

# THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

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## THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE 2011 LAUREATE ANNOUNCEMENT CEREMONY

REMARKS BY  
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

## 2011 Laureate Announcement Ceremony

June 21, U.S. Department of State

Undersecretary Hormats, thank you for that warm introduction. Bob Hormats spoke at the World Food Prize several years ago and it is marvelous to have the opportunity to be with him again today.

Secretary Clinton, on behalf of John and Janis Ruan, my wife Le Son, and all of us at the World Food Prize, I want to express our great appreciation for the privilege of once again announcing our World Food Prize Laureate here in the magnificent Benjamin Franklin Room. We are greatly honored, Madam Secretary, that this is the third consecutive year in which you have personally taken part in this event.

Secretary Vilsack and Administrator Shah, we are also highly honored by your presence with us. We consider ourselves most fortunate to have had your participation not only in this ceremony but also at our Borlaug Dialogue international symposium in Des Moines over the past several years.

There are also a number of World Food Prize Laureates with us today: Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, the Chairman of our Selection Committee, is here on the stage; and in the audience are former Laureates Senator George McGovern, Colin McClung, Gebisa Ejeta, and our 2010 Laureates David Beckmann and Jo Luck, as well as Peter McPherson from our Council of Advisors.

I also want to acknowledge a member of the Borlaug family, Julie Borlaug, Norm's granddaughter, who is here with us today.

Members of Congress, ambassadors, diplomats, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

When Norman Borlaug created the World Food Prize twenty-five years ago, he did so with the hope that it would, like the Nobel Prize, recognize and inspire great breakthrough achievements in increasing the quality, quantity and availability of food in the world.

In Dr. Borlaug's own career, two particular achievements stand out the most for having done just that. The first was his scientific breakthrough in Mexico, when his years and years of research produced a new "miracle wheat" variety that dramatically increased yields and resisted disease.

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The World Food Prize has in its first quarter-century of existence recognized on many occasions Laureates who have made similar Borlaug-like scientific achievements in many areas, such as plant and soil science, animal health, and insect physiology.

The second accomplishment that Norm Borlaug would talk about was his interaction with the top political leaders of India and Pakistan in the 1960s, when both the Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan took the courageous step to adopt Dr. Borlaug's approach to agriculture. The result was an amazing transformation – in which both countries went from facing the prospect of famine and large-scale starvation – to self-sufficiency and the ability to export food, in a very short period. Dr. Borlaug attributed this beginning of the Green Revolution to the decisive and courageous actions by both of those leaders.

Up until now, the World Food Prize has never been awarded to a head of government. But today, for the first time, we will honor two individuals who have demonstrated that same type of presidential leadership that has brought about a significant transformation in reducing hunger and enhancing the lives of millions of people.

It is my great privilege to announce that the 2011 World Food Prize Laureates are:

- His Excellency John A. Kufuor, the former President of Ghana; and
- His Excellency Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the former President of Brazil.

President Kufuor is being recognized for implementing major economic and educational policies that increased the quantity and quality of food for Ghanaians, enhanced farmers' incomes, and improved child nutrition and school attendance through the Ghana National School Feeding Program, cutting in half his country's poverty level and reducing the rate of hunger from one third of Ghana's population to the single digits.

President Lula da Silva pledged that his administration would be marked by the "fight against hunger." The centerpiece of his social and economic strategy, known as "Zero Hunger," implemented programs which strengthened family farms, reduced poverty levels dramatically and greatly increased access to food, particularly for school children – resulting in 93% of children now eating three meals a day and a 60% reduction in child malnutrition.

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President Kufuor and President Lula da Silva have set an incredibly powerful example for other political leaders in the world. Thanks to their visionary leadership, both Ghana and Brazil are on track to exceed the UN Millennium Development Goal – to cut in half extreme hunger before 2015.

I am so very pleased that His Excellency Ambassador Mauro Vieira of Brazil and Ms. Edith Hazel, the Chargé d’Affairs of Ghana, could be with us today as we make this announcement.

I want to extend a very warm invitation to everyone here to join us in Des Moines on October 12 through 14, as we present the 2011 World Food Prize to these two distinguished political leaders; and hold our Borlaug Dialogue international symposium, which will address the theme of “The Next Generation” of issues, leaders and technologies.

As you leave, you will receive a brochure that will provide more information about the amazing line-up of speakers that we have assembled for this conference, including President Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi.

We will also hold the grand opening of our Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Hall of Laureates, a \$29.8 million restoration of a magnificent century-old building, which will serve as the new home of the World Food Prize. Please go to our website, [www.worldfoodprize.org](http://www.worldfoodprize.org), to register to attend these events.

Secretary Clinton, Secretary Vilsack, Administrator Shah and Undersecretary Hormats, it would be our particular pleasure to welcome you to Des Moines this October.

When I was sworn into the Foreign Service in this room in 1967, visions of diplomatic assignments in Paris, London and Vienna danced in my head. Instead, I was assigned to USAID to work in the Mekong Delta promoting the Green Revolution. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. And so, as a former AID development officer, it is with enormous pride that I introduce someone who is already a leader of the Next Generation, the Administrator of USAID, the Honorable Rajiv Shah.