

UN Speech on GDFD Fellows Programs
April 2015

Good afternoon. Thank you all very much for joining us this afternoon. It is a pleasure to be here and have the opportunity to talk to you.

I am Semiramis de Miranda representing Global Foundation for Democracy and Development – GFDD.

Let me start by giving a special thanks to the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, and especially to the experts who have kindly accepted our invitation to talk to you this afternoon. They are Professor James E. Mahon Jr., Professor of Political Science at Williams College and former GFDD fellow; Mr. Michael Lennard, Chief of the International Tax Cooperation Section at UN DESA; and Ms. Gail Hurley, UNDP Policy Expert on Financing for Development. I would like to excuse however the absence of Mr. Guarocuya

Felix, who is the General Directorate of Internal Taxes of the Dominican Republic and Ms. Germania Montas, economist and was the former Deputy of the General Directorate of Internal Taxes of the Dominican Republic in 2012. Both were very disappointed for not being here today.

A little about us.... A US-based Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (GFDD) is the sister foundation to the Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (FUNGLODE), which is located in the Dominican Republic. Both Foundations were created by the former president of the Dominican Republic, Dr. Leonel Fernandez. GFDD and FUNGLODE are both non-profit, non-governmental organizations. GFDD is dedicated to the advancement of global collaboration and exchange between the people of the Dominican Republic and the international community. In the US, GFDD is a 501(c) (3) organization. Both

organizations are affiliated with ECOSOC, ONCTAD, UNESCO, DPI, WSIS, and closely align with the United Nations' agenda.

Among our many projects and programs, is our exceptional **Fellows Program** that assists people who want to do research in regards to the Dominican Republic and share their findings through international networks. As an incentive to our fellows, we support their research, publish their findings, and create panel discussions.

Today, we present an interesting topic for this panel that impacts almost everyone—***tax reform***. Our topic was inspired by the extensive research done by fellowship Professor James Mahon Jr. while he was in the Dominican Republic during the summers of 2013 and 2014. Prior to beginning his research in 2013, Professor Mahon had applied to the GFDD Fellows Program. We were extremely pleased to

accept him into our program because he would provide new and practical information regarding tax reform in the Dominican Republic. Through our fellowship program, Professor Mahon did his research in coordination with GFDD/FUNGLODE and a national academic advisor, Ms Germania Montas who was the former Deputy General Directorate of Internal Taxes of the Dominican Republic in 2012. He was able to study, review, and analyze tax reforms in the DR, and writing a well-received paper entitled, "The 2012 Dominican Tax Reform in Historical and Regional Context." His work now is a book. GFDD has just published his paper through our "Research and Ideas Series" and created this panel discussion.

His fellowship could not have come at a better time, for few reasons but not limited to: 1. The Dominican Republic new administration had just come into office and had passed a tax reform in 2012. 2. Many economists had

forecast a massive transfer of private debt into public debt. 3. The subsidies to the electricity sector had continued to drain the country's finances.

In closing, we appreciate our fellows' research and that Professor Mahon is able to be here today to participate with our other experts in our panel discussion on "Challenges and Scope of the 2012 Tax Reforms in the Dominican Republic".

Now, let's find out a little bit more about our speakers and start this panel by turning the discussion over to Marc who is GFDD's UN representative.
