

**Closing Remarks of Ricardo Hausmann on May 26, 2009 in Washington, DC at the conference
*Beyond the Fence: Research Lessons on How Immigration and Remittances Shape Global
Development***

Well, thank you. Thank you very much. And let me first thank all the presenters who've shared their knowledge and their studies with us. Let me also thank, on behalf of the Center for International Development; the Open America Foundation and Bob Hildreth, who's really the reason why we got into this project and why we're here today; and the Center for Global Development for this excellent partnership. I think there was a lot of value added into this alliance. And I would like to thank Michael Clemens, Joel Meissner, and Heather for their work in this project. I would also like to thank Ann Morris and Susan McDonald for their work on behalf of CID.

I have been very much impacted by Kathleen's point, that the joint set of international development and migration policy is an empty set. (Laughter.) And I think that is one of the reasons why I felt that this was a really great event. Because most of the time – you know, when I attend an event, kind of like you hear a lot of stuff you already knew, and then the delta is relatively small. Here I thought that my delta was pretty big because it was talking to people I don't usually talk to.

So international development people have a certain attitude. First of all, they think kind of like about the world, right? So they think like, look, when Adam Smith wrote *The Wealth of Nations*, the richest country in the world was four times richer than the poorest country in the world. And now that we understand *The Wealth of Nations*, the richest country in the world is 70 times richer than the poorest country in the world. So just as we think we understand the problem, the problem has gotten 20 times bigger, right?

So we think that the population trends in the world are making – you know, the bulk of the people living – and the bulk of the additional people are going to be living in poorer areas, and the populations in the rich part are shrinking, right? And they're getting older, while these are young, and so – so we can't imagine that there's something about a global equilibrium that needs to be thought about, and the conditions for that global equilibrium to happen and the opportunities for improvements here and there and so on.

So it's kind of like very natural for this crowd to think, you know, we're not talking about U.S. migration policy. We're talking about migration policy in any country. So, talking about Singapore and Israel – it's kind of like you. On the other hand, you have people saying, look, we've tried to push migration policy 20 times and we've fallen flat on our faces. We have to count the votes in the House and we have to count 60 in the Senate, not 50. And then we have to get business in line and labor and so on. So forget about optimal, forget about – (inaudible) – let me see how I could possibly get something through. Right? (Laughter.)

And those are two crowds that are thinking with a very, very different mindset and very different set of constraints. I think that in between there's a lot of stuff where the two

communities could talk much more to each other. Because the potential win-wins are so huge, I think that the possibilities to exploit those – even to make the political problems easier. Within the U.S. there's, I think, plenty of opportunities there.

And last week – or two weeks ago, I think it was – we organized a meeting on certifying biofuels. And the idea was, there's no real global market for biofuels and there won't be a global market for biofuels until some rules are there so you know what biofuel you're buying. And one of the problems with certifying biofuels is that people care about the net impact on global emissions and they care about deforestation. So they actually care – supposedly – about what happens elsewhere.

It would be very ironic that people care about what happens elsewhere only when it's about fuels and not when it's about people. Now, people organize about Darfur. I know that you're going to say that it's all cynically about protectionism.

MR. MACDONALD: (Off mike.)

MR. HAUSMANN: Yeah. But it's not only the U.S., right. I mean, there's a European biofuels policy and it was meant to be greenhouse gases and so on, and probably the next biofuels policy is going to –

MR. KREMER: That's because they care about themselves.

MR. HAUSMANN: But the point is that people – the people have historically cared about other people. That's the nature of human beings. They typically care about other peoples. For example, the North cared about the South having slavery. The Brits cared about there being a global trade on slavery in 1830, and they abolished it. The North cared about the South not having civil rights. People care about Darfur. There is, in the visa program, something about – in countries that have – what you call this?

MR. MACDONALD: Humanitarian.

MR. HAUSMANN: Humanitarian. So there's a bunch of Somalis in Boston, right? There's a bunch of Liberians in Boston. So people care.

And the question – I know that Ed was going to say, if it bleeds, it leads. So if people are bleeding, they can come. But they just would be kind of better off, no. Like I think that there is a case to be made on the moral issue surrounding this topic. It's a domestic moral issue. We are walking around in this place with people who fear to be stopped by police because they're illegal. They fear opening up a bank account because they don't have any documentation. They cannot drive cars – they cannot drive cars because they don't have a driver's license because they don't have ID cards. There's an enormous limitation on their livelihoods. So that is the first moral issue; beyond anything that international development people might want to cook up. So there's a moral issue here.

There's a moral concern about the fact that we live in – at a time when the richest countries in the world are 70 times richer than the poorest countries in the world. What kind of world do we want our children to live in; and our grandchildren? Do we think it is going to be a world where the differentials are going to be 200 to 1? We know something about what happened in the U.S.

In a very nice paper that Lant wrote a few years ago, he shows the portions of the U.S. which have a smaller population today in absolute terms than it had in 1900. In 1900, absolute terms. There's been depopulation in ample parts of the U.S. Now, the U.S. is kind of like a biggish country. If there – if the pressures for depopulation in a country like El Salvador, Haiti, Guatemala – the pressures for depopulation in those countries are huge. But they face borders. They face lack of citizenship rights, and so on.

So I think that the issue of migration can be enriched, even in terms of the domestic political debate, and the moral justification for the domestic political debate with a certain international development perspective.

And with that, I thank you all and I hope that this conversation continues. Thank you very much.