Phoenix or Dodo: Does the World Bank Have a Future?
Pamela Cox  
Former Senior Vice President for Change Management  
The World Bank

As the World Bank undergoes a major change process, it faces questions about its continued relevance. Developing countries have ever greater access to credit which can be obtained more quickly and with fewer conditions than World Bank loans, which constitute an ever smaller share of global capital flows. Faced with a rapidly changing world, what role can the World Bank and its sister institutions play in the coming decades? Pamela Cox retired last year from the World Bank after 32 years at the Bank, serving most recently as Senior Vice President for Change Management. In that role, she led the development of the first World Bank Group Strategy, adopted by the Bank’s governors in October. She has also served as the Bank’s Regional Vice President for East Asia and Pacific, Regional Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean and as Country Director for South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland.

Launching and Scaling Social Enterprises
James D. Thompson  
Director, Wharton Social Entrepreneurship  
University of Pennsylvania

Social enterprises have recently emerged as a dominant trend in international development and have the potential to reshape how we think about business, development, and society. They are far from a new concept, however, and in his book The Social Entrepreneur’s Playbook, Dr. James Thompson condenses a combined 26 years of Wharton research studying social enterprises in Africa and the U.S into a guide on conceiving, planning and scaling social enterprises which deliver high-impact. Dr. Thompson is Director and Co-founder of the Wharton Social Entrepreneurship Program and published in the Harvard Business Review, Journal of Management, Long Range Planning, Management Science, Organization Science, and the Research-Technology Management Journal.

Development Aid Confronts Politics: The Almost Revolution
Thomas Carothers  
Vice President for Studies  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Development efforts and the discourse that surround them often take place within a vacuum that ignores the political realities that can help or hinder their implementation. In his new book with Diane de Gramont, Development Aid Confronts Politics: The Almost Revolution, Thomas Carothers traces the rising belief in the assistance community that development is an “inherently political process and development aid must necessarily be politically informed and politically engaged to be successful.” He examines how aid actors are attempting to turn this insight into changed aid practice and whether it constitutes, as some adherents hope, a revolution in development work. Prior to joining Carnegie, Mr. Carothers practiced law at Arnold & Porter and served in the Office of Legal Adviser at the State Department. He is currently the chair of the Open Society Foundation Think Tank Fund and is an adjunct professor at Central European University in Budapest.

Climate Change with Economic Growth: What to Watch in 2014
Andrew Steer  
President and CEO, World Resources Institute

What to expect this year, and how will these determine the future for people and the planet? A perspective on the major global developments in economics, business, natural resources and sustainability in the coming year. Prior to joining WRI, Dr. Steer had a long career at the World Bank that culminated in service as the Special Envoy for Climate Change. He was also previously the Director General of the UK Department of International Development (DFID) and has served on the UN’s High Level Panel on Sustainable Energy for All.

Pathways Out of Poverty: BRAC's Targeting the Ultra-Poor Program
Susan Davis  
President and CEO, BRAC USA

In the past decade, hundreds of millions of people worldwide have transitioned out of poverty, but even middle-income states contain vast numbers of ultra-poor households. BRAC, in partnership with CGAP, is working with these households to improve safety nets, access to finance and livelihood training, with the goal of assisting these families in “graduating” from extreme poverty. Prior to founding BRAC USA in 2006, Susan Davis worked at the Ford Foundation, Women’s World Health, and served as chairwoman of the Grameen Foundation. She currently serves on the board that selects Ashoka Fellows.