

October 14, 2004 – 3:00 p.m.

HIDDEN HUNGER: THE ROLE OF NUTRITION, FORTIFICATION, AND BIOFORTIFICATION

The Hon. Catherine Bertini

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The United Nations
2003 World Food Prize Laureate

Thank you very much. We have now a little bit of a precursor of what we're going to talk about next year in much of the symposium but something that's critically important in all of our discussions every year. And the topic of the panel, the next panel is "Hidden Hunger: The Role of Nutrition, Fortification, and Biofortification." And today we three experts, leading experts, in the world who are here to present to us, and I'm going to introduce all three of them together and then ask them to make their presentations in that order, after which the floor will be open for questions and comments.

Dr. Catherine Woteki will be first. She's the Dean of the College of Agriculture at Iowa State University. She has been Dean since January 1, 2002, and she has also served as the interim director of the newly formed Institute for Food Safety and Security at Iowa State. She is also a professor in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition. She is a registered dietitian and a member of the Institute of Medicine. She is serving a three-year term as chair of the Institute's Food and Nutrition Board, and she is chair of the NAS Food and Nutrition Board from 2003 for three years. She served at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and in particular she was Under Secretary for Food Safety at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, responsible for the development of U.S. food safety policies. We knew each other from U.S. Department of Agriculture when we both worked there in the late eighties, early nineties. Dr. Woteki received a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Chemistry from Mary Washington College, a Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in State University.

When she gives her remarks today, she's going to talk about human nutrient requirements and how they can be used to plan diets and serve as a basis for public policies in agriculture, nutrition and health, and about efforts to harmonize nutrient requirements around the world.

After Woteki, Dr. Alfred Sommer will be the presenter, and he's the Dean of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He's also a professor at Johns Hopkins. He received his M.D. from Harvard Medical School and a Master of Health Science from Johns Hopkins. He has published five books and over 300 scientific articles and received numerous awards, including the Albert Lasker Award for Clinical Research, the Warren Albert Foundation Prize, and the Duke Elder International Gold Medal for Contributions to Ophthalmology. He's a

member of the National Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Medicine. His research interests include micronutrient malnutrition, child survival, blindness prevention and interface between public health and clinical medicine.

Dr. Sommer will tell the vitamin A story – how treatment of sub-clinical deficiency is important and how it can be addressed through a combination of traditional foods, supplements, fortification and genetic enhancements. He has much to report to us on these issues.

Then he will be followed by Howarth Bouis, who is the Director of HarvestPlus. Dr. Bouis coordinates an interdisciplinary, global alliance of research centers and implementing agencies working to biofortify and disseminate micronutrient-dense staple food crops and to measure their impact in improving nutrition. Since 1993, he has sought to promote biofortification activities both within future harvest centers and their partners and in the human nutrition community through publications, seminars, workshops, symposiums, and fundraising. As Director of HarvestPlus, he also holds joint appointments at IFPRI and at the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture in Columbia.

He will be talking with us today about biofortification strategies from the perspective of scientific feasibility, willingness of farmers to adapt, achievability of nutrient target levels, and institutional challenges to nutritionists and to breeders.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is with pleasure that I ask you to welcome the panel, and we will begin with Dr. Woteki.