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**September 20, 2006**  
**Opening Plenary**  
**Clinton Global Initiative**

**ANNOUNCER:** Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the 42nd President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton. [*Applause*]

**BILL CLINTON:** Thank you. Thank you very much. Good morning, and welcome to the second annual meeting of the CGI. I want to extend a special welcome to those who have traveled great distances across the globe to be here, and for the first time, those who are tuning in on the World Wide Web. We are also profoundly honored to have almost 50 current and former heads of state here. Our First Lady, Laura Bush, will be joining us in a moment, and I thank her for being here. I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to Bill and Melinda Gates, with whom I've recently spent some time in South Africa, in Lesotho, whose leadership on HIV/AIDS and health care in the developing world has been unprecedented. I thank them for helping to make this conference possible. And I want to thank Tom Golisano and our other principle speakers for their efforts that brought us all here.

We have leaders from around the world, who have done so much to put the human development agenda at the forefront of our discourse, including Hernando de Soto, Paul Farmer, Mohammad Yunus, Wangari Maathai, and many others. I thank the religious leaders who are here, the business leaders who are here, including Warren Buffett, Lee Scott, Carlos Slim, and others from around the world.

CGI was designed to tackle big global challenges in bite-sized pieces, with the conviction that, regardless of size or scope, our problems will yield to concerted action and innovative partnerships of individuals, NGOs, businesses, and governments. I don't need to tell any of you how timely this year's meeting is. The public discourse on climate change has changed rather radically just in the last year, from the question of how serious the problem is to the question of how quickly we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a way that averts environmental calamity, strengthens the national security of every country involved, and promotes economic growth and new jobs.

In the area of religious, racial, and ethnic conflicts, the world is once again facing the specter of genocide in Darfur. We see fresh clashes in Sri Lanka between the Hindu Tamils and the Buddhist majority government. People are asking, "Now what?" in the Middle East in the wake of the last year's troubles. We've seen, first in the last year, Muslim protests over Danish cartoons, and then over His Holiness the Pope's remarks. Meanwhile, we have evidence of fresh violence across religious and other lines.

In the area of health care, we've made a lot of progress in HIV/AIDS and malaria, but not nearly enough. Other global health challenges remain profound. And this year, for the first time, in addition to AIDS, TB, and malaria, we're going to be focusing on the less noticed tropical diseases that affect large numbers of poor people around the world and in the aggregate are also major killers.

All across the globe, economic empowerment efforts are making impressive gains. But they still reach but a tiny fraction of those in our world who live on less than two dollars a day. These are the kinds of issues that will dominate our discussion over the next few days. These are the kinds of commitments that will be addressed also by the promises that I hope each of you will make to take action. Last year's CGI generated roughly 300 commitments from more than 500 participants, worth well over two and a half billion dollars. While we certainly like commitments with lots of zeros behind them, when you consider the hundreds that were made and kept over this past year, some of those with smaller budgets had very large impacts indeed. So

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whether through big grant commitments or simple commitments of time and talent, I hope each of us can do even more this year than last.

We have already seen progress through our dedicated commitments team, and I want to thank them, the people who work year-round, first to help individuals develop their commitments and then to help them follow through. Over the course of the past year, they have been exceedingly diligent. They've done a lot of work to help last year's attendees on both fronts, and identifying the very small number of people -- only about 15 or so -- who came last year but either didn't make or didn't keep a commitment, so couldn't return. Most of the time, our commitments team simply works with people to support them as they labor mightily to keep their promises. As of right now, we have five commitments for this new year valued at more than \$350 million. There will be many more.

More than 1,000 people are here today, all committed to being agents of change in the year ahead, to reach across the political, economic, cultural, philosophical, and religious divides to build a better common future and to lead by example. I now have the honor to introduce someone who has earned our respect by leading by example. America's First Lady, Laura Bush, used to be a teacher. And I have to confess that I, at my age, have learned a thing or two watching her; watching her do good work around America and the world. She has focused on global education and literacy, one of the most pressing development challenges we face. And Hillary and I have been particularly grateful for her advocacy of education of young women in developing countries and her work with the United Nations.

She has worked on education in America as well, convening a summit on early childhood cognitive development, working with Teach for America, championing a campaign to educate women about the increasing risks of heart disease. It's a great honor to welcome her here to CGI, where once again she will lead by example, making the first commitment of our meeting. So please join me in welcoming America's First Lady, Laura Bush. [*Applause*]

**LAURA BUSH:** Thank you very much, President Clinton. Thank you all. Thank you, President Clinton, for your very kind introduction. I'm delighted to be a part of this year's Clinton Global Initiative. Thank you for inviting me, and thank you for the terrific development work through your Foundation.

This week, leaders from around the world gathered in New York to advance goals shared by people in every country: economic empowerment, education, and good health. The eagerness of children to learn, the desire of individuals to provide for themselves and their families, and the longing of mothers to see their babies grow up healthy and strong are universal. Yet poverty, a lack of education, and pandemic diseases have kept millions around the world, especially in the developing world, from fulfilling these fundamental desires. But thanks to the initiative of governments and the people in the developing world, men and women of many nations are creating sustainable solutions to poverty, lack of education, and pandemic disease. The American people are proud to stand with them.

President Clinton, I thought that your audience today might want to hear a few of the things the American people are doing through their government to support international development. Because of partnerships between developed countries and nations in the developing world, there's now a great optimism that the advantages enjoyed by so many in the developed world can be enjoyed by people everywhere. These partnerships are addressing poverty.

Since 2001, America's support for international development has doubled. And support for Africa has more than tripled. Last year, at the G8 in Gleneagles, the United States and other nations worked to secure up to \$60 billion in debt relief to the world's poorest countries. The US pledged to double assistance to sub-Saharan Africa by 2010. Even more important is building free economies which yield long term prosperity. In 2002, our country launched the Millennium Challenge Account, a \$5 billion initiative that encourages governments to become more transparent, to invest in their people, and to foster economic freedom.

Through partnerships between the United States and the developing world, we're addressing a lack of education. Just this year, the American people have provided more than half a billion dollars to support educational initiatives abroad. We're supporting initiatives like the Women's Teacher Training Institute in

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Kabul, which was established through a partnership between the government of Afghanistan and USAID. At the Institute, women from the provinces have a safe dorm to stay in while they're trained to be teachers. Then they can go home and train more teachers in a cascading effect with the purpose of opening and staffing as many new schools as possible.

And in Ghana, I visited the Accra Teacher Training College, which participates in the Textbook and Learning Materials Program. As part of the program, six American universities have partnered with six African countries to produce and distribute 15 million primary school textbooks for African students. The program is part of our African Education Initiative, a \$600 million commitment that's already helped train more than 400,000 teachers in sub-Saharan Africa.

Through partnerships between the United States and the developing world, we're addressing pandemic disease. The challenges posed by illnesses like malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS are significant. In Africa, malaria kills 3,000 children every day. And this largely preventable disease claims a 1.2 million lives a year. But last year, our country launched the President's Malaria Initiative, a five year, \$1.2 billion program that joins the government and private sector to combat malaria in 15 of the hardest-hit countries. By the end of this month, through partnerships with the first three focus countries, aid from the American people will already have reached about six million Africans. And in December, the President and I will host a White House summit on malaria to help build on the President's Malaria Initiative's success.

HIV/AIDS is one of the greatest humanitarian challenges of our time. Around the world, nearly 40 million are affected. Just a few years ago, many believed that the AIDS crisis could never be overcome. In 2003, our country launched the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a five year, \$15 billion initiative to combat AIDS in 120 countries around the world. The emergency plan works in partnership with the hardest-hit countries. And that partnership is saving lives. When the United States first launched PEPFAR, it was believed that only 50,000 in sub-Saharan Africa were thought to be receiving antiretroviral treatment. Now, in PEPFAR's 15 focus nations, our country has helped more than half a million people get treatment. These people are learning to live with HIV instead of waiting to die from it.

In South Africa, I visited the Mothers to Mothers program, which is funded with PEPFAR seed money. At Mothers' Center, HIV positive pregnant women receive information and support to keep their unborn children HIV free. Mothers also empowers women with education, so that they and their children can stay healthy. Mothers who have successfully delivered HIV negative babies mentor other mothers. The program encourages mothers to go to school, and Mothers helps women discover their artistic talents through beading and crafts and to use their skills to provide for themselves and their children.

Earlier this year, Mothers partnered with the Venice Arts Council to provide women with photography lessons and camera equipment, encouraging the women to tell their stories of survival through art. Today, the photos are on display in the Venice Art Walk in Los Angeles, and future displays are planned for Stanford, Harvard, and the United Nations. One of the women, Caroline, is planning a photo book to document her life as an HIV positive mother in a South African township. Before she came to the Mothers program, Caroline was a struggling single mother living in a shack. Today, Caroline's little boy is healthy, and she's an internationally exhibited artist, confident in her future.

Through programs like Mothers to Mothers, HIV positive people are finding a new sense of hope and purpose. The founder of the Mothers program, Dr. Mitch Besser, says this hope makes all the difference. When people know that HIV is not a death sentence, they're more likely to seek testing and treatment. They share their status with their family members, helping to break the stigma of HIV. The hallmark of our program, Dr. Besser says, is living positively. In the developing world, millions are now living positively.

Today I am pleased to announce that the United States government is partnering with the Case Foundation, the MCJ Foundation, and other organizations to help address one of the greatest health crises in Africa today, the lack of clean water. Around the world, more than a billion people do not have safe water to drink or to use to keep themselves and their homes clean. A child dies every 15 seconds from illnesses related to unsafe water. Without clean water, people suffering from HIV and AIDS can't take their antiretroviral medicines safely and easily, and their weakened immune systems are exposed to dangerous waterborne diseases.

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Unsafe water is also an obstacle to education. Water related illnesses keep children out of school and keep children from learning while they're in school. Finding clean drinking water is the central daily task of women and girls in many parts of Africa, a task that keeps girls out of the classroom. The public/private partnership we're announcing today will be known as the Play Pumps Alliance. Play pumps are children's merry-go-rounds attached to a water pump in a storage tank. When the wheel turns, clean drinking water is produced. Play pumps are fueled by a limitless energy source, children at play.

We invite other partners to join this alliance to install 4,000 pumps in schools and communities and provide clean drinking water to as many as ten million sub-Saharan Africans by 2010. *[Applause]* The U.S. government, through USAID and PEPFAR, is committing \$10 million toward a goal of \$60 million, and I thank Steve and Jean Case for their generosity and for their work to raise additional contributions.

Labatasing Lamono, one of the women who participated in the Mothers to Mothers photography project, summed up her life's goals this way: "I want my kids to have a warm shelter, a bright future, a good education, and my family to accept me. I want to own a house, to be independent, and to have a good job so I can raise my children." These are the desires written in the heart of every human being of every race, religion, income level, and nationality. And through the generosity of governments, contributions from the private sector, and the leadership of the governments of developing nations, we can succeed in helping people everywhere build a healthier, more prosperous, and more hopeful world for their children.

Thank you, President Clinton, for inviting me today. Thanks to your Foundation for the important work you do. And thanks to each and every one of you here, each one of you, for your commitment to the people of our world. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

I'd like to invite Steve and Jean Case of the Case Foundation and Ray Chambers of the MCJ Foundation to join us on the stage. Together with our partners, we commit to bringing the benefits of clean drinking water to more than 1,000 communities in schools in sub-Saharan Africa through the Play Pump Water System. *[Applause]*

**BILL CLINTON:** I want to thank the First Lady again. We have a minimal number of speeches at this meeting, and we won't have many more, only a couple at night. We're now about to go into the work of the conference. I thank the next round of participants who are here, and we'll go on so we can stay right on schedule. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

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