

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Remarks by Secretary Tim Geithner at the Development Impact Honors Award Ceremony

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As prepared for delivery

WASHINGTON – Let me begin by welcoming everybody to Treasury. We're very pleased to have all of you here for Treasury's first Development Impact Honors.

I want to thank Presidents Kaberuka, Kuroda, Moreno, and Zoellick for their deep commitment to facing some of the most serious economic growth challenges around the world. And we're pleased that Sri Mulyani could join us to represent Bob and the World Bank.

I also want to thank Representatives Cleaver and McCollum and Ray Offenheiser and Elizabeth Littlefield for joining us.

We are here today because multilateral development bank projects often go unrecognized despite their importance. The purpose of these awards is to highlight some of the best projects recently implemented by the MDBs. We hope that by singling out these projects and the teams behind them, we can help promote the highest standards for design and implementation of development programs, raise awareness about this work, and reinforce support for the MDBs.

In a few moments, my colleagues will discuss why today's honorees were selected. They're going to talk about how a multifaceted infrastructure project brought goods to hard-to-reach areas with scarce resources. They're going to tell you about how an innovative telecommunications venture helped stabilize a war-torn state. They're going to explain how an effective nutrition program is now giving more than 41,000 children access to healthy food after years of failed attempts. And they're going to describe how a pioneering program to stop deforestation is combating climate change.

Projects like these—which are focused on long-term solutions, use technologies to reduce costs and are often able to attract private sector funding—demonstrate why investments in the MDBs provide such good returns.

Over the past two years, we have worked with Congress to make a very strong financial commitment to the MDBs. We have made this commitment because the multilateral development banks and the projects they undertake benefit the United States.

First, they advance America's economic and national security interests. Our investments help open up and create new export markets for U.S. companies, making them among the most effective export promotion programs we have. At the same time, the MDBs advance our national security interests by helping to create functioning economies and meet basic human needs in volatile regions of the world. Nowhere is this more apparent today than in North Africa and the Middle East.

Second, our investments help leverage much larger contributions from other countries and from the markets, demonstrating that when we lead, others do their share alongside us. Even though we provide only 5 percent of our international affairs budget to the MDBs, our funding supports many times that amount in program assistance. For example, we contributed \$2.6 billion to the MDBs this year, but the MDBs will make nearly \$80 billion in commitments.

Finally, our support gives us a chance to push important reforms to improve financial effectiveness, promote greater transparency and accountability, and raise standards that will enhance the impact of these programs. We are best positioned to advance these reforms when we maintain our strong leadership position in these institutions.

I'd like to close by thanking everyone again for coming to today's event and for taking this important opportunity to recognize the critical work of the MDBs.

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