

2006 Norman E. Borlaug/World Food Prize International Symposium
The Green Revolution Redux:
Can We Replicate the Single Greatest Period of Food Production in All Human History?
October 19-20, 2006 - Des Moines, Iowa

<p>SESSION THREE: Linking the Public and Private Sectors October 19, 2006 – 3:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Panelist James Morris</p>
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Moderator

John Ruff

Thank you, Bob. You've made what looks like an incredibly daunting and complicated task into one that appears simple. We know it isn't, and I'm sure there's going to be some questions you will have for Bob. But before we do that, I'd like to introduce Jim Morris. When James T. Morris steps down as head of the World Food Programme at the end of this year, it will be a tremendous capstone to a career that has combined business, philanthropy, humanitarian leadership and public service for over 36 years.

Mr. Morris has served as the Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme since April of 2002. In July 2002 he became a special envoy for humanitarian needs in South Africa for the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan. In 2003 he carried out the largest humanitarian operation in history, which successfully fed 26 million Iraqis.

This past Monday, World Food Day, October 16, Mr. Morrison and this morning's speaker, Peter McPherson, announced at Georgetown University an exciting new initiative to further engage American universities in the fight against world hunger. His presentation today will discuss the roles of food aid in the times of crisis and humanitarian disaster. Jim.

Private-Public Partnerships: The Courage to Win the War on Hunger

James Morris

Executive Director, United Nations World Food Programme

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My pleasure to be here. I come from a family of northwest Iowa farmers, from a little town, Lynn Grove, so I'm back to my roots, I guess. I pay tribute to Norman Borlaug, this remarkable man. I judge people on what they make of the opportunity that is given to them. And what this man has done with the opportunities that came his way is extraordinary. I pay tribute to Ambassador Quinn and to John Ruan and the people of Des Moines and the people of Iowa for this brilliant idea to bring us all together to think about food and hunger and nutrition – in my judgment, the single most important humanitarian issue.

There are more people at risk because of this issue, and they've brought us together to think about it, and they've brought remarkable people here for a conversation.

I pay tribute to my predecessor, Catherine Bertini, who won this award a couple of years ago, as she was the perfect choice to be so honored. I was fortunate when I came to WFPI, inherited a remarkable organization. It was working superbly well, and Catherine's legacy of having put this special humanitarian enterprise in place – extraordinary.

The World Bank would tell you that the single most important investment any country in the world, be it Canada, the United States, Bangladesh, Malawi, can make is in the nutritional well-being of its very young children – to be sure that children are born to healthy mothers, nursed by healthy mothers, have good nutrition the first 24 to 36 months of life. And we know if we do that well, children everywhere in the world have the same opportunity to become extraordinary contributors. And we know that if they don't have that opportunity, they're compromised forever.

We know the World Health Organization would tell you that hunger and malnutrition are the single-most important health issue in the world. We know that UNAIDS would tell you that the single most important factor in the fight against HIV is food and nutrition and clean and safe water.

The World Bank, in a remarkable document for its spring meeting this year – you all should take a look at it – said that in 2005 there were 400 significant national disasters in the world, compared to 100 in 1975. And the 400 national disasters, going back ten years, the decade before 2005, negatively affected 2.6 billion people on our planet.

The World Food Programme, 15 years ago overwhelmingly a development agency, today is overwhelmingly a humanitarian agency, the largest in the world responding to disaster, to conflict, to tough issues of health. We're about to wind down our operation for having fed 735,000 people coming out of the Lebanon conflict. In the month of September, we fed 2.9 million people in Darfur, another 230,000 refugees across the border in Chad.

The numbers of people at risk and always the most vulnerable, are women and children. Anytime there's a problem in the world, it falls disproportionately on the backs of women and children, extraordinary. The world has decided to invest its resources in this arena to save lives of people victimized by national disasters, conflict, HIV-AIDS, etc.; there's much less being invested in basic agricultural infrastructure or in moderating, mediating, preventing problems – a big-time issue for people like us.

WFP's first objective is to be prepared to respond to four major crises at any one time. Last year we had the tsunami, we had the tough earthquake in Pakistan, this incredible drought – once again, Catherine – in the Horn of Africa, tough issues in Southern Africa, and they just escalate and escalate.

But our second preoccupation right now is this whole issue of child hunger in the world. If there's anything that's sinful, shameful, sad, reprehensible, unacceptable, it's the notion that of half the hungry people in the world, more than 400 million, are children. You know, 18,000

children will die today of hunger, one every five seconds, all day long. Imagine what the outrage would be if the headline tomorrow morning in the *Des Moines Register* was, “Yesterday, forty-five 747 airplanes crashed; everybody on board was killed. Incidentally, they were all children, and, oh, by the way, that’s likely to happen every day for the foreseeable future.” What the outrage would be. And the fact of the matter is – it doesn’t have to be.

The World Food Programme and UNICEF have been working closely together with the High Commissioner of Refugees, and a good number of NGOs and the business community, the faith-based community, higher education students all around the world – to see if we can come together in a movement, not unlike the Civil Rights Movement or not unlike the environmental movement, but a movement where the world says – “No longer will we tolerate children being hungry.”

And if we’re serious about the Millennium Development Goals of cutting hunger and poverty in half, addressing infant mortality, maternal health, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, universal primary education, gender equity – addressing the issues of food and hunger and nutrition at the basis of making progress on every one of those issues. And in fact if we had a movement that was successful in alleviating child hunger over the next ten or fifteen years, we would meet the Millennium Development Goals.

And an investment in feeding that five-year-old child or that ten-year-old girl in Malawi, the leverage, the power of that investment is substantially more significant than investing in feeding someone my age. I hope I have lots of years ahead of me, but I know that little five-year-old girl, if she’s well-fed, she’s got a lifetime for the investment to pay off.

You feed the little girl in Malawi, you make it possible for her to go to school just for five years – not much by our standards. She has no chance to go to school and be successful if she’s not fed. But if she’s fed and nourished, she has every chance to be successful, the same opportunities that kids everywhere in the world. But you make it possible for that little girl to go to school, she’s 50 percent less likely to be HIV-positive, 50 percent less likely to give birth to a low-birth-weight baby. Everything about her life changes for the better. Her aspirations for her family, for her children, for herself to go from here to here. She’ll have children when she’s 20, not when she’s 12. She’ll have two or three, not eight or ten.

We can feed a child, in school, for a full year for about \$35; and a few more pennies to get rid of the parasites, the worms; a few more pennies to buy a bar of soap to reduce the issues of diarrhea and dysentery – and suddenly a very small investment generated by people all around the world working partnerships under the leadership of governments who have the principal responsibility for this issue, powerfully, lives are changed.

And however you look at it – from a humanitarian, a moral, a spiritual point of view, or if you look at it from an economic point of view or a political point of view – it makes all the sense in the world. Now, my friend, President Obasanjo of Nigeria, says, “Jim, a hungry man is an angry man.”

And we’ve been working closely with the Economic Commission of Latin America to look at Guatemala. What is the impact of the fact that 50 percent of the children under five in

Guatemala are chronically malnourished? If you go to the indigenous population, it goes to 70 or 80 percent. And they say the economic impact in that country (which is a borderline middle-income country) simply because of the issue of child malnutrition, is a negative 11 percent on the gross national income of that country. I mean, a staggering a number, and a perfect example that a small investment has enormous payoff over time.

So we're working very closely with UNICEF, and hopefully we'll be able to bring the broadest possible coalition that will say, "We're going to do something about it." Last week I was in Luxembourg, a rich country, a very generous country. As a surprise, they said, "Jim, we're going to feed another hundred thousand children next year in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso." Canada three years ago made a commitment to feed another half a million children in Africa. And a commitment to Mali in two years increased the percentage of girls going to school in Mali by 30 percent. You know, a staggering investment, a staggering result.

Our notion is that there is a huge concentration in the world of hungry children – 75 percent of the world who are malnourished live in 10 countries. If you go to the African continent, well over half the children under five who are chronically malnourished live in ten administrative districts in sub-Saharan Africa.

The notion is that if there are 400 million children in the world that are hungry, they live in a hundred million families; and that if you're focused on identifying them, providing some support for the family and then embracing the family with larger interventions but with a focus on health and hygiene and nutritional education, a focus on water and sanitation in the family, a focus on getting rid of the parasites, providing some soap, having a little more food and having the food fortified with micronutrients, for about \$80 a family per year, you can make substantial progress in moving children out of poverty and hunger. And if you look at a hundred million families at a pricetag of about \$80 per year per family, \$8 billion on the one hand, it's a lot of money. But on the other hand, it's not much money when you think of all the other things we're doing in the world.

We have enormous corporate partners, a wonderful company in the Netherlands, T&T, 170,000 employees – every one of their employees is committed to feed a child, and the company will match it. The American Red Cross has said, "We raised more money than we needed in the tsunami, and we're going to use that money the next several years to feed children in Sri Lanka and Indonesia."

We obviously need a two-track approach. The notion of increasing production, increasing capacity, having it more local than imported in, but in the meantime there are lots of very vulnerable children who need our help. And a very small investment makes all the difference in the world in their lives.

And so I'm on the one hand, as my term comes to a conclusion, I'm very said to know that I won't any longer have the kind of opportunity I've had these five years to work on this particular issue. But the opportunity we have to eliminate child hunger and to dramatically increase the opportunities for children to have good lives and lives of fulfillment – with everybody simply doing just a little more.

I gave the commencement address last year at little Georgetown College in Kentucky, and they gave me a check for \$50,000, and they said, “We’re going to feed 1,400 children next year in Guatemala, and we’re going to commit to doing it forever.” And by the way, when I visited with their president on Monday in Washington, he said, “You know, Jim, this commitment we’ve made to a humanitarian agenda, special focus on children, it’s transformed our college. We’re a different place because of this relationship, this commitment we’ve made.”

You know, it’s pretty simple – you never feel so good about yourself as when you’re doing something for someone else, and there are lots of someone else’s in the world that need us. And to think for just a few dollars you can transform a life in the most powerful way possible. And by the way, this disproportionately affects young girls. And we know that most of the social progress that’s been made in the world is pretty much tied to women’s education over the last 25 years.

When my predecessor, Catherine Bertini, won the award, she said, “I want to do something special with the cash prize that comes along with it.” She said, “I want to use it to focus on girls’ education and finding ways to reduce hunger among children, girl children.” So she gave that money to friends of the World Food Programme that’s chaired by Marshall Matz, and he’s here in the room. The World Food Programme matched the World Food Prize contribution, and we now have the Catherine Bertini Fund that will help us forever feed young children, especially girls.

Each of us needs to be very, very thoughtful how we can do a little more. And if we all do a little more, something remarkable will happen.

Thank you.

John Ruff

Thank you, Jim. I think you can all see the passion Jim has for the subject and what an incredible job he has done in that area. Thank you again.

We were going to do some questions at this point, but given that we are running a little bit late, I’m going to ask the last two speakers to come up now. We’ll have their presentations, and then you will have a chance to ask questions of all of the panel.