

**Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC)  
and the United Nations Office for Partnerships**

in collaboration with

**Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy (CECP)**

*February 25, 2008*

**Meeting Location:** ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations

**Conversation II:** Corporate leadership

**Panelist:** Christina Gold, CEO, Western Union

**Introductory Remarks:**

Good afternoon. I am delighted to participate in this panel today on the very important and timely topic – the important role corporations can play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. I'll spend the next few minutes sharing a bit about our industry, the remittance industry, and outline our refreshed approach to corporate giving.

At Western Union, our very business model promotes positive economic and social development.

Remittances are a large part of who and what we are at Western Union, and they are one of the most powerful forces in global economic development today. In 2007, migrants sent home an estimated \$330 billion in recorded remittances, as much as three times<sup>1</sup> the official aid received by developing countries – combined.

Yet, many would say that we as a global community can do even more to multiply the tremendous impact remittances are having in the developing world. We would agree.

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<sup>1</sup> “Study Counts Cash Sent Home by Migrants” *Seattle Times* October 18, 2007

That is why we have long worked in partnership with governments, NGOs, and others to amplify the impact of money migrants invest in their communities “back home” and to see that migration becomes a choice, not a necessity.

We are taking a leadership role in building on this commitment. For example, late last year we announced *Our World, Our Family*, a five-year, \$50 million investment in fostering greater global economic opportunity, helping families stay connected, overcome barriers and realize their dreams.

The MDGs and Jeffrey Sachs’s work on world poverty guided the program’s development.<sup>2</sup> Designed to address the educational and economic needs of global citizens on every rung of the economic ladder, *Our World, Our Family* includes 4 components:

(Gives)

- new global giving circles that build on our innovative 4+1 program, which engages migrant hometown associations and government on every level to fund job creation in developing communities

(Learns)

- new resources – such as language skills training and family scholarships – that extend our longstanding commitment to education through support of programs such as Jobs for Americas Graduates

(Strives)

- and hands-on volunteer support to drive small business-mentoring and financial literacy – integrating our ongoing commitment to the Business Information Clearinghouse, which equips entrepreneurs with the tools necessary for success

(Speaks)

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<sup>2</sup> *End of Poverty*, Jeffrey Sachs

- global voice for migrants. We are committed to being a leading advocate for the diversity of migrant communities here at the UN and in other forums and we will continue to advocate for greater global economic opportunity

This program is fundamentally designed to help people help themselves.

This increasingly global age demands global solutions attuned to very local needs and realities. With more than 335,000 locations in more than 200 countries and territories, we have learned the value of this approach to business – listening to our customers, doing business in their language and currency, honoring their customs and culture. This commitment is reflected in our core business and our approach to broad community engagement.

This increasingly global world also demands increased collaboration, and partnership is a hallmark of corporate leadership. To help advance the shared goal of global economic opportunity, Western Union relies on the support of more than 6,000 employees, corporate and agent partners – for example, by providing a one-for-one match on funds agents contribute to this important cause.

We are also working with countless NGOs around the world. Most recently, we had the privilege of working with the UN Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, making an historic contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund, or CERF.

CERF was created by the UN to pre-position funds for humanitarian action. This type of innovative effort – planning ahead for a more rapid, reliable response to humanitarian needs around the world – aligns nicely with our values as a company and our definition of leadership. Western Union is the first company to support this effort, and we are pleased to stand alongside country leaders and help call other companies to action.

We urge other companies to join with us in support of CERF – and our broader goals. As a leader, we plan to extend our role in the international dialogue around migration, convening a global coalition around this issue and serving as an advocate for migrant rights here at the UN and in other forums. Here today for the first time, together with the UN and CECP, we invite others to join us.

Corporate leadership has helped open borders, positively impacting families who benefit from remittances. It is also necessary to ensure that, along with open borders, we share increasingly open hearts and minds. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo of the Philippines calls the migrants who are so important to her nation's economy "modern heroes," and I believe that is true for migrants in every corner of the globe.

One paycheck at a time, one family at a time, and one community at a time, migrants are transforming our world. They are changing how we think about development and providing new answers – and new optimism – in the fight against world poverty. They are everyday leaders, the world's greatest givers, and we are proud to take a leadership role in supporting them in realizing their dreams.