

**2012 International Education Summit on the Occasion of the G8
Convened by the Institute of International Education, Washington, DC
“Broadening the Spirit of Respect and Cooperation for the Global Public Good”
Remarks of Dr. Martha Kanter, Under Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
May 3, 2012**

Strengthening Education as a Global Public Good

Thank you, Dr. Goodman, for that kind introduction – and for your leadership of this valued and venerable institution. It’s striking to realize that IIE is approaching its centennial – and to consider its remarkable achievements during that time, in strengthening educational exchange and promoting understanding among nations. I know that all the education leaders here today – all the representatives of participating nations and national organizations – join me in thanking you for convening this important conversation.

And, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, let me extend a very warm welcome to all of my distinguished colleagues who are here representing countries that exercise leadership in the expansion of international education here and throughout the world. It’s a great honor to participate in this second annual meeting, here in the United States, in coordination with this year’s G8 Summit.

The purpose of this meeting is for us to share policies, discuss trends, and shape compatible and coordinated plans that promote academic mobility. We’re united today in the spirit of respect and cooperation. We know how much we have to share with and learn from each other, and we know that the stakes of our individual and collective success – in promoting educational access, quality and completion throughout our education systems – have never been higher.

Our Aspirations for 21st Century Postsecondary Education

All of our work at the U.S. Department of Education aims to achieve a goal President Obama set soon after taking office. That aspirational goal was to increase our nation’s proportion of postsecondary graduates from 40% to 60%, by the year 2020 – and to ensure that every American attains at least a year of higher education or career training. That goal remains our “North Star.”

In the Obama Administration, we see providing every student in America with a world-class education as a moral obligation, a civic necessity and an economic imperative. Nations that best educate their students will be the best equipped to thrive in the 21st Century.

That is why the U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has challenged our federal agency to become an engine for innovation at the state and local levels – creating a climate for change, providing resources and incentives for reform, and helping to scale up the most promising and effective practices for schools and institutions of higher education to dramatically improve the performance of our students. This reform agenda also includes an unprecedented focus on international cooperation and collaboration in education.

As Secretary Duncan has noted, “The importance of international cooperation and collaboration in higher education cannot be taken for granted. [...] There are some who treat international education partnerships as a zero sum game, where one country

gains a competitive upper hand--instead of treating these partnerships as a win-win proposition for both nations. [...]"

He continued, "I believe this skepticism about the benefits of competition and collaboration is both short-sighted and misguided. In today's knowledge economy, education is a public good unconstrained by national boundaries."

So, this morning, I'd like to sketch in broad terms the U.S. Department of Education's plan to address this new educational paradigm.

Our Evolving Policies and Current U.S.-International Higher Education Data

Let me first tell you about how our overall approach to education as a domestic and international priority has evolved to become increasingly integrative and comprehensive. As background, since the mid-1990s, through our Fund for the improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), we have supported collaborations between U.S. colleges and universities and their counterparts throughout the European Union, Brazil, Canada, Mexico and Russia.

The value of such arrangements for all participating countries resulted in establishing more than fifty certificate or dual degree programs, as well as over 300 multi-lateral curricular and mobility programs for hundreds of students in a variety of disciplines including business, economics, engineering, environmental science and management, to name a few.

We have learned many valuable lessons through these collaborations and through the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs administered by our Office of International and Foreign Language Education – programs designed to increase our nation's expertise in foreign language learning and international and area studies. We've learned how important it is for Americans to become well-grounded in the cultures and languages of the places where they choose to study, live, and work at different times in their lives. We've also learned that research, program and course development, and student exchanges designed to further economic growth and collaboration across nations are essential elements for building successful and lasting partnerships across boundaries.

Given the latest data in IIE's 2011 Open Doors report, the time is right to shift from a programmatic approach to a more systematic strategy. New international student enrollment in U.S. institutions is at a record high, increasing by 5.7% over the previous year, and 32% since 2000-2001. The overall number of international students climbed by 4.7%, comprising 3.5% of the total student enrollment in U.S. higher education.

The top five places of origin of more than half of all international students studying in the U.S. are China, India, South Korea, Canada and Taiwan. The remaining top places of origin are quite diverse, from every hemisphere. The top five fields of study these students choose are: business and management; engineering; math and computer science; physical and life sciences; and social sciences.

The trends for U.S. students studying abroad – again according to Open Doors 2011 – are also trending upward. Participation by U.S. students in study abroad grew by 3.9% over the previous year and has more than tripled in two decades. Fourteen of the top 25 destinations for students from the U.S. studying abroad are beyond European borders. It is interesting to note that U.S. students' top five fields of study differ somewhat from the predominantly science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) oriented fields of study chosen by their international peers; U.S. students tend to focus their studies in social sciences; business and management; humanities; fine or applied arts; and the physical and life sciences.

Our New International Strategy at the U.S. Department of Education: Strengthening U.S. Education and Advancing International Priorities

This year, the Department of Education prepared its first, fully-articulated international agenda with two strategic goals: (1) to strengthen U.S. education; and (2) to advance our nation's international priorities. In today's hyper-connected world, no nation can launch a fully effective domestic education agenda, without also addressing global needs and trends, and nurturing a globally competent citizenry. Specifically, our new agenda aims to:

- Ensure the competitiveness of our nation and our workforce, in today's global economy;
- Educate for our own increasingly diverse U.S. society, and sustain the civic values of our democracy;
- Promote national security and diplomacy;
- Collaborate with other nations to address global challenges; and
- Provide more U.S. students with a well-rounded education, including foreign language study.

Five main objectives support our strategic goals from 2012 through 2016. They range from plans to increase understanding – at federal, state, local and international levels – of the importance of a world-class education for all students, to plans to develop, monitor and continuously improve the Department's international activities in an integrated and coordinated manner.

A main goal of our plan is to **increase the global competencies of all U.S. students, including those from traditionally disadvantaged groups**. The need for these competencies, which we think of as "21st Century skills applied to the world," is clear – both for U.S. civil society, and for our nation's workforce.

The National Research Council reports that "a pervasive lack of knowledge about foreign cultures and foreign languages threatens the security of the United States as well as its ability to compete in the global marketplace and produce an informed citizenry." Right now, just 30% of U.S. secondary students are enrolled in a foreign language course. Two-thirds of Americans aged 18 to 24 cannot find Iraq on a map of the Middle East. And, African-Americans and Latinos continue to be underrepresented among those who study abroad.

Our thinking about needed knowledge and skills has been informed by The Global Competence Task Force, formed and led by the Council of Chief State School Officers' EdSteps Initiative and the Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning. These organizations have pointed out that to acquire and exercise the global competencies, students must be able to understand the world through disciplinary and interdisciplinary study and act on issues of global significance. They need opportunities to investigate the world beyond their immediate environment. They need opportunities to recognize perspectives – their own and those of others – and to be able to communicate ideas effectively with diverse audiences. They also must be able to take action – to translate their ideas into constructive endeavors.

From our nation's founding, the mission of our U.S. colleges and universities has included the responsibility to support the democratic values of our nation. Institutions of today and tomorrow must continue to equip students with the knowledge, experiences,

skills and resources for success in the future, their own and society's, a future in which they will hold multiple jobs of increasing complexity and nuance, as members of increasingly diverse communities, and as active and engaged citizens in an increasingly interconnected world. Our students' success will rest on their ability to be innovative, entrepreneurial, collaborative, and, for many we hope, visionary. This means our colleges and universities must place a far greater emphasis helping students understand their responsibilities as global citizens, helping them work effectively on diverse teams, educating them to acquire cross-cultural competencies, challenging them to make ethical decisions for the common good, and encouraging them to engage in their communities locally and globally. We believe that engaging students in these ways will help our nation meet the President's 2020 goal with more graduates who are better prepared and ready to lead us well into the 21st Century.

Our Department's increased emphasis on building global competencies includes more attention to world languages, area studies, and intercultural experiences. From new and existing postsecondary initiatives and programs, to our Blueprints to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, we're encouraging state and local institutions to weave global competencies into common academic core subjects, into college-and-career ready standards, and into expected learning outcomes. We also believe we should shift the focus of our postsecondary grant programs from the acquisition of deep subject matter expertise for a small number of students, to a greater emphasis on the acquisition of broad global competencies for many students to gain.

A Heightened Focus on International Benchmarking

We are also very interested in **enhancing federal, state and local education policy and practice by applying lessons learned from other countries to drive excellence and innovation in the U.S. and abroad.** We are doing much more to identify, learn from and incorporate – where it makes sense - effective, high-impact practices from other countries into the Department's policy agenda, program design and implementation. This includes collecting, analyzing and disseminating data, and convening strategic meetings to learn from others, problem solve together, and strengthen programs across the globe. We also want to delve more deeply into what works in other countries, how their innovative practices can be applied in the U.S. For example, we are placing a greater emphasis on participation in, and findings from, international benchmarking efforts like OECD's Program for International Student Assessment and the Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes – as well as joining the second cycle of the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey, to be conducted in 2013.

Secretary Duncan has also requested special reports, like one from the OECD entitled: "Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons From PISA for the United States," aimed at analyzing the practices of high-performing and rapidly improving countries – nations that not only do a better job than the U.S. at accelerating achievement and attainment nationwide, but are also doing a better job of closing achievement gaps among minority and disadvantaged students.

And, in March of 2011, the Department, the OECD, and Education International (the global federation of teachers' unions) – together with U.S.-based organizations, including the American Federation of Teachers, the Asia Society, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Education Association—hosted an International Summit on the Teaching Profession. This event was the first of its kind, designed to

engage governments and teacher organizations in intensive discussions about how to create a stronger teaching profession. Based on the success of the first Summit, the U.S. hosted a second one this year and the Netherlands has announced it will host the third Summit in 2013.

The lessons learned from these meetings have had a direct impact on Administration policy – helping to shape a proposed \$5 billion program to strengthen and elevate the teaching profession in America. With teaching morale that needs elevation, and with an urgent need to recruit a million teachers into the profession within the decade, President Obama has proposed this new competitive grant program as a means to empower states and K-12 school districts that commit to pursuing bold reforms at every stage of the teaching profession. The new program is called RESPECT – Recognizing Educational Success, Professional Excellence, and Collaborative Teaching – and it reflects in significant ways the findings from the International Summit.

A Renewed Focus on Education Diplomacy

The last area I want to highlight today is to **advance U.S. international priorities in strategically important countries through active education diplomacy.**

This goal encompasses our work with other countries established as priorities by Secretary Duncan and other agencies, like the Departments of State and Commerce. It also encompasses our efforts to support initiatives launched directly from the White House, including:

- The President's 100,000 Strong Initiative – to increase dramatically the number, and diversify the composition, of U.S. students studying in China,
- The 100,000 Strong in the Americas effort – to increase the number of U.S. students studying in Latin America, and the number of Latin American students studying in the United States, to 100,000; and
- The Brazilian Science Without Borders international student exchange involving 101,000 students.

And, of course, it includes our interactions with dignitaries and other international visitors, and our collaborations with other nations in multilateral forums and organizations.

Like your nation's ministers, the Secretary and our agency's senior staff work regularly with education officials around the globe. In three years, we've welcomed delegations from Afghanistan, Australia, Chile, Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, Russia, the Philippines and South Africa, to give a partial list. Our leadership team represents the Department at global assemblies like the Education Ministerial meetings for the OAS and APEC, the UNESCO Higher Education Congress, and the upcoming UNESCO Technical and Vocational Education and Training Congress. We've led delegations to India, Japan, Brazil and Australia for intensive collaborative consultations on topics ranging from higher education, to equity for all students, to education for sustainable development. And, last year, we hosted two joint Higher Education Summits – one with India, and one with Indonesia – to reinforce ties, gauge the progress of existing efforts, and explore new ones.

Along these same lines, our international partnerships have yielded a wide range of bilateral education conferences, alliances, and other joint efforts. For example, we're

implementing the first-ever U.S.-China Joint Workplan in Education. Activities thus far include the convening of mathematics experts in Washington and science education experts in Beijing. A second round of meetings with science education experts will take place this summer, along with an experts' forum for Chinese and American career and technical education experts.

In addition, the Department is working with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the Asia Society to promote sub-national exchanges of education leaders from the Chinese provinces and American states, as part of our plan. Six states are attending the 2012 Consultation on People-to-People Exchange, part of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue activities, to discuss building partnerships and visiting their sister provinces.

Finally, our joint work on the U.S.-China e-language project produced positive findings in an evaluation of student performance. Students with the lowest performance at entry made the largest gains when using a jointly-created supplementary, open-source gaming software program. They also gained increased motivation to learn a foreign language.

As you can see, we're working intently to achieve all the objectives of our new international strategy.

Let me also note one feature that cuts across all our efforts to promote 21st Century learning: the unprecedented opportunity afforded by technology. There's not enough time to address this powerful factor fully in my remarks. However, it cannot go unremarked: I know that technology, including the growing trend in Open Educational Resources, will feature prominently in our conversations as a means to accelerate achievement, reduce costs, boost productivity, and increase student access to high-quality, individualized learning opportunities – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. In short, technology will enable, indeed foster, interconnectivity among students from across the globe, particularly if we creatively deploy its capacities. Open Educational Resources have the capacity to transform the world into an affordable network of global classrooms supported by open communities focused on learning and scholarship to foster an unprecedented increase in educational collaborations across borders and cultures. We are really just at the beginning stage of this very exciting trend.

There is also a growing international recognition of the value of community and technical colleges as models for pre-baccalaureate education, workforce development, adult basic education and literacy services, and lifelong learning programs. Community college development is rapidly becoming a focal point for international collaboration. Brazil, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Mexico, Pakistan, Qatar and Namibia are just a few of the countries that are partnering with U.S. institutions to develop innovative approaches to entrepreneurship and workforce education in high-tech and high-demand fields.

Clearly, these partnerships confer mutual benefits. For U.S. colleges, such partnerships provide an invaluable opportunity to internationalize their curriculum and program offerings. Students benefit from the opportunity to gain first hand exposure to students and scholars from other countries and to gain language, cultural awareness, and other skills required for success in the global economy. Furthermore, these partnerships foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation, which are critical to the establishment of just, equitable, and peaceful societies.

The challenges we all face cannot be underestimated. Unacceptably high rates of unemployment around the world are hitting our young people particularly hard. While faring better than some countries, the United States is no exception. The overall unemployment rate in the U.S. stands at about 8 percent – but for young people in the

U.S. between the ages of 16-19 that rate mushrooms to 25 percent or even more, depending on how you calculate the figures. And if we disaggregate the data a bit, we see even more alarming realities for those who fail to graduate from high school or complete postsecondary education and for members of minority communities. For young African-Americans, those between the ages of 16-19, the unemployment rate in March, 2012 was roughly 40 percent, for Hispanics in the same age group, 30 percent unemployed. What's more, we know that depressed earnings in these younger demographic groups is typically not a transitory state: those who start the earnings race so far behind are far more likely to stay behind as they get older.

Being born into poverty and a lack of opportunities should not be a life sentence. That is not acceptable to President Obama, Secretary Duncan, to me or to any of us in this room. That's why, as one example, our Departments of Labor and Education, working together, have put an enormous emphasis on reforming and modernizing our system of Career and Technical Education (CTE). Last week, we released a new Blueprint for CTE to strengthen the linkages between secondary and postsecondary education, job-training providers and employers, including groups that support entrepreneurship. Put simply, we must strengthen these connections to give students far better preparation for 21st century jobs and the social and moral capacities for success in the workforce and in life, based on clear career pathways linking educational attainment to upward economic and social mobility.

Finally, we are asking academic, non-profit and other educational leaders from around the U.S. to tell their success stories related to accelerated educational attainment, including advice on how the approaches they have used can be replicated and scaled by others. Within a few weeks we will have more than a hundred examples available on our website, examples of what works, how the institutions, educators and students did it, and strategies others can use to achieve similar results.

We know the best ideas and solutions most often come from those closest to the problem – and that is why we are working to stimulate more sharing of ideas about high-impact, evidence-based approaches that are making a real and measurable difference. The results, some of which are already online, are and will be shared freely via the Department of Education's website and we hope this information, from the field, will be help to others, here in the U.S. and around the world.

Looking Ahead to Our Shared, Global Future

In the global marketplace, the domestic economies and civic welfare of nations are inextricably linked to that of our neighbors. In his 2009 remarks at Cairo University, President Obama observed that “education and innovation will be the currency of the 21st century.” I know we all are committed to strong partnerships in education and to equipping our citizens' mastery of the defining global challenges of the 21st Century, such as food security, climate change, public health, and workforce development, to name just a few.

We must seek to strengthen our institutions, nations, and regions – and we must work together to increase quality, and expand access to education for students worldwide. In doing so, we better our respective nations and our world, insuring that the next generation will have a safer and better world in which to work, raise families and contribute to the collective good.

Thank you all for devoting your energy and expertise to shaping a vision of excellence, equity and opportunity for the 21st Century. We look forward to your bold new ideas, inspiring exchanges, and productive collaborations. Thank you.