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DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE: WHAT CAN IT DO TO HELP?

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Thank you very much, President McPherson, colleagues, friends, ladies and gentlemen. We have heard this morning, and we have actually read in various studies that Africa, indeed, still remains the only continent where food production has over the years continued to decline. There are millions of Africans who are chronically hungry, 200 million Africans chronically hungry every year. Thirty million Africans require emergency food aid at any given time in a year. Hunger and malnutrition in Africa has been compounded in the recent past by a whole range of catastrophes, conflicts, right now in the Sudan, in the Darfur region. There is an influx of refugees into Chad, and also HIV-AIDS, among the various other calamities that afflict Africa.

And indeed as a result, we've seen the international media painting a rather gloomy picture on the development experiences of Africa. Yet, as many speakers have indicated, it's not all gloom and doom in Africa. There are pockets of successes that are emerging, and I think one of those successes is indeed the reason why we're here the success by Monty Jones in development of NERICA is one of those rays of hope we have in Africa.

I think more importantly we should look at Africa as an African continent that is beginning to open up now. The heads of state and government in Africa have now committed themselves to prioritizing agriculture on their continent's development agenda. Agriculture has therefore been given priority, and the heads of states and government last year, prioritized agriculture and agreed at the same time to increase their national budgeted allocation for agriculture by 10% within a period of five years. And indeed reports indicate that national governments in Africa are beginning to increase their budgeted allocation to agriculture by the agreed-upon mark of 10%.

We are very, very delighted that the international development community is beginning to revisit the agriculture sector. The G8, among other institutions, including the World Bank, have given indication that they will pay more attention to agriculture. But of course the challenge is really to move towards investing resources in the agricultural sector as reflected by the rhetoric which has been expressed.

We're very delighted in the recent White House announcement on ending hunger in the horn of Africa and the Norman Borlaug fellowship program that has recently been announced.

Some of the discussions that are taking place now between the Secretariat and the United States Government as the chair of the G8 in addressing some of the critical priorities relating to agriculture in Africa.

These developments are extremely welcome, but clearly if the tide of ending hunger in Africa is to be curtailed, I think there is need for massive financial resources to be injected in the agriculture sector, a kind of a martial plan that the U.S. was actually instrumental in setting Europe after the end of the second World War.

There is a need to focus on science and technology. I think there is recognition that if Africa has achieved the target of 6% agricultural growth by 2015 and entered into an Africa Green Revolution, it has to take advantage of the global scientific and technological breakthroughs that have been achieved in the past two decades. This recognition that the scientific capacities of national agricultural research systems, sub-regional research organizations, will need to be strengthened. But also there is a recognition that reforms within Africa will need to take place in creating an enabling investment for science to thrive.

If science is really to thrive, we need I think to create a scientific human capacity. We need to harness our intellectual scientific capacity. I think we need more Monty Jones. We need more African scientists. We need more homegrown scientists with a capacity and a passion to develop technologies that will address the needs of Africa now and not wait another forty years. Global knowledge institutions, including CGIAR centers, land grant institutions and foundations can play a critical role in harnessing the scientific capacities of Africa to address food insecurity.

If you look at the successes of Southeast Asia, you find that these foundations, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the work of the CGIAR centers, played a very instrumental role in simulating the Asian Green Revolution. And NEPAD is now in the process of identifying centers of excellence to simulate an Africa Green Revolution. And we believe that the foundations in America, the foundations in Europe, the various land grant institutions in America could actually play an instrumental role in strengthening the development of these centers of excellence.

And we're very grateful for the work of the various foundations that are already beginning to support Africa – the Rockefeller Foundation, the Keller Foundation, among the various foundations in the U.S. as well as in Europe that are beginning to support Africa in the area of science and technology. And also the work of the various CGIAR centers, among those are presented here, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), which is providing support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and WARDA where the NERICA rice was actually developed. They're all providing support to Africa. And I would like to call upon other CGIAR centers to join us to strength research, science and technology and particularly addressing food security in Africa.

And I would like to note particularly with appreciation the continued engagement of the land grant institutions in support of African institutions and in support of agriculture in Africa. In spite of the declining resources going into these land grant institutions, we have seen that there is a continued engagement with Africa by these institutions and would hope that the U.S. Government will actually pay special attention to these land grant institutions, which over many,

many years have played a very central role in support of African agriculture. And we hope that we can actually join hands with these land grant institutions as reservoirs of knowledge, as reservoirs of technological development in support of Africa, to stimulate an African Green Revolution, or indeed a Doubly Green Revolution, as pointed out earlier.

Indeed, I would like to urge the international community to join NEPAD in the mobilization of the required financial support and indeed technical support to end hunger in Africa. It is important that we all appreciate that the food crisis and hunger afflicting Africa is not just an African problem. This is a global problem. It is a global crisis. If we turn a blind eye to the blot that affects Africa today, I think we will actually be endangering the entire global community. Indeed, even the global security will be affected.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.