issue of Gaza and I look at the issue of West Bank in which we are painfully but, I hope, positively involved, there is no way that one can deal with the question of peace in the Middle East unless one accompanies it with the issue of hope in the Middle East. It is not that one is Muslim. It would be if one was Jewish or Christian or anything. If you have no hope and you're 25-years-old, and you've never had a job, and you've got no possibilities, you become frantic. That's not a question of religion. That's a question of being human. Everybody on our planet wants the same thing. They want hope. They want a chance for their kids. They don't want charity. They want an opportunity. They want to be invested in something that gives them possibilities.

That's what the Bank is seeking to do. That is an issue which is little understood, but needs to be desperately understood if there is to be stability on the planet.

There are many other side but very important issues. The issue of AIDS. The issue of AIDS with 40 million cases, with 12 million orphans, which has historically been thought of as African, which has 30 million cases. Today there are five to six million cases in India, doubling every 18 months. In another three years there will be on the order of 20 million cases of AIDS in India. We are not yet sure of the numbers in China. The fastest-growing impact of AIDS is actually today in Russia and Ukraine.

These issues are issues which do not get headlines, but which are nonetheless of fundamental importance.

The issue of vaccines. The issue of treatment. The issue of youth.

We have 2.8 billion people today under the age of 24. We have 1.5 billion people under the age of 15. This is not, as the young people told me in Paris a year ago as I talked to them about the future and what we're going to do with them, they said to me, Mr. President, we're not the future. We're the now. We are different than you were at 18 or 20.

What about youth? What about jobs? What about hope? What about opportunity?

If there are 2.8 billion today, and I'm telling you that there are two billion more people coming on the planet net in the next 25 years, it means that more than two billion people are going to pass through that range from zero to 25 in the next 25 years. So the issue of youth and how you deal with this is itself an issue which is under-addressed, under-understood by people of my generation and by people 40-years-old because we didn't grow up with computers and Internet. The 20-year-old kids that are talking to us are already saying to us, my brother or sister of 12 and 14 is already different than I was.

I'm sketching for you some of the things that we are concerned about here which are primal issues, which are issues which do not gain headlines but which are transforming our planet as we sit here. Not visible, but utterly certain. Not

understood, but essential to be understood if we're to prepare the next generation for the inevitable swings and changes which are coming.

How many of us know anything about Islam except those from those countries in this room? How many of us know about China? How many of us know about India? India and China are 2.3 billion people in two countries, a third of the planet. How much attention does this get in an integral part of broadcast or communications? How much is education for the next generation or even for our generation, how little does it get in light of immediate and visible crisis?

My interest in this meeting was to see if there is anything that can or should be done about this. Is this an issue which to you as professionals in the business you think requires attention? It is something that you accept as a truth and say, that's for someone else? Or is it something that with your coverage, which is between two and three billion people as I understand it, we should be addressing?

If it is to be addressed, is there a partnership that we can establish between the research aspects of our institution, the knowledge aspects of our institution, the could be helpful to you in terms of making the 15 minutes, 30 minutes, or 60 minutes, or 90 minutes, or God forbid, 1,000 minutes in terms of the importance of this subject? And if not, what is going to happen to the planet? If you don't get the message out, who does? Who does?

I have to say to you that that is where I'm at in terms of my institution. Now the other part is that I think we could help in terms of your domestic positions. We can help in terms of trying to free up the regulation. We can help with pressuring governments. We're not always effective, but we can help. We can help on funding. We can help with investment in some programs. We can help with material.

Our purpose in these two days is to try and see as we move into some of the films that you're going to see, but is to see before we get to the films, if there are practical ways in which we can be of assistance to you as an institution. We have money. We have some clout. We have some knowledge. But the most that we have is a passionate conviction that people don't understand what the hell is going on in real time in the world around us now, and that everybody looks at their market through a very small lens when in fact it's impossible today to look at it through a very small lens.

That is an aspect of news. But the broader aspect of news is that the planet's changing. And it is changing. We have to understand a broader number of things.

We also have to think, finally, in terms of values. What is it that we care about? Do we care about human values? Do we care about life? Do we care about others? Do we care about social justice? Do we care about equity?

Most of us don't ask those questions every day. But it's crucially important that we do start asking those questions every day. I don't speak as an idealist. Maybe I am an idealist, but I'm also someone who is really from the tough business of business, and the tough business communications over nearly 30 years, 40 years, of understanding newspapers and television and radio. I say to myself, what is the responsibility that all of us have as human beings to address this question?

You must have had some interest to come, and therefore I thank you. You're a pre-selected group that at least aren't going to say that we're idealist and completely foolish because otherwise I guess you wouldn't have come here. But what we're looking to do over the next two days is to try and see if there is something practical, pragmatic, and a series of steps that could allow us to build a partnership with you. Maybe not uniformly in every one of your countries, but with us at least doing whatever it is that you would wish from us to try and be supportive of a range of initiatives that might emerge from this meeting. I wanted to confirm to you today that we are more than ready. We are extraordinarily anxious to build better relationships. And frankly, to provide the service to you that you might need if you decide that this is something that you want to do.

We're not here to insist. We're not here to put you under a guilt trip. We're not here to try and embarrass anybody. But we think the facts are so important that they carry with them, in a way, their own strength. Which is that if we're looking to the next generation, we owe them the responsibility of helping them bridge from an outdated view of our planet to a current and a prospective view of our planet where issues of poverty, issues of equity, issues of cultural difference, issues of sharing a planet in a different way are things that we think are very important. We

certainly think that they deserve a lot more time on radio, on television, and in the print media than they get today. That really is the purpose of this two days. So I thank you very much for being here.