

THE 2010 WORLD FOOD PRIZE LAUREATES FORUM
October 13, 2010 – 6:00 p.m.

Roger Thurow – Senior Fellow, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

This is quite a crowd that we have here tonight, and as you know, had to move it from the previous venues; I think we were pressing fire codes, regulations. So, but we’re fine here and perhaps some standing room places, and people should please sit down.

I just want to make sure that everybody’s in the right place. And to do that I just wanted to repeat a line from one of our laureates that I had heard at a big gathering of the United Nations in Rome. And he introduced himself by saying — you remember this, David — he introduced himself by saying, “Well, I hope I’m not disappointing anybody, but I’m David Beckmann, not David Beckham.” Lest anyone confuse him with a somewhat popular international soccer star married to a somewhat glamorous model and pop musician.

And in a similar vein — Jo Luck and I were talking about this in Chicago — in a similar vein, this is not a gathering of Amy Tan’s best-selling *Joy Luck Club*. This is a gathering and a celebration of the “Jo Luck Club,” which has millions of members and fans around the world and, particularly, in the developing world. And everybody here who gets the catalog and is a big fan of the organization and the millions of people that are benefiting from that. Nobody walked out of the room in Rome when David made that pronouncement, and nobody’s leaving here, so everybody is in the right place. And I’m grateful that you are, because this will be a really special treat tonight.

For with us, we have really two giants in the field of advocacy and activism. And we’re fortunate in their eloquence, because one is a teacher and one’s a preacher. They made the world their classroom and their ministry. And they’ve educated the world and spread the gospel and the word about global hunger and the great opportunities that every single person has to make a big difference in the fight against hunger. In doing that they really represent and encapsulate what Norman Borlaug stood for, I think, the example that certainly is held up for at this conference every year and in conferences around the world that celebrate his legacy and for his passion and dedication. So that’s what we’re going to try to do tonight, is capture that passion and dedication of our two Laureates and also their charisma and inspiration.

So I figured we would start off with trying to get a burst of inspiration, particularly for the folks who are involved in the activism and the young people in the crowd. I know neither of you intentionally set off on your careers to win the World Food Prize and to stand up in the Iowa State Capitol tomorrow evening with the trumpets blaring. Jo Luck, you were a wandering educator in the Department of Parks and Tourism in Arkansas, I guess, and Dave was a Lutheran pastor in the World Bank, of all places. (That was a flock.) I guess we can just start off by — Was there a particular moment, a “Eureka!” moment, perhaps, where you realized that, “My place is on the ramparts of the fight against hunger”? Jo Luck.

Jo Luck – President, Heifer International; 2010 World Food Prize Laureate

Thank you so much. I’m thrilled to be here with you. Actually, I had an “Aha!” moment when I was quite young, and I thought about this for a while, because another reporter had asked me. And I got to thinking, and I said, “You know what, I think where my first inspiration was when my mother and I went to Japan after World War II on the first, not the very first, but one of the first three ships for dependents to live there in occupied Japan.” There were 800 women and children.

We lived there a year. We had a lot of rules. The military knew everyone couldn't come home, so they wanted to take the families to those remaining behind, and we were to be ambassadors. We could not eat their food because they did not have enough, so we got ours at the commissary. We could not play with the children, because we had to be very careful about not doing anything incorrect in that culture. So I was quite lonesome that whole year with all those adults. I learned Japanese immediately. You know, you can do anything when you're four years old. It just soaks in.

And we went down the lane, and every Sunday morning we would break up little chocolate bars that mother had gotten at the commissary and hold it on a tray so I could at least hold something out to those children. As hungry as they were, they came up and each one took one little piece and bowed their appreciation backwards: "Arigato gozaimasu," "Arigato gozaimasu." And I wanted to play with them and talk to them so much, and I said, "Please, just for a little bit?" "No."

And I turned around to Otona and my mother (and probably got a spanking later), and I stomped my foot and said, "When I grow up, I'm gonna make children all over the world – make sure they can come together and play together as one family."

I thought about that later. I think that's when I first thought globally, and then my "a-ha" moment was when I was at Parks and Tourism. Then a very young governor named Bill Clinton — I worked on his cabinet — and I was teaching at night. I love to teach, even though I loved Parks and Tourism and recreation and the history and museums that were under my leadership, including the Great River Road, for those who are familiar with that. And so I was teaching at night and I ended up — I love teaching adults; they're ready to learn, you know, it's great — so I was teaching a motivation class, and I said, "Don't just tell me where you're gonna be in five years. Show me. Sketch it or cut out pictures." And I'd take magazines, you know, and I had 40 adults in my classrooms. And they did. It was exciting, and they still tell me, "I did it. Here's where I was. Here's my picture," when I see them.

So at the last class, they'd gotten together, the last class, and they said — and people call me Jo Luck, I know I'm not Cher and Madonna and all that, but they call me Jo Luck like it's one word, because I really don't have a last name anymore — and they said, "Jo Luck, we want to know where you're gonna be in five years. Show us." I said, "Oh, yeah, right." "No, no. We've decided we don't want to leave the room 'til you do that." I thought about it, and I walked over to a flip chart, picked up a magic marker, and I actually drew a picture — not great art — but I drew a picture of some women, and I was sitting with them in a circle on the ground. Some had a baby, there were chickens, a man was walking by, there was a hut.

They said, "Where is that?" I said, "You know, I'm not sure." They said, "Well, is it Africa, is it Asia, is it Latin America?" I said, "I don't know, but I want to be there, and I want to make a difference there." And I said, "Thank you for making me think about it."

A week later I went to what you call a power breakfast for some of the women leaders, and I told that story. And I said, "You all better do that, too. See where you're gonna be."

Another week later, a headhunter from Washington, DC, called his five CEO women presidents colleges, you know, top individuals, to ask for a recommendation of a name of a woman in Arkansas that might qualify for working to end hunger and poverty around the world, and so forth; three of those women had been at breakfast with me. They immediately said, "Jo Luck." Well, he thought I must be so high qualified. He called me, he began to tell me his name and what we were going to do. And I said, "What are the qualifications?" "Well, it'd be great if you've lived abroad, you're bilingual, maybe a veterinarian, an animal specialist in livestock or crops," went on and on.

I said, "Now, how did you get my name?" And, "Oh, you came highly recommended." "And any more qualifications?" He said, "Oh, management." I said, "I got that one." But I didn't want him to know I was so unqualified. But it was a thrill to get the call. So I tried to be clever, and I said, "I would love to do that. It

would be a dream job, but I'm a single mother, I've two children. I would have to take at least a \$10,000 cut a year, and I can't do that 'til they finish their education." He said, "I'll tell my employers."

He called again in three weeks. "We've narrowed from 40 to 4 candidates, and the group would like to meet you while they're in Little Rock at the world headquarters." I said, "Dick Irish, I know what's going on. You don't have a woman in the finals, and they don't have to pay for an airplane ticket for me. I live here." And it was the truth. In fact, the committee said, "We don't know if we should talk to her. She's not very qualified." He said, "I want to tell you one thing, after all my years experience. You did tell me I had to bring a woman, and I'm doing it." But he said, "Don't just judge the people on the paper. Meet them and judge them in person at least." So they kindly, grudgingly saw me.

We began the interview, and they branched out from their usual questions, and we really had kind of a charming time, and it ran longer than the others. And one gentleman said to me, and he was a Lutheran minister, a brilliant theologian –

David Beckmann

He could be okay anyway.

Jo Luck

He worked in the Northeast and was very committed to end world hunger. He said, "Ma'am, you do know that when we talk about travel, we're not talking about going to Paris." I said, "I think I understand that." No – he was really concerned; you know, in tourism you kind of have to dress up, and I had my hair coiffed and probably a manicure, and I'm so glad I don't have to do all that anymore. But, you know, he was really concerned.

They offered me the job at 4:30 that afternoon. I was so thrilled, I was walking on air. But the next morning I had to go to Governor Clinton and say, "I know in my heart you're gonna be President one day. I really don't want to miss that, but I finally have found what I want to be when I grow up. I want to work with Heifer and other organizations and end hunger and poverty." And now it's 21 years later, and that's what happened to me.

Roger Thurow

See, there's our initial burst of inspiration. David?

David Beckmann – President, Bread for the World; 2010 World Food Prize Laureate

The story I'd like to tell you about is a trip last year, which actually was an "Aha!" moment. Dave Miner, my board chair, and I went to Mozambique, and we started actually in a really remote part of Mozambique, up by Lake Nyasa. So we visited some lakeshore settlements that were about 100 miles from the nearest road. We had to fly in on this little one-engine airplane, and then we took a big boat across. Our first stop was this place called Ntimbe. And Ntimbe is 40 mud houses, each with their cassava field. There are no concrete buildings, no lights. When we got to the – our boat came up on the shore and there was a group of about 50 people, must have been half the settlement, we were on the shore and they were singing hymns and praise songs. Many of you have traveled in Africa, so you can picture what that was. And the people on the boat, the Africans on the boat, knew the songs, so they were singing the songs.

And we got to the shore, and they danced us up to the top of the hill. I usually carry this – I used to work at the World Bank, so I have this big, black briefcase that is sort of inseparable – and it was really hilarious, because this one lady – they insisted on carrying our luggage up – and there was a lady dancing up to the top

of the hill with my black briefcase on her head. But they took us up there. There was a church at the top of the hill, a mud brick church that they had built. And our host there, a young woman who used to work at Bread for the World, asked them to – their question was, “Tell these friends from America how your life is better than it used to be.”

Well, it wasn’t really obvious that their life was better than it used to be, but they started talking. And, well, somebody said, “Peace.” Because as you know, Mozambique had been through 16 years of civil war, and all these people had suffered atrocities, and they had been repeatedly been made refugees. And now they have peace and a pretty good government.

And somebody mentioned, “The school.” because 10 years ago they didn’t have a school. Now almost all the kids in Ntimbe, even the AIDS orphans, go to school. And that sort of sent shivers down my spine, because Bread for the World played a role in winning debt reduction for low-income countries, including Mozambique, which then provoked a major expansion of primary education across Africa, including Mozambique. And so I was really struck [at what] Bread for the World members, here in Iowa, had done to get the Iowa delegation and the Congress to support debt relief. You could see the evidence here on the other side of the world.

And there were people there in Ntimbe that had AIDS and they were on death’s door – they’re now living and taking care of their kids and farming, and they’re on the church’s AIDS action team, so they’re teaching kids in the school about AIDS and how to avoid it. And many of those – women, actually – their anti-retrovirals are mostly funded by the U.S. government.

And then also they are within, they have a line – there’s no electricity, but across the lake there’s a cell-phone tower. And so I think there are a couple of cell phones in Ntimbe

I was really just profoundly encouraged that these very, very poor people — all these people have suffered hunger; all of them know what hunger is — but they really have managed to make their lives better. So I just have taken a lot of hope from that experience. And then, when we left there, actually, we spent several days visiting little settlements along the coast. Then we went back across, got back on the airplane, and the airplane crashed taking off. So we came very, very close to instant death, and it kind of put a punctuation mark at the end of the sentence, if you know what I mean. You know, it was kind of like, “Ooh, this was a message here.” So I think that visit to Ntimbe gave me a renewed sense that I’m doing what I ought to do to help change the politics of hunger, a renewed sense that there is hope to reduce hunger and poverty. If we can do it in Mozambique, we can do it almost any country. We can do it in the USA.

So it’s a recent story, but in fact it’s given me an urgent sense of vocation. And the World Food Prize actually sort of fits into that. I feel like, “Whoa – this is external validation that’ll give me a chance to talk to a lot of people about what we need to do to end hunger.”

Roger Thurow

See, two great bursts of inspiration. I had a sneak look at David’s new book, *Exodus from Hunger*, and I think this is one of the anecdotes in there that as I was scanning across – that’s a plug for your book, and Jo Luck, I think you’re also writing your...

Jo Luck

I’ll write mine within two years.

Roger Thurow

...writing your memoirs or something. So it takes care of the literary aspirations. But also a great opportunity to also continue to tell the story and reach as many people as possible.

And as Jo Luck was saying, I mean, in your application or your interview, you know – okay, well, I'm not an agriculture expert, not a scientist as many of the eminent people in this room are, not politicians that are making the legislation to do this (and none of us up here are) – but I think the recognition of the World Food Prize this year, is that advocacy and activism are also vital in the fight against hunger, particularly in generating through agricultural development.

So maybe if you guys can talk a little bit about the role of advocacy and, particularly at this moment of opportunity that we have now, that we see things moving with the Feed the Future program in the administration — a plug for my organization, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and the research and projects that we're working on – with things going, and as we've been seeing in Africa for the last couple of years, with the political will emerging there, how crucial is this, building advocacy and grassroots fervor to support all this? David.

David Beckmann

Well, I think Jo Luck and I represent, we do represent grassroots people, ordinary people who take action to help. And Heifer International primarily is just mobilizing people to help other people, including poor people in developing countries to help other people directly. Bread for the World is a faith-based advocacy movement, so we are all about getting the U.S. Congress and the U.S. President to do what only they can do to lead change against – change in reducing hunger in our country and also around the world.

We do have really great opportunities right now. I mean, the world has suffered a big setback because of the economy, because of high grain prices; but the opportunities are very clear. In the U.S., for the first time ever, the U.S. government is leading a world hunger initiative, an effort to strengthen investment in agriculture and in child nutrition.

I think they're doing a really good job, but it didn't just happen. It happened because Bread for the World and other groups, Chicago Council, other [groups], lots of people across the country, urged them to do it, and many groups. They've done a great job of listening to civil society and private corporations. Even once they decided to launch it, they've been open to allowing us to help shape the initiative. Just two weeks ago President Obama issued a directive to every agency of the U.S. government, instructing them all on a coherent U.S. government policy to promote economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries. This is the first time that the U.S. government has had a coherent development policy since John F. Kennedy.

And their agriculture and nutrition initiative is really the leading edge. This is their opportunity to demonstrate how they want to do development assistance, focus on reducing poverty, focus on reducing poverty through growth, listening to the recipient government and to civil society in the country. Again, this one for sure, it would not have happened without several years of campaigning by ordinary citizens all across the United States who care about hunger in the world, going to their members of Congress; and then after we got legislation moving in both houses of Congress, the State Department and the White House launched study processes, and that has culminated in the president's policy.

And the job is not done, of course. Congress is not on track to provide the money that the president has requested for poverty-focused development assistance next year. They are not on track to provide the money that he's requested for Feed the Future next year. And if these reforms that he's announced are going to be long-lasting, we need to have them embodied in legislation with bipartisan support, so that they have the force of law and that they have some permanence.

And all of that depends on people. Those are all things in American politics, and it will not happen unless people here – people here, who are living in the United States, have a tie to a member of Congress – unless we get to them and let them know that reducing hunger and poverty is important to us and we want them to

fund development assistance, we want them to reform U.S. foreign assistance so that it has a bigger impact for every dollar.

It's, the opportunity – this has got nothing to do with the deficit; the amount of money we're talking about is a rounding error in the federal budget. And if we can reform foreign assistance, that's really good for the U.S. taxpayer – it means we're going to get more impact per dollar. But it really comes back to people like us writing a letter to a member of Congress, calling their office, pushing. It's organized "give-a-damn" which will in fact lead to an acceleration of progress against hunger and poverty. The same thing, Roger – the same thing is true in other countries.

Often what is fundamentally missing is the political commitment to reduce hunger and poverty. Usually, people who have means and power know some things that could be done that would help poor and hungry people, but they don't do them. So I think in other countries, too, the way to get political will... I mean, partly you get good political leaders, you elect good political leaders; that's clearly part of the political process. But you also have to have push institutions in your society, institutions that can be within government or outside government, they can be political parties, or they can be NGOs – institutions that will keep pushing politicians and political leaders to do the right thing by hungry and poor people.

Roger Thurow

That's an "amen" to Reverend Beckmann – Amen.

David Beckmann

Can we have an amen?

Roger Thurow

Please, Jo Luck.

Jo Luck

Shall we put David down as undecided?

Roger Thurow

I was going to say, to hear the phrase, "organized give-a-damn" from a preacher was also exciting, so that was – Jo Luck, please.

Jo Luck

Well, Heifer has moved into advocacy. We're 66 years old, but for many, many years we did not approach that. We were working with the villages, with the communities, with the people on the ground. And actually, in the very beginning, there wasn't really interest in the government because they were so focused on the farmers. And as we've grown and we've learned, we know you're never going to make a significant impact until you really do influence the decision-makers as well.

And so we have spent three years, brought in a lot of these brilliant people, David and Sam Worthington and Charlie McCormack and Max Finberg and Tony Hall, and I could never name them all and never should have started the list – that have come to help train us and talk to us about good ideas, what they've learned in advocacy.

We are working all over the world. And if you're on the Rio, you know what you want to talk about in advocacy; if you're talking about a water issue over here... I said, "We can't take on all these issues — not until you have grown and strengthened in your own countries and you're ready for that." We have got to pick our first one and test it, and be careful, because our donors do not think that's our work. But they're going to see how it is necessary.

So right now, we are advocates for the smallholder farmer and the women to be empowered around the world. And we're members of Bread for the World, we look at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs; we read their important work. I'm deeply honored that I'll work with you this year on how we implement and monitor it. So we're not burying our heads, but we're not going to rush forward and lose a lot of people and think we're changing our focus. But it will come, and I want to say that; I really do. But I'm not going to speak my thoughts because I'm not representing all of Heifer yet, although we have a great team here and we all have a lot of opinions.

But there are other ways we influence. We live the examples of success. And so when David and others turn to us [and ask], "Is this working, and where is it?" — you know, we're on the ground. We've been there for a number of years. We hire only the indigenous people; they know it, the government knows them, everybody respects it, and we can say, "See — this has worked for years and years. Over here, this didn't; this is what we've learned. So we'll be kind of your lab, so to speak." A teacher would say "practice teaching," and that's our role.

David Beckmann

I mean, I just, I think Arthur Simon, who founded Bread for the World, is over here. He always says that action against hunger walks on two legs. There's the leg of direct assistance, really helping people, and then there's the leg of advocacy, changing laws and structures. And you've got to walk on both legs. You know, you can't just get the government to try to do what the government ought to do. You also ought to go out and help farmers be more productive. So what Heifer organizes — Heifer organizes hundreds of thousands of Americans and others to help millions of people directly. You know, clearly this is part of the solution, and you need to, I think we need to walk on both legs.

Jo Luck

Exactly.

Roger Thurow

Absolutely. Jo, when you were talking about things that Heifer does on the ground, the proving ground and practice ground, were there one or two examples that you wanted to give in terms of...

Jo Luck

Well, you know, I could be like David and I could get on my soapbox and tell you so many and get you so excited — but in the interest of this great audience and the time that we have, I want to just — this is not my best example, but I want to let you know that a lot of people think that they just are kind of living on subsistence, barely making it. And I'll give you two examples of great success, and then if I might, a little bit more modest example. I won't do too many, but I'd like to do that to show you both ends.

A gentleman — and if I don't have my years exact; I've got all those brilliant ones out there that'll tell me — but roughly 14 years ago, in that vicinity, a gentleman received rabbits in China. Rabbits, you say? I mean, we need cattle, right, and water buffalo and camels. You know, we work with 30 species, because we do have to find what's appropriate for the environment, the community has to decide what their resources are, what they

can support and what their real needs are. So we walk with them for one to three years in preparation and then long afterwards in monitoring – but it's theirs.

This gentleman, over that period of time, became a millionaire by U.S. standards, was written up in Jakarta in what is their *Wall Street Journal*. He goes back. Now, this started with rabbits. It's not about animals – that's the catalyst. It's about people. He goes back and every year does the same for 250 more families. He didn't forget where he came from. He's brought in water, he's brought in roads, and we all know how important it is, because if you get to the end of the road and it stops, things stop. You've got to keep it going. He has done so much, and he's one example.

Now, everyone's not going to be a millionaire, but don't tell me a smallholder farmer with the right resources and training – and they're mostly going to be entrepreneurs – can't make it as a great success.

Another situation I think is really important. The Gates Foundation and World Bank, and, oh, so many wonderful groups that make things happen, they really like to think big. You know, we're not going to solve hunger problems for a growing population if we don't think big. But they've kind of begun looking – now, what happens with these smallholder farmers? There is a role for them. So we are so fortunate; our largest grant, to have a \$42 million grant for a pilot program. And Sahr Lebbie's here, and others, and I think some from the Gates Foundation, but that's just one example of partnership. We're working in East Africa, in Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya – oh, Alex is here from Kenya, and Charles from Rwanda – to see how we can empower them to come together. And they're having to buy their own cooling plants, or they get a loan and they pay it back. This is not giving – they're doing, they're earning.

And then they come together and they build a business, and then they make their plan. TechnoServe helps us with that business side of it. ILRI, out of Nairobi and Addis Ababa, the International Livestock Research Institute, Carlos Seré will be here; they've helped us with the research. Now, it takes all of us. If that's successful, I have a feeling it'll spread. That's only up to the Gates Foundation, not us, but they're looking at Phase II. So think what might happen with that as a great example.

On the other hand – I was in Thailand, and I saw the oldest little woman, probably was my age; they live such a hard life. Well, I'm kind of an old little woman, but I've been lucky. I haven't suffered as much and worked as hard in the kind of way she does. And here she was, little woman, and of course you know how they dress, coins around their head and all these fine clothes. They don't just wear that to ceremonies; they live in it and work in it.

She was out there hanging onto this thing behind this great big water buffalo and just working her heart out. She came over to the side to take a break and through the interpreter I asked her, "Why do you work so hard out there? You're the senior member of the family. You have a lot of people here working."

She said, "Let me tell you something. We all have to do this and work together, because it takes so much time. And here's the thing: if I die my family will miss me terribly, but if this water buffalo dies, they lose all their hope, future and success and means of income." You know, she knew the truth, and she understood the truth. And that's what agriculture and animal agriculture do.

And I have several more up my sleeve if I get a chance to answer a question.

Roger Thurow

I think you guys are giving eight or a dozen speeches this week, so you can roll out the rest of them as you go along — right? Now, David, I think you mentioned you had an example of Bread's work with somebody in Iowa, were you mentioning or...? Do you want to mention that?

David Beckmann

It's an interesting example. Roger was saying he wanted just to have us give an example of how our organization works. So I think a good story is that there's this story about a guy named Tom Booker. I came in early, actually, and preached in a church on Sunday, Faith Lutheran, and Tom was there. He told me – I may get a few of these details wrong, because as he walked out of church, he said, "You got a few of the facts wrong." But it's basically right.

Roger Thurow

I'm a journalist — I can appreciate it.

David Beckmann

This is back in 1999, and you may remember that Archbishop Tutu and Pope John Paul II both suggested writing down some of the debts of the world's poorest countries in the year 2000, what became the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. But the basic idea was that Jubilee Year, based on a passage in the Torah – about every 50 years you'd write off the debts of heavily indebted peasants. So they had the idea that the year 2000 only would come once; let's use that to write off some of the debts of the poorest countries.

So lots of church groups all over the world started campaigning around the Jubilee idea, including Bread for the World and the church bodies that support us.

In 1999 when we started we had no – President Clinton, who was in the White House, did not think it was a good idea. Secretary Rubin, and Secretary Summers after him, thought it was a bad idea. We had no member of Congress who thought it was a good idea. And also it was a complicated thought. How are you going to do this, write off debts, in a way that really would help poor people, not just poor-country governments?

So as the Congress got themselves organized, it turned out that Jim Leach, who then was a representative from Iowa in Congress, was the chairman of the House Banking Committee. So we tried to get in to see Mr. Leach, and his staff wouldn't let us in to see him. They said, "Oh, the Chairman's working on a broad reform of the financial system this year. We just don't have time for these other pieces of legislation." And they wouldn't let us in.

So Tom is in his district, and they had started writing, a few people had started writing letters to Leach from their district, and then Tom knew he was going to be in town. He said, "I think I could get a meeting." So he talked to Tammy Walhof, who's our organizer for the upper Midwest, she's here, and he said, "Should I try to get a meeting?" She said, "Oh, sure." And he said, "Well, I really haven't studied..." Anyway, he went in and he took two or three people along with him, because he was nervous about going to see Mr. Leach on this issue. And it was at the end of the day; they were waiting in his office. The Congressman was late. He said, "I am sorry. I just can't take time to meet with you. I've got to get out to the airport." So he said, "Why doesn't one of you get in the car with me and you can explain it on the way to the airport."

Tammy tells me people from Iowa would know that the trip from Jim Leach's office to the airport in Cedar Rapids is a short trip. Is this true? It's not a long trip. So Tom had like, boom, got to explain this thing. And so he asked Mr. Leach to help us, just put it on the agenda.

Shortly after that, in fact, we got our meeting with Mr. Leach. And Jim Leach is a lapsed Catholic who goes to an Episcopal church, I think. So we went with representatives of the Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church and Bread for the World. But we walked in, and the chairman said, "Not only will I put it on the agenda; I want to sponsor the bill." And I was sitting next to one of his staffers — it was chairs like this — and that staffer almost, I mean, he almost fell off the chair. It was really dramatic.

So then Leach – he did it as a bipartisan bill, the bill moved. He moved it through the banking committee two weeks before the G8 Summit that year. It was President Clinton’s last G8. And Larry Summers, by then, was the Secretary of the Treasury. These movements, mainly among Republicans in the House, convinced Larry Summers that this issue had zip. And so the President took Leach’s basic ideas in the Leach Debt Relief Bill to the G8 Summit, and that resulted, as this very knowledgeable crowd would know, in the end – I mean, it took a lot of other effort. Tens of thousands of other citizens had to work with other members of Congress; it took us two years to get it authorized and then appropriated and so forth – but it has resulted in a \$78 billion reduction in debt, mostly debt that poor countries couldn’t have paid anyway. But their actual debt-service payment has been reduced by \$3 billion a year. It’s affected about 35 of the poorest countries, relatively well-governed countries.

And the deal has been that the industrialized countries and the international financial institutions will write off your debt if you use that money, and some of your own money, to invest in basic education, health, agriculture, things that are going to reduce poverty. So by all accounts it has worked really well. It strengthened democracy in some countries.

And just one clear example of an impact is the 30 million more kids who are in school – that came out of Tom Booker, this one Iowan, daring to take on a complex global issue and going to his member of Congress with his values and asking him to help reduce hunger and poverty in the world.

So in Ntimbe, that school, that’s what sent shivers down my spine. The school in that little town, not even a town, that little settlement, in remote Mozambique is there in significant part because one Iowan dared to be an advocate for hungry people.

Roger Thurow

That’s a really powerful example, and from that – in terms of raising the clamor, and that’s one thing that we try to do at the Council, or myself, outrage and inspire –

David Beckmann

You’re great. You’re good at it. Actually, you’re really good at it. *Enough* is a good book.

Roger Thurow

Thank you. But as one sees that you hear this story [of] the Earth moving on the debt-relief issue. And what we need to ask is, Why not hunger? And let’s put that effort behind the hunger effort and just, so, we want to say, “Why hunger? Why is there so much hunger in the world?” We also need to ask, “Why not hunger? If we can do these things on debt relief, the marvelous things that have gone on on AIDS reduction, the things that are happening on climate change — why not hunger?” Now, Jo Luck, you wanted to say something about...

Jo Luck

I was telling you how we work with advocacy; we live the example and provide some of the data and proof. And also how you can be highly successful and also what it means, sometimes, at the smallest level – that’s so important.

But very quickly, the reason Heifer is successful – and the reason I’m drawn there and been kept there is because they have learned so much over 66 years. And when I came and I was head of international program, and a great orientation, and I went to all these wonderful experts around the world – and many of you helped me facilitate – I said, “Tell me what it is that makes Heifer unique? What is special?” And of course, you know, “Do you want nouns, do you want...?” I said, “I don’t care. Just give me words. I’m a teacher. Let’s

get started on this.” It took us several months, when you communicate all over the world. This came from the ground up, not just farmers but the brilliant leaders. You know, all our country directors are more educated than I am. They have their doctorates, they have everything else – and that’s the way I like it, because it makes their boss look good. But it is important to bring them to the table and hear.

So we ended up developing the 12 Cornerstones based on the core values of what we do. And we’ve taken Dan West’s vision another step, and we say there has to be full participation, gender equity, family focused, accountability, genuine need and justice, you know, caring for the earth, better animal management, integration of crops – and I won’t tell you all that, but it’s important.

Every time we look at something in a project and evaluate it, that is considered. And the people on the ground organize, they make the decisions, they monitor it. If you don’t do it well, they take it away for someone else. We are there to help them and support them, but they make those decisions. And that’s why, in the Andes, they’re re-introducing alpaca, you know, the llama; and in the high highlands, it’s guinea pigs – it’s the only place they have space to have their protein.

So that is the approach, and I’d be happy, any of us would, to tell you a bit more about that, because it has turned into a development model that has been adopted. The World Bank once even asked us to come in in a place where something wasn’t sustainable and work with them. And so I won’t go into all that.

But I want you to know that is the real approach and the secret of sustainability. And so my dream, after winning this great honor – I represent the farmers by receiving it for them – is that we are going to get more exposed now to not only the great advocacy organizations, but corporate support and interest, agribusiness. You know, for years the little farmer and the agribusiness were kind of at odds. They don’t need to be. They don’t have to agree on everything, but they need to take the best from each other, and whatever they need to do, they need to know the impact.

So my dream — and I’ve been hearing a lot of great things about the importance of that small farmer and ending hunger, and certainly that’s not the only way to do it. But we need to come together. And, you know, I think we’re getting ready to. David said, and I say, the stars are lined up. You know, our administration, our Secretary of Agriculture, our Secretary of State, Raj, the administrator of USAID; all these people – golly, the World Food Prize brings them together, I’ll tell you that. And what a great opportunity to have that. We don’t have the resources, but we can sure lay the plan, and we’re going to have those resources. So that’s a dream, and this is an opportunity. Roger, thank you so much for the good questions and opportunities to speak.

Roger Thurow

Well, thank you. I put my glasses on because Frank flashed me – well, Frank didn’t flash me, but Frank flashed me a sign. Frank gave me a sign. I’d have put my glasses on for that, too...

Jo Luck

Of all times that I can’t see very well!

Roger Thurow

No. There are 10 minutes or so left, and so I think if we could maybe get some questions from the audience if anybody has any. But I want to say – what you’re hearing here is – a lot of times, and it’s so common, that we look the hunger problem, and it seems to be so immense. And we’re kind of paralyzed with, “Well, what can we do? What can one person do?” And as one just hears from Jo Luck, there’s so much. And David speaks eloquently about this kind of exodus, divinely inspired, that is happening. And he writes about that a lot in his book. And so kind of these two folks really embodying the optimism that we can do this and make great inroads on this. Question in the back?

Question

Hi. My name is Isaac, and I'm with the Oxfam Action Corps, and I'm a volunteer. And somebody on the panel mentioned the Feed the Future initiative of the administration. And something that we've been advocating for is the Global Food Security Act, which would hopefully extend the viability of that Feed the Future initiative beyond the current administration. Just wondering what you and David in particular thought about that bill.

David Beckmann

We supported the Global Food Security Act. It was a Lugar-Casey bill. I think the fact that Lugar-Casey introduced that bill already, maybe four or five months before the administration really outlined their Feed the Future, what became Feed the Future – it helped to get the administration to move. We supported it; it didn't pass before the end of this last Congress.

And my guess is, if it's reintroduced, what they may do is introduce a bill that more closely aligns itself with what the administration is doing, so that, in fact, the legislation really will undergird, give the force of law to, some of the things that are underway. And that would be really important, because it's bipartisan legislation. It would make the emphasis and the initiative to promote agriculture and reduce hunger in the world a long-term commitment of the U.S. government, not just something that one or two politicians, very powerful politicians – but, still, if they change their mind, or the voters change who's in office, they'll be gone and this initiative will disappear. So something like that would be good to do in the next Congress. We'll see what Lugar and Casey decide to do.

Roger Thurow

Okay, thank you. The question from Oxfam reminds me that there's so many activist and grassroots organizations represented in this room. And Jo Luck started naming some and then figured, well, you could go on and name a lot of others. I'm not going to name, I won't list any others, but they all have booths and displays on the third floor, I guess, above here, and some really great, innovative work that's being done, and very inspirational and powerful work that's being done by a lot of the activists and advocates and grassroots organizations that are represented here and annually come here. Next question. You can go to the microphones, by the way.

Question

Question for Jo. Heifer has done such a fantastic job in terms of the provision of livestock for smallholder farmers, but most exceptional is that you also have a tremendous training program to assist them in fully integrated, sustainable farming practices around that animal. Could you share with us some of the basic principles on how you approach putting together really effective training programs for the farmers?

Jo Luck

Absolutely, and thank you. A while ago I was trying to imply those are the kinds of things we must do to make it sustainable. We can't back up and let the animals out and say, "Good luck!" And I'm serious about that, because some people assume that might happen. And for experienced farmers, after World War II, there was a little bit of that to be sure; it was in the hands of farming experts. But they might eat the animal by mistake — you heard of that — we didn't want that to happen. Also, if we just leave it there and they're not sure, maybe some of the leadership that it was not meant for might take the animals and say, "We'll take care of them."

So we have the local people, when they request – and we only respond to requests; we don't go in and say, "We have a great idea." We respond to requests, and they heard it word of mouth, and they go out and take a team and look at all the needs. They talk about training, and it's always how to care for the animal, but [also] how do you care for your resource and the environment? Instead of cutting trees, plant trees, have a living fence. When you have a slash-and-burn hillside — and, you know, the very poor have the worst land — do the terracing, plant the nitrogen-fixing trees, learn how to do that. We teach them how to build zero-grazing pens with the slats underneath so they catch the urine and the manure, and they use that as fertilizer, or maybe the patties from the cows, or whatever, to insulate or burn for fuel.

You know, there are so many options in that training. They have to train in gender equity. They have to make a decision how they're going to pay for it; they maybe say 1% goes into savings. They have to learn a little bit about accounting, because they have to keep track of the animals and the offspring for their data and their records. So it ends up leading to an entire sense of development. And pretty soon, they are training others. So we train as many farmer trainers to help others.

The ones [with] resources that might be a little greater, some with a little more land or something, they usually have the breeding animal, so they have to figure out how they save their money for their breeding and how they work together as a team.

Another factor is – people say, "Why do you put them in a pen? Isn't that cruel?" Those are the goats, particularly. "You know, they're not healthy. I said, "Yes, they are healthy." That protects them from disease. They don't go out and nibble up the crops and the plants and destroy things. The children will exercise them in the afternoon, the families rotate who milks them. And each child knows when their family is going to have a milking, and they're out there with their cup, because they get the first milk, and then they all sell the rest.

So you have to learn techniques. We have experts, and we use local experts, and we bring them from all parts of the world, too. While the indigenous people run the program, they bring in the best, and they monitor each other, to train them like extension workers.

And the final thing I'll say on that – when we went into Poland to open Central and Eastern Europe, Jim Devries – he's been a wonder; I've worked with him all the years, and he's here, head of the international program – we went in and we looked at the state farms, and I said, "These are some of the most incredible animals I have ever seen. They're beautiful." And so I said, "What are you doing with them?" They said, "Well, we slaughter some each month to survive." "And what are you waiting for?" And through the interpreter, they said, "Hope." So we talked about it. Why can't Heifer come in, with our great donor support, and with the experts, and select the best and then hire you to be their extension worker? We'll put them with local farmers, we'll save the breed, we'll begin to – I mean, those things aren't complicated; they're logical, but I have to have the best technical people, the knowledgeable people, to know how to carry it off.

And there's a lot more training along that line, and I appreciate you bringing it up. Because if they're not comfortable, if they can't handle it, when we pull out, it's not sustainable. You can go almost any place where we've delivered animals and still find people who will say, "Heifer made a difference years ago."

Roger Thurow

You sound like an agricultural expert to me. You're talking fertilizer, and...

Jo Luck

We have men and women out there – though, at the beginning, when I came, it was mostly men – and they taught me a lot, so I appreciate it, and I have learned a great deal.

Roger Thurow

You're learning. Probably time for one last question.

Question

My name is Kevin Pokorny. I'm from Des Moines, and welcome to Iowa. I'm real pleased that you're here. The question I have is: What effect, or what impact, is global climate change having relative to your programs and dealing from the aspect of – not only the local level, as far as how that may affect land and water and crops and so on, but also the politics within the world relative to global climate change? Can you respond to that about how that's playing into this whole scenario and what it's creating for you?

Jo Luck

Well, first of all, everyone I know at Heifer (and there may be an exception), we believe climate change is real. So we're really serious about it. And we realize that the techniques we're teaching – like I mentioned, the terraced hillsides, how to do plantings to stop erosion and other areas, all sorts of things that you can do to better prepare – sometimes it's so devastating what might happen. But we have seen much more natural disasters with that. And we've had two examples of a hurricane hitting – was it Mitchell? – anyway, our farmers fared so much better than even their neighbors because they had some plantings, they had some means of keeping the land and not having the landslides. When the tsunami hit, it hit in six areas, and people were wanting to give us money to get out there and help. We said we want to help, but we're not in disaster assistance. And we listed several great organizations, and go find them, and they need you. That was in the *Wall Street Journal* — we kind of liked that. Said, seldom do they recommend someone else. What I said is, when they go to reconstruction and rebuilding, we need to be there and help them.

Another thing is, when we have these refugee camps, I have met children that have been there 18 years, they've lived there – that's not temporary. I think we should start immediately. David knows how so many people, handing out milk for children, all the things we have to do, disaster assistance. And it's kind of like the climate change – we have to take care of the immediacy. But let's all be planning for the longer term. Let's be giving them something to take care of and make some decisions. Give them chickens in the refugee camp, give them this and that, give them the training of what they might do for global warming.

And really tell them what might happen. Now, they have the right to believe it or not, but I think they need to know what the implications are. And I don't think poverty, global change, climate change, environmental issues, hunger, many of those things, can ever be separated. They're integrated, in my opinion. We just don't each have expertise in everything – that's why we need to talk to each other. And we need to work with people on water issues; I'm very frightened about water issues in the future as well as climate change. I hope that helps a little.

Roger Thurow

David, I guess we're probably running out of time, so I was figuring we will leave our benediction to Reverend Beckmann, because I know you have something to say.

David Beckmann

Yeah, I do, actually. You know, I do see this in theological terms. I may be the first person to talk about theology at the Borlaug Dialogue. But since – I believe in the God of the Bible, so when I see that hundreds of millions of people have escaped from poverty, extreme poverty over the last couple of decades, I see this as our loving God moving in our history. This is like the Exodus when slaves escaped from Egypt, and the experience of their escape gave them that great liberalization; gave them, shaped their idea of what God was.

I think the reduction of hunger and poverty and disease that has happened, and that is so clearly possible, is the great Exodus of our time. And I also think, if you believe in any kind of god, God's calling us to get with the program and to be part of this, and specifically that includes using our political power, wherever we live, to change laws and systems to advance this great liberalization.

Now, in a group like this, people have all different kinds of ideas about religion or not religion, but everybody here knows that feeding a hungry child is sacred. And everybody here knows that absolutely the best way to do it is to make it possible for Mom and Dad to make a living so that they can feed that hungry child day after day and make life better for themselves. So I do say I think what we're about is profoundly spiritual, profoundly hopeful. And for this room full of people to get with the program and help advance what God's doing in the world, that's what I hope for.

Jo Luck

I say, Amen, Brother David.

Roger Thurow

So thank you, Reverend Beckmann and Jo Luck, and I think everybody can really see the passion and the commitment and the dedication and the drive and two extremely worthy laureates of the World Food Prize – because we have Dr. Swaminathan here and the absolutely stupendous work that went on during the Green Revolution in India, other scientists, and the tremendous work that they have done. The other leg of that, as we've been talking about, is there has to be the advocacy to support what you guys are doing in the research labs and out in the fields.

So another round of applause for Reverend Beckmann and Jo Luck, and we're all off to dinner. Thank you.