**Talking Points for Introductory Remarks**

**India-OECD-World Bank Conference on Financial Education**

**March 4th, 2013, ITC Maurya, New Delhi**

**Opening Session 8:50-9:45 am World Bank Speaker 9:10-9:20 am**

Sincere thanks to the Reserve bank of India and the OECD for all of their effort to organize and sponsor this conference. Both organizations and Dr. Chakrabarty, in particular here in India, have been invaluable leaders and tireless champions of expanding financial inclusion and increasing financial capability through education.

This conference, which is the third of four regional events that are being supported by the Financial Literacy and Education Trust Fund established four years ago through the generous financial support of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, exemplifies the kind of partnership and commitment that will be required for us to continue to make progress on these essential issues.

The experience of the last decade has amply demonstrated that financial inclusion and a robust and reliable financial sector are essential to countries at all levels of development as well as a critical ingredient for global economic stability, poverty alleviation and shared prosperity.

We need only to look at the catalyst for the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009 in the sub-prime mortgage markets in the United States to see the consequences and ripple effects of in sufficient financial capability among consumers in combination with insufficient protections and controls to global economic security.

We have learned this experience and that of many developing countries that the introduction of new financial products and services is a necessary, but far from sufficient, condition to achieve the goals of development and stability.

New products must be complemented by enhancement of the knowledge, skills and behavior among individuals as well as the development of the legal and institutional foundations for the regulation of the vendors of services and protection of consumers to achieve responsible and sustainable financial inclusion.

It is fitting that this conference is held in India, a country that has been at the vanguard of innovation and development of new pathways to financial inclusion – a leader in the development of micro finance products, innovative approaches to providing access to banking and other financial institutions and enormously significant advances in technology and programs to support access to not only financial services but also new types of social insurance programs that require similar skills for effective engagement.

India is also a setting in which the many risks and challenges attendant to achieving meaningful and responsible financial inclusion may also be seen. Significantly through the leadership of the Reserve Bank, India has been at forefront of advocacy for financial education and efforts to address vulnerable groups that you will learn more about over the next two days and are thus and ideal setting for this event.

The partnership that is behind this event also exemplifies the diversity of institutions and the kind of cooperation that will be required for us to make real progress in this arena.

Financial support has come from a very new international donor, Russia that is not just providing resources but also faces its own challenges in building financial capability so will benefit from the knowledge and resources that will be shared with you this week. As the current G 20 President they also have a forum to share now ideas and information and can build on the work advanced by Mexico and the United States in this role over the past two years.

The OECD has effectively used its convening authority and knowledge building capacity to support this work for more than a decade and supports the ongoing forum and knowledge sharing through its International Network for Financial Education.

The Trust Fund managed by the World Bank involves cooperation between the Human Development Network with a focus on supporting effective participation in social insurance system and health care financing that increasing require household level savings and investment decisions and often the initial point of access to financial institutions through conditional cash transfer programs that require the development of news skills, the Financial and Private Sector development teams working on access to finance and consumer protection and the researchers developing diagnostic survey tools and undertaking impact evaluation studies to determine what works most effectively.

This kind of cooperative and interdisciplinary effort between country advocates, international institutions and researcher is what will be required for us to meet this critical challenge. The knowledge and resources shared with you today and tomorrow represent continued progress down what will be a long path. The World Bank and the IFC have already made a significant investment in supporting this progress and will continue to do so.

I wish you all the best in your learning and commitment to this important area.