

2006 Norman E. Borlaug/World Food Prize International Symposium
The Green Revolution Redux:
Can We Replicate the Single Greatest Period of Food Production in All Human History?
October 19-20, 2006 - Des Moines, Iowa

<p>LUNCHEON ADDRESS: Food Security in An Insecure World October 20, 2006 – 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Under Secretary Josette Sheeran – U.S. Department of State</p>

Introduction

Ambassador Kenneth Quinn

President - World Food Prize Foundation

Everybody from the soy foods industry, thank you. It's a particular pleasure for me to introduce our featured speaker at lunch today, because even though we've only known each other for a few months, she's already become a great friend to the World Food Prize. And that is Under Secretary of State for Economics, Business and Agriculture, Josette Sheeran.

Now, I'm going to tell you a few things about her. She's got a big State Department job. You know I used to work in the State Department, and when you were dealing with the Under Secretaries, you know, the Secretary gets all the credit, but it's the Under Secretaries that are out there putting everything in place – it's okay for *me* to say that, right? – and are doing the work. And the E-Bureau, the Economics Bureau, has got in many ways the most difficult issues to deal with, terrible problems there. And she has been in that job for a little over a year and has done such a terrific job, as now the nominee of the U.S. government to become the new Executive Director of the World Food Programme. And you know from hearing about the exploits of Catherine Bertini and Jim Morris here, the current executive director who's going to be speaking this afternoon, that's the organization that gets more food to more hungry, starving, endangered people, and saves lives, than probably any other organization in the world. And so that'll be an enormous responsibility.

Now, in her present job, one of the things she has to do is deal with all these international negotiations and trade rounds and biotechnology. And you go off to confront the Europeans or go out to confront others about tough issues of biotechnology, and Dr. Borlaug's there to advise. It's Under Secretary Sheeran who does that. I love – she has another title – she's the Sous-Sherpa for the G8 Summit and helping get all the leaders to the top of the summit mountain there. And has hosted a variety of other bilateral and multilateral economic dialogs.

In terms of doing things for countries that are facing tough times, one of her key initiatives has been the Businesses Building Businesses initiative for Afghanistan, which brings U.S. business leaders and Afghan farmers and entrepreneurs together. And I know we have several people from Afghanistan who are here as Borlaug fellows. Also in that same capacity, she had the Pakistan CEO earthquake initiative, which brought \$110 million for disaster victims in Pakistan.

Prior to this, she was Deputy United States Trade Representative and oversaw the creation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which will help African countries develop trade capacity and allow them to successfully compete in international markets. And I know that's important to our African ambassadors who are here today. And she heads a 3,000 State Department Economic Office—I never knew there were so many, I have to say—all over the world, in coordinating their reporting and their efforts to work on behalf of the United States and advance our economic interests.

But last spring when we came to Washington, she hosted the World Food Prize and Dr. Borlaug, and we had our announcement ceremony at which we made public for the first time the names of our three laureates. And it was a marvelous ceremony. She spoke at that time and was so impressive and compelling. And I said to her, “Oh, we'd love to have you come in October for our events” – never thinking that she'd be able to come. And she contacted me and said, “I'd really like to come.” You're a great friend – thank you so much. Under Secretary Josette Sheeran.

***Food and Security in an Insecure World:
Seven Reasons We Can End Hunger in our Lifetime***

Josette Sheeran

Under Secretary, Economic, Business and Agricultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

Well, Ken, thank you very much for that generous introduction. It is really an honor to be here. I have a question, though, before I start, which is – Is there something in the water in Iowa? Looking at the Ruan family and what they've done, Norman Borlaug, Secretary Johanns is from Iowa. President Quinn – I heard you grew up here in Iowa. Our two *Wall Street Journal* reporters here today. I'm sure others that I have yet to meet. But you think about this being the humanitarian heart of America. And you've sold me. I'm sold. I think it is.

I do have to say also, what a beautiful state. You fly in, and to me it's moving to see the miles and miles of productive fields. As Deputy Trade Representative I've seen American soybeans all over the world, I've seen them feeding the world, I've seen processing plants throughout Africa, China and elsewhere. And the revolution that took place here in Iowa is something that, you know, you travel around the world and many people think there must be something in the water in America that makes it so prosperous. But good policies, technology – that's where that can happen. And to see it so effective in Iowa has reminded me on the flight in.

I also want to pay tribute to the 2006 laureates. Your project really represents the power when the United States and Brazil can come together to share technology and knowledge. And I'm working and helping lead our biofuels dialog to look at not only the power of technologies but also food security issues, and I think there's tremendous potential there. And I want to really applaud the work that the three of you have done in translating that into making a difference in people's lives.

It would be easy, with all the challenges in the world today – nuclear proliferation, sectarian and religious conflict, terrorism and deadly diseases – to be pessimistic about our chances to make a dent in reducing hunger in the world today. Yet I'd like to outline for you today seven reasons why we should all be optimistic that we can end chronic hunger in our lifetimes, fulfilling the vision of Dr. Borlaug, Ghandi, as we were reminded again today, and others.

I know that this outcome is far from assured, but every once in a while circumstances align, opportunities open, and what once seemed an impossible dream can be realized. A generation before us, John F. Kennedy inspired this nation to reach to the far heavens, and just eight years after his challenge, a man walked on the moon. As recently as 1967, twenty million people annually contracted smallpox. Of those sickened each year, more than two million died a horrific death, and millions more or less disfigured. That year the World Health Organization launched the intensified smallpox eradication program. It was a global effort, and it worked. Just 13 years later in 1980, smallpox was declared the first disease eradicated from Earth. And today we were reminded of the successful eradication of rinderpest.

Mahatma Gandhi inspired hundreds of millions of his countrymen to stand up without violence to a seemingly invincible empire and was able to win independence for India. Nelson Mandela's refusal to bow to the stubbornly entrenched injustices of apartheid ended that practice and opened a new chapter in the history of South Africa and for all of humanity.

I don't want to sound naïve. There will no doubt always be hungry people – natural disasters, conflicts and wars can disrupt the lives of hundreds of thousands in just seconds. We will always need to respond to those emergencies and feed the hungry. And it is critical that we fully develop and fully fund the means to meet hunger emergencies. But as the examples listed above portray, sometimes a perfect storm of positive factors can come together – good ideas, dedicated people, scientific breakthroughs, newfound resources, political resolve, and moral indignation – and we can make major advances in relatively short periods of time.

In his book, *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell called this type of change a social epidemic where change can be contagious and spread quickly through the world. He said in his book, "Things can happen all at once, and little changes can make a huge difference." That's a little bit counter-intuitive, but I'm saying, don't be surprised – this is the way social epidemics work.

Have we reached the tipping point in our fight against chronic hunger? Can we end forever the haunting pictures of gaunt mothers holding dying babies, or children with swollen bellies and matchstick limbs? I believe we have. Can we build a world where every child can strive to realize their potential, free from the blight of undernutrition and stunting? I believe we can.

I'd like to outline the seven reasons that give me optimism, and I think when taken together, they give us a historic opportunity to banish chronic hunger in our lifetime.

Reason one is focus. In September 2000 the United Nations Millennium Summit, the world's nations came together in an unprecedented way to share a unified focus on achieving eight measurable goals by 2015. Every nation agreed to the same goals. This has never happened.

The first goal is to half the number of people living in poverty and who suffer from hunger, as poverty and hunger are linked at their core. Progress has been made, especially in Asia and parts of Latin America, and in fact Chile was the first nation to halve absolute poverty and has achieved that goal well before the deadline. In the last twenty years alone, China has lifted more than 400 million people out of poverty, more than all of human history combined.

We know the most pressing challenge now lies in Sub-Saharan in Africa where the poverty rate has dropped overall, but the number of people living in extreme poverty has increased by 140 million since the year 2000. And we have yet to reverse the hunger curve. It is estimated that one in three people in Africa are currently undernourished, and more than a third of all the world's undernourished people reside in Sub-Saharan in Africa. The World Food Programme estimates there are more than 852 million undernourished people in the world, 400 million of whom are children.

Although the measuring sticks show that we still have a long way to go, I am hopeful – because this is much more than a statistical mandate. Albert Einstein once said, “Genius is focus.” And these clear goals, forged with support by all nations, provide the mandate to rally developing and developed nations alike. The challenge is: Can we translate that mandate into strategic action plans, starting with those nations whose leaders have the vision and the will to knock down barriers? I say, yes.

Can the array of stakeholders, including the FAO, the World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, U.N. AIDS, the World Food Programme, IFAD, IFPRI, NGOs, foundations, the private sector, all come together around the leadership of individuals such as Dr. Swaminathan, co-chair of the U.N. MDG Taskforce on Hunger, in support of such strategies? I think the answer is yes.

In the U.S. we answered the call of the MDGs by creating a new type of cooperative assistance program through the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The MCC distributes substantial grants, hundreds of millions of dollars at a time, to nations that score high in good governance and investing in their people and that offer strategic plans, almost like venture capital, to meet these MDG goals. Since this was launched in 2002, nearly \$2 billion has been distributed to 20 nations.

MCC-eligible countries like Mozambique, Malawi and Burkina Faso have been using their self-designed MCC programs to meet multifaceted challenges of food insecurity, from rural education to land titling to the critical development of roads and infrastructure, to policy reform. And as of this week, Mali’s MCC Compact is before the Board for approval – \$460 million-dollar plan designed to help, by the people of Mali, to address food security, poverty and economic growth. Congratulations, Ambassador Diop – a lot of hard work on your part to get that done.

MCC gives these nations a critical mass of resources to design their own strategy to break the cycle of hunger and poverty. It’s critical that the MCC be able to work closely with other stakeholders to be sure our strategies are aligned.

This global focus on hunger is being amplified by the press, an in popular culture. Hunger has been a cover story this year in *Time* and *Newsweek*. *The Wall Street Journal* has raised the bar in coverage, rightly being nominated for a Pulitzer Prize several years ago. Last year’s Live Eight concerts helped activate a new generation of young people. I’m so pleased to see the students here today who I’m sure are part of that generation that will make a difference. More than a billion people tuned in via the Internet alone. The combined power of the press, the Internet, and the youth of today can be another force multiplier for halving hunger by the year 2015.

The second reason I’d cite is the technical and policy revolution, of which the leaders are here today. The theme of this symposium – whether we can reproduce, expand an evergreen (as one speaker said this morning) the Green Revolution. Can the single-greatest period of food production in human history now transform the face of hunger in Africa? I quote from Dr. Borlaug, “Using proven agricultural techniques, Africa could easily double or triple the yields of its crops. It has potential not only to feed its own people but to become a dynamic agricultural exporter within a few decades.” New technology must be supported by good economic and

agricultural policies. As Dr. Joachim von Braun, Director General of IFPRI has stated so clearly, “Progressive policy action is the key to increasing food supply and food security.”

The World Bank’s revolutionary Doing Business Analysis and Report each year measures every nation in the world against dozens of specific microeconomic policy levers that must be functioning for job creation and economic success. For example, in Syria, if it takes 53 years of an average person’s salary to start a business, how many businesses do you think will be started? Not many. And you see this kind of challenge throughout the world.

Enlightened leaders are using this report as a strategic guide for action and fixing lever by lever. Can we take the same targeted action for agriculture? I think so. Can we use technologies, cell phones, computers as a force multiplier for agricultural education, extension programs, Best Practices, weather forecast, commodity markets information? It’s already happening. Now even the poorest farmer can potentially access the most up-to-date agricultural knowledge.

The third reason I’d cite is the private sector. We’ve seen the recent headlines: private philanthropy is entering the cause of addressing and eradicating the root causes of hunger at an unprecedented level, and there’s great potential in this partnership. These public/private partnerships and the private philanthropy are critical force multipliers in and of themselves in transforming the field of agricultural development in the face of hunger.

One of the most exciting is the announcement that the Gates and Rockefeller Foundations – Rockefeller Foundation, of course, championing this issue for over half a century – are joining forces in an alliance for a Green Revolution. This initiative will funnel \$150 million over five years to jump start Africa’s Green Revolution. They will support the development of more robust disease and drought-resistant seeds, enhance distribution networks, and university-level training for African crop scientists.

The partnership with the private sector brings more than money to the table. It brings new levels of efficiency, expertise, results-based management, including scalability and measurability. The United States has made such public/private partnerships an important component of its aid strategy. Under USAID’s Global Development Initiative, more than 1,400 organizations, including international and local businesses, private foundations, NGOs and governments are partners in 97 countries in the developing world.

Reason four I would cite is ownership at the individual, village and country level. The most powerful factor in ending hunger is individuals, families, and communities empowered with the tools to feed themselves. Again and again we’ve seen how determined individuals can and do better the lives of many.

Wangari Maathai, a brave Kenyan woman, with an environmental supporter, overcame resistance in her native Kenya to plant millions of trees, she was able to salvage ravaged forest land, protecting the climate and even food security. For her work, in 2004 she became the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. When I spoke to her in 2005 at the Clinton Global Initiative, she was impassioned in her belief that Africa will only transform when people are empowered at the village level and their inherent wisdom respected by those intervening to help solve problems, including their own leaders.

Over the last eight months, I've had the chance to travel more than a dozen nations all over the world as part of Secretary General's Kofi Anan's high-level panel in the U.N., looking at coherence in development and humanitarian assistance. We've asked the critical question: How can all U.N. agencies, funds and programs develop and support one strategic country-level approach to reaching these MDG goals?

In talking with people, whether villagers in the Pakistan mountains rebuilding from the earthquake, or with farmers in Haiti fighting the advanced erosion of soil, or presidents and prime ministers in Africa and Latin America, we've met people who know exactly what they need to move from poverty to self-reliance. In Jabori, Pakistan, I was invited into the midwife of the village's home. Her home was made with U.N. tents and scavenged doors and windows from the earthquake rubble. And when I asked her what she needed most, she didn't hesitate for a second. She said that they had lost their village buffalo in the earthquake. And she said a buffalo can meet all the nutritional needs of every pregnant woman in the village and every child, with its milk alone. And it provides warm clothes from the wool. That was her simple wish – a buffalo to meet food security needs there.

In Africa I see a new generation of leaders, many of whom are here today, who are stepping forward to transform their nations. In 2003 African leaders at the Maputo African Union Summit pledged to devote 10% of their national budgets to agriculture and to undertake critical reforms.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development, or NEPAD, is implementing the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Plan aimed at achieving annual growth of 6%. Donor countries are working closely to support this effort and there is success happening. Mali, Ghana, Mozambique have increased the proportion of their budget dedicated to agriculture. East and West African commissions have coordinated with member states to align national investments with a comprehensive agricultural framework. Malawi, for example, is integrating famine-prone hunger hotspots into this framework. Peter McPherson's group, the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, is doing tremendous work in this area.

Trade and regional integration also offer great promise. NEPAD has recognized that agriculture is critical to Africa's economic and trade growth. According to IFPRI, removal of barriers in the nonagricultural sector, which distort agricultural trade, would increase total agricultural exports from Africa by 19%; and trade within Africa would jump by more than 50%. COMESA, one of the regional groupings, has done tremendous work in realizing these benefits, and the benefits came after their hard work within just a year. The Doha Development Round would not have launched without the leadership of a handful of African trade ministers showing leadership at its inception.

I also have to point to China's success in reform of their agriculture sector. China has become so efficient in producing food that they feed 22% of the world's population, using only 7% of the world's land. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, food consumption per person has increased 50% with very few of its more than 1.3 billion people going hungry. But all these gains in technology and policy knowledge are powerless to save lives unless implemented. Good leaders can and must demonstrate to other nations the power of good governance to change a nation's destiny.

Reason five I'd cite is women, as other speakers have pointed out today. The empowerment of women can be the ultimate force multiplier, as the world struggles to feed a growing population. As U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and laureate Catherine Bertini, study after study demonstrates that educating girls is the most powerful development tool we know.

According to FAO estimates, women produce more than 50% of the food grown worldwide. This includes between 30 and 40% in South America, 60% in Asia, and 80% in Africa. This is a largely untapped resource in the fight against hunger, because they are too often excluded from access to capital, from tools and seeds, and to education.

A recent World Bank study found out if women receive the same education as men, farm yields could raise by as much as 22%. But women farmers have access to only 5% of all the world's agricultural services.

I am encouraged because we now have a clear global focus on this issue. The empowerment of women and gender equality is the third Millennium Development Goal. There are a number of programs that show how educating women farmers directly results in improved yields and higher family incomes.

In one project in Hunan Province, one of the poorest in China, a woman went through the class and diversified her crops to include flowers, which she was able to sell on the market. She was so successful that a hundred families in the village are now following her lead. I think we might have seen those flowers in the slide show today.

UNICEF and the World Food Programme, under the leadership of Ann Vinneman and Jim Morris, have also partnered in a program to end child hunger and malnutrition. This joint initiative focuses both on helping children under five have sufficient nutrients to prevent stunting and other diseases and also on women so they have healthy, full-weight birth babies, breaking the mother/child cycle of malnutrition.

One of the outcomes of the U.N. High-Level Panel that I've been on will be to strengthen and enhance women's empowerment and gender equality organization, that it can help develop model programs in the field to ensure women receive the education and resources they need but also to coordinate within the U.N. with other agencies to ensure that these issues are put at the forefront.

Reason six I'd cite is microcredit and other policy innovations. I, as all of us, were very excited to hear last week that the 1994 Food Prize Laureate, Muhammad Yunus, won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work with microlending and founding Grameen Bank. His goal was to empower the world's poorest people to enable them to lift out of poverty through access to financial information and microloans. His loans, which often were only a few dollars, rarely more than 100, usually went to women to help them buy tools or seeds, sewing machines, or unprocessed grains, so they could hand process them for a profit. Since its formation in Bangladesh in 1997, the Grameen Bank has created a microfinance network that reaches 2.2 million families in 22 countries.

The final reason I'd cite is all of you. The most important factor that can truly fuel this tipping point, launching an end to the hunger epidemic, is people in this room today and the thousands of other frontline warriors around the world doing battle in this important cause. (And again, we're so pleased to have the students and teachers here in Iowa that are focused on these issues.) You are the leaders and innovators. You inspire and show by example. You understand the many causes of hunger and work daily on the solutions.

To rid the world of chronic hunger takes dedication, commitment, hard work of the humanitarians in this world that understand food aid, the scientists who have developed improved seed, the economists and agronomists who understand developing world crops and their markets, the anthropologists who understand how to work with communities while introducing new practices, and the courageous frontline hunger troops that deliver food to the malnourished, no matter what the obstacles and challenges.

The leaders who address these issues through focus, attention and reform, and the policymakers who help bring about change for the hungry in their nations, the private sector, and of course the foundations and NGOs who mobilize funds, donors and workers – working altogether, all of you are the force multipliers in the quest to end chronic hunger. It is seeing you all together in this room today, sharing new ideas, discussing new ideas, that assures me this will be something that we'll read about in our history books.

Dr. Borlaug, *The Wall Street Journal* reporter Roger Thurow said today, "You taught us how to increase food production, and the world didn't follow through." Today, I say it can be a tipping point toward your dream of eradicating hunger for all time. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Kenneth Quinn

Thank you, Undersecretary Sheeran, for that wonderful tour of all of the issues and that optimistic view. Sometimes you're working on hunger too long, it's hard to have that, and you've given us a lot of reasons to be thinking very positively today. And it's a perfect lead-in to this afternoon's discussion.

I want to now conclude lunch, encourage everybody please be back at the ball room by 2:00, so we can start right on time with Rajiv Shah and his remarks about the Gates Foundation program and then the colloquium and dialogue on that. And then we'll get to the business and public/private partnerships for the rest of the afternoon. So, I hope you enjoyed lunch and we'll see you in a few minutes.