Conference Framing

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Good morning everyone. It's so nice to see you. Probably could say good morning in about 25 different languages. Let's try it. Good morning in you language. Good morning. Fantastic. Fantastic. My name is Dick Larson. And off-and-on over the next 2 and 1/2 days, I'll be playing your host. And everyone finds that very funny, that I'm going to be your host. And so let's get started. We have an action-packed agenda, and we have to keep on schedule. So already, I'm 30 seconds behind schedule, so excuse me.

Welcome to LINC 2013. We have represented here, and you should all give yourselves a round of applause, 49 countries. Over 300 participants. We don't know how many were walk-ons today, but at the last count, it's slightly over 300. And others are joining us by the internet, live streaming. Welcome, those of you who are watching us from your computer at home or at work or wherever you are.

The credo of LINC. LINC was born in 2002 by a number of us volunteers at MIT and in other countries. We have partners who are co-inventors of LINC also, and some of them are here today. "With today's computer and telecommunications technologies, every young person could have a quality education, regardless of his or her place of birth or wealth of parents." That's something we started. That's a phrase has not changed since 2002.

And yet, if you look at the technologies that have changed in the last 11 years, we're getting closer and closer and closer to that possibility, at least on a technological basis. So that's the theme of LINC 2013. And you'll hear about MOOCs this morning – Massive Online Open Courses – which are providing learning opportunities worldwide to hundreds of thousands of students. So what might be the impact of those now and in the future? Innovations in educational technology, like mobile technologies. Impediments to bringing in education. Some of these are political, cultural, economic, training, those kinds of issues. Impact of technology in lowering the cost of education.

So LINC was formed in 2002. In 2003, we had the first LINC conference, thanks to the Lounsbery Foundation in Washington, DC. In February 2003, we had 80 participants. Now, we have over 300 here. We had 15 countries represented then. Today, we have 49. We also had LINC conferences in 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2010. And there is a group of folks who were there with us at LINC 2005. And if you look carefully, I'm not going to

give you enough time to do this, you'll see some faces there that are still here today. And none of us have aged at all, guaranteed.

Now, LINC 2007 was kind of special, because it's the one that we did not do here on the MIT campus. And you see Her Majesty Queen Rania sitting there, next to Phil Clay, who served as Chancellor during that period of time. On her right are the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education. I don't know who that guy is on the outside there. So there are some shots. We had some fun, too, outdoors and that sort of thing. And there's one of the shots when we were in Dubai.

Now, at LINC 2010, which was the last LINC that we had, Charles M. Vest – Chuck Vest as we call him, former President of MIT and now President of the National Academy of Engineering – served as our keynote speaker. We had 19 plenary speakers. By the way, all the plenary speakers' speeches are on video and on our LINC website, if you want to see what they said in 2010. And same thing here today, even though we're live streaming this over the internet, we're also recording it. And within a few weeks, maybe even sooner, all the plenary sessions will be up on the LINC 2013 website. Now, I'm not going to show you the names of all the plenary speakers in 2010. But the people I'm about to show you now are here at LINC 2013 and are either plenary speakers or session chairs or presented a contributed paper.

Now, Vijay Kumar – Vijay are you here this early? OK, he's not here this early. He was going to go to a wedding in India this week, but he's decided not to. So he's going to be here instead. But obviously, he's not here this early. All these people, you're going to be hearing from. Cliff, by the way, is the LINC speaker tomorrow. Are you pointing to me? There, how are you doing? Welcome. David Pritchard, he's presenting some papers on his statistical analysis of MOOCs that have been offered by MIT so far.

So let's not forget our focus. Now, when LINC started, we were exclusively tertiary, exclusively college and university. We're engineers. It takes us a while to think about these things. But it's come to our attention that the outputs of high schools are the inputs to colleges and universities. So therefore, it's not appropriate for universities to ignore what's going on at high schools, and maybe even lower grades or primary grades.

So starting, particularly, LINC 2007, we started talking also about high schools, particularly STEM projects, STEM classes: science, technology, engineering, and math. So since LINC 2007, we've been high school science, technology, engineering, and math, as well as universities and colleges. So we think about that. Let's not forget our focus, which are the students, and the students can be pre-university or in the university.

These are some photographs from Ningxia province we took in 2004 in China. Dakar, Senegal. Northern Mexico, in a very poor, rural village. We have interesting stories about Mexico, how 10-year-olds got credentials that usually 29-year-olds had a hard time doing. Here are students just outside of Islamabad in Pakistan taking a written doctoral

exam in physics. Professor Pervez Hoodbhoy, who has a degree from MIT and is one of the most famous physicists in Pakistan. Notice how dutifully they're taking their exam, and also notice that the majority of them are females.

Here are high school students taking a math exam just north of Lahore, Pakistan. And why are they sitting on the sidewalk taking the exam? Anyone have any ideas? I know Naveed Malik has an idea, because he was with me when I took the photograph. Hi Naveed. It's because the electricity provided to schools and most other things in Lahore, Pakistan is a square wave, on one hour, off one hour, on one hour, off one hour. And the time of this class would happen to coincide when the electricity was off. The classroom was too dark to read the exam or to write the exam. So they were sitting outside doing it. This is an example of the kind of impediments we face in emerging countries.

We want to thank many, many people and organizations. UTM of Malaysia, University of Technology Malaysia is our platinum sponsor. Thank you, UTM. We could not have done this conference without you. Will the UTM people stand up please? Fantastic partnership. We also want to thank MIT's Office of Digital Learning, which is the MIT sponsor. And I don't think Sanjay is here at the moment. Ah, but Ike can stand. Ike also is with the Office of Digital Learning. Ike, stand up. We'll give a round of applause. We have Fujitsu as a sponsor. Are the Fujitsu people here today? Ah, Kanji, get up. Thank you very much. And the Babar Ali Foundation from Pakistan also provided some travel scholarships for some of our visitors today, our participants from Pakistan. We thank them.

And now, let's not forget MIT. MIT really provided a lot of energy and enthusiasm here and time of the volunteers. So we thank MIT. We thank my home department, which is Engineering Systems Division. Because when we were working on LINC, we weren't doing other things that they might have wanted us to do, so we thank them. We thank MIT OpenCourseWare, which provided a lot of service for us and volunteers. The Office of Educational Innovation and Technology, OEIT, provided lots of us support for us. The MIT Office of Professional Education provided lots of support as well.

And Glenn Strehle, I don't know if Glenn Strehle is here today? He also provided support for this conference. He's now treasurer of the Lounsbery Foundation, and was a very famous treasurer of MIT. Up through the late '90s, he worked with me at the Center for Advanced Educational Services for a while. We co-authored a chapter together. He helped form MIT World. So we thank him as well. And here's the Planning Committee. And these are the people who should get the biggest round of applause, because without their labor and their intensity, it couldn't have happened.

Now, you might ask, what is LINC? Well, LINC is you. And basically, you are leaders in technology-enabled education from around the world, focused on tertiary education, colleges and universities, but also including high school STEM-focused education. Some of you are professors. Some of you are NGOs. Some of you are in government. Some of

you are students. All of the above and many more. What happens is we get together and we share best practices, worse practices, what makes things difficult, what makes things easy. And also, we're trying to have enough time for you to circulate Lobby 13 at the hotel, and around lunch, so you get to meet your colleagues from around the world. Remember, whatever country you're from, they're 48 other countries here. In the past, LINC has been quite successful at forming partnerships, like Mexico and China, or Ireland and Saudi Arabia. Things happen. And as a result, other programs start after LINC. So that's basically what LINC is all about. And so we hope you engage in those kinds of activities while you're here and have a very productive and enjoyable time.