

**OPENING REMARKS**

**Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn**

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*Introduction*

**Meghna Ravishankar**

Director of Planning, World Food Prize Foundation

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Good afternoon. Welcome to the 2019 Borlaug Dialogue International Symposium. My name is Meghna Ravishankar. I am the Director of Planning here at the World Food Prize Foundation. Over the past few months, our team has worked tirelessly to put together a lineup of speakers who bring out new perspectives, inspire action, and make an impact. We are looking forward to all the insightful discussions that will take place on this stage, and hopefully, outside of this room as well.

We are so honored to have guests here from all over the world, people with a variety of backgrounds, unique insights, and vastly different approaches to their work, yet sharing one common goal – ending hunger.

Our theme this year – *Peace Through Agriculture* – was inspired by the work of Dr. Norman Borlaug whose legacy we aspire to carry forward. But it is also set forth by the endeavors of Ambassador Quinn, the President of the World Food Prize Foundation. Through his decorated diplomatic career, having served in both Vietnam and Cambodia, Ambassador Quinn has seen the true significance of *Peace Through Agriculture* firsthand. In recognition of his tireless efforts and tremendous influence in confronting the Khmer Rouge genocide that took place in Cambodia, he was announced as the Aegis Trust Steven Krulis Champion of Humanity Distinguished Service Award winner earlier this year.

While serving as ambassador, he discovered the key role that agricultural development played in eradicating genocidal regimes. Since then, he has advanced this commitment to *Peace Through Agriculture* throughout his 20-year career as President of the World Food Prize Foundation. With this year's events being his last before his retirement, it seems only fitting that he would start off the symposium with a few words about his career and the growth of our organization.

It is now my pleasure and honor to introduce Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn, President of the World Food Prize Foundation.

## ***50 YEARS OF BUILDING PEACE THROUGH AGRICULTURE***

### **Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn**

President - World Food Prize Foundation

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Thank you, Meghna. Thank you so much. I just want to be sure you know about this wonderful young woman. Two years ago, she was an intern in our office. I saw, like almost everybody else who works for me now, her great ability. I hired her to be the Director of Planning. I'm sure when all these presidential delegates come, they'll think you're probably about 50 years old, and they'll be surprised. But she is just a spectacular organizer, and she's put all of this together. So, please join me in thanking Meghna for her work.

So Norman Borlaug – it's World Food Day, U.N. World Food Day around the world. It's Norman Borlaug World Food Prize Day in Iowa, and I'm so thrilled to be opening the Borlaug Dialogue for my last time, 20<sup>th</sup> time and last time. I'm so pleased that we have here on the stage the man who brought me to the World Food Prize, our chairman of our foundation, John Ruan III. John, would you stand up? Next to him is the man I brought to the World Food Prize, our 2019 World Food Prize Laureate, Simon Groot. Simon.

We also have 16 World Food Prize Laureates here, so 17 including Simon, and we have for sure more life-saving achievement gathered in Des Moines on World Food Day than any place else on this planet. So, I'm so pleased we have all these laureates here as well.

Next to Simon is Paul Schickler, the Chairman of our Council of Advisors. We also have four new Council of Advisor members who are with us for this event who are here in the audience and who have joined an already spectacular advisory group.

So this, as we celebrate and remember Norman Borlaug. I'm so pleased that his daughter Jeanie and granddaughter Julie are here, and his son Bill will be joining us later today. So, we want to honor Norm with so many different things.

One of the things that we're doing to remember his passing ten years ago is that we have a Norman Borlaug Day Poster Contest. There is the winning entry from Samantha Reed, a high school junior at Des Moines Christian School. We unveiled it on Monday at our Iowa Hunger Summit, and I think it did a pretty good job of capturing what Norm was all about, the moral right of all who are born into this world.

We make the Borlaug Dialogue a tribute to Norm. It's also the 10-year anniversary of Bill Gates being right here on this stage announcing all of the major steps he would be taking to uplift the world out of poverty and malnutrition, uplift Africa, a grant to the International Potato Center that resulted in three World Food Prize laureates. So remember Bill Gates, and Rodger Voorhies will be here tomorrow to give, along with Gebisa Ejeta - They're going to be on the stage kind of recreating the moment. Gebisa was your laureate in 2009, and he and Mr. Gates sat on the stage and had a dialogue.

We also have the launching of the Borlaug Adesina Fellows. Our 2017 laureate, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, and his wife Grace are here. As usual, he's brought an exciting group with him – President Olusegun Obasanjo is here, and tomorrow afternoon, the Borlaug Adesina Fellows will be here on the stage to launch the World Hunger Fighters Foundation. You remember he, at

the laureate ceremony, donated his quarter-million-dollar Prize just to doing this. This is the next step in that.

We also are so incredibly honored that the president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, President Félix Tshisekedi is airborne on his way to Iowa to be here tomorrow for that launch and to join us at our Laureate Award Ceremony.

And we have another array of distinguished speakers who will be in our Dialogue. So very, very pleased to have them, ministers with us from around the world and international and U.N. human rights advocates.

Plus, we have two award winners with us – my great, good friend, Agnes Kalibata, the former Minister of Rwanda, who won the U.S. National Science Foundation Public Service Medal. Marshall Matz is here. He’s the one who told me when it was happening, and I was so thrilled for Agnes. Next to her is Emma Naluyima, Dr. Emma, 2014, on the stage – she’s the smallholder farmer from Uganda, who’s got a one-acre farm, and she makes \$100,000 a year on the farm with all the incredible things that she does. I was in Accra this year when she was announced as the Africa Food Prize Laureate. So, I got a chance to give her a big hug, and she said to me, “Oh, Ambassador Quinn, you found me!” – you know, so if only I had signed up for 10% of what she’s going to make.

Tonight we’re going to award the Borlaug Field Award at the Hall of Laureates to Dr. Hale Ann Tufan from Turkey, continuing in this great lineup of young scientists under the age of 40. We had a million-dollar grant from Judith Roden and the Rockefeller Foundation. So, you have to be there this afternoon. The buses are going to load at 5:15, so when Meghna comes out and she says, “All right, Symposium’s over,” run downstairs to get on the bus. So, I know some of you are saying, “Well, I don’t know. You know, it’s the end of the day. I need to check my emails,” so we built in an incentive for you. Only at the Hall of Laureates will you be able to get the new variety of Borlauger Beer. So, come on! You remember in 2014, we commissioned the brewing of Borlauger. I’ve trademarked the name now. We’ve gone back – we brought it. Just go up to the bar and say, “I’ll have a Norm.” And then later, because I know you’ll want more, they’ll have it downstairs at the bar in the Marriott. So you don’t want to be the one that says, “Oh, did you try the Borlauger?” “No, I didn’t go.” Come on. So be over there. And we have a wonderful reception afterwards, it’s a great networking chance and to see our Hall of Laureates.

This is also the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Global Youth Institute, which started 25 years ago in 1994. There’s the entire group, 14 Iowa high school students, who were there. But interestingly, there were three Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, so what a high school youth program – three Nobel Peace Prize Laureates. President Jimmy Carter was not there for the picture. Muhammad Yunus, and of course, Norman Borlaug.

Now, as you’ll see at the meals, the Youth Institute has grown a bit. We’ll have about 220 students; they come from 10 countries. Our program impacts 10,000 students a year. We’ll have 470 students and teachers who will be here from 26 states and its terrific programs. When they get to rub shoulders with all of you, that’s where the inspiration comes from.

It’s also the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, speaking of anniversaries, 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the visit of Pope John Paul, St. John Paul II, came to Living History Farms. I worked with the governor of Iowa then. I was the security coordinator for the Pope’s visit. I was up on the hill – 350,000 people. The Pope gave his message to farmers in rural America, to the stewards of the earth – protect

the plants, the water, the soil, and use them to feed the millions and millions who are hungry. This is the theme this year around our Iowa Hunger Summit. If you were here on Monday, you know we had a great turnout – the room was full of people for the Iowa Hunger Summit. It is the great bipartisan moment where everybody in politics stops for a day. They come together around things all Iowans agree on: that Norman Borlaug is a great hero, the World Food Prize is his creation, and that feeding hungry people is what unites Iowans together, no matter what other differences that we might have.

We gave another award, our Robert D. Ray Iowa SHARES Humanitarian Award, to R.W. and Mary Nelson, the founders of Kemin Industries, wonderful, wonderful humanitarian... great business people. They have business all around the world, so it's such a great thrill to honor them.

I want to say a special shout-out to President Tim Sands of Virginia Tech University. Virginia Tech has taken over the GAP Report, such a terrific centerpiece of our side events, along with the CAST Communication Award, the U.N. FAO. So, President Sands and all the Hokies out there... It was hard for me. I was a Maryland guy, you know, the ACC. But now Maryland's moved to the Big Ten, so I can cheer for Virginia Tech again.

I want to thank our media partner, Farming First, and a special thank you to our sponsors. You know, when I came, I had four sponsors that gave about \$45,000. Now, thanks to the work of Mashal Husain, our vice president, we have over 70 sponsors who very generously help us. My young staff, like Meghna and Nicole Barreca, they make me put up the next slide about connecting with us. And, you know, I know it's Facebook and Twitter. And I didn't know what the last one was. I'm saying, "What's the last one? I don't want to look dumb out there." So that's Instagram, you know, what am I going to do?

So, this is kind of the opening portion. I want to now invite John, Paul, if you would escort our laureate down to the front row, and we'll move on to what you're really here for, the opening keynote address for our conference.

So, I'm telling you about anniversaries, so this is an anniversary for me. You've heard of 10 years, 15 years, 25 years, 40 years, and this is for me my 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my career in foreign affairs. So, I arrived in Vietnam. You know, I dreamed of being a diplomat in Europe – chandeliered ballrooms. There's where I ended up – sitting on sandbags – yeah, but these are all the members of the military advisory team that I led in Duc Ton District. I can tell you everybody's name to this day because of the bond.

I learned there two things. One was, I saw the Green Revolution begin. I was in the villages when the Green Revolution started. I was to quote, sort of, John McCain, "a foot soldier in the Green Revolution." And I was a USAID Officer. The State Department loaned me to USAID, and I learned the Borlaug formula of roads and rice and how they could transform people's lives, uplift them, and then could bring peace – they could root out the insurgency better than anything else we did.

30 years later when I was ambassador in Cambodia... And you'll see here I am. I still look the same. In the next slide, there I am on the left with my deputy, Carol Rodley, and we're out with de-miners and road builders, implementing \$13 million of USAID money. We built roads into the Khmer Rouge areas, and there were 25,000 of them when we started, and as I left, two months before I ended my ambassadorship, I got a phone call saying the last Khmer Rouge had

surrendered, thanks to the USAID money – only with that were we able to eradicate the worst genocidal, mass-murdering terrorist organization of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.