

**World Food Prize Symposium 2002**  
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CATHERINE BERTINI

U.N. Secretary General's Personal Humanitarian Envoy to the Middle East, and  
Visiting Professor, Gerald Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan

Do you remember the story about the old man and the young man who each were on their own, wandering along on the beach? And the old man looked at all the starfish that had been washed up on the shore, and he didn't give much notice, because he thought they were all going to die. And when he came across the young man, the young man was picking up starfish one by one and flinging them back out into the ocean. And the old man said to the young man, "Why are you spending all your energy doing this? You can't possibly make a difference." And the young man picked up one more starfish, flung it into the sea and turned to the old man and said, "I made a difference for that one."

When we're here to celebrate the World Food Prize and its 2002 winner, Dr. Sanchez, and all the other winners in the past, we're celebrating the success of people who did more even than that young man in throwing one starfish after another into the sea, but found a way to reach so many people and to improve so many lives. And I want to add my congratulations to Dr. Sanchez for his great accomplishments and to the World Food Prize Committee for having found a way to recognize these kind of accomplishments of him and so many others that are so important to people around the world and so often don't get the recognition that certainly they deserve.

We can all make a difference, even if some of us have to do it one by one by one. And before I finish this morning I want to talk a bit about how we can make a difference.

I do want to say, thank you, though, before I proceed, to Ambassador Quinn, to the Ruans and Dr. Borlaug, to all of Ambassador Quinn's staff and everyone who helped make this event such a success and certainly who included me in it. I've been learning a lot. I enjoyed the evening last night immensely also, and it's so nice to see so many friends and to learn from so many imminent people.

All of the discussion the last couple of days has been, of course, about water and how it affects agriculture, about water and how it affects people. And of course agriculture affects people as well. But it's all around the context of how do we ensure, over the long term, the health and well-being of the world's people. Now particularly of the 800 million people who, as Sandra Postel said yesterday – don't have enough to eat, don't earn enough to be able to purchase food, don't have the ability to grow enough food.

We have to be concerned about those people now, and we have to be concerned about everyone in the future. We want to ensure that we can feed everyone, we want to ensure that people don't

die of preventable diseases, we want to be sure that the long-term water supply for individuals, for agriculture is here, not just for the foreseeable future but for the whole future of the planet.

I'm teaching this semester at the University of Michigan, and the graduate students who are there, I'm pleased to report, see, even though we're talking about food aid in my course, see water as the main issue for the future and one that many of them want to direct their future careers to. So I was heartened when Sandra Postel and Peter Gleick talked about some of the challenges for the future, knowing that there are people probably multiplied many times over by the people at University of Michigan and others who are already building commitments to work in these matters.

The first time in my career that I saw the important connection between water and food aid, which has been my business, was when the Secretary General named me as his Special Envoy for the drought in the Horn of Africa in 2000. In fact, he announced this appointment of me for this job on my 50th birthday, and I didn't think it was a very nice birthday present at the time; however, I since found that it was one of the most rewarding jobs that I had ever had – because I was able to see not only from a broader perspective of food aid, not only many of the problems and the challenges in the Horn of Africa but also many of the solutions coming forth.

We said as we went to look and did our analysis of the region that water supply and water quality and basic medicines were the greatest unmet needs. In other words, even though this was a drought, even though it meant that there wasn't enough agriculture being produced, that there wasn't enough food going in, either the food that had been produced or the food aid that was moving into the country as a region. But where we really had incredible shortfalls was on the provision of quality of water and the water supply.

We knew also, and we said, that well-targeted inputs would go a long way to ensure that the affected people do not have a serious crisis beyond the drought. But as UNICEF says, already there are four billion cases around the world every year of childhood diarrhea. Most of those cases, they say, could be alleviated or not even occur if water quality was improved.

But what we saw in the Horn of Africa was not only challenging in terms of what needed to be done in the future, but also it was exciting to see what had been done and what could be done. For instance, OXFAM, the NGO which does a lot of work with water, had built some water purification facilities.

I saw one in Southeastern Ethiopia where they had taken water that UNICEF had collected, but it was very dirty, and they built a water purification system, a very basic system. It cost them a hundred thousand pounds, British pounds, to build this system, approximately \$150,000. It was going to serve, it was serving 90,000 people in the town in which we visited, and they said it would last for at least three years, possibly far beyond that. Now, can you imagine how little, for less than \$2, for three years people would have clean water because of this one facility. It's so inexpensive but yet so sometimes complicated to put together, but yet a program like OXFAM can quickly come in and make a huge difference in this community.

In Kenya, we visited women, Massai women, and there were very few men around because of the drought, because so many men had gone off with the livestock to be able to find water and food for the livestock. The women were thrilled and they were so excited, because UNICEF had dug two wells, and these wells were so important to the women for a couple of reasons. First of all, the women were the ones who always collect the water to cook the food and do the wash and do anything else one needs water to use in the household. And these new water sources meant that they only had to walk one hour each way each day to get their water instead of four hours each way each day.

The second reason why they were happy was because there were two water sources in one place. There was a trough in one area where the animals were drinking from, and then there was a pump in another area where the women and the girls were getting their water. Why was this important? Well, they told me that in this part of the world, if there's one water source, the animals get it first. The women wait 'til there are no more herds, no more animals, and then the women can go and get the water. Imagine the quality of that water, even if it came out from a well to begin with. But they had their own water, and they were thrilled.

And then we learned from UNICEF that some of the simple hand pumps that they were able to provide, which would bring water in for years and years, cost as little as \$1,000.

So we were able to see not only a lot of the problems but some of the wonderful solutions that were available.

Now when we think about these matters and when we reported back to the Secretary General, we said, "So much more needs to be done, especially in the area of water supply, water quality and providing basic medicines." Because in fact the deaths of children there in the region were primarily from diseases that could have been prevented, most of which they were susceptible to either because of bad water or because they were malnourished, because they were weak and their bodies couldn't keep away from these diseases which overcame them; and there was not enough medicine to be able to help them.

So to stories like this, I say, what could we do if we wanted to save a starfish? Well, as individuals we could do something, because we can find organizations like OXFAM and UNICEF in this case and find ways to support them, whether it's through personal contributions, through community programs to raise funds for them, or through other activities that would help them with some of this important work.

Another area where we saw this close connection, of course, I referred to before, and that's with women and how women use water. We can talk about water on very broad terms, but when we talk about it on how it's used in the household level, it's used by women, it's collected by women, it's often apportioned by women. But it is the women in households throughout the developing world who are the ones that have to find it.

They have to find the water and carry it back. They have to walk many hours many times day after day in order to get this water. They have to use it to cook, and of course they have to find the

food to cook. They grow it if they can; they find it somehow if they can. And they have to cook the food all the while taking care of their families as well.

When they have the ability to have water in or near their homes, it makes a total difference. And think about this in your own home. It's something we don't even think about when we turn on the water faucet. But if you had to even go down the block to get the water that you use in your bathroom, in your wash, in your kitchen, in your day-to-day life, you would consider that a huge burden. But a lot of people have to go much, much further, and the water they get isn't very good.

When Peter Gleick was talking about community development yesterday, I thought of how important it is to involve these women. And he implied that – he said we have to involve the community. And, you know, a lot of times we just talk to men, I think he said. So he didn't say the next step, which he implied, which is to say – and we really need to be talking to the women, because they are the users. They're not only the users of the water and the food, but they are also in many places in the world the farmers.

And I still shudder when I think of the fact that if you talk to a group of people who give advice to agricultural workers, especially to extension workers, you find almost exclusively men on any continent. And yet the people, for instance, in Africa, eight or nine out of ten people who work in farming in Africa are women. It's not that women and men can't talk to each other, but I don't think we're listening very well to the people actually who are tilling the fields if we're not talking more often to women.

I saw this once in Angola. The American ambassador and I were visiting an area which had been recently demined, and a lot of people had returned home in an effort to start growing food and rebuilding their homes. And they came and complained to us because someone had sent them some tools; they sent them hoes to work in the fields, because they thought that they needed hoes. Well, they did need hoes, but nobody had talked to the people who were going to be working in the fields, who in this case were exclusively women, to ask them what kind of hoes they needed. So they sent hoes, the kind of hoe that we have in our shed, you know, a long wooden hoe that met at a 90-degree angle with a rectangular metal spade. And it's almost like a rake, really, when you think about having to dig deep into the ground.

But what these women told us – they complained bitterly to the ambassador and I – that what had been sent to them were male hoes, male hoes. I didn't know there was a gender. Does anybody in this room...? Well, I assume there's a few people in this room who know there was a gender differentiation in hoes, but I bet not too many people had known this before. I told this story once to a group of women, and they thought I was talking about my stockings.

Female hoes in this part of the world are on short wooden sticks that meet at much closer to a 45 than a 90-degree angle to a metal spade that's pointed that digs further into the ground, and the women need those because they have babies on their backs all the time they're in the fields. And they have to lean over while they're in the fields, and they have to dig further into the ground, and they wanted those female hoes. But nobody asked them, and they got the wrong thing.

I think it's an example of how important it is to involve the community and to ask the community and to ask the right people – the people in the community who are going to be doing the work. And that makes all the difference.

And we try to do more of this at the World Food Program where we organize groups of women to be people from whom we would take advice. Or if there was a community group that was giving advice, we try to insist that at least half the members of that group be women, so that we could be getting advice about food and what kind of food people need, from the people who are actually going to cook it.

Another issue that's so important, and especially also where water comes into play, is getting children in school and especially girls in school. Still in this world there are really millions of girls who are not in school, tens of millions of girls who are not in school in many places – boys too, but even more girls in places where it is just not popular to send girls to school.

But yet we know that if girls have an education at least through age ten, a primary school education, that their lives in the future are significantly improved, that they are literate, they can read and write, and they know basic arithmetic – so they can know more about what's going on in their community. If an economic opportunity comes their way, they know it's there and they can have a better chance of taking advantage of it.

They can also know more about good nutrition for their children, about healthcare for their children. And just because of their own choices, the girls who have at least a grade school education have half as many children, 2.9 children, average as opposed to six children compared to the women who don't have a basic education. We know it's critical. In fact, I think it's one of the most important things in the world we can do is ensure that more girls go to school.

One of the issues in going to school is water and particularly sanitation and whether or not there bathroom facilities in the school or even any sort of separate facility separate from the boys. It's a critically important issue and an issue that's often forgotten.

My former colleague and my friend, Carol Bellamy, when she spoke in Johannesburg at the summit recently, said, in fact, I quote: "UNICEF is calling on national leaders to ensure that every primary school in the world would be equipped with separate sanitary facilities for boys and girls and that every school without exception have a source of clean and safe drinking water."

When I visit schools around the world and I see the school feeding programs that are being put together that are so important and I show these pictures to the women and men in the United States who run the school feeding programs for American children, I mean they just, they either shake their heads or kind of laugh an uncomfortable laugh, seeing for instance the sanitation. The only thing available, where there's a big pot of water, for instance, and the kids come when it's time for lunch and wash their hands in the pot of water, same pot for everybody. And then afterwards when they have lunch and they bring their plates back and rinse them out in the pot of

water. And this is important because it's much better than doing nothing – but a far cry from what we need if we want to protect all of our children.

And speaking of all of our children, feeding children in school is so critical; it's so critical for all the children. We use it sometimes as an incentive to get girls to school. WFP, for instance, in many communities where it's not popular for girls to go to school, gives a liter can of vegetable oil to girls after they complete one month of school. And some of these girls are so little they can barely drag this liter can home with them. But it is as much as two weeks' pay for some of their fathers. So it's enough incentive to send the girls to school. We've had anywhere from a hundred to a 350 percent increase in the number of girls in school in the communities where we've done this. And in a lot of places people have had to build more schools.

But feeding people at school as a concept for not only getting children to school but for helping them learn is an important concept. And it's one that was learned after the war in Europe and Japan, and it was one that was learned in this country when, after World War II the military reported that a lot of the recruits were malnourished or undernourished. And I'm talking about American recruits.

And so in 1946 the U.S. Congress created what became the national school lunch program, starting to give lunches to children in school because it was so important from a national security perspective. But since then it's been found that, not only in the United States but anywhere, that feeding children in school makes such a difference. It increases attendance, it decreases tardiness, it increases standardized test scores. And teachers will tell you that children pay much more attention when they're not hungry and they're able to learn at school.

It's critically important, and that's one of the reasons why World Food Program and many NGOs have been running school feeding programs for many years. In the second half of the Clinton administration, the U.S. ambassador to Rome was George McGovern, the same Midwestern George McGovern that ran for president and was a senator from South Dakota. And he said, "I think that every child in the world should have lunch at school – look at the difference that it makes." And, with his friend Bob Dole from Kansas, the two of them are now a force to try to convince governments, our own and others, to insist there should be more resources put toward feeding children at school, toward a goal of having all children eat at school.

And I should say in terms of another conference coming up, if you have an interest in some of these hunger issues, that at the new McGovern Center in Mitchell, South Dakota, which is just getting underway, there is a conference on the 21st and 22nd of November called "Ending Hunger in our Time." And Senators McGovern and Dole will be keynoting that conference.

What can we do if we want to promote more children in school and promote sanitation in water issues in school? Well, again, we can reach out to groups like UNICEF, friends of the World Food Program, friends of WFP.org, which is a U.S. counterpart, Save the Children and other great NGOs who are working on these matters. And we could remind our public officials that we think that these issues are very important. And I'll come back to that in a couple minutes.

Just a couple comments about some of the crisis areas. When we talked about those 800 million hungry people, most of them aren't in crisis areas. If we added up all the people living in crisis, it would be a small number of those people. Most of those people are living in India and China and Sub-Saharan Africa and in other countries around the world. But in the crisis areas the problems are sometimes even more severe.

In North Korea, for instance, where in 1995 the government asked the World Food Program to come in to help because they said that they had a bad hail storm that affected the agricultural production. And we did an assessment and found that there was a bad hail storm that affected agricultural production. But it wasn't very long that we were in that country before we found that it was really a far bigger problem than that and really a structural problem in the country that was not going to be fixed with food aid, but at least the famine could be stopped with food aid.

Massive amounts of food have gone into North Korea, over a billion dollars of food. And since 1997 we have been feeding one third of the population of North Korea. Now, one of the issues, however, that's been found is that food aid, although critical to keep people alive, is only part of the even short-term Band-Aid solution, because the water quality is so poor that so much more needs to be done in order to help to try to build a reasonable water system for the population as well as a water system for irrigation and for agriculture.

And one more thing about North Korea – just recently the World Food Program had to announce that it was going to have to seriously cut its program in North Korea because the donors weren't coming through this year. South Korea, the U.S. and Japan have been the largest donors, and the U.S. continues to give a large quantity, as has, up until recently, South Korea. But Japan hasn't given in some time, and the latest political news about North Korea may make this even more difficult. So I pray that we're not looking for an even more difficult future for North Korea.

In Afghanistan where the people – and this was referred to yesterday – where people face poverty for years, war, clan fighting, the Taliban, and then the drought, which, by mid-2000, UNICEF said that 30 percent of the wells and the water supply have dried up and where only 11 percent of the people, rural people, have access to safe drinking water. There is a high prevalence of diarrhea; 18 percent of all child deaths are attributed to that, and of course that's attributed in large part to bad water.

The rate of children dying in Afghanistan is the highest in the world. I remember seeing earlier this year a baby in a hospital who was the tiniest baby I had ever seen, and I pray that that baby might live but didn't know quite how it could. And so many of its brothers and sisters are dying from lack of food, water and medical care.

A lot of work had been done in Afghanistan in the fifties and sixties and seventies on water issues; and some of that base is still there, but the current work has been decreased dramatically.

This brings me to a really important point. Development has decreased dramatically. Andrew Natsios touched on this recently, yesterday, but I have to talk about it a bit more.

Development – if you look at the statistics for not only the U.S. but all of the wealthy countries that contribute to development around the world – things like water projects in Afghanistan in the fifties and sixties or school-feeding projects in Sub-Saharan Africa in the seventies or eighties. These kinds of programs have been all dramatically cut back, and I believe they've been cut back for two reasons.

First of all, they were cut at the end of the Cold War. There seemed to be, there's a dramatic difference between the eighties and the nineties in terms of the available development aid. And I think that there was around the world a view that we could save now some of our resources because we don't have to be fighting our Cold War battle through what we're doing to support countries around the world. And there was a decrease.

But at the same time, the Cold War saw a huge increase in emergencies: The Eastern European problems in Bosnia and Kosovo; more and continued problems in Angola, and in North Korea; a lot of problems around the world attributable in large part to the fact that the Cold War was over. So there were a lot more emergencies. So donors, governments put their money into emergencies, they put their money into keeping people alive rather than into helping people be able to grow.

And this is then one of the most severe problems that we have faced, because the development resources dwindle and dwindle, even though the aid resources in some areas are relatively constant, but it goes much more to emergencies. And we all agree. If somebody's starving, I think everyone in the world says, I don't accept this. There's enough food here to be sure no one is starving. We're going to send it. And we do. We send it to Afghanistan, we send it to Bosnia, we send it to Rwanda.

But after that story goes out of the news, then we're not there so much anymore. And they call it the "CNN factor." When CNN packs up and goes away, when *The New York Times* leaves, when *The Times of London* goes back home, there are no more stories, and people don't know that it's still an urgent problem. But it is still an urgent problem, and the resources start to dwindle.

But imagine the poor woman living in Bangladesh that doesn't have anywhere near enough food to feed her six children and who isn't living in the midst of a flood or a natural disaster. She never gets in the news. We don't know that we can help her to improve her life if only we could give her some more development aid. If only we could help her to be able to improve her economic well-being and her economic livelihood.

And this has been, I think, a severe problem that we all face. And therefore I say to us here today – how can we do more to try to reach these 800 million hungry people. How, when we sit here in Iowa surrounded by corn, how can this be that these people still live this way? Well, the way, path for people to move out of poverty is economic development. And we've seen people move out of poverty through economic development – in Southeast Asia, in Latin America, in the Middle East and in some countries in Africa.

We've seen this happen, and as Andrew said before, we've even seen many countries become our customers, eight of the top ten countries that are customers of U.S. food now. We used to be recipients of USAID food. So as people move out of poverty, they can purchase more, their countries can purchase more, they become stronger. But we've got to do more to help them move out of poverty, because as many people rise, some of the poorest, least-educated people are still destined to be stuck, unless we find a way to reach a hand to help them. And that's what we could do.

No, aid, fortunately in the United States has not ever been a partisan issue, and if it ever becomes a partisan issue, we'll all be in trouble. It's always been supported by both parties, supported by Senator Harkin and Congressman Ganske. It's supported by Senator Luger and Senator Leahy. It's a bipartisan effort.

But it's also not had a lot of improvements over time, of increases over time. So when Andrew mentioned yesterday that the President has said that there will be five billion dollars and after three years they'd reached the five billion dollar addition to ten billion level, that's very significant as an increase. What he didn't say also was that USAID and his budget increased by almost 50 percent, 40 percent, actually, an increase in the budget this year over last year, for food aid, which is very significant and very much a move in the right direction.

But do you know that still, even with all of this, the U.S. is 22nd out of 22 of the wealthy countries in terms of the amount of money it gives for foreign aid through its government to developing countries – 22 out of 22 on a GNP basis. And we give .01 percent for this purpose, and the goal is .07 – am I saying these statistics right? – .07 percent is the goal that the rich countries have set for themselves about where we want to go. And Norway and Sweden and Germany and the UK and Japan and Canada are all more than the United States.

So we have a very, very long way to go. Yes, we see lots of bags of food, we give a lot of food, but we're a big country – we need to give even more. And we need to give that food and give other kinds of technical advice, support, direction, university exchanges, and so forth. Yes, we do a lot – nowhere near what we need to do.

And I think it's because Americans don't yet understand that there are 800 million hungry people there in the world. There are so many people who don't have good drinking water. There are so many people who don't have access to any tools to be able to help build their way out of poverty. And we can do so much more.

And I would hope that the big starfish that we can throw out, collectively, is a new movement starting in the Heartland of America to say what we're doing is great, it's wonderful, it's critical, and what the Bush administration has taken are very important steps toward a lot more that we need to do in the future to be able to help improve and in fact save the lives of the poorest of the poor around the world.

We have the ability to do it. All we need is the knowledge, because I believe that our will to do it exists as well. Good luck.

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