

**2012 THE "BORLAUG DIALOGUE"**

October 18, 2012 - 10:25 a.m.

*HRH Princess Haya bint Al Hussein*

*Introduction by:*

**Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn**

President - World Food Prize Foundation

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We've come to a very, very special part of the program, so if I could have your attention, please. This is the speaking slot in the World Food Prize Borlaug Dialogue that has been the place in the program where some of the most memorable speeches and presentations have ever come. And remember a few years ago, here is where Bill Gates came, Kofi Annan, and this year we are privileged to have a speaker who in terms of inspiration and concern for the hungry and for the poor and providing the global leadership, is at that very same level.

Her Royal Highness, Princess Haya At least Hussein, Messenger of Peace of the United Nations, appointed by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has a long history of support for humanitarian causes. She founded the first food assistance NGO in the Arab world in her native Jordan, and she is the chairperson of the International Humanitarian City in Dubai, the largest logistics center for the delivery of emergency aid in the world today. She's a member of the International Olympic Committee, president of the International Equestrian Federation.

Her Royal Highness Princess Haya is the daughter of His Majesty, the late King Hussein of Jordan and the wife of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates and ruler of Dubai.

But there's one other thing about her that wasn't in the official biography, that gives very special meaning to her presence here today, particularly given that the Ruan family and John Ruan Sr. are sponsors of the World Food Prize, you know, Ruan Trucking Company, Ruan Transportation Management Systems. Princess Haya is the only Jordanian woman licensed to drive heavy trucks.

Your Highness, we are so very, very honored to have you with us today. Please come.

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***PLENARY ADDRESS:***

**HRH Princess Haya bint Al Hussein**

President & CEO, Heifer International

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Ambassador Quinn, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am honored and humbled to be with so many people who are doing so much to improve the quality, quantity and availability of food. In a world that pays far too much attention to people of dubious character and minimal achievement, it is so refreshing to join this celebration of service to humanity.

The pioneering work of Norman Borlaug and the spread of nature's bounty across the globe lives on in the World Food Prize and the Borlaug Dialogue.

I am also pleased to have the opportunity to make my first visit to Iowa and America's Heartland. This state helps feed the world. I am curious about your State Fair. I know that you can get some unusual foods there and more than a few politicians. While preparing for this speech, I learned about deep-fried Oreos, deep-fried Twinkies, but I do have a question. How on earth do you deep fry a stick of butter, and why would you do that?

I am not an expert on food and agriculture, but I have seen the face of hunger close up. I would like to share some of what I've seen and my perspective on the problem that you're working so hard to alleviate.

Hunger has always been part of our past. It does not have to be part of our future. Despite rising global prosperity and the wonderful innovations that the World Food Prize celebrates, hunger still stalks the poor. Now and then political leaders wring their hands about it. They issue declarations and pledges and even hold summits. Meanwhile, nearly one billion people struggle to eat. Millions of mothers still suffer the agony of watching their malnourished children die.

It was my late mother, Queen Alia, who led me to food issues. She was very involved in reaching out to the hungry in Jordan and planned to start a food aid NGO. She died three months before she could do that, when I was just the age of three. When I was finally able to fulfill her dream in 2003, I chose the name she wanted, Tikyet Um Ali, which roughly translates, "As a shelter provided by the mother of Ali" (my brother). It continues to provide food and assistance such as unemployment opportunities to some of the poorest Jordanian families.

But it wasn't until I started working with the United Nations that I realized the full impact of food shortages and what they can do to a family in the tiny villages and places like Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya and Cambodia. I learned so much from spending time alone with children and hearing their stories.

Hungry children look the same wherever you go - downcast, empty, distracted, blank - that is the face of hunger. They open up in the unpredictable ways that children do, but they talk about things that most children don't - death, missing parents, beatings, their constant search for food. They earnestly tell you how much they'd love a new pair of shoes. They proudly show you the toys they've made from bits of trash.

In the Kibera Slum in Nairobi, a little boy and girl told me that when they walk to school in the morning, the first thing they look for is smoke coming from the school's chimney – it tells them whether they'll receive food that day. I asked, "What if there's no smoke?" Their answer was heartbreaking. They said they wanted to go to school, but if they don't see the smoke, they skip school to scavenge or beg for food. And I was struck by the fact that when they did get food at school, they always saved some to take home for their family.

Those children deserve to be heard. I cannot imagine the frustration of a father or a mother of hungry children or how they feel. I am certainly frustrated by what I have seen, and I come from a life of privilege and luxury. I don't have to worry about feeding my daughter or my son.

Sadly, most people, especially those in positions of power, don't really want to hear the voices of hungry children. When some politicians do focus on hungry, they depict them as dependent victims or, worse yet, addicted to handouts. Others say all the right things about hunger, then develop amnesia when it comes to writing the check.

I believe it's morally bankrupt to pledge funds you never deliver. At the G8 and G20 meetings in 2009, donors pledged \$22 billion for new investments in food production over three years. How much of the money has actually materialized? Less than half – that is morally bankrupt.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to that hunger is either invisible or just accepted as a fact of life, and I don't know which is worse. In the developed world, public attention is not as focused on the 1.6 billion people who eat too much, not the 860 million who eat too little. If you have any doubt about that, compare how much we spend on diet products with what we spend on food aid. Americans spend more than \$50 billion a year on diet foods and less than \$3 billion on food aid for families starving in Darfur, Mali or Bangladesh. And you are not alone here; the same is true for many other rich nations.

The excess calories consumed in the United States or Europe would easily feed every single African struggling with hunger, yet there is no broad public call to eat less and share more. Our embrace of overconsumption is stunning. Retailers in restaurants here and abroad sell food in portion sizes in packages that blatantly encourage excess and waste. The results are the same in the Middle East as they are in North America. In the UAE and the Gulf States we have some of the highest rates of obesity and diabetes in the world. In the U.S. obesity-related health spending exceeds over \$150 billion dollars a year, more than the foreign aid provided by all OECD countries combined.

Food losses are another reflection of our love of excess. In Europe 90 million tons of food are wasted annually, almost 300 pounds per person. In the United States, food losses total \$100 billion dollars. Similarly depressing data would no doubt emerge from analyzing losses in other wealthy countries.

So how do we get people to care about hunger? If the moral imperative is not enough, we also have a vested political interest in eliminating hunger. The danger in hunger is not just for the hungry. It is a problem for all of us, because hunger threatens our collective peace and security.

Norman Borlaug had it right when he said, "If you desire peace, cultivate justice – but at the same time, cultivate the fields to produce more bread, otherwise there will be no peace."

We have seen far too many examples of hunger's ability to trigger violence. There have been more than 60 food riots in countries around the world from 2007 to 2009 alone, triggered by the last spike in food prices. We may well be about to experience a repeat, although this time it would be weather, not oil prices, driving up the cost of food.

History has also shown us that in countries where families struggle to buy a loaf of bread or a bowl of rice, the atmosphere is ripe for extremism. Extremists feast on hunger. They use it as a weapon and as a tool for recruitment. People who cannot meet the basic needs of their families lose their human dignity. Without dignity, there can be no peace.

Consider the case of Palestine. You may not know that half the children in Palestine today are malnourished. Would you find this acceptable in Des Moines, Chicago or Los Angeles? This is a hunger born of human conflict. Fishing and farming are restricted, and so are the exports to earn money. A once-prosperous community lives on the brink. That is not a roadmap for peace.

It's not easy to replace suspicion and hate with trust and cooperation, but we must do that soon, especially in the Middle East. Intense competition for food and water in my region will explode into open conflict if it's not addressed. And that is where Daniel Hillel comes into the picture. He rose above politics and bigotry to share his talents with all.

Ambassador Quinn beautifully described Hillel's work in microirrigation as crossing cultural borders for the sake of the greater good. We must all take that leap, make that choice. And we must do it for our children.

The entire world knows that instability in the Middle East can be very dangerous and have far-reaching consequences. Many countries are involved in efforts to maintain or restore stability. Unfortunately, those efforts are much more likely to involve purchasing weapons than food. That is not a roadmap for peace either.

We need to reorder our priorities. My husband, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed, who serves as vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, as well as the ruler of Dubai, asked a very good question when he said, "How can countries around the world spend over a trillion dollars in armaments as we fight over land, ideology and religion, and let 300 million children starve?"

We have to make ending hunger an integral part of foreign policies in countries around the world. This is not just the responsibility of the United States. The good news is that the pool of donors for aid is expanding. The Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development estimates that as much as 20% of global aid comes from OPEC countries. I'm proud that the UAE is one of only a handful of countries that have met the U.N. targets for development assistance. China and other great nations are also contributing to the cause. In 2010 the Chinese loaned more money to development projects than the World Bank. Private donors like Bill and Melinda Gates and the Buffett family are having a huge impact.

But as is so often the case, the world looks to the United States for leadership on this issue. Americans have done more than anyone to build modern agriculture and to share the food they produce and their knowledge of farming with others. Both the Obama Administration and the Bush Administration deserve credit for investing more in solutions to end hunger. USAID,

under Rajiv Shah's leadership, has given agriculture a priority and funding it has not had since the days of the Norman Borlaug Dialogue and the Green Revolution.

U.S. programs like Food for Peace have saved and transformed hundreds of millions of lives worldwide. It is really no exaggeration to say – America feeds the world. But I don't think that we can say Americans view hunger as a threat to national security. We have seen what can happen when this country applies its power and resources to social and economic issues. The European Union just won the Nobel Peace Prize for helping Europe heal the divisions that tore the continent apart in World War II. Yet, even many Europeans concede that the United States and its Marshall Plan deserve at least as much credit for creating a peaceful and united Europe.

President Eisenhower saw the connection between food and peace. Here's what he said in 1958:

*In vast stretches of the earth, men awoke today in hunger. They will spend the day in unceasing toil, and as the sun goes down, they will still know hunger. They will see the suffering in the eyes of their children, and so long as this is so, peace and freedom will be in danger throughout our world.*

The money spent on food aid and agricultural programs makes a difference. We have to be smart about it, and it's worth the effort. In the last two decades globally, we cut the death rate from hunger and disease among children under five in half. We've saved over a million young lives a year – that is a step in the right direction, but we must do more.

The bottom line is, real progress on hunger costs money. We must accept that and raise it. Economic downturn or not, we must come up with the additional \$30 billion that the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization says we need to invest in food production each year. It is in our collective interests to do so.

Imagine what life would be like if the United States and Europe and the rest of the developed world treated hunger as a dire threat to their security. Imagine what the world would be like for all of our children. Thank you.

### **Ambassador Quinn**

Your Royal Highness, I think you can see that you have touched every heart in the room and thousands and thousands of others who are watching on the webcast around the globe.

Last year Princess Haya was scheduled to be here and speak, and thanks to the blessed event of her pregnancy and having a child, she was unable to come, but she sent a videotape of her. And it was so very, very moving and so touched, and we were so thrilled when you came back. But having you here in person was just so much greater impact. There are, for me, 12 years I can count on my fingers of one hand the truly great, memorable moments of the Borlaug Dialogue. And now your presentation today will be added to that list. You have touched us, inspired us and brought the issue of confronting hunger front and center for everyone's national agenda and personal agenda.

Please join me in once again thanking Her Royal Highness.