

Good morning. I want to thank Dean Lancaster for opening up Georgetown for partnership and hosting this important session today. I want to thank Minister Tedros and Mr. Azad from Ethiopia and India, respectively, for co-convening this effort and the executive director of UNICEF, Tony Lake, for your leadership in making all of this possible.

I know we're all also quite excited to hear from both Secretary Clinton and Ben Affleck this morning. And so we're eager to see them and I thank so many honored guests and excellencies who have come from around the world to be with us. Welcome to Washington.

One year ago, many of us gathered in London to take steps to ensure that every child would have access to current and new vaccines. That successful effort led by the United Kingdom – and for which we congratulate their leadership – helped set the stage for what's now possible in child survival.

On this very stage earlier this week we heard leaders like Joyce Banda of Malawi and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia as they asked us to prioritize maternal and child health, both as the basis of building strong and prosperous economies and because they felt we could now deliver results fast enough that their populations would appreciate the concrete benefits of good governance.

And corporate leaders like Andrew Witty of GSK asked us to imagine a future for developing countries in which nations leapfrog the infrastructure of the present and build health and financial systems of the future.

Specifically, these leaders asked us to use the opportunity, every opportunity we have to reach and serve a child to provide a basic package of interventions that's most likely to lead to profound results.

During the next two days, we have the opportunity to realize this vision. We are here because more than 700 leaders from more than 80 countries around the world have for the first time come to commit themselves to ending preventable child death.

We are here because you believe that for the first time in history, we have the tools, the knowledge and the experience to achieve this remarkable goal; because you've said you're willing to do things differently, to push and lead and demand results in order to get there; and because leaders from Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who laid out a vision of Every Woman Every Child, to major religious leaders from across Africa that are here with us today, to the kids in the tent outside wearing UNICEF T-shirts are now demanding that we not just lead, we succeed.

But if we're being honest, we know that right now we're not immediately on a path to achieving this goal. Today, around the world, the rate of decline in under-5 child mortality is around 2.5 percent. To achieve the MDG target that we all believe deeply is achievable, we will need to accelerate that to nearly 12 percent. And to eliminate preventable child death overall,

we'll need to address the glaring disparities that can occur between countries and within countries on our way to these goals.

Progress starts with a pledge, a commitment to achieve this goal that we hope every country around the world will make. We know we have to intensify our support for the countries with the highest rates of child death. And we look forward to hearing the country plans and leadership of those countries through the next two days.

The United States, already the largest funder of global health, will continue to carry that mantle forward and we'll accelerate our partnerships with countries around the world as exemplified by novel new efforts that we hope to create in the DRC, Nigeria and other countries.

Second, we will all need to identify particularly vulnerable communities in urban slums and rural settings and reach them first. Thanks to analytic work done by UNICEF, we know that this is the path to success. Recognizing the critical role that faith-based institutions and civil society play to that end, we're eager to hear from leaders of faith institutions here and to learn about the new, novel partnerships that will come out of the next two days.

We also have to prioritize the high-impact solutions that we know can save the most kids most efficiently. And over the course of the next two days, whether it's with respect to oral rehydration and zinc or using mobiles for health outreach, we look forward to launching new partnership with more than 10 companies that will help drive those goals.

And we have to invest in mothers' education, literacy and safe child birth, effectively creating a continuum of care. We'll learn from co-conveners in India and Ethiopia about the progress they are leading in this respect and how we can scale these efforts globally. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, we have to measure results and ensure mutual accountability.

During the next two days, we'll hear from partners at the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria as they all carry and take forward this critical responsibility.

Again, the United States will do its part by supporting their efforts and by restructuring the demographic and health survey so we have better data and can actually measure outcomes on an annual basis.

Now, there will be skeptics – those that say the goal is unattainable, the pledge is not a business plan, our reviewed aspirations in some countries are unrealistic and that in a period of fiscal austerity we really don't need to try. Our task is to listen to those skeptics and then work diligently to overcome every point they make, every skeptical voice.

We've now posted on our website the photos of more than 1,000 people, many leaders – I see Margaret Chan here, who has a wonderful photo – of their fifth birthday or when they were young on our website. These 1,000 leaders from both sides of the American political spectrum from across the international health community from around the world and from a broad range of

American government agencies and institutions believe in a simple promise that every child deserves a fifth birthday.

So if we can demonstrate in these next two days that we can come together across communities, see our common purpose and commit ourselves to that goal, we hope people will look back on this as a special moment in time when something very special happened.

Thank you.