Drumming ends
That’s quite a welcome!

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Maureen O’Neil and I am president of Canada’s International Development Research Centre – known as IDRC.

It is a pleasure to say a few words at the Ottawa launch of a new book on the experience of the Tanzania Essential Health Interventions Project. We are grateful to the Canadian Society for International Health for providing us with this opportunity.

It is always a delight to talk about TEHIP … because the project has been a success in so many ways. TEHIP helped reduce mortality in two districts in Tanzania. And, in the process, it provided critical insight on what measures are needed to deal with the more generalized health crisis in Africa.

TEHIP also serves as a model for successful international partnerships. IDRC is proud to have been a partner — through TEHIP — with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Tanzania. We are also grateful for the support and participation of the Canadian International Development Agency.

For those of you who missed this morning’s panel, I will provide a brief précis of TEHIP’s work in two Tanzanian districts: Rufiji and Morogoro. Together, these districts cover a region as large as Nova Scotia.

One goal of TEHIP was to make health planning more responsive to evidence on the local burden of disease. TEHIP worked towards this goal by developing a series of tools to help health planning teams in the two districts understand what that evidence meant. This allowed the teams to allocate their budgets proportionally to the leading causes of death — applying funds where they would have the greatest impact. As an example, both districts opted for a greater emphasis
on malaria … and also a new emphasis on combatting the five leading causes of death of young children.

TEHIP also wanted to improve the efficiency of district health systems in order to better support front-line health care providers. The districts were given a small amount of extra money to make improvements. The increase amounted to one U.S. dollar per capita — less than the price of a cup of coffee in North America.

But with that money the districts accomplished a lot. They put in place new transportation systems to ensure more timely delivery of drugs and supplies … and to ensure better supervision of local health facilities. They instituted new training for community health workers — emphasizing holistic approaches. They upgraded capacities in seemingly mundane — but critically important — areas like report writing and office management. They supported the restoration of crumbling health facilities. Soon, more people were seeking care at community clinics because the quality of service had improved so much.

The results of this process are inspiring. In five years, child mortality in Rufiji and Morogoro has decreased by over 40 per cent. The adult death rate has also declined markedly. This provides a powerful indication that paying attention to health systems — to the infrastructure and planning behind the delivery of health care — yields significant dividends.

TEHIP’s story can be found in a new book published by IDRC that fittingly, was launched in Tanzania last week. The book is called *Fixing Health Systems* and it describes TEHIP from its inception to its impact. And there is not only a book: There are case studies, a companion CD ROM, and a Web site.

To give you some idea of the rich contents, I invite you to watch a very short video. It’s called Net Solution and it is one of four videos that you will find on the CD ROM.

[video is played]

One obvious question raised by the success of TEHIP is: “Where to go from here?” At this point, I would like to introduce Dr. Gabriel Upunda. Dr. Upunda is Tanzania’s Chief Medical Officer and he has been involved in TEHIP from its earliest days in Tanzania. He will speak about what future options exist, and how we can move forward from the TEHIP experience. Welcome, Dr. Upunda.

[Dr. Upunda speaks]

Thank you, Dr. Upunda.

Before we go, I would like to acknowledge the presence of Maureen Law, the former director of IDRC’s Health Sciences Division, who was an early champion of TEHIP. And I would also like to mention that the four authors of *Fixing Health Systems* are here with us. They are Don de
Savigny, Harun Kasale, Conrad Mbuya, and Graham Reid. All of them played key roles in the ten-year history of TEHP, working with a large cast of contributors from Tanzania and from around the world. They and Dr. Upunda will all be in Ottawa until Friday and they welcome questions and discussions about their work.

Celebrating TEHIP’s contribution is important for us at IDRC and in Canada. I invite you to pick up a copy of the book from the tables, along with some strawberries and a glass of champagne punch… and join us in the celebration.

Let the festivities begin! [Drumming starts again]