

2007

Subj: RE: Attn: Bill Gates-Speech at Wharton School from Vice Pres. & Treas. of World Bank
Date: 6/27/2007 8:36:01 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: billg@microsoft.com
To: Genebanker@aol.com
CC: christu@microsoft.com, Patty.Stonesifer@gatesfoundation.org, melinda@mfgates.com,
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This speech was very good.

It would be interesting to look at what you expected 27 years ago and see how what has happened compares to it.

I would guess that the outcomes in most countries (Mexico, Thailand, Korea, Malaysia, China, India, Brazil, etc...) would be a lot better than almost anyone would have predicted 27 years ago.

One of my favorite illustrations of how things have improved are the two Hans Rosling videos shown here:

<http://roslingsblogger.blogspot.com/>

When you look at the positive surprises they would include many countries, literacy almost everywhere, end of cold war real politic, reduction of population growth.

No longer can we talk about the developing world versus the rich world.

The negatives would include Africa and a few other places (Haiti, Afghanistan,..). Perhaps also the reputation of aid and multilateral organizations including the UN and the World Bank.

Another negative might include the views of some part of the developing world of the developed world including lots of Muslims and the dangers that creates.

Thanks for sending along your speech. Let me know if you do anything that talks about positive and negative surprises.

From: Genebanker@aol.com [<mailto:Genebanker@aol.com>]

Sent: Monday, June 25, 2007 8:58 AM

To: Bill Gates

Subject: Attn: Bill Gates-Speech at Wharton School from Vice Pres. & Treas. of World Bank

Mr. Gates:

I very much appreciated and was impressed with your recent speech at the graduation ceremonies of Harvard University. I have attached a speech I gave 27 years ago at the Wharton School of Business which emphasizes what is likely to happen should we not address problems of basic poverty. Perhaps you might be interested. I was, for 20 years, the Vice President and Treasurer of the World Bank.

Kindest regards,

Eugene Rotberg
(202) 944-3810

Subj: **Re: Attn: Bill Gates-Speech at Wharton School from Vice Pres. & Treas. of Wor...**
Date: 7/9/2007 3:09:32 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Genebanker
To: billg@microsoft.com

Thank you for your kind remarks concerning my 1980 Wharton School speech. I also very much appreciated your directing me to the Hans Rosling videos.

You commented about negative and positive surprises. My colleagues at the World Bank, for the most part, predicted huge advances in literacy, health and the standard of living in China, India, much of Southeast Asia and South America. However, neither they nor governments predicted the tremendous impact of information technology and the speed with which instant communication permitted almost everyone to know how everyone else in the world was living. The truth is that most governments do not have the political structures or the political will to address the tremendous gaps which heretofore had been unnoticed by the have-nots. That, in turn, has created great tension as rising expectations, fueled by the awareness of how other people live, have created a lot of instability, risk and uncertainty. As you know, it is very difficult for government to make interventions which address issues hundreds of years in the making. And now there are few secrets.

I am enclosing a set of notes for a speech I gave at Duke University in 2001 related to the difficulty in predicting negative or positive outcomes in this world of increasingly extensive communication. It is an interesting anomaly that the better and faster the communication, the greater the risk and uncertainty—a counter-intuitive development—but not really surprising given the rigidity of social and political institutions to cope with the reactions of those who now no longer are “in the dark.” Please excuse my not responding earlier as I was traveling in some rather remote places in Iceland.

Gene Rotberg

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