

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

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Remarks by

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Nancy Stetson, thank you so much for that very kind introduction. Nancy and I first worked together in the early 1990s on issues related to restoring U.S. relations with Vietnam, and I have been so pleased to work with her now as Secretary Kerry's special representative on Global Food Security issues.

On behalf of our Chairman John Ruan III, I want to express our enormous appreciation to Secretary Kerry and the State Department for hosting, for the 13th consecutive year, our World Food Prize Laureate Announcement Ceremony. The first was in 2004, when Secretary Colin Powell spoke about efforts of the Bush Administration to promote global food security.

Ambassador Kurt Tong, thank you for presiding at our ceremony today. Please let Assistant Secretary Charles Rivkin know how grateful we are that the Economic and Business Bureau has served as our State Department connection for this entire time. I want to express my gratitude to Eric Luftman, who is retiring, for his collaboration over the past years and for the diligent efforts of Zach Blackburn, who has had the lead in planning this year.

I was sworn into the Foreign Service 49 years ago in this very room and, as I took the oath, I imagined I would be going to chandeliered ballrooms in Europe. Instead, I found myself assigned for five years as a USAID rural development advisor in the Mekong Delta just as the Green Revolution was beginning.

I tell you this story to let USAID Administrator Gayle Smith know that I am one of her alums. In that regard, I want to acknowledge Peter McPherson who is here. Peter is a former Administrator of USAID and is currently president of APLU and a member of the World Food Prize Council of Advisors.

I also want to note that two of our World Food Prize Laureates are here today: Dr. Per Pinstrup-Andersen and Rev. David Beckmann.

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Congressman Jim McGovern, former Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, Mrs. Barbara Grassley, we are so very honored to have you with us.

Ambassadors, Diplomats, Distinguished Guests.

In the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates in Des Moines, there is a magnificent 20-foot high stained glass window depicting a family in classical times bringing in the harvest. Nearby, emblazoned on the wall, is the name Hippocrates, the Greek physician considered the Father of Medicine who approximately 2,400 years ago is reputed to have said, “Let Food Be Thy Medicine.”

That quote best captures the accomplishment for which the 2016 World Food Prize is being awarded. The breakthrough achievement in developing and implementing biofortification – the process of breeding critical vitamins and micronutrients into staple crops, thereby dramatically reducing hidden hunger and improving health for millions and millions of people.

Since the World Food Prize was first presented to M.S. Swaminathan of India in 1987, 41 persons have been named World Food Prize Laureates. Today, I can reveal that in 2016, for the first time ever, four individuals will share our prize. These four scientists have truly achieved what Hippocrates mandated two centuries ago. They have developed food crops that can make sick people well, and which can counter malnutrition and enhance wellbeing.

Our Laureates represent two separate organizations. Three of our new Laureates, members of a team from an international research center, are being honored for their achievement in developing the **single most successful example** of biofortification – the orange-fleshed sweet potato. Their plant breeding in Mozambique and Uganda led to the production of multiple Vitamin A enriched sweet potato varieties; and their implementation of education and extension efforts in 10 African countries, have encouraged and convinced farmers to plant, and consumers to purchase, and children and adults to eat this nutritionally fortified food.

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One Laureate pioneered the implementation of a multi-institutional approach to biofortification as a **global** plant-breeding strategy and founded a new organization within an international research center to pursue this objective. As a result of his leadership, crops such as iron and zinc fortified beans, rice, wheat, and pearl millet and Vitamin A enriched cassava, maize and sweet potatoes are today being tested or have been released in over 40 countries worldwide.

Through the combined efforts of our four Laureates, over 10 million persons have **already** been positively impacted by biofortified crops with a potential of several hundred million more having their nutrition and health enhanced in the coming decades.

This October, the World Food Prize will celebrate the 30th anniversary of its founding in 1986 by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Norman E. Borlaug. It is of significance to note that it is also the 30th anniversary of Dr. Borlaug's first going to Africa where he joined with Ryoichi Sasakawa in launching an effort to bring a Green Revolution to that continent.

It is therefore particularly poignant that two of the four Laureates I am announcing today are Africans.

It is also most appropriate that two of the four individuals who will be named World Food Prize Laureates are women.

It is now my special privilege to announce that the 2016 World Food Prize Laureates are: Dr. Maria Andrade of Cape Verde; Dr. Howarth Bouis of the United States; Dr. Jan Low of the United States, and Dr. Robert Mwangi of Uganda.

It is a special honor to note that Ambassador José Luis Rocha of Cabo Verde and Ambassador Oliver Wonekha of Uganda could be here as citizens of their countries are announced as recipients of this, the foremost international award for confronting hunger.

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I am especially pleased that Dr. Shenggen Fan, the Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute – IFPRI – could be here. It was at IFPRI that Dr. Bouis founded and guided HarvestPlus for several decades.

Dr. Bouis will make his first appearance as a World Food Prize Laureate tomorrow at a roundtable on Africa, hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

I am equally pleased that Dr. Barbara Wells, the Director General of the International Potato Center, is also here. Her organization has overseen and directed the work of Drs. Andrade, Low and Mwanga in Africa.

There is also a special connection of these World Food Prize Laureates with the Gates Foundation. On October 15, 2009, Bill Gates launched his Foundation's initiative to uplift African agriculture and health at the World Food Prize in Des Moines. On that same day, as part of that effort, the Gates Foundation unveiled a \$21 million grant to fund the development of the orange-fleshed sweet potato in Africa. Today, just seven years later, we see the impact of that visionary initiative being acknowledged by this awarding of the World Food Prize.

The four Laureates will receive their beautiful sculptures in a ceremony at the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines on the evening of Thursday, October 13. The award presentation will be part of a weeklong series of events celebrating our 30th anniversary, including our Borlaug Dialogue international symposium, Global Youth Institute and almost 30 side events. As you leave, you will receive a copy of this brochure telling you about our Laureates as well as one of the most remarkable line ups of speakers to have ever appeared at the World Food Prize.

We are thrilled that we will have four African presidents take part in our Borlaug Dialogue symposium, including: President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius; and former presidents Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, John Kufuor of Ghana, who is also the 2011 World Food Prize Laureate, and Dr. Joyce Banda of Malawi. In addition, Dr. Akimwumi Adesina, the

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President of the African Development Bank, will be participating, as well as Dr. Jim Yong Kim, the President of the World Bank Group, who will be returning to his home state of Iowa.

Please go to www.worldfoodprize.org/register and reserve your place at the symposium October 12-14.

During the 2008 presidential campaign Dr. Norman Borlaug wrote to both Senator John McCain and Senator Barack Obama urging them, if elected, to continue to build upon efforts to promote agricultural development especially in Africa. He was thus greatly pleased when in June 2009, at this very same World Food Prize event, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton first announced the principles that would form the basis of President Obama's Feed the Future initiative.

In her capacity as Senior Director for Development and Democracy at the National Security Council and as Special Assistant to the President, Gayle Smith has championed those principles and brought together the entire U.S. government in interagency process to shape this signature program of the Obama Administration. She has worked assiduously to support the President through the G7 and G20 processes to encourage world leaders to find solutions to the decline in global investment in agriculture. As a result of these efforts, agriculture, food security and nutrition are now front and center on the global agenda.

One of the lessons that I learned as a young USAID officer in 1968 was the impact of seeing hungry and suffering people up close and face-to-face. It left a deep impression on me, just as it obviously did on our keynote speaker. It was in her 20 years as a journalist covering sub-Saharan Africa that Gayle Smith developed her commitment to humanity and her passion to help people who are struggling to improve their lives. This is a passion that clearly continues to motivate her now as the Administrator of USAID. It is thus my great privilege, as a former USAID officer, to introduce the Honorable Gayle Smith.

Smith.