

WELCOME REMARKS

Tuesday, October 29, 2024 – 9:00-9:15 AM

Mashal Husain

Chief Operating Officer, World Food Prize Foundation

Ambassador Terry Branstad

President, World Food Prize Foundation

Former Governor of Iowa

Mashal Husain

Imagine a seed held in the palm of your hand, small, almost unremarkable. But within that seed lies a world of potential, the power to nourish a family, transform a community and even reshape an entire planet. That seed represents hope, innovation and the courage to dream. This week at the Borlaug Dialogue we are not just talking about the *Seeds of Opportunity*. We are planting them.

We gather here in the agricultural heartland of America, not just as conference attendees but as cultivators of a global movement that echoes Dr. Norman Borlaug's vision of a world where every person has access to the nourishment that they need to thrive. For the next three days we are joined by hundreds of participants from almost 70 countries and 500 organizations, all united with a shared vision of a more food-secure world, a tapestry of cultures, ideas and expertise coming together, woven into one global community. After all, it is agriculture that offers one of the most promising roots to promoting understanding and building linkages across national, political, ethnic and religious differences.

This year we are deeply honored to welcome to the Borlaug Dialogue, His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone and Her Excellency President Samia Salulu Hassan of Tanzania. They will be joined by ministers of agriculture from around the globe, thought leaders, scientists and experts in international development and finance. Their presence here speaks volumes about the urgency of our collective mission and the vital role of diplomacy in addressing the global challenges of hunger and poverty.

With diplomacy and collaboration in mind, the Foundation expanded its convening footprint beyond our U.S. borders with our first-ever international conference, DialogueNext, which traces the global footsteps of Dr. Borlaug to diverse corners of the world, creates a meaningful dialogue, and identifies critical next steps in global food security. Following its launch in Washington, D.C., which very much focused on the significant role of women in agriculture, we held DialogueNext in Mexico, eighty years after Dr. Borlaug arrived in Mexico, back in 1944. Next year, we will host DialogueNext in India, honoring Dr. Borlaug's pivotal role and his pivotal work in India and Pakistan during the mid-1960s. And in 2026, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the Foundation, we will take DialogueNext to Africa, continuing Dr. Borlaug's legacy of igniting ideas through conversation.

Also this year in an effort to inspire a new wave of leadership and collaboration, we launched the Top Agri-food Pioneers Initiative to celebrate global trailblazers driving innovation and solutions in the agri-food sector. You will see and hear from many of them on the Borlaug Dialogue stage throughout this week.

And in the spirit of elevating new trailblazers, we are so proud to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Global Youth Institute, which has inspired thousands of young leaders to be the next generation of problem solvers. This week 175 students will be among you, engaging in dynamic conversations that will shape their futures and empower them to tackle the global challenges ahead.

Now, you might have assumed that this is our opening event. But we actually kicked things off with something quite out of this world, literally. Three students from the Global Youth Institute had the incredible opportunity to connect with astronauts aboard the International Space Station. They asked the astronauts questions about food production in space and what the notion of space agriculture could look like. So this week, while we won't launch you into space, we are about to deliver a mind-blowing experience right here in the fields that feed the world. We will have 40 plenary and breakout sessions and fireside chats and keynotes, 30 side events with our wonderful partners, three action-packed days and two amazing laureates. Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin and Dr. Cary Fowler, please stand up, and let's give them a round of applause.

Together this week, we will focus on meaningful outcomes, tangible, deliverable and real action. On a final note, this year we are elevating our sustainability initiatives by providing our speakers with reusable aluminum water bottles, instead of the single-use plastic ones. These bottles are a hundred percent recyclable, reusable, reflecting our commitment to reducing plastic waste. Additionally, all the buffet meals that you'll experience will be served on compostable plates and tableware to cut down on food waste, and our composting partners will collect the compost and help us further our commitment to a more green and sustainable event.

And now please join me in welcoming an exceptional leader whose remarkable career includes being the longest-serving governor in U.S. history and U.S. Ambassador to China. It is my great honor to introduce the president of the World Food Prize Foundation, Ambassador Terry Branstad.

Ambassador Terry Branstad

Thank you, Mashal, for that wonderful introduction. Don't run off. Before you go too far, I want to say thank you for your tireless efforts... She ran off, I think. Thank you for your tireless efforts in putting together this exciting week of events.

Mashal - Thank you.

Terry - Thank you very much.

Mashal - What a great partnership.

Your dedication, your passion for the World Food Prize Foundation and our programs and our mission is unmatched. Thank you for the partnership.

And now I want to say good morning to all of you. It's a privilege to welcome you to the 2024 Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue. This event honors the legacy of Norman Borlaug

whose work in agriculture saved countless lives while improving food security around the world. His belief that there is no greater gift than the gift of food inspires all of us to continue his mission.

As we engage in discussions over the next few days, I encourage each of you to share your insights and experiences. Together, we can develop practical solutions to the pressing challenges of food security. Thank you for being here, and I look forward to our conversations.

I want to welcome our 2024 Laureates, Drs. Geoffrey Hawtin and Cary Fowler. They are two exceptional reasons to be here today. Their exceptional contributions to global food security inspire us to continue our work in addressing the pressing challenges that we all face.