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NABE/Banco de España Symposium

Introduction to John Williams

Luis M. Linde

Governor

Dear participants,

We are fortunate to be able to close this symposium with an eminent speaker, **John Williams**.

John is one of the most influential economists in the United States, with an outstanding record both as a scholar and as a policy-maker.

After completing his PhD in Economics from Stanford University, John began his career as an economist at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, where he contributed to bringing traditional macro models towards what is now considered the state of the art.

Subsequently, John joined the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, later becoming Director of Research. Under his leadership, the San Francisco Fed became one of the leading research hubs of the Federal Reserve system. In 2011 John took over from Janet Yellen as President of the San Francisco Fed. And just a few weeks ago, he was named as the successor to **William C. Dudley** as New York Fed president. He will occupy a permanent seat on the Federal Open Market Committee, the Federal Reserve's monetary policy-making body. Congratulations, John, and, we wish you the very best of luck on your new appointment.

John Williams's research features significant contributions on a wide range of topics in modern macroeconomics, from the analysis of monetary policy under uncertainty, to the study of innovation and productivity. Crucially, his research has brought back to the attention of policymakers the role of the **natural interest rate**, a concept which dates back to the contribution of Wicksell a century ago, and which has gained greatly in importance in the analysis and conduct of monetary policy.

John has popularised the idea that the natural interest rate is not constant or even stationary. His research reveals that the bulk of the fall in the natural interest rate can be attributed to a slowdown of trend productivity growth, a view that has gained ground in academic and policy circles. That is related to the risk of a low economic growth scenario, at least in the advanced economies, an idea that has been present in your discussions during the symposium.

On behalf of the organisers of this conference, the National Association for Business Economics and Banco de España and, also, on a personal note, I would like to warmly thank John Williams for joining us here today.