

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Thomas Phillips, Communication Partners, 212-935-4655, comptwp@aol.com

Christopher Williams, Goldman Sachs Press Office, 212-902-5400,

Christopher.J.Williams@gs.com

Michael Levine, Asia Society, 201-328-7486, michaell@asiasoc.org

**INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE CRUCIAL TO STUDENT SUCCESS AND
LONG-TERM ECONOMIC HEALTH**

**Study by The Goldman Sachs Foundation and Asia Society
Proposes Bold Educational Response to Globalization**

NEW YORK, December 8, 2005 – According to a report released today by The Goldman Sachs Foundation and Asia Society, U.S. students risk falling behind peers in other nations in their preparation for new jobs because critical skills needed to compete in the global marketplace have not yet been adopted in most US schools. Responding to economic analyses summarized in *The World is Flat*, by Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times* and recently honored as the best business book of 2005, the report concludes that today's students must acquire a far different set of knowledge, skills and perspectives than previous generations to succeed in an increasingly interconnected global economy.

Educating Leaders for a Global Society details the challenges facing America's education system in preparing young people to compete and succeed in a globalized economy. The report, which provides examples of investments other countries are making in education to stay competitive as well as examples of successful international education programs in the United States, is available for download at www.internationaleled.org.

The report details how U.S. workers in virtually every sector face competitors who live just a mouse click away in Europe, China, India, and in dozens of other nations whose economies are growing. Improving math and science skills among U.S. students remains critically important, and has been the subject of wide public attention. Just as important, according to the report, is the need to promote international knowledge and language skills for all students, not just a select few. The report calls on business leaders, educators and policy makers to expand public and philanthropic investments in international education and language programs.

“Preparing today's students for success and eventual leadership in the new global climate is the single most important task facing U.S. education,” said Stephanie Bell-Rose, President of The Goldman Sachs Foundation. “If young Americans are to take on challenging global leadership roles in the future, they must possess a deep understanding and appreciation for other cultures, geography, history and languages. The world will demand it of them—we must demand it of our education system.”

Underscoring the urgency, the Bureau of Economic Analysis recently reported that U.S. companies realized \$315 billion in overseas profits in 2004 – a figure up 78 percent over the decade and that far outpaces the growth of domestic profits. Already, one in five U.S. jobs are tied to international trade, and economists project most of the growth potential for U.S. businesses lies in overseas markets.

Skills Needed

According to the report, U.S. students can compete successfully with their peers in other countries only if they are given the resources and skills to do so, including:

- *Global knowledge.* Teaching about the rest of the world has typically focused on the three F's – food, flags and festivals. Such approaches are no longer sufficient. In addition to knowledge and understanding of other regions and cultures, students must graduate high school with course study in world history, geography and international economics.
- *Languages.* By learning a second language, students acquire key cognitive and academic skills as well as insight into another culture. The US must increase capacity in a wide range of world languages to function in the global economy and to secure our future.
- *Global perspectives.* To relate effectively to peers from other cultures, students must have an underlying respect for and interest in different perspectives. The report concludes that societies that are open to new ideas, wherever they originate, have a huge advantage.

The report offers exciting “break-the-mold” examples of local educational models which are emerging at a grass roots level across the country. These programs, identified through The Goldman Sachs Foundation Prizes for Excellence in International Education, show how educators at all levels are responding to the global economy by bringing the world into their classrooms.

“These innovations can change the face of education,” said Vishakha Desai, President of Asia Society. “By integrating international themes into the rhythm of the school day, educators are making instruction more rigorous, relevant and exciting. These pioneers are improving educational quality, getting the values of mutual understanding, respect and cooperation across cultures into the curriculum, and sparking students’ curiosity to explore beyond our borders.”

The challenge now is to scale-up innovations that exist in a growing network of schools, but which have not grown systematically. The report recommends several specific actions for business leaders, educators, political leaders and philanthropies to take to promote global knowledge and skills, including newly designed high schools and graduation requirements, teacher training, the creation of languages pipelines in critical languages such as Chinese, and innovative uses of technology to provide virtual links to schools in other countries.

About The Goldman Sachs Foundation

The Goldman Sachs Foundation is a global philanthropic organization funded by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. The Foundation’s mission is to promote excellence and innovation in education and to improve the academic performance and lifelong productivity of young people worldwide. It achieves this mission through a combination of strategic partnerships, grants, loans, private sector investments, and the deployment of professional talent from Goldman Sachs. Funded in 1999, the Foundation has awarded grants of \$62 million since its inception, providing opportunities for young people in more than 20 countries. Visit the Foundation at www.gs.com/foundation.

About Asia Society

Asia Society is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening relationships and deepening understanding among the peoples of Asia and the United States. The Society operates cultural, policy, business, social issues, and education programs. Through its Asia and International Studies in the Schools initiative, Asia Society's education division is promoting teaching and learning about world regions, cultures, and languages in K-12 schools by raising awareness and advancing policy, developing practical models of international education in the schools, and strengthening relationships between U.S. and Asian education leaders. Headquartered in New York City, the organization has centers in Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, San Francisco, Shanghai and Washington, D.C and will open a center in Mumbai in 2006. www.asiasociety.org, www.askasia.org, www.internationaled.org