

# American

## NEWS & VIEWS

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## President Obama Summit Boosts Spirit of Entrepreneurs

By Andrzej Zwaniecki  
Staff Writer

Washington — Tarik Yousef of Dubai wanted to be a government bureaucrat when he was young because there was no alternative for ambitious youngsters in his country. His dream was shared by many of his Arab peers.

The new generation is different, Yousef told delegates in Washington to the April 26–27 Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship. From his experience as the dean of the Dubai School of Government, he knows that Arab youth increasingly see entrepreneurship as an alternative.

Nabil Shalaby, an educator and promoter of entrepreneurship in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, agreed that entrepreneurial energy is there among the younger generation. “It just needs to be nurtured and tapped,” he said.

Entrepreneurs from roughly 60 countries met in Washington at the invitation of the Obama administration and expressed hope that this entrepreneurial energy will create jobs, bring robust economic development and drive other positive changes.

“Real change comes from the bottom up, and that is why we are here,” President Obama told the entrepreneurs April 26.

Discussions about how entrepreneurs can become agents of change were at the center of the summit’s agenda. It wasn’t a typical Washington event; it was more dialogue than lecture, observed Elmira Bayrasli of Endeavor, a U.S. nonprofit group. Even the seating in the ballroom where panel discussions took place — rows of round tables, instead of chairs lined up to face a stage, and no podium — encouraged an exchange of ideas.

“Moderators [administration officials] were allowing the panelists and invited delegates to speak their minds, even when it might have been uncomfortable to do so,” Bayrasli said.

Entrepreneurs shared problems and sometimes found solutions they hadn’t thought about earlier, said Sofiane Chaib, managing director of a foreign-language center in Algeria. “At times it felt like a group therapy session,” he said.

Those whose achievements were recognized by the president in his speech were ecstatic. “It’s like 10 years of dedication [to your business] and then you’re recognized

for a split second by the president of the world — elected by the American people, but ... really the president of the world,” explained Soraya Salti, from Jordan, who was one of those mentioned by Obama.

Salti and other entrepreneurs in attendance believe that the enthusiasm at the summit will help them carry out new projects. Waed al Taweel, a student from the Palestinian Territories, said it might help her realize her dream enterprise — a recreation center for children and teens in her homeland.

But with expectations as varied as the backgrounds of the 250 entrepreneurs attending, not everyone was leaving Washington perfectly happy. Some delegates were enthusiastic about the culture of entrepreneurship in America, but disheartened by what they said was little or no support for their efforts in their home countries. Saad Al Barrak, head of a major mobile telecom company that operates in the Middle East and Africa, took issue with the summit itself. He said the event sometimes felt like “an entrepreneurship refresher course.”

The administration did announce concrete initiatives. These mostly private-public partnerships include a fund that potentially can mobilize more than \$2 billion in private-sector investments and internships, professional development, mentoring, training and networking programs for entrepreneurs from countries with Muslim majorities, as well as projects promoting high-tech business incubators and providing seed money. Administration officials said that the Washington summit is only the beginning in the process of elevating entrepreneurship to a more potent force for change. Several follow-on meetings were discussed; Turkey will be the next host of a similar event.

Craig Newmark, founder of Craigslist, said continuity is important. “If you follow through and you keep doing more of it, eventually things can grow from the grass roots,” he said.

Some of the entrepreneurs at the summit found immediate personal gain. Al Taweel, 20, the youngest attendee, will be going home with an offer of a full scholarship from the president of Babson College, just outside Boston, to get her master’s degree in business administration.

## Women Entrepreneurs Can Ignite Social Change

*Entrepreneurship Summit session devoted to women*

By Charles W. Corey  
Staff Writer

Washington — Proclaiming that women have a “unique opportunity to ignite social change,” Farah Pandith, the U.S. Department of State’s special representative to

Muslim communities, opened the final panel at the Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship on April 27. The panel focused on “unleashing the power of women entrepreneurs.”

Pandith told the women they are role models and agents for long-term change. “Women entrepreneurs can impact generations, creating a ripple effect by setting an example for young girls. One person can inspire change on the local level. Through investing in the ideas, the creativity, the passion and vision of women, lives can change inside and outside the home.”

She was joined on the panel by Valerie Jarrett, assistant and senior adviser to President Obama; Muhammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank; Dina Powell, global head for corporate engagement at Goldman Sachs; Tamara Abed, director of Aarong; and Faridah Nambi Kigongo, founder and managing director of Nambi Children’s Initiatives.

Yunus told the summit that his business started bringing financial services to poor people and not just poor women. “Loan-sharking in our village” in Bangladesh “enraged me,” he said.

He said he went to a bank and asked them to make loans and they refused. “So I started complaining about the banking institutions. ... They give loans to people who already had money. They would not give money to people who did not have money. I said, ‘This is ridiculous, this should be the other way. Not only do you reject poor people, you reject all women.’ That is how I got into the woman issue.”

In Bangladesh at that time, he said, not even 1 percent of the borrowers in the banking system were women. “Something is wrong in the system,” he told himself, and then he started offering himself as a guarantor for women’s loans.

At first, he said, women were reluctant to borrow funds because of cultural sensitivities. “It took a lot of patience ... six years’ time ... to achieve a 50-50” ratio of women and men borrowers, he said.

Loans to women brought much more money to the family than loans made to men, Yunus said, and as a result he began to focus on lending to women. “Today we have over 8 million borrowers; 97 percent are women and they own the bank. ... They sit on the board and make the decisions.”

Then, Yunus said, they started educating the children of those women to build new generations who are skilled. Now there are 52,000 students in school thanks to Grameen, he said.

These students complain there are no jobs, but Yunus says that is the wrong attitude. He said he tells those students to pledge every morning, “I am not a job seeker. I am a job giver.” He encourages them to use their new skills to create new jobs for themselves and many others.

In the end, Yunus said, “all human beings are entrepreneurs.”

Dina Powell of Goldman Sachs, who immigrated to the United States as a child from Egypt, told the group her company’s program “10,000 Women” aims to educate 10,000 women entrepreneurs worldwide.

“Investing in women as entrepreneurs is a smart investment,” she said.

The 10,000 Women Program seeks to reach 10,000 women with pragmatic business and management education on how to write a business plan or access capital. Some 2,000 women have already been educated under the program, she said, and five of them were entrepreneurs attending the summit.

Tamara Abed is a former investment banker who also worked for Goldman Sachs and is now director of Aarong in Bangladesh, which supports some 65,000 women artisans. She said women often have the drive and passion for doing business and for many, it is a “fight for survival” if they have no husband and children to support. “Women are the agent of change. If you can inspire them, you can empower them.”

Faridah Nambi Kigongo is the founder and managing director of Nambi Children Initiatives in Uganda, which works to improve the lives of vulnerable children and assists women with health care and basic needs.

She started a local television show in 2007 called the Nambi Talk Show. It features elders sharing local wisdom and knowledge.

Kigongo, who has a master’s of business administration degree from Edinburgh Business School in Scotland, said she founded the children’s center on the severance package she received after resigning her well-paying aviation job. “It was a conscious decision for me,” she said, to look after the children.

“Coming from my background, I had productive, educated parents and seeing these children, I said, ‘OK, these are my neighbors, I need to do something about them.’ ... That was the beginning for me.” Moving on to work with women entrepreneurs was a natural fit, she added.

President Obama hosted the summit, which covered

issues including technology and innovation, access to capital, unleashing youth and women's entrepreneurship, mentoring and networking, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, promoting and enabling business, and social entrepreneurship.

Some 250 entrepreneurs from around the world attended, along with a host of American entrepreneurs, business executives and top U.S. government officials.

Participants came from Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei, Cameroon, Canada, China, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Finland, France, The Gambia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, the Palestinian Territories, Paraguay, the Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States and Yemen.

### **Statement by Secretary Clinton on Election Transparency in Iraq**

*U.S. seeks partnership with an Iraq that is stable, sovereign, self-reliant*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesman  
April 27, 2010

#### STATEMENT BY SECRETARY CLINTON

#### Election Transparency in Iraq

On March 7, I congratulated the people of Iraq on their national elections, which were a clear demonstration of their commitment to democracy and a future without fear and intimidation.

Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), the United Nations, the Arab League, and both international and domestic observers declared those elections to be free of widespread or systematic fraud. The United States respects the legal avenues that Iraq has set up for challenges to candidates and to electoral results. However, for challenges to be credible and legitimate they must also be transparent and must accord with the laws and mechanisms established for the conduct of the elections. Investigations into allegations of fraud should be conducted in accordance with IHEC procedures. Similarly, candidates should have every opportunity to answer charges against them. Transparency and due process are essential to protecting the integrity of the process and preserving the confidence of the Iraqi people in their democratic system.

The United States does not support a particular party or candidate. We seek a long-term partnership with an Iraq that is stable, sovereign and self-reliant. As a friend and partner, the United States calls upon Iraq's leaders to set aside their differences, respect the courageous ballots of the Iraqi people, and to form quickly a government that is inclusive and represents the will of all Iraqis and their hope for a brighter future in a strong, independent and democratic Iraq.

### **Space Travel Moves from Government Control to Commercial Realm**

*Interest grows as U.S. companies, Virgin Galactic lead new space race*

By Cheryl Pellerin  
Science Writer

Washington — As the international crews of space shuttle Discovery and the International Space Station worked together in orbit more than 300 kilometers overhead on April 15, President Obama described to an audience at the Kennedy Space Center what the "next chapter" holds for U.S. space exploration.

With only three launches left in NASA's shuttle program — Atlantis on May 14, Endeavour July 29 and Discovery September 16 — the United States and its international partners are on a new trajectory to the future that will involve more public-private partnerships.

"This is the next chapter that we will write together here at NASA," Obama said in Florida. "We will partner with industry. We will invest in cutting-edge research and technology. We will set far-reaching milestones and provide the resources to reach those milestones. And step by step, we will push the boundaries not only of where we can go, but what we can do."

In testimony April 22 before a Senate subcommittee, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden called Obama's plan "the most authentically visionary policy for real human space exploration that we have had since President Kennedy challenged NASA to send humans to the moon and return them safely back to Earth."

Under the plan, he said, "we will ensure continuous American presence in space on the [International Space Station] throughout this entire decade, re-establish a robust and competitive American launch industry, launch more robotic probes into our solar system as precursors for human activity, invest in a new heavy lift [research and development] program," and build a technological foundation for sustainable exploration.

The United States also will conduct expeditions in lunar space and unprecedented human missions to near-Earth

asteroids and ultimately Mars, Bolden said. What the Obama administration does not support is a proposed NASA plan to return astronauts to the moon by 2020.

#### AN INTERNATIONAL ENTERPRISE

In 1960, American Telephone & Telegraph designed and built the first commercial spacecraft – a satellite communications system called Telstar. The system was part of a multinational agreement to develop experimental satellite communications over the Atlantic Ocean. Telstar-1, launched by NASA from Cape Canaveral in 1962, was the first privately sponsored space launch.

Today, 48 years later, two U.S. space-transportation companies – Space Exploration Technology Corp. (SpaceX) of California and Orbital Sciences of Virginia – are testing supply flights partially funded by NASA for trips to the International Space Station over the next several years.

Other U.S. space companies include Bigelow Aerospace, a Nevada start-up company that is pioneering work on expandable space station modules; the Spaceship Company, a joint venture between U.S. firm Scaled Composites and Richard Branson's U.K.-based Virgin Group; and Space Adventures, a space tourism company that has sent seven private astronauts to the space station.

Since 1996, the Federal Aviation Administration's Office of Commercial Space Transportation has licensed eight spaceports for operation, George Nield, FAA associate administrator for commercial space transportation, told America.gov. His office licenses commercial launch operators and spaceports and issues commercial astronaut wings.

Outside the United States, Nield said, there is great interest in the business of space but fewer strictly commercial space companies. The space programs of Japan, Russia, Europe, China and India are funded by national governments. France's Arianespace is a quasi-private European space consortium founded in 1980 as the world's first commercial launch-services provider.

#### PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES

An exception is the entrepreneurial company Virgin Galactic, whose \$26 million SpaceShipOne flew to space three times in 2004, becoming the world's first private manned spacecraft. The company unveiled SpaceShipTwo in December 2009; the test flight period will last 18 to 24 months.

According to Galactic, it will build the first commercial vehicles during the test program. The company plans to

fly 500 people in the first year of operation and 50,000 in the first 10 years. Passengers will be able to leave their seats and float in the weightlessness of space, enjoying a view of space and Earth stretching for 1,000 miles (1,609 kilometers) in every direction.

"Other countries that don't feel they have the capabilities to build rockets still have interests in the science and technology," Nield said. These include the 16 countries that are partners and contributors to the International Space Station.

"Countries that have recognized that it's beyond their current capability to build rockets or experiments still want to be part of it in some way," Nield said, "and several countries have been mentioned in the media either as sites from which vehicles are or have been launched or may launch in the future."

These include Louru in French Guiana, the current site of Arianespace launches; Kiruna in Sweden, a sounding-rocket launch site also being proposed for space tourist flights; Spaceport Scotland in Lossiemouth, also envisioned as a launch site for space tourism; Ras al-Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates; and Baikonur in Kazakhstan.

"The United States is committed to space commercialization and there are plenty of opportunities for international participation," Nield said. One track is space tourism. The other is "to work with and support NASA in servicing the International Space Station and taking part in exploration activities. That will require a lot of help from governments and from industry."

#### Computing Advances Allow More Blind to Access Published Works

*International sharing of copyright materials could spur more availability*

By Burton Bollag

Special Correspondent

Washington – One of the big problems for blind people always has been the very small number of books, magazines and other printed materials accessible to them. Few books are translated into Braille, the system of raised dots read with the fingers, or issued as audio recordings.

However, this situation has been changing rapidly in recent years as the result of two key developments. Changes to copyright laws in the United States and some other countries allow nonprofit groups to publish works in formats accessible to the blind without seeking permission from the copyright holder or paying royalties.

And advances in computing – especially the widespread availability of text-to-speech technology and the rapid

spread of hand-held e-readers — are putting hundreds of thousands of books tantalizingly close to the reach of people with disabilities that prevent them from reading. Together, the two developments, for the first time, are opening the possibility of vastly increased access for disabled people to novels, textbooks and other published materials.

But even as access has increased, organizations for the blind and people with other disabilities that prevent them from turning pages or reading text say it has not gone far enough.

In the United States, the exemption in copyright laws, known as the Chafee amendment, was adopted in 1996. It allows government agencies or nonprofit organizations to publish and distribute works in Braille or audio versions to the disabled without requiring prior approval from the copyright holder. The law is intended to help disabled people without undermining protections against illegal reproduction of copyrighted works for monetary gain. Advocates for the blind praise the law as a model solution.

But there is a problem, they say. Materials published in the United States for the blind under the copyright exemption cannot be shared with disabled people in other countries.

“So we manufacture a book and put it in our collection and here’s the same book that has to be remanufactured in every English-speaking country at great expense,” says George Kerscher, a leading advocate of greater accessibility. Kerscher is secretary-general of the DAISY Consortium, a national group that promotes the distribution of books in a standard digital format, called DAISY, or Digital Accessible Information System.

About 57 countries, most of them developed nations, have some sort of exemption from their copyright laws to benefit the blind. The de facto ban on international exchanges of materials produced this way is especially a problem for the blind in developing countries, said Brad Thomas, a vice president of Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic, a nonprofit U.S.-based organization. “It’s probably the single biggest problem facing the [blind and disabled] community around the world,” when it comes to access to books, Thomas said.

Negotiations are expected to start shortly on a framework to allow international sharing of these materials. The talks will take place at the World Intellectual Property Organization, a specialized United Nations agency in Geneva that oversees international copyright and patent issues. The group celebrates World Intellectual Property Day, April 26.

Negotiations may be difficult. The United States and a number of other countries feel a draft treaty prepared by the World Blind Union and presented by Brazil would go too far in weakening copyright protections. The United States nonetheless “acknowledged there is a problem and said some international consensus should be reached,” according to Justin Hughes, a law professor and senior adviser on intellectual property issues to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Meanwhile, the rapid popularity of e-readers — electronic devices that store books digitally and have a screen on which people can read the text — could revolutionize access for the disabled. That’s because most of the devices have, or soon will have, the capacity to convert the text to speech.

However, the hopes of blind people have been dampened by a controversy over the use of this capability. In the last year, authors, concerned the technology could cut into the sales of recordings of their works, demanded the capability be turned off. Blind and disabled people staged angry demonstrations against the authors and the issue is still not settled.

“It’s a big controversy,” said Kerscher, “but at least we’re talking.”

### **Climate Change Media Partnership**

By Amanda Spake

*Amanda Spake is a Washington, D.C.-based writer whose articles on health, science, education, and the environment have appeared in U.S. News and World Report, The Nation, and the Washington Post, among other publications.*

Mass communications media in the developed world have covered scientific and political debates over the impact of global climate change for nearly two decades. But journalists in developing countries did not have the budgets, the training, or the opportunities to do the same. “There was very little information about climate change reaching the public in the countries that are most vulnerable to its impacts,” says Mike Shanahan, press officer for the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), a research and advocacy organization.

The problem became apparent at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali, Indonesia, in 2007. Just 11 percent of the 1,600 journalists accredited to the conference were from news outlets in developing countries. Yet, these annual U.N. conventions are a key venue where nations assess their progress, negotiate greenhouse gases targets, commit to funding priorities, and more.

The IIED was concerned about the dearth of news on climate change in the developing world. So was Panos, a global network that fosters public debate about development, and Internews, a nonprofit committed to empowering local media. "We all realized that journalists from developing countries could very rarely afford to travel to report on the international climate change negotiations, and that this was creating a democratic deficit," says Shanahan. So, together, the three groups formed the Climate Change Media Partnership, with the aim of boosting both the quality and the quantity of climate change media coverage worldwide.

The Partnership raises funds to bring about 40 developing country journalists to the annual Conference of Parties of the U.N.'s Framework Convention on Climate Change. There, the group provides its journalist Fellows a two-week program that includes media training, connections to sources for stories, and high-level briefings where the journalists meet and interview senior negotiators, top scientists, and other newsmakers.

"Something important here is that we enable journalists to tell stories that are directly relevant to their audiences at home," says Shanahan. At last year's Copenhagen summit, for example, many met and interviewed their heads of state.

The program benefits do not end there. Fellows share ideas, contacts, and reporting tips through their own e-mail network. Some have organized media workshops for other journalists in their regions. Others have created the first climate change series for their radio stations or newspapers.

So far, journalists from 42 countries have participated; last year, there were nearly 600 applicants. The Partnership expects as many this year, as the staff gears up to take 40 journalists to the December climate change summit in Cancun, Mexico. Each fellowship includes travel to the conference, food, lodging, field trips, and program administrative fees. The cost is about \$10,000 per journalist.

The investment has paid major dividends. Over the past three years, roughly 120 fellowship recipients have produced nearly 1,600 stories on climate change for media outlets in their home countries.

"But I am most proud of the fact that we are helping to form a long-term network of the future leaders of climate change journalism," says Shanahan. "Their passion, determination and enthusiasm for finding and sharing great stories about climate change are critical for keeping millions of people around the world informed."

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