

SECURING AFRICA'S FARMING FUTURE – WHERE ARE THE YOUTH?

Panel Moderator: *Lindiwe Majele Sibanda*

October 19, 2017 – 8:30 a.m.

Introduction

Morgan Day

Director of Planning, World Food Prize Foundation

Well, good morning, everyone. I know everyone's kind of filing in from what I hope were some really exciting and engaging side events this morning. And I hope everyone enjoyed themselves last night at the Borlaug Field Award. Hope you all had a chance to see our beautiful Hall of Laureates.

Again, my name is Morgan Day. I am the director of planning here at the World Food Prize, and I am thrilled this morning. Our lineup of panels this morning is chock full of leaders, and this morning we're really focusing on agriculture and food insecurity in Africa. But I hope that there are some really broader themes that we can draw up that would be relevant, regardless of region.

I am absolutely thrilled to be introducing our first panel. Dr. Lindiwe Sibanda is bringing to light the real experiences from Africa with her panel. Last year she led a panel focusing on African women scientists, which included the President of the Republic of Mauritius, Ameenah Gurib-Fakim. And this year she is bringing together fresh voices from African youth. The Aspen New Voices Fellows, several of them are going to be a part of the panel as well as FANRPAN policy experts to share their personal experiences about how Africa's youth can secure the farming future.

If you'll please join me in welcoming them to the stage.

Panel Members

Lindiwe Majele Sibanda	Vice President for Country Support, Policy and Delivery, The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
Mercy Lung'aho	Research Scientist, International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)
Ariong Moses	Project Specialist, One Acre Fund – Uganda
Salif Niang	Co-founder, Malo SARL
Sithembile Mwamakamba	Senior Programme Manager, FANRPAN
Emma Naluyima	Farmer and Private Veterinarian
Lindiwe Majele Sibanda	

Panel Moderator

Thank you very much, Morgan, for that introduction, and good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am excited to be hosting this panel at a time when the African Union has declared 2017 as the year in which we are harnessing the demographic dividends by investing in the youth. Now, I've deliberately set away from the panel; because, according to the African Union, youth is 15 to 35, and I'm way beyond that.

I'm excited because we have 54 countries in Africa. We have taken the best of the best, just four countries. I'm going to take you to Uganda, I'm going to take you to Kenya, I'm going to take you to Mali, and I'm going to take you to Zimbabwe, all in an effort to showcase the best of the best in the youth that are doing it and leading by example.

Emma, you were here four years ago, and I remember Ambassador Quinn showing off that he has been to a one-acre farm that does it all. Take us to your farm. Just paint a picture of what is happening right now in Uganda at your farm.

Emma My farm is one acre, and I divided it into quarters. A quarter goes for the pigs, and another quarter goes for the planting, matoke [inaudible] type of food, and then a tenth goes to the fish, a tenth goes to the cattle, and another tenth goes to the vegetables. And another tenth is just left for just in case I need to do something else. I also have chickens on the same farm.

Now, at 4 A.M. I wake up, and I hold a board meeting with my animals and the plants. And I only say one thing. The plants that talk to me, and the cows and the cattle and everything say, "If you take care of us, we shall take care of you all the way to the bank." And that way I get energized, and I start working. And I'm very happy to tell you that I'm able to provide for my family. I look after my kids, give them food, nutritious food at that, from the farm, and I also am able to take them to school, give them medical attention, give them warm clothing – trendy ones at that – from the proceeds I get from the farm.

Lindiwe But, Emma, you are a qualified veterinarian, white collar job. I know you do know cattle front and back. But white collar job, yes?

Emma Yeah.

Lindiwe Why go into something like farming, I mean, and smallholder farming, not just farming, on a one-acre farm. Surely there are better things to be doing than farming.

Emma Actually, the best white collar job I have is farming. You know what? It seems dirty, but that's green gold, so that's why I decided to go there, for the green gold.

Lindiwe How many people are you employing at that farm?

Emma Right now I employ about five people. My husband actually is my farm manager. I employ him as my farm manager, so right now he is busy taking care of the animals and everything. But this is one thing I've decided to do as well.

After being successful in farming, I decided to train... My farm is a demonstration farm, so I decided to train people, main emphasis on the youth and the women, better methods of farming; because I want everyone to be successful like I do.

And then, bearing in mind that an average Ugandan is 14 years, I decided to also..., my husband and I decided to open up a primary school. Now, this primary school isn't a normal school, and it teaches only the three things Africans have failed to teach their children. It's a school for children for African farmers. It teaches time management through farming, because farming is the greatest timekeeper. If you don't plant or if you don't plow on time, then you're going to miss on the raining season. Right now, raining at home. So if you didn't plant on time and plow and everything—remember we don't have tractors, so you need to use your hands and ox plow. So we teach them how to manage time through farming.

And then we teach them the value of money. We teach them that, like each child from 8 years to 12 years is given a banana plant, because that's our staple food. So we give them a banana plant to look after, and this enables them to have knowledge, also to care and to be responsible. And then we teach them that this thing that you have is going to give you money. So you don't just plant and leave it, so they have to look after it, make sure they have quality products, and then they sell the products. And then we teach them the other value. The value of money. That's the value of money. And then we teach them the culture of saving.

So they are young children, so a young child knows I don't have anything, I don't have to buy food, I don't have to do this, but I'm going to... So we teach them you can buy candy, but you need to sell. So each child in my school has a bank account. So that's what I do.

Lindiwe Thank you. Time management.

Emma Value of money, and the culture of saving.

Lindiwe And the culture of saving. Well done, Emma.

Emma Thank you.

Lindiwe Let me stay with Uganda. Thank you. Talk about giving back to your community. So Emma is farming, you are in Uganda, and you've chosen to go into advisory services. What help can you give to Emma's farm? What are you doing in Uganda on advisory services?

Moses So basically I work with the One Acre Fund, and we support smallholder farmers in a region called Bosoga. It's in the eastern part of the country and one of the poorest in the country. What we do is that we get these farmers, train them on better farming practices, and then we give them credit in the form of inputs. And we have seen a lot of actual results, because a typical farmer in that region only harvest about five bags of maize in one acre; that is about 500 kilos. But through the work that we have done, we have farmers now harvesting up to 40

bags an acre. So they have now the food that they need. They can sell some of this grain to actually take their kids to school and meet other household needs.

Lindiwe Moses, this is 2017. We heard that the Fall Armyworm had devastated parts of Uganda. You moved from 5 to 40 bags, and you are not touched by fall armyworm, no diseases? You're good?

Moses Actually, most of the farmers suffered from the Fall Armyworm. It destroyed the maize at the early stage, even when we used the advice by the Minister of Agriculture to actually advise the farmers. They could spray the maize and the small larva would actually die, and then like different stages of the larva would keep surviving and eat the maize up to the grain stage. And this affected the quality of the maize that they produced. So even if the farmer go to the 40 bags I was referring to, the price of their maize was actually very low because of the poor quality. And you could feel the frustration of farmers. They were using various kinds of chemicals, including acaricides.

Lindiwe Oh, my goodness. What is an acaricide?

Moses Acaricide is an insecticide for tick control. But I think because it smells so bad, the farmer thought it would chase away the moth. And for us who were training the farmers, when you go to the garden, you could actually get the itches on your skin. And then we get scared, because when you look at the [inaudible], we actually have chemicals which are banned in the Ugandan market – Roundup 2,4-D, a lot of things. And I think it's actually very important that we actually train farmers better.

Lindiwe There is a job for advisory services, there is a job for regulatory services from government, and there's a job for responsible chemical deployment by the industry.

Moses Yes.

Lindiwe But take me back. You say you work in a poor region. I'll tell you one thing. My grandfather never saw himself as being poor, because he always said, "I've invested in all these children. That's labor for me, that's income for me." What makes an African village poor? Why do you say they're poor?

Moses So I will talk about my personal story, and I'm actually a grandson to somebody who had five wives, my grandfather, and produced 45 children.

Lindiwe 45 children.

Moses 45 children.

Lindiwe That's wealth. I was talking 12, but 45, that's rich.

Moses Yes, during their time they felt pride by having a lot of wives and having so many children. But the result was that they couldn't have enough food in the

household. My father actually tells me of when they would ring a bell just to call them for a meal.

Lindiwe They ring a bell at noontime?

Moses Yes, and if you delayed to run to the eating table, you would likely miss the food. So what was painful to him was one day when he actually performed very well at school, and they went to the report card. He tells me he was the first in his class all through, except once when he became the second after losing only two marks. But with the good results, he went to his father and said, "I have actually been admitted to a technical school, and I need the fees." And the father said, "I cannot waste the time with you. You already know how to count, and that is it for you." So my father ended up becoming a peasant farmer, "peasant" meaning growing small stuff for survival. But through his hard work, he was actually able to take me to school, and I got a degree in agriculture and another in environment. And I feel that the job that I have now to actually serve this group of farmers is the best job in the world; because when you look at Africa, we have the youngest population in the world, and whatever we are doing for these smallholders is actually a service to these young people who probably will be like myself and get something else they can actually do in the future.

Lindiwe Thank you so much for that story of your life. Thank you that you're serving your community by giving back. Thank you, Moses. Over to Mercy. You're working for one of the most prestigious CGIAR centers. There are 17 of them, but we're still talking about children going to bed hungry, children being sent off school because they haven't had enough food. What does that mean to you? What are you guys doing?

Mercy Actually, I can really relate to this story, because when my mother was pregnant with me, she was a farmer. She had anemia, as a result – I was born too early. Like at two weeks barely a pound. The doctors gave me 72 hours to live. I'm so happy to be alive today, and what I do with the life I've been given is really to link agriculture to nutrition outcomes, because that's the link that is broken.

So when I go to farming communities, I feel like one of them. I teach them how to increase production diversity so they have diverse foods. When they make a little money, I teach them to prioritize nutrition – good food, healthcare, sanitation. This is important for nutrition. And when women are pregnant or they're lactating, I teach them to balance their time and their energy by using technologies that are time-saving, labor-saving. This is important to me.

But more importantly, I help governments promote nutrition policies. Like school feeding policies where agriculture can now feed schools, so school becomes a market, and children thrive. But another thing is my research work on biofortified beans.

Lindiwe Biofortified beans?

Mercy Yes. I really push for biofortification, because I've seen it work. Our study in Rwanda, it showed that biofortified beans can resolve anemia, can even improve

brain function in women. So I've seen agriculture stop the very thing that almost cost me my life, and that's why I push for it.

Lindiwe Wow, wow. I mean, we talk about hidden hunger. When I look at you now, fully grown, I would never think that... So how do we communicate this message, you know, to say there's something you're missing, there is hidden hunger in you. I mean, what Moses was telling us was tummy fill, but what you are bringing is the hidden hunger that lead to premature birth at 36 weeks, and not many people survive. Currently one in three deaths are attributed to malnutrition in Africa. And you are the success story to do the work.

So how do we deal with this divide? I mean, my own grandmother... Emma's farm now has got cattle, pigs, everything. There is all the diversity that she needs. What has gone wrong in the agriculture system? And I go back to the 17 CGIAR centers. What is happening? Because we've got all the core commodities across the 17. Why is it not coming today at household level, at the smallholder farm level? What is broken?

Mercy I think what I have to mention is what I see in communities. You know, we walk down the street and we all look the same, and we think we're all okay. So it takes a mind shift to be able to see there's something we don't see, but we need to be aware of it. Until ten years ago, the CG was still pushing calories. So we are learning that quality is important. So nutrition education and promotion is critical, but I need this in schools, I need this in social media, in the radio. In communities when we talk, we have to talk about diversity. We have to embrace diversity. We have to make this part of our message.

Lindiwe Thank you, and thank you for that story. And congratulations, we have you, thanks to technology and knowledge.

Ladies and gentlemen, we've had Uganda. It's farming, smallholder farming, it's advisory services from Moses, it's nutrition from Mercy. But we're all being told that's for agriculture to be cool for the youth. They want to move up the value chain. They want to see money, and they view smallholder farming as more subsistence type. We've got Salif from Mali. Hi. You are the big box man here. Tell us, when does the till tick. What do you do?

Salif Thank you, everyone. First of all, don't be fooled. So I was a PhD candidate about six years ago up at Purdue, studying political science, international agents, so nothing really directly related to agriculture. And the stipend I made ten years ago as a graduate teaching assistant is more than I make today. So for the entrepreneurs out there, just that's the cold, hard truth. I have zero regrets. I have... This is something that I've been committed to basically since I was born. I was born in Rome. My dad also went to Purdue. He got his ag econ degree there in the '80s, so when he was posted to the FAO as a young professional and then a few years later moved to Ethiopia... So I grew up in Ethiopia in the '80s when unfortunately Ethiopia was synonymous with malnutrition and hunger. And at the time I remember the story when someone was telling me about South Park and starvin' Marvin, and I couldn't understand, you know, what they were

talking about. So this is issue of hunger is something that is just deep. I would say it's deep. It's deep for me.

And things are going well. I want to emphasize that. But what do you need to do to ensure that you succeed as an entrepreneur in the space? I think number one is the commitment and the vision that is non-negotiable and to have a vetted, no B.S. action plan. And then the work and the ethic to put that action plan into motion. And that's what's going to allow you... It's going to happen when the adversity hits. When the things that you expected to happen doesn't happen, you're not going to panic.

So this theme of youth and agriculture is something that has almost become a gravy train. Excuse me if I can be that blunt. There was a lot of energy or a lot of attention. There's a lot of programs, a lot of projects, a lot of consultants making a lot of money, a lot of economic opportunities for those consultants who supposedly create economic opportunities for young people. And I don't want to be hypocrite, because I am one that benefited from that.

So I also do a lot of agribusiness consulting, and in fact it's income from doing consulting that allowed me to invest in Malo. So Malo would be dead today, because I moved back in 2011. Six months later we had the coup d'etat. Al-Qaida basically had half the country under occupation, from Timbuktu all the way to south of Malti. All the funders that we had lined up dried up. USAID left the country. Peace Corps left the country. Mali was basically closed. My professor said to come back and finish my dissertation, and I decided not to heed that advice. We decided just to stick it through.

And really the moment... The opportunity that we had was, as I mentioned, my dad retired at about the same time, took his entire pension, his entire life savings and basically said, "Kids, go build me the farm that I always wanted since I was a poor child growing up in western..., in Mali. He went to Israel. We went online. We found basically what are the technologies out there. And we went and built a ten-acre, so four-hectare, a ten-acre farm outside of Bamako, so it's a peri-urban farm. And it was tough. I mean, the first few years was grueling because...

Lindiwe But he gave you the skills. I mean, you had trained. You were doing international relations, and now you're back building a farm.

Salif Yeah, I'm getting there, getting there. So Excel row cropping is very different from like real row cropping, so I was really good at Excel. So it's a family business, so my dad, so he's an economist. I had a younger brother who did not do so well in school, like a lot of young people, but this was an opportunity for him to kind of get his life back on track. So he became the farm manager. And he had a baptism of fire.

And the first thing that changed his life was the Egyptian government had an agronomist as part of the bilateral relations between Mali and Egypt, sent an Egyptian agronomist to Mali. I think for four years nobody called him. He was just bored, watching tv at home – until he heard that there was this young, 18-

year-old kid, my brother, who got thrust with this hundreds of thousands of dollars just got invested in this farm, trying to grow tomatoes and all this technology he...had difficulties. So he basically mentored my little brother. And that's when my little brother learned to farm.

So I work with him. Technically, I'm not the strongest, but we build tools to manage the business from a technical standpoint, like a human resources standpoint, the economic standpoint. And today we get paid today to provide advice to others. And our flagship, our first customer, our first client was a gold mining company in Western Mali – controversial, extractive. Some of you may know a little bit of African history. If you Google Mansa Musa, you'll learn about the wealth, enormous wealth in this part of the world that has been extracted for centuries.

And they hired us to design a program for them because they worry about two things. The legal mining, the young people that are frustrated in occasional illegal mining. And second, is there a way for them to reduce their food costs, because they have thousands of employees from Australia, from South Africa, and they're importing food from long distances.

So the program is simple. Year one, training school, so we design a training school based on our family farm; started with a hundred kids. Not everybody made it, and that's why it's designed that way. We don't want everyone to make it. Now, the ones that made it, we have them placed this year on five additional incubation farms. So each person in the program knows how to produce horticulture. It can vary. They can do poultry. They can do agriculture. And it's them that are feeding the mine owners and [inaudible] to market.

Lindiwe So what's your relationship with these trainees? Are they still reporting to you? I mean, what's your business line there?

Salif We moved on, because we're consultants, and now we're working with two additional projects that focus on this. One is the USAID-funded project with AVRDC, the World Vegetable Center, and that is... Again, our role is very simple, is the business side. We have a vetted business plan and tools, so we take the young, committed individual or a team and then connect them to the markets. So we've had two wholesalers commit to buy other produce that are... The youth that benefiting from this program are going to benefit.

Lindiwe So one thing that's clear is that you train, but you also target. Not everybody makes it through the training. And for those that make it, they come up with a clear plan, and it's about business and it's about the opportunity and the skill that you've given them that carries them through. So that's your core business.

Salif It is, and if there's one field or one domain... Agriculture does not joke. Farming does not joke, right? Like it just don't. Like if you neglect your plant, your seedling, you will see the results instantly. If you're sloppy, you're lazy, you don't do the work, you'll get that [inaudible]. Too many people, and I speak for Mali, my own country, that the problem of unjust impunity where people who are getting all these resources, all these programs, all these grants, a lot of them

don't deserve it. And the ones that do are being left behind, and they're the ones that have been frustrated. They're the ones that have been recruited by extremist groups. They're the ones that are angry. They're the ones that end up being suicide bombers. So if we don't go back to like this ethical value-based system, we will continue pumping money, and it will actually make the problem worse. And that is my, that is my fear. But I'm an optimist that we can solve it.

Lindiwe ladies and gentlemen, that's our businessman in the room, Salif. Farming is no joke, he says, and he's making sure he brings the best of the best out of Mali and that they feed themselves and not just feed Mali, hopefully, you'll be feeding the continent. Thank you so much, Salif. I'll come back to you.

Now, over to you, thembi. We've heard about the smallholder farm that's thriving. We've heard about the challenges and advisory services. We've heard about the challenge of malnutrition and the challenge of governments that dish out help without targeting. What is this that you are doing on the policy front? What can be done to alleviate all these challenges, which to me are really about governments not having their acts together, policies that are broken? How do we fix this brokenness?

Sithembile Well, we have excellent policies on paper. I mean, if they were to be marked by university professors, they would probably be A+ papers; because they read really well in English and in French and in Portuguese and the other languages that we have in Africa. But the one thing that's lacking is that they are not informed by the people that are actually facing the challenges. There is a disconnect between the policymakers and the people that are working on the ground. The young people are not consulted, and therefore the policy miss the actual challenges that they need to address.

What we are doing at FANRPAN is trying to bridge that gap. We are looking at, what's the message that's out there. We know the challenges, but what has the research done to try and address the challenges? And what is science saying? But at the same time we know that researchers are not good communicators. So the research might be there, but it's sitting on shelves and nothing is being done about it. It's not feeding into the policy processes. So we're saying – Who are the best messengers to actually carry that message that the researchers have come up with? Can the young people speak for themselves? Can they communicate to the policymakers exactly what they want to see happening?

But at the same time, we are also saying – What are the platforms where young people can engage? The ministerial meetings are closed meetings. They don't invite... They talk to themselves, yes, that's correct. So we're saying – What platforms can we have so that young people are engaging?

And we have also found that we talk a lot at the global level and at the regional level, but there is little talk at community level. So we are also trying to see – How can we get young farmers, women farmers, and community level also inputting into the policy process?

Lindiwe So What are you doing about it?

- Sithembile We have developed a tool that we call Theatre for Policy Advocacy. It's a cultural sensitive tool where we use theater as a way of bringing research results from the universities, from the research institutions to the village. And we get the farmers of that level to actually validate the research by saying – yes, that speaks to me; or no, that is too far fetched. So the way we do it is that we have theater performances at community level, which are then followed by dialog where different groups of community members, the youth on their own, the women on their own, and the men. They actually take apart the performance to say – I identify with that person, because these are the challenges that I am actually facing. So by using theater and presenting a challenge through an actor, people are free to engage, and they're free to actually say what could be.
- Lindiwe Demystifying the policy development process and making it tangible so the evidence is real.
- Sithembile Yes, that's what we are doing. We are making it simple. We are saying that policy is not out of reach. The farmers, the youth, they can get involved. They just need to have the right engagement platform.

Q&A

- Lindiwe Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sure you're ready to engage with this panel. I am going to take a couple of questions. There are mics on the side if you can just line up. I can see one of the mics there. If you are burning to engage with the youth and ask a couple of questions, this is your time. I can see Gordon walking to the mic. No. So where Gordon is, there is a mic. [inaudible], are you going to the mic? All right, there's another one on this side, so if we can have people line up, the panel will take the questions. Over to [inaudible].
- Q Thank you very much, Lindiwe. It's so heartening that youth has become a key issue in the sort of subject matter we have been discussing. I mean, if you go back to three, four, five World Food Prize events, you will hear youth, youth, youth being mentioned. But I think what is different now is that we are beginning to see youth with evidence of engagement. I think there's too much talk at times. We really need more and more examples of youth coming in to actually showcase what they have been able to do. It may not be perfect, but they are doing it. And so the challenge for all of us, which of our organization or institution we come from is a challenge of engagement. In the same vein, we have had from heard from our lady in the extreme that the problem is not just policies. If you're going there, I hear we can even score A-1 if we are scored by a university professor, and that the problem is actually the implementation.
- I want to make a call that we need advocacy at two levels. First of all, we need advocacy at the level of policymaking, you know, for nutrition in countries. I just come from a side event of the Alliance Against Hunger, working with stuff, and they are doing very good work, linking up with congressmen and trying to influence the policy of the U.S. Government towards food and agriculture. And I would like to see developing country networks setting up at that level. But that

alone is not enough. We also need to have underground level advocacy where we are actually implementing things to show that it can work and it can change things.

So that's my wish and my call, that the next World Food Prize will have specific evidence-based examples of how this has worked at the two levels.

Lindiwe Thank you very much, [inaudible]. That's IICA. There is a promise for the next World Food Prize. Thank you. Over to you. Please keep them short. We just want to capture as many questions so that the panelists have time to respond.

Q I am Marcelene Agnen from Tuskegee University, originally from Cote d'Ivoire. Your stories are very touching, especially Moses. The fact that your farmers are using so many harsh chemicals, and how do we educate the youth, the upcoming, the next generation farmers how to sustainably use integrated pest management to make sure that they have better crop. Also, this should take us back into starting again the dialog of engineered crops, whether transgenic or genome editing crops that can help the plant's natural biological defense system so that we use less and less of those harsh chemicals and better for the environment. So that would be my question.

Lindiwe Thank you, thank you. Over to you, sir.

Q Thank you. Edson Mpyisi from the African Development Bank, and I coordinate the Enable Youth Program. It's really great to hear all these stories here, and especially I like my sister from Uganda who built the school, and you're starting agriculture very early at the primary stage. I think that's very important. But I've got a question for Salif Niang from Mali – right?

Salif Yes.

Q You gave us a reality dose that what you're earning now as an agripreneurs is less than what you were earning ten years ago as a grad student. But here I am with African Development Bank, trying to excite all the youth on the continent to get into agribusiness. So tell me, in Mali, okay, and okay, I seen your model. You're working with one or two and training a few agripreneurs. But here we're being told we have 420 million youth on the continent, 12 million coming into the job market every year; and there are only 3 million jobs. So we have a huge gap of 9 million jobs. One, in Mali how can we... Some of your ideas, you know, how do we scale what you're doing, you know, as government, as development partners. I like your ideas. How can we scale these up? But also, give us an idea on private sector. You're a private sector. What support can government... How can they best come in? Because we work a lot with the government in the public sector. I'd like to hear your thought, especially with the Mali example. Thank you.

Lindiwe Thank you. Salif, we want money. Tell us how we can make it happen. I've got two more, then I'll close the questions. Over to you, lady.

Q My name is Ester Kimani from Kenya. I work with the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization. And my question to the panelists is – How will you want the research organization to engage with the youth in the issue that you are facing? Yeah, how do you want us to engage? You know, don't just come and dump things on you, but yeah, how would you like to see that happen? Thank you.

Q My name is Florence Wambugu, I work with an organization called Africa Harvest in Africa. Mine is a question with a comment. I've been working with a youth organization, is involved in technology transfer, grassroots level between private sector as well as international organizations along the value chain.

And with that we have found that it's hard just to put the youth in a straight jacket. They've got their own innovative ideas how they want to engage. For example, in one project, we were working on sorghum, and they decided that instead of selling their sorghum, turn it to feed and start a chicken business and egg business entrepreneurship and making money. And so I realize in this, trying to engage the youth, allowing innovation and creativity is very, very important, and flexibility.

Another very interesting observation is about another experience of having in a church. I go to a big church, about 10,000 members, and I was asked to start a youth entrepreneurship business in agriculture. First time I had to use [inaudible], within a short time we got about 650 youth were coming and networking and meeting once a month. But to me the most interesting thing out of this is the most [inaudible] to have them exchanging their own ideas, opening the platform, having their own [inaudible] group, having their own exchange of ideas and helping each other – how are we making money, where are we losing money? So actually bring speakers once in a month to actually target the area where they're having the biggest challenge. Otherwise, they're learning from each, they're learning from each other's mistakes, and they are forward real well.

So, say even as we come up with some concrete ideas, let us allow for flexibility, creativity, and most important, the youth learning from other youth. Thank you.

Lindiwe Thank you very much for those experiences from the ground. What I would like to hear from the panel – you've heard the suggestions, the recommendations, but there's nothing that beats youth solving the challenges that face the youth. You are the champions. You are the ones who will lift the millions. Currently one in two Africans are below 35. What that means is there's a whole army that you all have to lift. What is the one challenge that you have had to overcome and that you wouldn't want other youth to face? I'll start with you, Thembi.

Sithembile I'll say the need to demystify policy. If we are talking about..., yes, demystify policy, if we are talking about real engagement for youth, they have to be part of it. It's nothing for the youth without the youth, so let's make sure that they're fully engaged and they're not just talking.

Lindiwe Ladies and gentlemen, it's nothing for the youth without the youth. So the youth is now – it's not the future. Over to you, Salif.

Salif Thank you. I just want to be clear. And I did say that, yes, I make less today, but that doesn't mean I haven't made money. What I'm saying is what we were able to make, we've invested it. I live well. I'm very privileged. I'm very lucky. Okay, so I am not trying to give that impression at all. And Malo, which is, we're the first rice fortification company in Africa. We're about to finish a deal with the World Food Program. For the first time, almost a hundred thousand kids are going to have fortified rice in school all year, and it took six years. It's a very good deal.

Agriculture is profitable. We're making money, but if you don't make that commitment, that sacrifice initially, at least in the first few years, it's very difficult in the long run to try to instill in the youth.

Q [inaudible].

Salif Reduce the risk?

Q Yeah.

Salif Don't lose money but think the long game, because investments you make today for years and years you'll reap those rewards. Once you take gold out of the ground, it's gone. But once you invest in your soil, you can have generations of wealth to come.

Lindiwe So reduce the risk.

Salif Reduce the risk, and that's what we're doing now with the tools that we've built when we talk to young people.

Lindiwe So de-risk agriculture. Thank you. Mercy, what's the one big challenge you had to overcome?

Mercy Given my history, I had to change my mindshift. My mother said, "Do not go into agriculture." And I couldn't... I did not go into agriculture. But when I was at Cornell, Professor Per Pinstrup Andersen was singing, linking agriculture to nutrition. And I was thinking—how do I make this work for me? And I like the comments that came out. What we do now at CIAT is really co-create solutions with the youth. We use partnerships with civil society to be able to engage governments, to engage communities. And now with the African Leaders for Nutrition at the African Development Bank, we really want to push those policies that work on nutrition. For me I am preaching nutrition-led agriculture, and that's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Lindiwe Nutrition-led agriculture—that's your story, and you're sticking to it. Thank you, Mercy, and thank you to Per Pinstrup Andersen, who is the role model who made you do what you do now. Over to Moses.

Moses Yes, I feel the youth have questions that must be answered. And one is that—Does agriculture really pay? The other is that—Can it be a sustainable source of

livelihood for myself? And the third is that – Do I have self-dignity? Can I be recognized as a contributor in my community if I engaged in agriculture?

Lindiwe So dignify agriculture.

Moses Yes. And it comes to the issue of access to the technology that you are using. If we look at the issue of seed, access to seed or credit, fertilizer and the rest as well as the training company, but also importantly the tools that you are using, then we see that agriculture will be profitable and the young people will be attracted to it.

Lindiwe So dignify and assure farmers have access to technology, and make it profitable, make it a business. Thank you. Finally, our rope star, the farmer [inaudible] vet.

Emma One of the reasons why I [inaudible] have been a successful farmer is because I had knowledge. I went to school. So, issue is – give the youth the knowledge they desire to do whatever they need to do. And since, like I said... I mean, 70% of [inaudible] Ugandans are 14 years old. It means they [inaudible] be given knowledge. So that's why I put up that primary school, to just disseminate knowledge all over. And these kids, it's amazing what they'll do. They're not only learning, but they're going to pass on the same information to their parents and to the neighbors, and everyone will be happy. Knowledge.

Lindiwe [inaudible] give us knowledge. That's what will make agriculture cool for the youth. Ladies and gentlemen, as I sit here and see [inaudible], Judy and Julie Borlaug, I am reminded of what they've always told me, that when Norm was in his last minutes, he said, "Take me to Africa." And today I'm sure he's smiling, because his life was about the next generation. They are real. They are doing it. Thank you very much. Join me in thanking the panelists.