It’s quite a film [referencing the Body Team 12 scene just shown]. I understand they were featured on the Today Show this morning so if you want more interviews you can learn about them there. Thank you all for being here today and thanks to Paul and Barb for those opening remarks. My name is Gabrielle Fitzgerald and I’m the Director of the Ebola Program for the Paul G Allen Family Foundation. It’s great to be a part of an organization where Paul’s leadership encourages us to take risks, close gaps and be willing to challenge the status quo by applying innovative approaches. And it is great to be a part of an organization which uses its diverse expertise to create meaningful impact.

From the earliest days of the Ebola outbreak Paul Allen has encouraged innovation in the response to Ebola. And today at this Ebola Innovation Summit we hope to do things differently. For example, the space we are in represents the fresh approach we hope to foster. You may have noticed this building is, let’s say, eclectic. And that’s on purpose. After all, this is an innovation summit. In fact, we hypothesize that a creative dynamic space will create more creative and dynamic ideas. We are going to test that hypothesis by using every inch of this space today.

The building’s history is also relevant. It was constructed 100 years ago as the Palace of Fine Arts for the 1915 World’s Fair. San Francisco had almost been destroyed by the devastating earthquake of 1906 and the message of the world’s fair was that with the help of cutting edge science and technology the city could learn its lesson, prevent the next disaster and build something even better to present what was lost.

The highlight of the proceedings was a functioning Ford assembly line. Visitors could watch workers turn out a brand new car in just ten minutes. And you may have noticed a Model T right at the entrance to this room today.

In some ways, we’re in a similar moment right now. Ebola has tested us in ways we never could have conceived before but we have learned the lessons the epidemic has taught us. And we believe we can deploy our intellect and talent and technology to tackle Ebola. And just like this building, we hope that what we create isn’t a temporary response but a lasting monument to innovation that improves people’s lives for years to come.

Another thing we hope is different today is the diverse mix of people in the room. 35% of you are from tech and private sector, 25% are from non-profits, 15% from governments and 9% academia. Plus we have representatives from philanthropies, design and some of you who defy easy categorization. Why are we doing it this way? Because this Ebola outbreak has proved we need to do things differently. I remember when I first got involved in global health. Back then a conference would have included all the usual suspects, all of whom looked at problems in exactly the same way. There wouldn’t have been much private sector, no design thinking, no philanthropy. That was the 20th century and we can’t address today’s problems with last century’s solutions.

And that’s why you’re here. We are only going to create 21st century solutions if we do it together combining expertise and ideas and skills from every corner of our society in new ways. Ebola isn’t
getting quite as much attention now as it was months ago which means we’re right at the juncture where we can lose focus, let our attention wander and backslide. That’s a lesson we’ve learned the hard way. One year ago this month Guinea declared its last case of Ebola. The WHO declares a country Ebola-free after 42 days and at the 42 day mark there was a collective sigh of relief. International experts who had flown to Guinea to help out, packed their bags to go home. Then, on Day 50, a new Ebola case was discovered and over the past year we have been on a roller coaster with the number of cases changing week to week. Last week there were 37 new cases of Ebola in West Africa up from the week before. The good news is that Liberia has only had one case of Ebola in the past two months. But in Guinea the number of cases has been alarmingly persistent with 28 new cases in five prefectures last week. As Paul said, we’ve made great progress but our goal of zero Ebola cases is still a ways off. At a World Bank meeting on Ebola this past week, last Friday, leaders like the Secretary General of the UN and the head of the World Health Organization stressed that even though cases have decreased by 95%, getting the last 5% of cases is the hardest. Even when we do get to zero cases, that’s not the end of our work. We know that Ebola will come back and then there are some other epidemics we need to learn how to respond to more effectively. There’s Middle East Respiratory Syndrome which has been on a slow burn for several years, Avian Flu in Egypt, Plague in Madagascar. These are not far off fears, they are real crises happening right now. So in this building we’ve gathered some of the best minds in a dozen different sectors to start solving problems.

So here’s the rundown for the day. We’ll spend the morning hearing from some of the leaders in the current Ebola response. In the afternoon, we’ll break into smaller groups to delve into four of the most pressing challenges that have been revealed by the Ebola epidemic and which will remain gaps unless we take action to solve them. I want to mention how we landed on the four challenge areas. We asked you. As Barb mentioned, we consulted over 70 organizations to identify areas where innovation is needed and we grouped the key themes from those conversations. We’ve been thinking about it like a wiki - we gave you a platform; you filled in the content. And you have signed up to be part of the solution in one of the breakout groups this afternoon. We recognize that there have been many Ebola related events so I want to put this one in context. We are building on the conversations that have already taken place about how to improve the response. Today is designed to be a very practical hands-on start to addressing the problems that have already been identified. We want to leave here today feeling like we have accomplished something concrete so everything is geared toward that goal. We’ve asked Scott Case, the Founding Chief Technology Officer of Priceline to serve as today’s innovation chair to lead the conversation and spur our thinking. He will take us through the afternoon sessions on the four challenge areas. In between the speeches and the breakouts, we’ll have some free time and I encourage you to wander around and look at the exhibits we have on display. Please take time to meet the exhibitors who are technological innovators who are doing exciting work on everything from designing better protective equipment to improving information sharing with cutting edge communications technology.

I want to thank USAID and Skoll Global Threats Fund for hosting this summit with us. We hope you will join us today and in the coming months in creating the 21st century solutions that our 21st century challenges require.

I would now like to invite our next set of speakers to the stage to discuss lessons learned....