

**CONVERSATION: ENHANCING COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION  
ACROSS ALL STAKEHOLDERS**  
October 14, 2011 - 11:00 a.m.

**Louise Fresco- Distinguished Professor, University of Amsterdam**

Okay. For all of you who feel that you're exhausted and this has been a long week, don't fall asleep, don't go away. I'm going to convince you with my two panel members that this is about the most important session we're going to have. So bear with us.

And why is it so important? Because this really is about communication and about engagement and collaboration between all stakeholders.

And as you know, all of what we've said so far really requires us to communicate. It really requires us to find ways of engaging everybody and putting a message forward which in many ways is not a simple message.

When I started to work in agriculture, agriculture was not a very popular subject and I had to constantly explain to people why a nice, middle-class girl like me wanted to do something about agriculture.

Today, fortunately, after years of neglect, agriculture is back on the map. It's back on the map with politicians and with the public - agriculture and food.

However, at the same time the messages about agriculture and food have become far more complicated. And it's not enough today, even at this forum, to say it's great - you know, let's all talk about agriculture. We're facing a world where an increasing number of people are very far removed from the realities of agriculture.

We have an increasingly urbanized world. Many people do not really know the realities of agriculture and the realities of food production. So the messages we have to put across are complex messages, and we can see that. If you just look at the Internet, if you look at public media, you see that the messages are often complex, contradictory and even downright sometimes mixed with untruth and unclarity.

Just think of subjects like biotechnology and issues of climate change. There are many subjects related to agriculture and food that are increasingly complex. And in a world where the media move even faster all the time, it's very difficult for us to get those messages across.

Now, we've long learned that the medium is the message, and the challenge is: How can we best use the media and the world out there to communicate in such a way that we get a true

dialogue about agriculture, that we as societies, as a world society but also as individual countries, get a dialogue about the kinds of agriculture and food we want, a dialogue which engages everybody from a housewife to a farmer to a politician to somebody in the private sector.

This is a subject that transcends sectors; it transcends stakeholders, and it really is asking: how can we best communicate and get the dialogue going?

And of course we couldn't be sitting here if we weren't going to try to do the same here with you as a group. So I promise you, after brief introductions, this is going to be a mass discussion. And I hope you all have your twitters out on your iPhones or on any type of phone. I want you to be tweeting; I want you to put things on the Internet in whatever way you can to communicate this.

My ideal – but of course it takes a little while for a very respected institution like the World Food Prize forum to get itself organized – my ideal would have been to have a so-called twitter forum time here at the back where your tweets would be visible and readable for everybody and we could react to them. I will try to do that next year.

In the meantime, we have two fantastic panelists with us. I'm not going to introduce them with a lot of detail, but you have their bios. We have them both from the private sector from very different backgrounds with a strong interest in public affairs.

And I'm going to ask them to give you a sense of what they feel is important in terms of communication, media and engaging in the dialogue.

So Bruce is the CEO of TechnoServe.

### **Louise Fresco**

It took me a while to understand that that was not about cars or tractors. But I understand now, it's about far wider issues. Has a very important private sector background, even to the extent that you were in banking, I understand.

So tell me, Bruce, what comes to your mind when we talk about communication and dialogue and engagement?

### **Bruce McNamer-**

Well, any number of things, but per our conversation beforehand, we're hoping that once we actually spend just a couple minutes talking about where we come from, and this is much more of a dialogue amongst all of us.

But just to locate TechnoServe in this conversation, for those of you who don't know who we are, we are an international nonprofit, paradoxically focused on private sector for-profit development in poor countries and around the world. And what that means is working with entrepreneurial people to help them develop commercially viable competitive farms and businesses and industries in the countries in which we work.

And for more than 40 years, most of that work has been in agriculture and in agribusiness. That won't surprise people here, because it turns out that's where most of the world's poor people are; they're working in agriculture. And it turns out that's where most of the real, viable commercial opportunities are. They are manifold, but they're in agriculture and they're in agribusiness.

So the approach that we take is very much a value chain approach. It's thinking about business systems, a business systems overlay to that and saying – where are the real opportunities for commerce, for enterprise creating, for economic growth, whether it's about the input supply businesses, farmers, productivity, etc. We build farmer aggregation models and work with entrepreneurs engaged in transport, storage, packaging, processing, businesses. And it's about the market linkages –how do we broker our transactions between buyers and sellers in specific value chains?

And again, it's all the way up the value chain from the input supply to the consumption somewhere on a table somewhere in the world. And it's very specifically targeted in the countries in which we work. It may be cocoa and chai in one country; maybe dairy and coffee in another – really looking at the real sources of commercial advantage and comparative advantage for the actors in that value chain.

So as such, we're very much about food security. We haven't always defined our work in those terms, but we do; and in that context, vitally and necessarily about communication and coordination in two important ways.

One is – and we won't talk about it a lot today, but this is very, very important to us – it's the kind of work we do every day in the field. So much of it involves us playing an honest broker role - trying to integrate the efforts of, on the one hand, entrepreneurs and farmers, with those of bankers or traders or export companies or government or other NGOs. And in that context, clear ways of communicating, clear, a shared language, shared objectives, shared approaches to communication are vital, and that's part and parcel of what we do every day. One big, important piece of what we do that is vital is communication.

The other is a challenge familiar to all of us: how do we tell our story to the broader world? And even that's the topic of the conversation today – how do we talk about food security to the public and in compelling ways? And even the title, “food security” covers a whole host of sins, as we know, and sometimes it has contradictory descriptors.

For some of us, it may be about hunger or the flip side of that, obesity. And I know Ellen will talk more about that. For some of us, it's about our nutrition agenda in a food security context. Or food safety – some people when they talk about food security are talking about the important and vital role of organics, and others are talking almost contradictorily about GMOs or biotechnology and its role. The local food movement at the same time has an international trade agenda to promote real food security.

So we're talking about a whole host of issues when we talk about food security. And similarly, when we talk about the public, we need to ask: who are we targeting that message to?

So all of it. I think it's incumbent on all of us to think in these kind of communications terms and frameworks about what it is we want to say and to whom. Whom are we talking to? Why do we think they should care about what we're talking about? And what is it we want them to do?

I mean, on the NGO side, I mean, our target are donors. Some of us are looking at legislators. Some of us are looking at consumers of better or healthier or more sustainable food. Some of us are marketing our messages around food security, frankly, to investors. I mean, you will see more and more companies and multinationals, engaged in agriculture and describing food security agendas.

For us, it really is about how we engage donors and supporters in the work that we do.

Why should people care? I think some of us are talking about this from a moral imperative. Some of us talk in terms of national security interests of the United States and other governments. Some of us are talking about an economic agenda in terms of new markets or sources of supply for our products. And some of us, and all of us indeed, are talking about legacy issues – in 10, 20, 30, 40 years from now, can we feed the world? What's the world that our children will inherit?

For us, it's a bit of a moral argument but not in an obligation sense - more in an aspirational sense – how can you think about doing the right thing to help people achieve their own ends and to empower themselves to actually help themselves out of poverty.

And then, finally, what is it we want people to do? And I think sometimes we all fall down a little bit. We get very hipped up about the vital importance of addressing these issues, but what is it we actually want the people we're communicating with to go out and do? Sometimes it's to donate. Sometimes it's to write your legislator. Sometimes it's to consume a healthier food. Sometimes it is actually to think of yourself and in your investment portfolio in a different way.

But how are we targeting those issues to really galvanize activity? Actually, what is our specific call to action?

And for TechnoServe it is a couple things. One, it is – can you help us as donors and as supporters in that sense? We have a broader agenda – it would be around advocacy, but that's very challenging for an organization like ours, and we can talk about that, more about that.

So to give some quick reflections on some of the lessons that we've learned and on social media in that context. First, and I think any media person will relate to this, and that is the vital importance in all the communication we do - of telling stories that really can bring home to people at a very personal level of what we're talking about - at the level of the individual, the family, the community.

We at TechnoServe, focused as we are on businesses, often make the mistake of talking in terms of revenues in an aggregate level or total thousands of people employed, or we work with 400,000 farmers.

But even the most savvy business audience in a day responds much more emotionally to the story of that individual business person or that individual farmer or how this particular family was benefited by the work we did. And we do harm to ourselves the day that we forget that.

Second lesson learned: I think it's very easy for us to describe the challenge of food security just in terms of the enormity of the challenge, in terms of numbers and in terms of doomsday scenarios for where this could all end up. And on the one hand we have to do that, on the other hand that sometimes works against us in a couple different ways.

One is, if the problem is that big, sometimes the response is just to throw up our hands and say, this is insurmountable – let's move on to something else.

I think sometimes the response to describing problems in those terms is it's hard for us actually to conceive in numbers like that. So we're much more helped by breaking that down into numbers that we can relate to. A billion people going to bed hungry every night is a big number. But if I say, "Take a group of seven of you. One in seven people in the world is going to bed hungry every night," that has a little more resonance for me.

If I say that by 2050 we're going to be feeding nine billion people – that's a big number. Well, what if I told you that, you know, the population of Des Moines is about 200,000 people. Tomorrow we're going to add a new Des Moines to the global demand for food. And then we're going to do it on Sunday and Monday and every day next month. And in fact we're going to add a new Des Moines to the global demand for food every day for the next 35 years. That starts to size the problem in ways we can actually relate to. And I think we do need to break it down for people.

I think we need to package our calls to action in ways people can relate to. I think sometimes we will ourselves say, "We're running a wonderful program, and we're actually doing it with support from people in this room, to reach out to 150,000 smallholder farmers in East Africa. Isn't that remarkable? We're doubling incomes, etc."

And I think the response in the public can be – that's fantastic. I really love it. What does that have to do with me? What does my hundred-dollar donation actually have to do with that? And to be able to say, "Here's what your hundred dollars will do. Here's what your letter to a congressperson will do."

Make the call to action relevant to what your audience can actually do with that.

And then I think you've got to meet people where they are. And whether it's in TED Talks or in PR or it's on Idol Gives Back and the use of celebrities. We have to be thinking low-brow, high-brow and really targeting people that way.

And then finally I'd say about the importance of social media –I wouldn't say we are sort of the exemplars of the use of social media. I think TechnoServe, like many of your organizations, are trying to figure out what that means for us. And it's very appealing for us. I mean, thinking

about the reach that it might engender and attract new audiences to our message; thinking about the kind of personal interaction that it enables is very compelling.

We ourselves in terms of social media - I am blogging. We have a blog; it has my own thoughts of folks in the organization. We use interviews, success stories, photos, YouTube. We do use Facebook, and we do use Twitter. We're part of [nextbillion.org](http://nextbillion.org), which is an online site for bringing together thinking and best practices around this intersection between development and enterprise creation.

And we're learning as we go. Some sort of constraints around that - and we can talk more about this: One, I think we all can be in the thrall of social media and really put a lot of effort in without stopping to say: what's the return we're getting back? Just like any business decision, we need to be thinking in those contexts.

And two, what are the demands it puts on the organization? To the extent that social media enables a real interactive engagement with our audiences, it also requires in our case that same engagement out in the field in Mozambique or Ethiopia or Honduras. We have to be able to actually come up with the news stories or video clips or ways of telling that story many more times and in many more compelling ways to a much broader audience. So it really put constraints on the organization.

Let me stop there.

#### **Louise Fresco -**

Just to get some audience participation, I want a quick show of hands - who actually has a blog or tweets about food issues? Can I see some hands raised, more hands? Is that all? That is not very good, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, I should say, because this is also, right, the next generation. So next year we have to do better. I hope after this session we'll get all of you to start a blog and communicate on this subject.

Now, let me move to Ellen because Ellen is a good example. She resides now in New York with her company, 30 Project. She was on the Ink [magazine] list of the 30 most influential under 30; she was on the list or is on the list still, of *Fortune's* most influential women. And she is a great example of innovation, media and new thinking about food and agricultural issues. Ellen, what would you like to share with us today?

#### **Ellen Gustafson- Co-founder, FEED and Founder/Executive Director of 30 Project**

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Well, I'll just put my own personal story in context, because it's a very weird road. I started out my career right after 9/11, working in national security issues and working for the military and realized that the hotspots around the world that end up becoming insecure regions and terrorist hotbeds actually often start as food insecure and hungry.

And so I actually kind of jumped ship from the security space and right into food security where I worked at the World Food Program and then eventually realized that, you know, young people - at the time I was in my mid-twenties - and it's really easy, as we all know, to donate, especially in the international sphere in these very metric-based amounts: the cost to

feed a child in school for a year, between \$30 and \$50, depending on how you're feeding them, in what countries. And really those numbers are easy for people to get behind.

So I started a company called FEED. It was for-profit business with a nonprofit partner. And FEED's model was essentially to create products, especially bags that say FEED on them. And each bag sold had a number on it, and the number represented what you were doing, what the metric of change was that you were engaged in.

And I think that's an unbelievable model, and we proved a lot of success in the sort of burgeoning social entrepreneurship world. We were able to provide about 65 million school meals through WFP just from selling these products around the world. And it was a testament to young people wanting to be engaged in seemingly intractable problems.

But what I started to notice was that there's this other dialogue happening, especially among young people in our own country. And I was actually approaching my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday a year and a half ago, and I started to think about not only how when you look at the numbers of hunger, but also when you see the numbers of obesity, that the 30-year trajectory is what is really shown in the data models of growth of the obesity epidemic.

And that it's very difficult to find a way to understand how these two crazy, big problems have essentially matched themselves in today's world - where there's a billion hungry and a billion overweight.

And so in looking back at around the time that I came on the earth, I was thinking, well, what else kind of changed around that time? And obviously there are a number of factors. There are political factors; there are in some ways consolidation factors. But there are fundamental questions that I think young people are asking about food that in some ways are not necessarily represented here on this stage.

And I think there's an opportunity with the World Food Prize and with the organizations and companies that are represented here to really dig deep into these other strains of communications that are happening within our own country but also around the world and try to figure out how we can get these messages to flow more together.

So my organization, the 30 Project, is looking at, yes, in the last 30 years a lot of these problems have gotten worse - but how do we work together between the anti-obesity community, the agricultural community, and the anti-hunger community to actually develop what would be a long-term plan, a 30-year plan for a better food system?

And again I think in the spirit of understanding what the sort of youth dialogue is about food issues, I think about the interesting comment that Howard Buffett made yesterday. Agriculture is sexy. Young people are into food. They are into knowing where their food comes from. They are into understanding farming systems and their place in the greater food system. They are willing to change their purchasing habits to have a better place in the food system.

And I think in many ways the anti-hunger community is a little bit missing that boat. But I don't think those are two wildly different communities that can't actually align for bigger-picture missions and messaging.

So if there's one thing that I really just want to make sure people take away is – Let's think about how we can align the messages of anti-hunger and anti-obesity. Let's think about how we can talk about agricultural yields but also ask the questions of – what are we yielding? And is what we're yielding eventually going to create nutrition transitions and an obesity epidemic in countries around the world?

And then – How are young people, with their energy and passion around better food systems in our country, how can they be engaged to make sure that we're focusing also on improving food systems around the world?

So I think those are key issues that, in the spirit of collaboration but also in the spirit of communication, we have to make sure we address.

### **Louise Fresco**

Thank you very much, Ellen. So we have two sets of experiences – Bruce's lessons learned and Ellen's plea for a much more integrated set of messages. So now it's your turn. And my question to you is – how should we communicate? How should we engage in this dialogue that cuts across stakeholders? And what should be our main messages?

Now, in order to get a fairer participation than we've had so far, I only want the under-35's to react for the moment. So, sorry, ladies and gentlemen – just have a little bit of patience. So the microphones are open for anybody who considers himself or herself at least mentally under 35. Go ahead, get up. I can't see very well back there because of the lights.

### **Question and Answer**

#### **Question**

Well, I don't see any real under-35's standing up, so I'll stand up and say, I'd like to think I think under 35. I'm Pat Bens from Seattle. I'd like to ask a question of both of you but particularly Bruce.

TechnoServe is doing fantastic work in developing, training and capacity-building capabilities at the rural level, at the village level, training people on practices that work, sustainable agricultural practices that work, that are not that expensive, and that also enable them to organize and actually deliver products to large global marketplaces but from a position of organized power so that they have something to say in the negotiation in terms of commercial terms and so forth.

What are the key essential components of how you approach training and capacity development at the local level?



**Louise Fresco**

We're going to take a couple of questions before we answer. Otherwise, we get too much of an extended monologue. So more questions of the mentally under-35? Or questions or comments rather.

**Question**

Good morning. Don Floyd with 4-H. You're all doing fantastic work. If communication is about changing mindset, what's the top mindset that really has to change around these several issues you've presented?

**Louise Fresco**

Can you elaborate a little bit what you mean by top mindset?

**Question**

Well, if communication is about shifting someone's frame of reference, like the president did this morning around the caring for poor versus the rich, or like Bruce just did when he said it's a Des Moines every day. You know, we talk about a couple more billion people in 40 or 50 years. But what's the big shift that has to happen in people's minds around this issue of agriculture and food and land use, all this stuff.

**Louise Fresco**

Absolutely, so the paradigm shift. Anymore comments? I see a row of people there.

**Question**

Yes. Definitely, not under 35 but work with many people who are under 35.

**Louise Fresco**

Okay, just give us your name.

**Question**

Yes, I will, I'm going to. My name's Judy Beals. I'm the Campaigns Director of Oxfam America. And my question has to do with the engagement of young people. I agree that young people are talking about food. The challenge of moving that conversation towards tackling the difficult policy questions that need to be addressed is, I think, extremely difficult. The policy conversation is mostly dominated by experts in this country and elsewhere, and to create the political will to create change is quite difficult, so I would be interested in thoughts about that.

**Louise Fresco**

Okay, thank you very much. Good question. Yes, next person.

**Question**

I am under 35.

**Louise Fresco**

Great.

**Question**

And first of all, I'd like to say that I am overjoyed to be hearing what the three of you have said so far around communication, around food issues, all kinds of food issues, and the need for the conversation to be happening on different subjects in different ways and different levels.

I guess my question is - I work for an organization that traditionally works with U.S. citizens who are older and less tied to technology and less willing to talk about certain issues. They're not as interested in the sort of popular food issues. Food security, they're interested in, but the kinds of organic gardening, urban gardening - they're not so tied to.

But we really, in my organization, want and need youth involvement. And so we're struggling to find the right platform or the right topic of communication and the right way to get all of those age groups, and all of those different interests together to talk.

So if you had any suggestions or any ideas about how to bring multiple ages and groups together, that would be great.

### **Louise Fresco**

Great, thank you very much. Last question for the moment, and then I know there are more people queuing up. We'll give you a second chance, but otherwise I'm taxing their memories too much. So, yes, please, your last question.

### **Question**

My name is Angela Boss, and my question would be - at the field level, on the grassroots level, it appears from my travels in agricultural development that groups that are actually implementing development on the field level have a very hard time talking to one another and collaborating at that level, as well as organizations within North America and Europe.

So what do you see as a way to get collaboration between groups who often might even share the same office in Nairobi but don't even talk about their programs that they're doing in the same neighborhood with similar strategies, but they may have a lot to learn from each other? So could you address that?

### **Louise Fresco**

Thank you for the question. These were all very useful questions. I don't promise you the final answers, but I'm going to give the floor first to Bruce and then to Ellen.

### **Bruce McNamer**

Terrific. Wide range of questions. So just to tick through. Pat, in answer to your question, how to think about keys to effectiveness at that local level, I think I would cite a couple things that resonate for us.

One is, around these community farmer aggregation models, what we have found is that the more specific the purpose of that aggregate entity, the more likely you are to be successful, even down almost to the level of: we are organized to market bananas. We're not organized for anything broader than that. Our goals are about income, and that's going to be what drives us, and it's very specifically and relentlessly targeted on that.

Second thing is thinking really aggressively about governance at a very, very local level. I think when trust breaks down among groups, you lose any chance of actually effectively utilizing the power that you refer to in interacting with the market, because I don't trust the treasurer. And I think there are revolving models of thinking much more simply about government structures.

And I think there is potential for information technology to bring transparency at a very local level in terms of flows of money and communications. And I think that can be an enhancer to trust.

And the final thing I'd cite is - continuing to utilize emerging technologies, certainly, but organizational models to bring down transaction costs, because the return has to be a function of that cost. And if you can bring that down, uses of IT and uses of SMS texting to reinforce certain messaging, I think that's very important.

Do you want to go back and forth or just tick down the whole line?

**Louise Fresco**

Be selective. Just reply to what you think is most relevant.

**Bruce McNamer**

Don, to your question about changing mindsets - I think too often we think and we talk. We already get it around food security and we understand the urgency. I think it's incumbent on us to be thinking about - how do I make that relevant for that particular audience or that particular person? Great, you're telling me all this, but why are you telling me all this?

And that's a function of - why is it important to me? And, being very creative and thoughtful about what we want them specifically to do. Because I think sometimes we - okay, now I've got your attention. I've gotten you to the point where you believe it's a big problem, but what can I as Susie sitting in Des Moines do about it? What can I as Mary who runs a big corporation in Maryland do about it? They're different things, but how do we have specific packages and activities for people to take on in response to the message that we're trying to get out there.

**Ellen Gustafson**

Yeah, I'm going to kind of focus on the three middle questions. First, the 4-H question about mindset change. You know, I think there's a real crisis in the messages that are going out.

A great example of that is that the USDA's new recommendation for us as eaters is to fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables. But that's not the food that we produce in our country. And groups like the 4-H really have to get focused on asking those deep questions.

You look around at our country, you look around even at conferences like this, and we are dealing with the health outcomes of a food system focused on overproduction of commodities - I'm just gonna say it.

And I think we have to make sure that we are fundamentally questioning, as farmers, which I myself am not, as activists, as consumers, what is the right type of food system.

I met Dr. Borlaug. I was incredibly lucky to meet him in 2006. He was receiving an award by given Auburn University, the International Quality of Life Awards. And when he spoke, he said over and over and over again – “It is all about the young people. You young people have to make change.”

And the reality is, there is a bit of a misunderstanding of what young people are looking for. And if young people are interested in sustainable agriculture or, God help me, in organic agriculture, there can sometimes be a stifling of that and an answer that, well, there is no way that that is an answer to these global systems.

And if that’s what older people want to tell young people, that’s fine. But if we’re listening to this great leader, I’m not sure that’s exactly what would be said, and that the conversation has to be able to flow in both directions.

The other thing I think is really important, and it’s kind of relevant to what’s going on in the world today – there’s this whole, you know, “Occupy” these different cities. Some of the advocacy answers, even in relation to global hunger, is occupy your kitchen, understand where your food comes from, understand what are the bases of our food system, and how do our food choices actually resonate around the world, based on the systems that we’re supporting.

I think in terms of the policy conversation, there is a major divide between anti-hunger organizations and their benefactors, which are often big food companies and big agriculture companies, both domestically and internationally. The sustainable agriculture community and the anti-obesity community have been in some ways loosely aligned.

And if we don’t break the barrier between those two groups at the policy level in Washington and actually have an ability to have a conversation long term about – if we’re going to change subsidies, what does that mean for SNAP; what does that mean for foreign aid?

If we don’t have the ability to talk amongst those almost two camps, we’re not going to get to a point of long-term change that will be a sustainable food system for everyone.

And I think the fourth question was about this idea of how do we talk to older people. And Something that’s not fundamentally asked anymore is –is this food, and would your grandmother recognize this as food? And I think that’s a really fair question, because in the last 30 years, what’s been offered at our grocery store shelves has changed quite dramatically.

I think some of the data suggests that three-quarters of the products offered in the grocery stores contain either corn soy or wheat, which is fine, because that’s the agricultural system that we’ve built in our country. But maybe that’s not something that we want to continue long term. And again if we’re recommended to eat half fruits and vegetables, then maybe it should be easier for us to access those things.

So I think an easy way to kind of have the conversation back up the chain is to say – is this the food you used to eat? And if it's not, is it okay that it's so different today?

So I hope those are some good ideas on how to change the conversation.

**Louise Fresco**

Thank you very much. Bruce, you wanted to add one thing?

**Bruce McNamer**

No, just not wanting to miss some of the questions. I think to the last question, Angela, about this observation that we're all doing the same thing right next door to each other – boy, part of that just comes in the weird world that is nonprofits, and anything that doesn't have the kind of market discipline.

But some of that actually comes back to donor and donor coordination. Because the fact that I'm doing something right next door to somebody who's doing it may be a function of – there's a donor who's interested in this, and there's a donor right next door who's interested in something very similar, and how do you get the coordination at all levels?

That's too simplistic an answer, I know, for your question, but I think it helps.

**Louise Fresco**

I think they're actually hitting two quite important points here, which are sort of at the level below what we are saying. That's a question I'm going to ask the audience again – what do you feel we would gain from having more of a dialogue between the anti-hunger, agriculture, health, food communities? Do you feel we are too much separated into sectorial groups? Do you feel that we can improve there? If I can see a show of hands, should we improve this?

Yeah, I think most of you do feel that. So that maybe is a take-home message for ourselves. Perhaps you should, we should, and I should also all look at how we can improve the dialogues across the sectors, across these different action groups.

The second question, I think, which comes up also from a few things that have been said – is the younger generation sufficiently talking to the older generation? Or rather the reverse – is the older generation open enough to listen and to engage in a discussion with the younger generation? Can I have a show of hands now? Enough or not enough? Not enough. Nobody's satisfied as far as I can see. I mean, I have the lights against me, so I can't see.

That is a very important point, so this is really something we should improve, and I already sense that this may be one of the things we might recommend from this session to Ambassador Quinn and others.

Okay. Now, I see quite a few people who want to give some comments. I think I'm going to be extremely lenient and even give the over-35's a chance, if they really make an effort to enter into dialogue with the younger generation. Okay, off you go.

**Question**

Well, my name's Peter Sherinian. I work for KFMD Radio here in Des Moines, and I do a show called Green City about sustainability issues. That aired this morning agriculture 9 a.m., and I missed it unfortunately. It's all prerecorded.

But the last young lady who asked the question – my impression was what she was really talking about is communication between, say, one farmer in Ghana and another maybe in Brazil and exchanging knowledge.

And my thought to that was – can we – and I don't think this exists – can we set up a knowledge bank electronically, a library, for example, that anybody can go to in the world electronically and access information that can help them on the local level, providing them with answers to help solve some of their problems?

That's a very broad generalization, but maybe that's not happening and could help.

### **Louise Fresco**

Yeah, thank you. That's an interesting suggestion. More speakers. Go ahead, whoever.

### **Question**

I'm Philip Bradshaw. I raise corn and soybeans and pigs 300 miles east of here in Illinois. I am also the vice president of the United States Farmers and Ranchers Alliance. It's the first time we've ever got 52 farm organizations at the same table to agree; we need to have more dialogue with people like you, Ellen.

We have this group together, if you happen to have been on there. If you haven't been there, go to [usfraonline.org](http://usfraonline.org). It will take you to the food dialogue that we had about three weeks ago. We had four hours of dialogue that's on the Web. Anybody in the world could watch it. We had people in California. I happened to be on the panel in Indiana. We had Secretary Vilsack in Washington, DC, and we had people in New York.

Our objective is to have people like yourself and the others under 35 – because you're the age of my granddaughter. So I think it is important, and what you say is very important. So we are out here today soliciting everybody to be part of this dialogue. I'm taking up more of your time than I should.

But basically we went out and had hired professionals to do focus groups in the last six, seven months. Everything we found out was that when people who do not understand today's agriculture, it creates a little fear. That's why they do not accept it.

I'm going to say one other thing and then I'll be quiet. I don't know that I really have a direct question, only that I think your panel is excellent. I think your comments have all been excellent; we need to have more of it.

But I want to tell you one thing. I started farming in 1963. My farm had a soil erosion loss of five tons per acre. Today it's under one ton per acre, and I'm proud of it. I have seven of my family members on my farm, and I am a commercial farm, but we need all farmers – big, small,

organic or commercial like mine. And that's the message we have to get out, because we've got to feed the world, as our good friend, President Lula, said this morning.

And thank you. I don't really have a question, just wanted to make some comments.

**Louise Fresco**

Don't worry, don't worry. Thank you very much. And I want you and Bruce and Ellen to be texting right now during the session – get your phones out. Okay, next question. Go ahead.

**Question**

Hi. My name is Mario. I work with the Boston Consulting Group. I used to be a volunteer consultant for TechnoServe. And actually my question is around – what are ways, very concrete ways in which nonprofits can get young people who are going to go on to become successful in business and politics and other fields to still be very attached to the topic of food security?

And I know TechnoServe did a great job setting up this program where they have insurance from Goldman Sachs, from all the big, multinational companies, consulting firms come six miles and then leave, go back to their firm, but bring this passion for food security.

And I'm wondering: are there any other programs that can be done so that people very early on who will now go to become food security experts, like me, but will remain very involved and want to make changes and be in positions where they can make changes. They're going to want to invest their time, energy and money in that. So TechnoServe has a great program like this.

Anything else? Best practices that we can share very concretely so that we have a chance to learn more about this topic and put our energies into it?

**Louise Fresco**

Thank you very much. It's a sensible question. More comments at the back there.

**Question**

Hi. My name is Mira, and I'm a current student at Carlton College in Minnesota. And I have two questions, which I know is obnoxious, and I apologize in advance. But a little bit of background – I was a World Food Prize Youth Institute attendee in 2008, I think, and then I was a Borlaug-Ruan international intern in 2009 in Beijing. And Adam, behind me, is also an intern.

And the two of us, I think, both had really good experiences with the Youth Institute, and it's the reason that I've been coming here for the last four years. But having the opportunity to come here as a 19-year-old is not something that most other college students have, because the cost of attending conferences like this is prohibitively expensive.

And I think something that's really interesting to me at Carlton is that food is sexy – it's absolutely sexy. But the problem is that food security is not sexy.

Something that happened at Carlton last year was that we got fair trade bananas with St. Olaf College, the college across the river, which was awesome – but it’s still not achieving the goals that we ultimately need to reach, and it’s not what students at Carlton are really talking about.

They’re talking about the kinds of foods that we eat, which is a first step – I will absolutely say that – but I don’t think that we’re really getting there.

So my first question is – how do we make food security sexy instead of just having food be the center of conversation?

And the second question that I have is – as I mentioned, it is really expensive to come to a conference like this as a student. And so my question to you guys is how to get students who really do care to places like this or even into an internship or something that is different. Because we all have access to the same internships, and there aren’t that many. It’s really competitive to get the few that there are.

And I know that for Adam and I - we’re both set up because of the World Food Prize. But for students who haven’t been interested in food since they were 15 or 16 years old, I think it’s really difficult to get involved and find a place where you really fit in and enjoy learning about food and food security.

So I’m curious to know how you guys would say to take your first steps into the world of food and food security.

**Louise Fresco**

Thank you. Those are absolutely eminent questions, and I think, in a way you already made a plea to everybody here in this room. Anybody who has any ideas about internships with your company, with your group, will have to put them on the Web. You know, the World Food Prize will have to learn to use the Web even more.

**Question**

I have 50 copies of my résumé here, so if anybody wants one...

**Louise Fresco**

Okay, we go on. We have a time issue, so I think we have room for about two questions, maybe three, depending on how it goes. Concentrated and focused questions, please, or comments, either way.

**Question**

My name’s Adam Riesselman. As she said, I was a former Borlaug-Ruan intern. I’m a student at Drake University. I grew up on a rural farm in Western Iowa. I don’t really know how we’re going to get the future shakers and movers of agriculture, the future farmers, how to contact them.

Because when we’re talking about food and maybe even talk about a diversified cropping system as well as more sustainable agricultural practices, as well as organic farming, how do



we talk to these young farmers? These people that may not be getting a formal agricultural education or ways to diversify their crops? How do you talk to these young people, and how do you talk to the future farmers of the world – especially in America and just like a basic corn or soybean or wheat-producing nation?

**Louise Fresco**

Yeah, I would actually even add that – how do you get young farmers is a worldwide issue. I mean, just to get them motivated to continue in farming is a big issue for the future. So it's a very relevant question. We'll have the experts give you the final answer on this one. Next one.

**Question**

Hi. My name's Courtney Paisley, and I'm the coordinator of a youth network, the Young Professionals Platform for Agricultural Research for Development – it's called YPARD. And one of our primary aims is to get young people's voice more prevalent in these debates and discussions. And I would say we have two strategies to do that.

The first would be to lobby organizations for those young people within their research institutes, within their NGOs, to try to include more young people in their discussions, in their meetings.

And then I think we have to recognize that there are a lot of young people that are still quite timid to speak out in these things. And like you said, you had to kind of pull the young people out of this crowd; so I think we also need to understand that. And there are a lot of cultural barriers in regions where young people aren't supposed to speak up; they're not allowed to speak up.

So the other strategy that we have is we have a lot of youth focus groups. We have an online platform where young people are able to express themselves and say what their challenges are and what they're feeling. And then we try to synthesize this – which I know is dangerous – but we try to synthesize it the best we can, and we try to present these at a lot of these big conferences and these meetings to try to get that youth voice in there.

And going back to, again, one of our other aims is how to make agriculture more attractive. And you would not believe how many rooms I've sat in with gray-haired men telling me what the youth want. So, you know, there are no young people sitting in the room. I mean, we need to engage them, especially in that specific discussion. Thank you.

**Louise Fresco**

Yeah, and do I see this correct that I have two more speakers? Okay.

**Question**

Hello. My name is Christine. I'm coming from Switzerland, and I am a politician and the founder/member of the new political party named Green Liberals that is matching economy with ecology – first party to make that in Europe.

I have two questions, and I agree with Ellen. The question is – and I'm not judging you – is to recognize the food. I'm not recognizing food in what I have been eating. And even if it was

very good, I have not the taste of what I was used to. I was born in France and educated with, I mean, the religion of food in France. But you have not the taste of real food.

So my question is – maybe it's not only to produce more but to produce a good quality if you want to avoid obesity.

And also the second question is – have you noticed that in developing countries you have obesity gaining? So it's a threat that you have in very poor country, overweight people. So those were the two questions, and I'm very grateful if you can answer these. Thank you very much.

### **Louise Fresco**

Last but not least.

### **Question**

I'll try to be quick. First I wanted to say I have been tweeting about this conversation, and I had to reiterate the young lady's comments. It is really great to hear this panel and hear the issues that you guys are bringing up.

To be really direct, young people are used to be talked at and not really getting to participate. And we're often encouraged to participate, but to really get us to feel like it means something, my question is – how you give us jobs?

Not to get too political, but it's been really hard. I graduated a year ago, and I am fortunate enough to be working in the field, and I say that because I work for a USAID contractor and I reformat résumés and prepare post-performance reports to proposals.

How do you give a young person like me a meaningful position in this movement and in this kind of discussion? How do you get more young people involved, aside from just internships? But with jobs we feel like we're doing something really meaningful and really making a difference.

### **Louise Fresco**

Thank you. That's a very profound statement. Okay. I'm going to give both of my experts here on the panel the floor. I'm sure you cannot address everything that has been said, but really this is a dialogue. It's not a session of question and answer, and I hope after this session you will have time to engage in even more intense dialogues. So, Ellen, would you like to start to react?

### **Ellen Gustafson**

Yeah, a couple of big themes – One is the original idea of sort of the electronic bank of farmers, and I think that's hitting at a really important problem. Another thing I noticed in looking at the last 30 years and what has changed is that our independent government and independent funding for research and agriculture has diminished.

In that space, a lot of corporate funding and corporate R&D has stepped in. That's been wonderful. There's been a lot of amazing advances that have come from that. But the reality is

that, without independent research and without a real sort of political will for understanding research and development projects that can help a broader range of people, we really are going to be stymied by, and be limited by, what sort of a for-profit model interest in research.

A second kind of big theme that I think answers a lot of different people's questions but is essential to this conversation: People who may be seem hippy-dippy or granola, or whatever the phrases are, and want to eat organic or sustainable or local farmers' markets, that's great. But that's also pitted as a binary sort of dichotomy between these little organic eaters in Berkeley versus the big ag and the real production farmers in the Midwest.

Those are not the only two options. And in terms of jobs, in terms of young people getting involved, in terms of corporate partners, people who go back into the corporate world, there is a massive space here for opportunity, and it's called entrepreneurship.

And just because the way we buy food today is in a grocery store and it's a huge - you know, we drive to it and we park in the parking lot - that is not the way it has to be. I'm not saying I have the solution. I'm not saying that's not the best solution. I'm saying that, just because the system is the way it is doesn't mean it's the way it has to be.

And if young people don't say, "I want to start a company." You know, there is a huge space of opportunity for local food systems development that's using technology, logistics, that's and different transportation systems to get food to people in new ways. That will work here, and it will work in the developing world.

And so the opportunities in entrepreneurship and business are huge. And there's that whole middle space of regional agriculture, of medium-size farming but also of different types of big farming and different types of small farming. That's a huge business opportunity.

There is an organization called the Young Farmers Alliance - check them out. There's a movie about them called Greenhorns. The website is [greenhorns.net](http://greenhorns.net). It's fascinating. There is a massive growth in young people interested in agriculture. This Young Farmers Alliance is actually a new lobbying organization to kind of help with the transition from older farmers to younger farmers that want to come in and work the land and invest in soil and other things. So check them out.

And the last thing - getting back to how do we make international food security sexy, which I think is a really, really relevant question. But I just want to tell a really fast story.

When I was a kid in the eighties, the famine in Ethiopia was happening, and what my mom would say in trying to raise a citizen of the world, was, you know, "Eat your vegetables," or "Clean your plate, because there are hungry kids in Ethiopia." And I at the time was, that's ridiculous - they're not going to send my food to Ethiopia.

But there are big-picture themes here about our role in the global food system that are sometimes brushed away because it seems too big and too complex. The United States of America imports 60 percent of our fruits and vegetables. We have a massive place in the global food system.

In many ways our overproduction of some grain crops that's been used as food aid for a really long time has led to the divestment in agriculture that we're now trying to reverse. That was in the last 30 years and we're now just trying to reverse it with Feed the Future and with these great initiatives to focus on small farmers.

Our food habits reverberate, and our choices do reverberate. And I think the more we can teach people those lessons and how we are involved in the interconnected world, and our own dinner plate is, the better off we're going to be at engaging a wider range of people to help solve the problems.

### **Louise Fresco**

Bruce.

### **Bruce McNamer**

I probably can't add a lot to what Ellen said. A couple of comments, though, to Peter, to your question about a knowledge bank or leveraging information technology much more systematically in the developing world for information sharing and the like - we're not there yet but we're getting there.

I mean, cell phone penetration and proliferation of IT in the developing world has been much hyped over the last ten years, and there's been a lot of hyperbole and a lot of discussion about the potentiality this has for solving all problems.

Overhyped, and yet maybe not hyped enough - it's coming. And I think we are seeing it in the work that we do in terms of finally our ability to leverage information technologies in the way we interact with farmers, in the way we organize our informational transparency around markets prices, transactions.

It's coming. It'll be here. Internet penetration is still not there in the kind of rural context in which we work, but it is coming, and it has great, great, great promise. So stay tuned on that.

I would say on this larger set of issues around engaging young people in agricultural systems, I think there may be some promise in the way we enter the problem. I think, Ellen, the point you continually make - it's about what we eat every day and being interested in that and thinking at the level of the kitchen.

Well, if that's the way that we begin to engage in food, how do we take advantage of social networking or other media to say - but that's just your entry into this, and now let's expand out from there to be thinking more globally about the implications that inquiry has, not just for, am I eating in a healthy way, but where does my food come from, and what implications does that transformation or that transport have for other issues I care about, whether it's the environment or global poverty and the like.

I think being able to knit these issues together - so my concern with eating healthy with actually a concern about obesity and nutrition in a different country or in a different context. I think there is promise in social networking and in the fact that we now think about food in

ways that we didn't when it was 20, 30 years ago. It has promise not just for eating healthier but actually thinking more across the whole food system.

And then what can I do about it? I think to your question about the model TechnoServe has for engaging young people in the work that we do, yeah, other ways of doing it, other programs. It strikes me that there's not enough of it anywhere, but there is a geographical element to this, and it is - we actually end up oftentimes recruiting at the financial services companies or some of the management consulting firms.

And a lot of times they're coastal, so we're taking a sort of set of business skills and acumen and making people aware about it. But what are we doing in Des Moines? And there's not enough to that.

Now, we have started to engage much more with food companies whose bread and butter (if you'll pardon the expression) really is around bringing talented young people into their organizations and helping them think about that.

But part of this is a geographical phenomenon, and very few people in New York are aware of all that the World Food Prize offers in terms of opportunities for actually getting resources, getting plugged into ways that I can address problems.

So how you overcome that geographical barrier, I don't want to be glib and say it's all about social media, but I think there's something there.

### **Louise Fresco**

Thank you. Let me add just a few words from my own perspective, and then unfortunately we have to wrap this up.

I hope you feel as hopeful as I do, because if I listen to you all, I think we're getting there. We're getting there in terms of engaging in a dialogue, a dialogue that allows young people to communicate, to say, and not only as you said, to be talked to, but to really say what fascinates them and what they feel strongly about.

It's a dialogue also where voices of farmers need to be heard much more clearly, and not just farmers but also I would say everybody engaged in the food chain. I mean, let me hear somebody who works in a factory where they make bread; how does he or she feel about food?

It's obvious that the entry point for modern societies with a strong middle class like the U.S., like many parts of Europe, but increasingly also Latin America, is of course food. But what we need to do with the real challenges and the paradigm shift issue, if you want, is to connect your kitchen and your plate to those who actually produce [it] in this country but also elsewhere.

Food is about knowing; food is about conscience. It's about what links me to a farmer who may be a banana farmer in Costa Rica, which links me to a person in a factory who actually produces the processed food, to somebody, a farmer a long time ago who has been selecting the wheat from which now my bread is being baked.

It's this idea of a network. And I can see immediately with my probably not very, what shall I say, standard mind, I can see a fantastic act on the Internet, on my iPhone, where I put in my bread and I see all these linkages, like an enormous network where I can hear, where I can talk to the farmer; I can at least see who has been my farmer.

I know there is one little app from New Zealand which I do want to share with you. In fact, I got this at my TED Talk. I got a jersey from some company that linked back to a farm where the wool came from for that jersey, and I could actually hear an interview with the farmer and his son about what they wanted to do in life. And that to me has made that jersey so precious.

And I could see the same thing happening with our food and linking indeed this paradigm of food, hunger, obesity, and let me say responsible living – because that's in the end what it is about. It's about taking our responsibility not only for our lives but for the world as a whole.

And for that we need to engage in a dialogue. I cannot repeat this often enough. And if I can take one message home, back to Ambassador Quinn and back to the Board, it's going to be, "Let's have more dialogue. Let's hear the diversity of voices, let's hear the possibilities of getting even more of a paradigm shift next year."

Thank you very much.