

***HEALING THE WOUNDS: THE POWER OF AGRICULTURE IN POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY***

**Panel Moderator:** *Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn*

October 16, 2019 - 1:30-2:20 p.m.

***Panel Members***

<b>Ms. Heidi Kuhn</b>	CEO, Roots of Peace
<b>Hon. Dr. Gerardine Mukeshimana</b>	Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Rwanda
<b>Dr. James Smith</b>	CEO, Aegis Trust
<b>Hon. Chanthol Sun</b>	Minister of Public Works and Transportation, Cambodia

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***Panel Moderator***

**Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn**

President - World Food Prize Foundation

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I want to invite our next panel to come up to the stage. Now here they come, led by Heidi Kuhn who is the founder and director of Roots of Peace. And then my very, very good friend from Cambodia, Minister Chanthol Sun. Then my also very good friend, Minister from Rwanda, Gerardine Mukeshimana, and James Smith, the founder and president of the Aegis Trust.

So I'm going to sit down, and we're going to have a conversation about genocide and food security because these are people who have been through this and lived through these experiences or reacted to them. Minister Mukeshimana, I want to ask everybody sort of the same question, that genocide, as you know, as Minister Chanthol knows, traumatizes populations and disrupts and dislocates families, and refugees are created. So, I want to ask you if you would take three, four minutes, and I'll turn to each. Talk about the role of agriculture that you direct in Rwanda and the role it played in helping your country recover from the trauma that you went through in 1994 and may have left between a half a million and a million people dead in a year. Please, Minister.

**Gerardine Mukeshimana**

Thank you, Ambassador Quinn. I am so happy to be here. The genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994 is, as you just mentioned, took away the lives of more than a million people in a hundred days. That means on average 10,000 people were dying every single day, and more than 3 million people went out of the country. That means almost the country was empty. And I mean we attribute the genocide against Tutsis to about the leadership. But sometimes when you look at a local level, what was happening, of course there were planners. There were many types of people killing people, but it was surprising that you find your neighbor turning against you. So the genocide taking away a hundred... I mean a million people in a hundred days—it cannot happen if people, so many people are involved in it. That means we find ourselves that

our neighbors are turning against us and killing us. And most of the things I was watching when I was growing up. They were killing the family, destroying the house to make sure that you are not going to be remembered, but also the most thing your neighbor will be looking for will be your crops or be your cattle, will be your belongings – which means we were getting to a point where the country was deep into poverty. People were not having enough to eat. People were so desperate, and then they thought that by killing their brothers and sisters will bring something up, but it didn't bring anything at the end of the day. So, I think when the country was liberated in 1994 – I was young, but I can imagine that the leadership had their own choices to make, and I mean, you have all of these people who are surviving and reclaiming their justice for the people, for their families – you have the ones coming back because you cannot leave the country that is empty. That means you have to help people. So they resettle them. It's a challenge, but how do you resettle them along with the survivors? So the justice is very... was very challenging. And while you are resettling them, I know no one is going to resettle with an empty stomach, which means you have also to go back and try to get people to grow what they can eat. Probably by the first years, they were supplemented by foreign aid, but I guess also agriculture was so important. As the country moved on, probably in years 2000 and beyond, most of our policies were turning around agriculture because you have 80 percent of the rural population who are living on agriculture, so that agriculture has to be a centerpiece of anything that you are thinking of. So our policies in Rwanda have been evolving around agriculture, the women, agricultural transformation, and then other sectors can come along because again in my own country that is 25 years. Even if you go into other sectors, like if you go into industry, agro-processing has to be your choice #1. If you go to the service industry, again, feeding the people, feeding the guests, that has to be something. So I think... The whole wonder has been evolving on agriculture, but we are proud of where we are getting, and I'm happy that again we are moving forward. Thank you.

### **Ambassador Quinn**

So, let me turn now to a friend, Minister Chanthol Sun. We worked together. I was an Ambassador, and I saw him on the frontlines of rebuilding his country. And he made a point to me earlier. He said, "You know, we really need a whole day or two just to talk about Cambodia." Of course, I agree with that, but thank you for making the trip to be here and to talk about your experience.

### **Chanthol Sun**

Thank you very much, Ambassador Quinn, for inviting me to be here. Before I start talking a little bit about Cambodia, talk about agriculture, I'd like to ask. How many of you heard about a movie, "Killing Fields"? If you do, please raise your hand. So, about half a room heard about the "Killing Fields." The "Killing Fields" was talking about the story of these genocide regime in Cambodia. What you watch is not really what happened. It wasn't that. These movies were very tough but was not tough enough. Now, Cambodia, society, the whole country turned upside down. The whole country is a labor camp. There is no country on earth that suffered like Cambodia. Can you imagine the city of like Chicago, two million population leaving the capital of Phnom Penh was evacuated, pushed out of a country at one point, same day, just walk out? No one can stay in the city. Even you sick, you gotta empty out of the hospital. When you walk, you had no idea where you go, no idea where you get your next food. So, the country turned upside down. Disease, execution, famine: everyone thought about food.

Now, I was fortunate to leave the country before the Khmer Rouge took over, but my family got stuck and stayed behind. My mom - my mom passed away, not in the labor camp, the country of a labor camp but in the additional concentration camp of the Khmer Rouge. Why? See, just stay on the ground, pick up a few grains of rice to eat. The Khmer Rouge just said, "You steal from the organization." So, they put her in the labor camp, in an additional labor camp, and she died. My brother disappeared, I don't even know where he is today. When they evacuated the city of Phnom Penh, he was not there with my family. If you ask Cambodians today whether they lost a member of the family, I would say probably 90% will raise their hand and say, "Yes, I lost family members, a member of my family." How many of you in this room wear eyeglasses, raise your hand. You wear eyeglasses, you would be dead in Cambodia at that time. The Khmer Rouge kill everyone that wear eyeglasses, because you were intellectual. You read too much. Dead. When we liberated the country in 1979 after three years and eight months of the Pol Pot regime, when we enter the capital city of Phnom Penh, there were only 70 people living in the whole capital of Phnom Penh. There were only 45 doctors left, 26 pharmacists, 28 dentists, 700 medical students that remain in Cambodia. The country that abolished the currency – can you imagine that? There's no currency. The Khmer Rouge just demolished the Central Bank of Cambodia. So, they use food to really destroy you. They use food to break you, and they let you work in a labor camp, but they don't give you food to eat. They give you rice porridge every day, a few rice, because they control you. So you lose – you lost the will to live, to be a human being. Some people commit suicide – they cannot take it. But thanks to the liberation of our country on January 7, 1979, we were able to take them all out, the Khmer Rouge out of the jungle. But they stay in the jungle to fight against the government of Cambodia, until the peace agreement, brokered in 1991, and U.S. also play a major role in the Peace Accord in Paris, that let the U.N. organization for election in 1993, but for the first time we had an election in 1993 organized by the United Nations. They sent about 20,000 troops to the country to help organize the election. The Khmer Rouge decided not to participate in the election, and they continued to stay in the jungle, fight against the government of Cambodia, until 1998 when they laid down their arms. And Ambassador Quinn also play a role in this one. He worked very closely with our prime minister to bring the Khmer Rouge to the Cambodian armed forces. They lay down their arms.

I would say Cambodia today is a young country, It is a 20 year old country. For the first time in December 1998 Cambodia has peace – no war, one country, one government, one constitution, one king. So, this 20 years Cambodia has been developing itself, rehabilitated the country. We rebuilt the country from scratch, from zero. When I mean zero, it means zero. There's nothing else like it anywhere in the country or anywhere in the world – no school, no currency, no religion, no food, no infrastructure. It's absolute nothing. It had been turned upside down. But after the election, we managed to rebuild our country, but it's better when the Khmer Rouge laid down their arms. In 20 years we had a great economic progress in the country. Our economy is growing at 7% per annum for the last 20 years, one of the fastest-growing economy in the world. The life expectancy in Cambodia was 33.3 years in 1981, a few years after liberation. It's increased to 56.7 in 1998 and increased again to 70.6 in 2018 – 14 years with 20 years of peace and stability. So it's extremely important to talk about peace and stability. When we talk about food, we have to provide food for the people to eat. The basic right of human beings is the right to have food to eat, the right to shelter, education, and healthcare. We cannot... I think we can, but we should not focus solely on democracy, on human rights. You can talk about human rights until the cows come home – if there's no food in your stomach, no one listen to you. So focus on food distribution, growing agriculture. Cambodia was a country

of famine, begging for food. Today we are an exporting country, export nation. We are one of the largest rice exporters in the world. Our rice won The World's Best Rice three years in a row.

**Ambassador Quinn.**

Oh, really?

**Chanthol Sun**

Three years in a row, the world's best. So all this is important, important. Agriculture is important. But in order for crop to grow, you need to build infrastructure. That's where I come to play. Ambassador asked me to come to talk, to attend. I said, "Ambassador, please, I have no idea about agriculture, but I know how to build road." So, my portfolio as a minister of public works and transport, I build road. So our government policy is that we must... We integrate our people. Integrate Cambodia with Thailand, with Laos, with Vietnam in order to do world trade. So the strategy for us is to build a paved road between the capital city of Phnom Penh to all the 25 provincial capitals in order for them to bring the food, bring the product to sell to the market. You have the tree and the farm, but the fruit in the market, but in order to bring the fruit, you must have road. So we invest heavily in infrastructure. Before, we lost fifteen percent because the road is so bad, so why bring eggs if broken along the way. We bring banana – it spoil along the way, around fifteen percent. But today our road network is great – I wouldn't say the best, but you can travel all around Cambodia on paved road. So it's important.

**Ambassador Quinn**

So this is the Norman Borlaug formula of roads and rice and that coming together – the essential elements. And that's why I mentioned USAID, he administrator, the money we had, and to working together to build those... Everywhere we built a road, the Khmer Rouge were undermined and eventually withered away. The North Vietnamese army couldn't get rid of them, but building the roads there. But to build the roads, they had to be demined, and maybe I could turn to Heidi Kuhn.

**Chanthol Sun**

Please. Beforehand, a little bit on mining. Cambodia is one of the most mined countries. There are 10 million, but many are along the Cambodian border, Cambodia and Thai border – 46% of Cambodian villages are mined. So up until now, we only de-mine 1,800 kilometers. We still have another 3,000 kilometer, square kilometer that need to be de-mined. Cambodia probably has the most amputees in the world per capita, with 40,000, and people still die from landmines today, maimed by landmines. Cambodia got bombed between 1960 to 1973, 2.7 million tons by the U.S., you know that. And then make the demonstration – 2.7 million tons was dropped in Cambodia, more than the World War II in Japan. So that today we still have people still get killed from USO, from landmines in the country. So that, it's very sad. It's very sad.

**Ambassador Quinn**

So, this is why I've invited guests like Heidi Kuhn, the founder of Roots of Peace, because mines are a central element of what she does. Please.

**Heidi Kuhn**

Thank you, Ambassador, and thank you, distinguished guests, to be here to celebrate this World Food Day. And I approach this from a different standpoint. In September 1997 I recognized the landmine situation. We live in a world today where there's an estimated 70 million landmines silently poised in 70 countries. It takes 8 pounds to detonate a landmine, the average weight of a newborn child. And it costs about \$3 to put that in the ground, and it's very expensive to take out, about a thousand dollars to remove. So the vision that I had, you know, at the time, was to turn mines to vines, to replace the scourge of landmines with bountiful vineyards and orchards worldwide. It was only an idea, but yet my family and my Roots of Peace emanate from what was even before the United States of America. They came over from Scotland in 1701.

And in 1850 there was a young, intrepid pioneer spirit, a young boy in his 20s who heard there were gold in them hills of California and came out. He purchased... He worked very hard with not a penny to his name and became one of the first millionaires in California. But it was not about the money, it was the currency of the heart. And that was always imparted to our family. He ultimately purchased 2,500 acres of land in Marin County, which is the other side of the Golden Gate Bridge. And when he heard of the social injustices for the Gold Rush, after the Gold Rush and the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, which connected our great country 150 years ago this year, he decided to take action, because he heard that the Chinese were being discriminated. They were told to go home – they had finished their job. Well, he sailed over to San Francisco, because there was no Golden Gate Bridge. He invited 500 Chinese to come over to his private property, and they started the thriving dried shrimp industry, exporting three million pounds of dried shrimp to China annually.

What was taught to us as children was respect for the land and respect for its people. So when I heard about the atrocities of landmines, far beyond the beautiful backyard that I'm so privileged to live in in San Francisco, I decided as a mother of four to take action. I began my first footsteps in Croatia in the first month of the New Millennium and backed by the California vintners; Robert Mondavi, Miljenko Grgich, born in Croatia, to see his beautiful homeland turn from these beautiful vineyards to 1.2 million landmines. He got on the plane out of his comfortable of Napa Valley, and he flew to make a difference. Well, today I've seen with my eyes that country to from 1.2 million landmines to one of the top tourist destinations in the world.

So peace is possible. And when I was a young child, I saw the images of Vietnam War, the black-and-white images of a body count. And I vowed as a young woman that education is paramount, so I went to UC Berkeley, much to the chagrin of my parents, in the 1970s. It was all about peace and love, but there what I learned... I graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in political economics and took those footsteps now and as an elder to be a steward of the earth. And in Vietnam today where we've worked for the past ten years, I'd like to bring to everyone's attention the fact that there are millions of clustered munitions and explosive remnants of war which still remain in the ground since the war ended April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1975. I was a junior in high school. And to think and to tell my alumni and friends that there's still landmines in Vietnam...

Well, working with our family, my husband and four children, who, my son was country director, blue-eyed blonde, went over there. You have to work with the government first. You know, you don't judge whether it's democracy or communist or... You have to work with the government, and we had permission to go over there. And since we have worked and partnered... We do not demine. We partner with other organizations, partnering with MAG, the Mines Advisory Group. We removed landmines in Kwong Tre. And if any of you were in

my generation, you know what the words Cam Lo, Dong Ha, Khe Sanh, Hamburger Hill mean. If you're under 30, you probably have no idea what I'm talking about. But it's important for the takeaway to hear it, to be known that, as we remove those millions of landmines, UXOs and cluster munitions, Roots of Peace, my organization, has trained over 3,000 Vietnamese farmers. And we're cultivating the best black pepper in the world, although I hear he thinks it's better.

But just to wrap it up, we went from there to Afghanistan. And again, relevant to this not just being one country or another but 60 million, shortly after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks we learned, of course, about Afghanistan, not in the most horrific way. But I also learned that there were 70 varieties of grapes that once were indigenous. The Thompson seedless grape, the red globe was indigenous.

And story from an agricultural perspective, very interesting – I love history: In the 1940s there was an intrepid professor at the University of California at Davis. His name was Dr. Harold Olmo, and he was considered one of the first Indiana Jones. He would trek all around Afghanistan, and he would take the cuttings of the grapevines and put them in his backpack. And he went back to Davis, and he created a living library. And after 9/11 I was so privileged to meet with Jim Hill and the chancellor of Davis. And I said, "Let's go turn mines to vines in Afghanistan." And I think they thought I was out of my mind. They thought, "You can't grow wine in Afghanistan, Mrs. Kuhn." But I said, "No, no, no. It's the grapevine. It's the choice of the mine whether we have fresh grapes or raisins or a fine bottle of wine." And I think it's the fruit of the vine and the work of human hands and the power that we have in this room to turn mines to vines.

Now, I want to just fast forward and certainly thank my great country for backing the idea of a mother, because it doesn't happen on butterflies, good dreams or just my simple prayers. Because you need the money to turn the idea into reality. So in Afghanistan we went over there shortly after 9/11, and we learned that farmers were harvesting their fruits midday on burlap sacks, dragging them to market, hoping to get a meager profit. Well, as I did a little more research, I learned Afghanistan is a country 80% dependent upon agriculture. It's not the Tora Bora caves I have seen on CNN – 80% dependent upon agriculture, 60% of the population under 30 years old.

So partnering with going humbly to USAID and say, "We had an idea," they gave us \$6 million. And I met an incredible woman in the audience, Pat Shake, the six-million-dollar woman, I call her. Many of you know her – USDA and really the head of the Borlaug... When she retired, she came to work for Roots of Peace, and I just want to say fast forward to the most wonderful success story – today USAID has entrusted us with over a hundred million dollars for nearly two decades. And we've had the honor of working with not only USDA, DOD, European Union, Asian Development Bank, The World Bank. And we have planted five million fruit trees in all 34 provinces, benefiting only one million. Now, a population of 32 million, 80% dependent upon agriculture, we're just getting started. So I encourage you all to join us with your collective wisdom and minds. Through USAID funding, earlier this month we brought dozens of Afghan traders from Kandahar, Helmand, to meet with Indian buyers and in two days negotiated \$55 million in trade deals, selling fresh fruits to new markets, SPAR, Big Bizarre, Food Haul. It's supply and demand – it's real simple – 80, you know, a country dependent upon agriculture through President Ashraf Ghani flying those fresh fruits to new markets, cold storage refrigeration, corrugated boxes properly packed. And thank you to USAID for entrusting Roots of Peace to be the implementing partner.

**Ambassador Quinn**

Sorry, the Administrator isn't here right now.

**Heidi Kuhn**

Oh, bummer.

**Ambassador Quinn**

Rob Bertram and Beth Dunford must be out here taking notes.

**Heidi Kuhn**

Is anybody on social media?

**Ambassador Quinn**

So just two small little items to kind of connect all of this, is that Minister Chanthol Sun was telling about the evacuation of the cities. At one point, I believe the largest Cambodia city in the world was Long Beach, California. Yeah, that's true. That was what happened to that country. Secondly, people like Ambassador John Negroponte, ambassador George Moose over here, those Foreign Service officers who went to Vietnam... I didn't get any training how to issue visas, stamp passports. I was sent to Fort Bragg, North Carolina to walk the booby trap trail to learn how to avoid setting off mines. I walked it once, and I set off three. Now, thank goodness, you know, in the training trail you didn't get blown up. But it's sobering, sobering when you feel that, that you know that could have been in a real situation. So I walked down all sorts of trails like that in Vietnam, some in Cambodia as well. And as I said, you learn. You watch the person in front of you, and you stepped exactly where they stepped. So I've been out with deminers, digging mines out of the ground - they're the most insidious, insidious device.

So here, James Smith is from the United Kingdom. He and his family are so inspired and dedicated and have turned their home and their lives into this incredible movement of Aegis Trust. I was so honored to see their award, but I was more honored just to get to know them, know their work countering genocide. James.

**James Smith**

Thank you. I hope you all realize what an amazing hero we have in our midst. I think, you know, we all know Ambassador Quinn for his work for the World Food Prize, but to recognize the threat of a genocide and raise the warning before it happens is incredibly rare, and he did that. And then to respond to the plight of refugees during the genocide – and then go back as an ambassador and help eradicate the remnants of the Khmer Rouge through this innovative and ingenious road-building program, it's really something. It's really something, and it was a real privilege for Aegis Trust to present to Ambassador Quinn the Steven Krulis Champion of Humanity Distinguished Service Award in Rwanda and also in a ceremony in the House of Lords in the United Kingdom.

**Ambassador Quinn**

Thank you, thank you, James. Thank you so much.

## James Smith

And how do you recover from the situation we've been hearing from, the ministers from Cambodia and Rwanda? It's amazing for me to live and work in Rwanda for the past 15 years, working with the government of Rwanda, but a million people rooted out of a population of less than seven million – the human capital that's destroyed as well as the infrastructure. You have to start from ground zero. And it is remarkable how you build your countries up, and Minister Gerardine has been incredibly modest at the remarkable growth and development in Rwanda over the past 25 years.

Food security development is essential – of course, it's essential. But for communities to be freed from the threat of conflict and violence, trust has to be built again or fear has to be overcome. And there's been all kinds of innovative, homegrown solutions that I've seen in Rwanda to deal with the massive burden of justice – how do you address two million cases of genocide in a country that's this size?

But I want to just bring us down to a community level through a story. It's a story of two hills, neighboring hills. And although in Rwanda Hutus and Tutsis generally lived together, these hills were unusual. One was predominantly Hutu I think many of the Tutsis had already been driven away and killed. And on the other hill, at the time of the genocide, was predominantly Tutsi. And the villagers in the Hutu hill joined the genocide, attacked and killed many of the Tutsis of the neighboring hill. After the genocide there was almost silence between the two hills. The villagers would even avoid each other on the road that ran between the two hills.

And yet the villagers enjoyed listening to a radio and particularly a program called Musekweya that used to give positive messages. And they began to discuss among themselves whether it would be possible to emulate the characteristics in this soap opera who managed to solve all kinds of conflicts. And they began to observe the village's perpetrators on the first hill, how survivors struggled on their farms. And this is connecting the recovery and agriculture. They saw how the individual survivors who had lost, not only of carrying the psychological wounds, sometimes physical wounds, but lost that support of extended families and were often toiling alone in the fields. They began to observe this and thought maybe there's a way we can do something about this and have an active reconciliation. Sorry, asking for forgiveness after a situation of genocide is... You know, what does it mean?

And so can you imagine the survivors of the second hill seeing the villagers of the first hill coming across the valley with tools, implements. One survivor said how frightened they were, because these tools were also used as weapons in the genocide. And they came and they started to help them in the fields. The leader of the first village describes how they planted sorghum and beans with the survivors for the survivors, and they begged their forgiveness. But they didn't just beg their forgiveness in words – they put it into action. And over time, working together, there was a trust was built up, and the survivors described how they began to visit each other, even celebrate on occasions together.

And they didn't realize it, but they designed a textbook restorative justice project that demonstrated the power of agriculture in bringing people together and communities together, and that story was collected by Freddy Mutanguha, our executive director and his team, to show role models. And it was incorporated into what we call Peace and Humanity Education, a mobile exhibition that travels around Rwanda. It's now, the Ministry of Education in Rwanda

has integrated it into the national curriculum to help inspire others about building empathy, critical thinking, values – values activate our own humanity.

The final point – because there's many, many stories like this that have been documented around Rwanda where agriculture is being used side by side in the reconciliation efforts – what we've learned is that there are a number of components that are needed for rebuilding aside from of course justice. Livelihoods, sustainable livelihoods are required, of course. There needs to be healing from the trauma, and there needs to be education that can activate our humanity. And these three strains have been shown in Rwanda. If they're running independently, that's good, but if they're running together not integrated, they make each other more effective.

I'm going to stop there, but if there will be time later in the discussion even for one minute, I do have an example where this now is being exported from Rwanda, this approach, to places where conflict is escalating, as a means to de-escalate or freeze conflict and build peace in at-risk countries.

### **Ambassador Quinn**

So thank you, James. So when I went with Aegis Trust to Rwanda, I had this incredible experience. They brought in three Rwandan farmers who had been through the genocide and were sitting at the same table, foods being served, and they identified themselves. And two said "I'm a victim," and they describe what happened to them and their skulls being cracked and their legs being broken. And then the third person said, "I'm a perpetrator." He had done... I don't know that he had hit those particular people, but he had been involved in these incredibly brutal acts that you'd hear about. And I was dumbstruck that people could be brought back together because they farmed together in the same community. I don't know if that works every place, but it was stunning and remarkable.

So we have just a few minutes. I want to turn to the two ministers. Maybe I'd start with Minister Mukeshimana and then come back to Chanthol Sun for a few comments – because you go to Rwanda and you'd never know this happened. It's this incredible country, and Kigali is such an incredible capital, and the same with Cambodia and with Vietnam. But Minister, what you've done.... It was such an honor for me to receive the award in Rwanda, handed to me by you personally, given what you have been through.

### **Gerardine Mukeshimana**

In Rwanda our president like to tell us that we need to think big. That means you think beyond you and you think about being part of what is happening. So I think it happened and people worked hard to again reconcile people. And again, if you come back to what agriculture does in the countries that economies are dominated by agriculture, so it's important that people start to think on how are we going to survive. Because if we had left ourselves to be like – I'm a survivor, I'm a perpetrator – you would never have a country; because the country was destroyed, was bound on zero ground, and then you had to move on. So it's important all the time to think of how to... A human being has such a high level of resilience in himself or herself, it's important that you build on that resilience and try to build on the positive values – what is bringing the people together, rather than just looking, keep swinging in the middle of what is dividing the people. So in Rwanda we have been trying to build a strong and inclusive economy, so we don't want to go back to where we come from. So it's important that we also look at our future. Jim said what has entered the curriculum in education, but also as we grow,

the resilience... We need to build this in the future generations. So again, being inclusive, making sure that there is a justice to everyone, that no one is like the second-class citizen, another one is a first-class citizen is important. And again, building a food system that is going to be sustainable, because again even globally we see what is happening. Most of the countries that are going hungry are the countries that are also, in addition to climate change, into the conflict. So building sustainable food systems that are going to last, it's a big challenge that we are having in the front of us. So I think I'm going to leave it there, but also building a human population that is having a trust into each other is very critical.

### **Ambassador Quinn**

James Smith was very kind, what he said about me, but to me the two heroes on the stage are the two ministers, because they both faced that threat. They both endured that. I know, Minister Chanthol Sun, because the Khmer Rouge was still a threat, and I was there with him. And I know every day, every moment always was the question – when sometime is the Khmer Rouge going to try to kill me? That was what you thought. So, Minister, only a couple of minutes left. I want to leave to you to have kind of the closing comments.

### **Chanthol Sun**

Ambassador, Cambodia has a very powerful way to forgive and to forget. They are Buddhists. Now, the Khmer Rouge killed two million Cambodian. Did they go by and execute them? No. We integrate them together with us. The ambassador said a while ago about three people can eat together, our Prime Minister still plays golf with a former Khmer commander. If I go and kill someone that really killed my brother and sister, would that act bring the life of my mother back? It would not. So we believe in Karma, the law of Karma. You do it, it will proceed with you. You do a good deed, you will be rewarded by a good deed. You do a bad deed, you will be rewarded with bad deed in your next life. So we don't go and start killing all the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. We integrate them together with our society. That's the only way to do it, to forget and to forgive and move on to build our country, to ensure that our people have a better standard of living, and to ensure that we will not have this genocidal regime again ever in Cambodia or anywhere in the world. We must work together to preserve peace and stability, to improve the standard of living of the people. We must work together to ensure that every man, woman and children has food to eat, like the famous food writer of the U.S., MFK Fisher, *One road. First we eat. Then we do everything else.* So don't talk about anything else until you have food to eat. You want to talk about your rights, about democracy, whatnot – don't talk to them until they have a full stomach. If not, it's not going to work. It's not going to work.

So also I want to leave this – Do not try to export something that you believe that is just the way we run our country. It's the democracy way, the human right way. Please do not export that. Each country is different. You cannot export that. It's not cookie cutter the same way. And if you start something, please finish it, do not leave it and walk away. And let me leave you with a quote from the last ambassador of the U.S. on April 12, 1975, when he was evacuated from Phnom Penh, and he said... His name is John Gunga Din. April 12, 1975. "The day, the night is spent. Abandon Cambodia and hand it over to the butcher". Five days later the Khmer Rouge took over the Cambodia and killed 3 million Cambodians. So don't abandon us. Work with us today. Work with Rwanda. Work with all countries around the world to ensure that human beings have a basic right – it's the right to food to eat, right to shelter, to education, to healthcare, and to live in peace and freedom. Thank you.