



2006-2010

Commission on Growth and Development

Achievements



Commission Chair M. Spence is presenting at the final event in Washington, D.C. June 9, 2010.

Introduction

Launched in 2006, the Commission on Growth and Development was an independent body that brought together 22 policymakers, academics and business leaders to examine various aspects of economic growth and development. The work culminated in —*The Growth Report: Strategies for Sustained Growth and Inclusive Development* (May 2008) —which was positively received in industrialized and developing countries alike and in academic and policy circles, and then a *Special Report - Post-Crisis Growth in Developing Countries* (October 2009).

The Commission accomplished its work through an investigative process that brought together over 300 distinguished academics and seasoned practitioners and drew on technical expertise and real world policy making experience. A focus of the Commission's activities was to maximize the outreach and accessibility of its work. This report summarizes the Commission's accomplishments.

Workshops

The Commission held thirteen workshops between 2007-2009. Workshops were organized around key thematic areas that were identified by the Commissioners as highly relevant to what promotes (and hinders) rapid and sustained economic growth and poverty reduction. In addition to reviewing commissioned papers, the workshops were an opportunity to highlight cutting edge research by world renowned academics. Participants included Commissioners, policymakers, academics — authors of the thematic papers and case studies — World Bank staff, representatives from think tanks and from sponsoring institutions.

Growth Commission Meetings

The Growth Commission officially met 6 times; twice in Washington, D.C., and once in Singapore, Suzhou, London, and Boston. During these meetings, Commissioners brought their varied experience to the table to debate and discuss the conditions that may enable developing countries to find a path to rapid and sustained growth.

The Commission's work was made possible by support from the governments of Australia, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the World Bank Group.

Publications

The Growth Commission developed and implemented a robust publications program. In addition to *the Growth Report*, it published a *Special Report on Post-Crisis Growth*, five Thematic Volumes, and nearly seventy working papers.

The Growth Report has been translated into 9 languages

Reports

The Growth Report presents the Commission's main findings and discusses how global trends influenced developing countries' growth strategies and prospects. The report was launched in May 2008.

Following the financial crisis in the fall of 2008, the Commission held a workshop on the crisis and its implications for developing countries. Following this workshop the Commission's *Special Report – Post-Crisis Growth in Developing Countries* was published in December 2009.

Thematic Volumes

The Commission's thematic volumes aim to take stock of current thinking on aspects of economic growth, review the salient features of successful growth experiences, identify new and developing trends for future growth strategies, and assess the most effective approaches for developing countries. Five thematic volumes were published:

- *Urbanization and Growth* (Editors: Michael Spence, Patricia Clarke Annez and Robert M. Buckley)
- *Health and Growth* (Editors: Michael Spence and Maureen Lewis)
- *Leadership and Growth* (Editors: David Brady and Michael Spence)
- *Globalization and Growth* (Editors: Michael Spence and Danny Leipziger)
- *Equity and Growth in a Globalizing World* (Editors: Ravi Kanbur and Michael Spence)

Each volume includes papers written by eminent academics, practitioners and policymakers and presented and reviewed at one of the 13 Commission workshops.



Commissioners M. Ahluwalia, M. Spence, and V. Kelkar (India Development Foundation) present the *Special Report* in New Delhi, February 11, 2010.

Working Papers

The working paper series was launched in 2008 and consists of thematic papers and country case studies. The thematic papers assess knowledge in areas such as monetary and fiscal policies, climate change, and equity and growth. Country case studies explore the nexus between leadership and the dynamics of growth and change in specific country settings. Nearly 70 papers have been published in this series.

Dissemination

Over 3,300 copies of the Commission's publications have been sold by the World Bank's InfoShop. In 2009, *The Growth Report* was on top of the best sellers list. In addition, over 4,000 copies of the report have been distributed for free. Copies of *The Growth Report* and *Special Report* were disseminated to all Heads of State, Finance Ministers, and Central Bank Governors.

The Growth Report was launched in Egypt, France, India, the UK, and the US. The Special Report was launched in Canada, Egypt, India, Turkey, and the US.

Several launch events were also held for the five Thematic Volumes. These included targeted events in Belgium, Brazil, China, Egypt, Jordan, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and the US.

All publications of the Growth Commission are available in electronic form on [the Growth Commission website \(www.growthcommission.org\)](http://www.growthcommission.org). Several are also available on Kindle, Google Books, Nook, ISSUU, Scribd, eBrary, Netlibrary, ebooks.com, Ingram Digital, Kobo, Books-on-Board, etc. Commission publications' pages have been viewed over 138,000 times on Google Books.

Events

The Commission reached out to policymakers and academics around the globe. Over 50 events were held in over 20 countries from Chile to South Africa and from Kuwait to China and several others in between. These events included thematic workshops, publication launches, consultations, presentations at universities, conferences, economic associations, and think tanks.

Translations

To increase the accessibility of the Growth Commission's work, the Commission website is available in six languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Japanese, and Spanish). *The Growth Report* itself has been translated into Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Persian.

Conference editions of the select thematic volumes have been translated into several languages, including Arabic, Chinese, and Portuguese.

The *Urbanization and Growth* Volume was also reprinted by an Indian publishing company for local distribution.

Website

The Growth Commission website was used to provide updates on the activities of the Commission and provide access to its work. All publications are available for download on the website. As previously mentioned the website is available in six languages. For the past two years, our website was visited more than 138,000 times and accessed from 215 countries/territories.

Upon completion of the Growth Commission's work, the website will be archived and available at: www.growthcommission.org



Nobel Laureates B. Solow, M. Spence, and R. Lucas at the Workshop on Fiscal and Monetary Policies. Washington, D.C. April 11, 2008.

Blog

The Growth Commission's Blog – *The Growth Blog* – was established to promote the discussion of issues pertinent to sustained economic growth and inclusive development. It was a forum where students, practitioners, and scholars could freely engage in a more in-depth discussion around issues raised in *The Growth Report* and thematic volumes.

The Growth Blog functioned from May 2008 to July 2009. Upon completion of the Growth Commission's work the blog will be archived and available at: www.growthcommissionblog.org

Guiding Principles contributing to the Success of the Commission's Work

First, the interactions between leading academics and policy makers yielded novel and useful perspectives because three conditions were met: (a) there was no attempt at pushing a specific point of view; differences in opinion were recognized; the aim was to understand underlying explicit or implicit models leading to differences in opinions; (b) there was no attempt at forcing a consensus when none existed, and (c) the work was aimed at policy makers, and hence cognizant of the need for simplicity in exposition, for relevance, and to be mindful of the political economy dimensions of policy making.

Second, the Commission's view was that policy makers need to make decisions in real time; they cannot wait for research to be completed. The focus therefore was on examining what the current state of knowledge provides as guide for action.

Third, the Commission recognized early on that a common mistake is to assume that a policy beneficial for an industrialized economy is necessarily beneficial for a developing one. The work of the Commission persuasively demonstrates this is not the case.

Fourth, learning from others is the key to influencing policy design and overcoming implementation challenges. The Commission felt that the ability to combine technical advice with practical implementation experience and political dimensions was the most effective and credible way to assist policy making.

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