

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Speaker: Honorable Mark Green
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Introduction

Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn

President - World Food Prize Foundation

If you could join me in welcoming to our stage for our morning keynote address the new administrator of USAID, the Honorable Mark Green.

So many of you know I started career... I'm from Dubuque, Iowa, right across the river from Platteville and Potosi, Wisconsin. And I passed the Foreign Service exam, and I was going off to Washington, and I was going to be going to London or Paris or Vienna and sipping aperitifs in fancy ballrooms. And I was seconded instead to USAID and sent to Vietnam in the middle of the war. You may have seen me in the Ken Burns documentary. And I became a rural development advisor and was in villages in Vietnam when the Green Revolution started. At the same time, Jeanie, your dad was in India and Pakistan. And it changed the course of my life. And USAID is such an incredible organization, filled with officers who are doing so many amazing things for the last 50 years that I have been associated with it. And so that's why I was so thrilled, Administrator, to have you make this schedule work so you could be here to address us.

Now, I was worried, because he's a Wisconsin guy and went to Eau Claire State. And I lived in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and we cheered for La Crosse State. Then I looked a little further, and he has a law degree from the University of Wisconsin. I had my master's degree from Marquette in Milwaukee. So, you know, one more thing worried about.

But saw that his role at the International Republican Institute that's out there on the ground doing such amazing things, and we have personal connections to Senator McCain and Rich Williamson at the U.S. Global Leadership Conference and with Liz Schroyer. I have such enormous respect for her and all that they're doing as U.S. ambassador in Tanzania. They're on the ground. President _____ was going to come today, but then at the last minute couldn't make it. And so looking on paper, I said, well, he's got terrific preparation and probably knows Peter McPherson who was the head of USAID and we worked together in the Reagan Administration.

But the thing that really convinced me is in August when Administrator Green was confirmed, he did a video and talked about his role in heading USAID. And I saw the video, and my staff members who are here will know, that night I sent it to them and I said, "Everybody has to watch this, because this is a person who is inspiring and obviously inspired himself." So it is my great pleasure to welcome Administrator Mark Green to the World Food Prize and to the podium.

Honorable Mark Green

Administrator, U.S. Agency for Development

Thank you. So I am delighted to be here in the house that Ken Quinn built. I am from Wisconsin. I know where Potosi is. I know where Platteville is. And he went to La Crosse. I went to La Crosse's older and wider brother, UW Eau Claire. But now seriously it is great to be here.

In the brief time that I have with you, what I want to do is briefly describe what I see as three revolutions that are underway in the field of development, to point out that they are all particularly important to the area of food security. And as I do, I hope that you'll all agree that these changes, these revolutions just might make this year's sessions of the World Food Prize the most hopeful and exciting ones ever.

Now, the first of these revolutions is no surprise – it's technology. Not the everyday discoveries but the fact that it's becoming increasingly available and affordable all across the developing world. Now, my own career in development began about 30 years ago. My wife and I were teachers in a little village in Kenya in East Africa.

Those were different times. In our little village, we had but one telephone; it was a windup phone, and it was mounted on a wooden box in the school office. So back then if you wanted to make a long-distance call, you'd go down to the office, you'd pick up the receiver, you'd turn the crank, and you'd say, "Operator, give me 662, Kisumu," put the receiver down, sit outside under a mango tree, wait for the phone to ring to tell you that your call had gone through. A dozen years later, I'm walking to that same village, walking along a path. I see a young boy, and I say, "Do you know Niva?" (one of my former students). He said, "Yes." I said, "Can you go get him for me?" He said, "Yes," and he pulled out his mobile phone, and he called him.

Five or so years after that, I was ambassador in an East African country, and my African staff had cheap mobile phones, and they were conducting business, they were paying their bills, they were making calls everywhere. That is the lens through which I see technology and innovation in Africa and elsewhere.

This is an extraordinary time of opportunity. These innovations, this frugal technology, is making the impossible possible, the unsolvable solvable. Now, in West Africa USAID is supporting a tropical weather forecasting company called IGNITIA. IGNITIA sends daily and seasonal forecasts via text message. It's received by 320,000 users across West Africa, increasing their awareness of rain and drought, particularly during the growing season. In Ethiopia there are now electronic billboards in the countryside that show the latest price for coffee, and the aim is to help those remote, small-scale farmers see what the actual price is, so when the unscrupulous middlemen come to try to game them, they've got ammunition. Not so many years removed from the windup telephone.

Now, if the expansion of affordable technology is the most eye-popping revolution underway in the developing world, there's another one underway that I would argue is at least as important. So when USAID was launched a little over five decades ago, something like 80% of the money that flowed from America to the developing world was traditional development assistance, what we call ODA. Today that figure is just under 10%. To be clear, it's not because ODA is fading away. It's because private financial flows have roared ahead – large-scale philanthropy, remittances, but more than anything else, commerce in investment. The world's fastest-growing

economies are largely in the developing world. According to the World Bank, half the nations in Africa are now lower, middle income or higher. Many of these same nations have very young citizenry. The demographics are showing that they're increasingly young, so that means their emerging consumers are interested in the very kinds of products that U.S. businesses make and services that we provide. In short, American business has business in the developing world.

The third and final revolution that I'd like to describe is the one that excites me most as administrator, and that's the rapidly changing relationship between private enterprise and the development community. Leaders in both sectors are finally figuring out how to take the unique capabilities of each, public and private, and apply them to problems that neither could take on fully alone. And this is making challenges that once seemed insurmountable very real and very achievable. It is hard to overstate how big a shift this is in the development field. For years, whether we realized it or not, USAID and others saw donors in governments as the proper drivers of progress. Private enterprise was something to keep at a distance, or if you could, bend it to your will. We welcomed donations from private enterprise. We were even willing to contract with private businesses to obtain goods or receive services.

Today we have moved way beyond. Today we have moved beyond grant-making and contracting, and instead we're collaborating. We're recognizing that agencies like USAID don't need to be the sole actors in sectors if we can be the catalytic actors in those sectors. We're rethinking how international development initiatives are designed, tested, rolled out, and we're embracing the creativity and entrepreneurship that only the private sector can bring to the table.

Feed the Future, which so many of you know and so many of you participate in, Feed the Future, America's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative in so many ways is helping to lead the charge. One example – CoolBot. In many parts of the world, some of you know, farmers harvest much more food than they actually need, enough to generate a modest income – but they lack access to temperature-controlled storage. And what that means is what they produce spoils before it ever gets to market. Where they should be living comfortably, they're barely scraping by. So last fall, Feed the Future called out to the private sector and research community for help. CoolBot as one of the solutions we received. An engineer in Upstate New York figured out how to turn a regular window air conditioner into a low-cost cold storage unit – CoolBot. His unit costs about \$300 compared to \$300,000 for traditional commercial units. An American company, Store it Cold, saw the device was a huge hit for small and medium farmers back here in the Midwest, and they thought it just might work in the developing world.

So we collaborated with a store called the Scale CoolBots in Central America – right product, right place, right time – it's taking off. Our role wasn't simply to pay them to provide their product – that's what we might have done years ago. Instead, what we tried to do was help them understand the local market and culture and then try to use our connections to help them exploit the opportunity. Now, our role wasn't simply to pay them to provide their product. That's what we might have done years ago. Instead, what we tried to do is help them understand the local market and culture and then try to use our connections to help them exploit the opportunity.

The goal for CoolBot is to reach 15,000 farmers by year's end. That will be 15,000 rural farmers and cooperatives who for the first time ever will have access to refrigerated storage. This will help them keep produce fresh until it's sold. This will give them that chance to do more than

barely scrape by. And the endeavor works because it joins the special capabilities and connections of each side, public sector and private, again to tackle problems that neither of us could do alone.

As administrator, I pledge to make CoolBot in that story not the exception but the rule in our dealings with private enterprise. As a further down payment on this approach, today I'm announcing two new exciting ventures in which USAID and private enterprise are collaborating to lift lives, lower poverty, and yeah, catalyze commerce.

The first involves the Syngenta Foundation, and it takes on a key challenge in food security – getting state of the art seed varieties to smallholder African farmers. Our collaboration will help local African agribusinesses gain access to high-quality seeds so they can be sold at affordable prices. It will bridge the gap between the labs that develop cutting-edge seed varieties and remote farmers and communities so desperate for high-yielding harvest.

There's a second collaboration that we're announcing today. It's one with Keurig Green Mountain and Root Capital. It aims to support small-scale coffee farmers who suffer from poor access to markets and private capital. Through this partnership, small-scale farmers will gain greater access to credit, learn new business concepts and strategic planning, and connect to lucrative markets that value sustainable agriculture.

So I hope my message to all of you is clear. At USAID we want to move beyond grant-making, beyond contracting and embrace collaboration, co-design and co-financing. I hope it gets your wheels turning. I hope it gets you thinking about the possibilities.

Now, just in case it doesn't, I want to take a step further. My job now is to manually turn those wheels. I hear some squeaking as we do it. Instead what I want to do is issue to everyone here a call to action, and it's a call to action that should really affect every one of us and something that we have to take on and something which working together I think we can conquer.

As many of you know, and I know there's been lots of talk about it, the fall armyworm is truly a great challenge to survival of agriculture in Africa. It's a destructive pest endemic to the Americas that is now spreading all across Africa. In fact, it has already been positively identified in nearly every country in Sub-Saharan Africa. It has a voracious appetite, particularly for maize, and it's pesticide resistant. It has the potential to cause billions of dollars in damage and put hundreds of millions of lives at risk for hunger. The potential impact of the fall armyworm highlights a fundamental challenge that farmers all across Africa face – limited access to the tools, technologies and management practices that are really necessary to take on and manage this threat.

So as many of you know, here in the U.S. we know the armyworm problem, and we've controlled it, and we've done so by using the best science and tools that are available, from crops with built-in resistance to smart, safe pesticide use. So USAID is calling public, private, civil society, research and university partners to channel those tools, to enlist those tools to take on this problem. Let's control the fall armyworm in Africa before it becomes a true food security crisis. We're launching this call to action to connect and mobilize our partners and ensure that Africa gets humanity's greatest thinking on this subject.

As part of our role in the collaboration, I'm announcing that Feed the Future has already begun assembling likeminded international and African organizations, companies and research

institutes to mobilize their solutions to the fall armyworm epidemic. And I'm reaching out to all of you to offer you a role in this effort. In fact, I am challenging you to join us. If you're willing and interested and if your organization can commit to this global effort, go to Feed the Future's website and tell us what you can bring to the table.

A hundred years ago, Teddy Roosevelt had this to say about challenges like this. He said, "Look, far and away the greatest prize that has to offer is the chance to work at work worth doing." And I submit to all of you here today that sustainable agriculture, Feed the Future, these new partnerships, especially as applied to daunting challenges like the fall armyworm – hard work, but God knows it's work worth doing.

Thank you to all of you for what you do. More importantly, thank you for what you're about to do. We appreciate it, and we promise to be there every step of the way as your partners.