

The 2024 Clinton Global Initiative

“Economics, Peace & Security, Climate, Health and Humanitarian Relief”

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Economic Inclusion and Shared Growth was a central theme of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) 2024 annual meeting, in particular highlighting new initiatives and commitments from various featured organizations that aim to address economic inequality, support entrepreneurs, and aid marginalized communities. The meeting's theme, "What's Working?", emphasized showcasing and scaling effective solutions to global economic challenges, even though long-term project and implementation-efficacy remain unproven.

Throughout the meeting, new "Commitments to Action" were announced or highlighted, specifically those slated to collectively-facilitate over \$400M, including for projects that support women entrepreneurs (with a focus on equality and inclusion), a range of engagements involving targeted funding for marginalized communities such as aging populations in need of health equity through technology-assisted social service access, and also self-employed and informal economy workers who are focused on promoting climate adaptation solutions and expanding access to grass roots community capital. As for metrics, the only broad area of agreement was that the best measure of success was getting liquidity for action into the hands of those most impacted -- rather than intangibles such as services, support, ideological guidance, nebulous infrastructure offerings, and secondary service environments or access.

To CGI's credit, the importance of framing local and regional economic challenges against the backdrop of wider global issues, was not lost on conference organizers. Hence, broader issues were also touched upon, including the interface between Threats to Democracy, Economic Instability and Economic Institutions in the face of political and other sources of social instability. throughout various global settings. The overall thematic lens was also

fortuitously-extended to consider examples where humanitarian crises benefitted from initiatives aimed at funding local economic aid groups -- tasked with addressing funding shortfalls that adversely-impact not only economic factors but humanitarian issues as well.

Attendant conversations also addressed the intersection of threats to democracy and economic stability, exploring how to uphold democratic institutions amidst ongoing regional strife, one example being considered including the Sudan. Although the intersects of climate instability, lost economic opportunity, sustainability, climate finance, and job creation within green economies were all touched upon -- insufficient attention was allotted to these vital issues. If anything, the electrical power and zero net energy technology revolutions, the impact of AI and industrial robotics on job loss, and destructive competition for vital strategic resources (including but not limited to rare earths) were all but ignored -- even though these issues are paramount in combating issues of degrading economic opportunity, availability of grass roots financial liquidity, and resilience to climate change.

Although executives from major financial institutions and investment firms participated in the -- at times drifting -- discourse, their additional comments fell short on detail. Panels or one-on-one dialogs that featured global economic leaders such as US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, World Trade Organization Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and Mastercard CEO Michael Miebach at times were more expansive, but only where conceptual comments fell into categories of institutional interest to these leading players.



Sec Hilary Rodham-Clinton and Former Treasury Sec Janet Yellen at 2023 CGI

Credit: Julia Mineeva / EGBN News / Alamy Live News

Peace Coupled to Security reflected another main theme of CGI 2024. In concert with a conceptual focus on “What’s Working?” and scalability, particular attention was devoted to the question of women’s roles in defending democracy and democratic institutions against authoritarian regimes and on the frontlines of conflict. This discussion was extended to

include consideration of analogous issues encountered across diverse humanitarian crises, such as the Sudanese Conflict.

Memorable “CGI Mainstage Sessions” considered issues of Peace and Security from multiple ongoing worldwide vantage points. Featuring Reem Al-Hajajra (Palestine -- *Women of the Sun*) and Yael Admi (Israel -- *Women Wage Peace*), a Key Session converged and featured two women’s organizations from Israel and Palestine considering challenges on the frontlines of peacebuilding, and the need to counter the disproportionate impact of conflict on women. Another session focused on *Aid to Ukraine*, and featured the challenge of delivering practical sources of aid -- such as solar-powered lanterns -- to Ukrainian families affected by Russian attacks on Ukraine’s energy grid, this as one example of “What Works” !

Featuring Nobel Laureate Maria Ressa and Venezuelan Democratic Movement Leader Maria Corina Machado, a 3rd prominent Session focused broadly on initiatives for protection of journalists throughout areas of crisis and conflict in Russia and Venezuela, respectively. A fourth dramatic session, and doubtless key moment of CGI 2024 -- chaired by Hillary Clinton -- featured Russian activists Yulia Navalnaya and Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who discussed threats to democracy and a myriad of challenges encountered while protecting activists and journalists, engaged in standing up against authoritarian leaders.

There would not be any annual CGI meeting viewed as being completely rounded, which did not consider Climate Change, Climate Resilience and Sustainability. In this context, 2024 CGI did not disappoint. Of the 175 new, \$400M in value, “Commitments to Action”, no fewer than forty were added to CGI’s Climate Resilience and Sustainability portfolio, and are expected to result in reduction or avoidance of more than 7.3M MT CO₂ Eq in annual contamination. These included innovations in water access, sustainable water & agricultural land management, waste reduction and circularity, and enhancing electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure supporting the worldwide transition to electric vehicles. In addition, CGI announced a two-year effort aimed at driving brands toward sustainable practices that create climate-resilient jobs, and which thereby support social entrepreneurs as part of a CGI Greenhouse program involving mission-driven companies and cross-sector partnerships -- in turn designed to promote enhanced impact against progression of the climate crisis.

2024 CGIs other dual pivotal themes of Health Equity and Humanitarian Response received extensive prime time coverage, perhaps most notably-centered on two focal points spread over a large and formidable spectrum of domestic and offshore CGI engagement. At present, CGI projects an impact of its programs and efforts at reaching nearly 300M people worldwide, including 175 new “Commitments to Action” across various health related areas unveiled this year. Major areas of focus include disparities in mental health, including many

coupled to economic programs already mentioned above. The projected reach for potential positive impact is estimated at reaching the lives of more than 285M people worldwide.

Running in parallel to CGI's Health Equity Thrust and Outreach, are major programs focused on Financial Support for Humanitarian Relief, for which \$54M worth of goods and resource commitments for humanitarian and disaster response efforts were made during the 2024 CGI meeting. Following the 2023 CGI meeting's initial Ukraine focus, this years program additionally-focused on the crisis in the Sudan, and included a coalition of over 15 organizations engaged in systematic funding of local aid groups on the ground in the Sudan.

However, there was more to report. In collaboration with CGI, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) announced its commitment to a New Capital Fund, initially focusing on solarizing field operations, and aimed at providing a more reliable and sustainable power source than diesel generators, for intervention during long-term crises worldwide. In Ukraine, an aid partnership formed at the 2024 CGI meeting between '*Solight Design*' and '*Common Man for Ukraine*' resulted in a relief convoy delivering solar-powered lanterns to vulnerable Ukrainian communities, particularly at the front. These lanterns provided light and security for families affected by attacks on Ukraine's energy grid. Ancillary efforts focused on women at the frontlines of conflict, given recognition of how humanitarian crises and violent conflict disproportionately affect women and girls. Finally, on the disaster response front, a CGI technology company was awarded a 10 yr contract by NJ State to enhance disaster recovery, and to support NJ readiness to respond better to natural disasters and to more effectively manage future federal recovery funds.

To cap off 2024 CGI's formidable accomplishments on the health front, First Lady Jill Biden chose to announce a \$500M DOD investment in women's health research directly from the heavily press-covered 2024 CGI event, thereby highlighting a memorable CGI meeting.