

2010 "HUNGER FIGHTER" BREAKFAST KEYNOTE: RAJIV SHAH

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Thank you. Thank you, Catherine. It's already a little nervous to be here with a group of people that I all consider mentors and experts and people I've been proud to learn from, and then to have Catherine offer such a generous introduction is really something. Thank you.

And I want to thank Ambassador Quinn and the organizers of the World Food Prize, John Ruan and others, for inviting me to speak today. I've been to this event, as Catherine mentioned, for a number of years, and I am just amazed at the growth and the enthusiasm that is palpable in this room today and that was just incredibly palpable and real in the beautiful setting of the session yesterday when we got to honor David and Jo.

It is the first time coming to Des Moines now that I've made this a regular practice, that I've run into Kofi Annan at the airport, and I guess that's telling about the stature of this event and what it means for this city.

I also want to thank several pillars of Iowa politics, and in the world of agriculture, Secretary Vilsack is just such a tremendous leader with such a unique commitment to this cause, this place and this Prize. Congressman, thank you for being here, and I know Senator Harkin is not here, but it was outstanding to have him participate so regularly in this effort.

As I've said before, I've had the privilege of addressing this gathering before, and every year I've come here to learn something from you and to share thoughts on new approaches, things we could do to prioritize agricultural development and really break fundamentally the cycle of hunger and food assistance that we've witnessed for decades.

But today I come here in a different role. I now represent a government fully committed to an approach that I and you have been advocating for. I'm responsible in part for carrying out that vision, and we as an administration are fully dedicated to its success.

You've heard the President in his inaugural address, at last year's G-8 Summit in L'Aquila, and just a few weeks ago in the New York U.N. General Assembly articulate his core commitment to agricultural development and eliminating hunger.

Last week while accepting the George McGovern Leadership Award, you heard the Secretary of State, a powerful advocate for food security for some time, describe in detail and without notes our efforts to increase crop yields, our efforts to build access to markets, our efforts to use mobile technology to transmit weather and price information to smallholder farmers around the world.

And you've read the prospectus. I have a copy of it here. It's available on our website. This prospectus that is our guide for the Feed the Future program, represents a strategic for how we intend to spend the \$3.5 billion

dollars this administration has committed to this cause and how we hope to marshal the additional \$18.5 billion dollars that those commitments have already leveraged towards this end.

So you've heard these speeches, you've read these announcements, and you've seen us recite a set of core principles that come right out of the learnings and the insights and the knowledge represented in this room today. And so if I were you, I'd have one question on my mind: What is actually happening out there that's different?

I can tell you today that we're focused on global food security in a way that this government has not been since the earliest days of the Green Revolution. Throughout this government our agencies are working together in a united approach to increase food security and finally conquer global hunger.

At USAID we've established a new Bureau of Food Security responsible for guiding and directing our agricultural development programs and with a real focus on improving nutrition and an absolutely priority of focusing on women and girls — that's for you, Catherine.

It's for everybody. We've also hired more than 40 additional foreign service officers specializing in agriculture, raising our global food security workforce to nearly 300 individuals.

We've created a new mechanism housed at the World Bank, called the Global Food Security Trust Fund, that makes it easier to invest in food security priorities. This mechanism uses open proposal rounds and independent technical reviews and has already led to the commitment of nearly \$225 million to five countries. But more importantly, it's created a new avenue for countries to bring their partners together, develop collective and coherent proposals, send them in, and benefit from the guidance of expert agencies.

And — and I was particularly excited to be a part of this — we've unveiled the Norman Borlaug Commemorative Research Initiative. This new partnership between USAID and USDA is a new research effort that will invest in transformative solutions to help farmers deal with pests, disease and a changing climate.

One of the first priorities of this initiative — not surprising, given my experience here several years ago when I had the chance to meet Dr. Borlaug for the first time — has been to accelerate our investments in the most serious wheat rust disease that the world has seen in nearly 50 years, Ug99.

Although discovered in Uganda just 11 years ago, Ug99 has spread quickly throughout East Africa, Asia and parts of the Middle East. We're already seeing Ug99 threaten the food security and the recent productive agricultural gains in important conflict-prone states like Pakistan and Afghanistan. And 80 percent of the wheat varieties grown in this country are also potentially susceptible to this disease, which could lead to potential losses of more than \$9 billion a year.

To combat Ug99, we're working with USDA's outstanding Agricultural Research Service — and I don't know if Dr. Knippling is here today, but Ed Knippling, who runs that, I saw him last night — and in doing so, we're helping to support the development of greenhouse research in Minnesota, developing adapted wheat rust varieties in Pakistan and then trying to use those varieties and test their performance in other parts of the region.

We estimate these rust-resistant varieties will be adopted by nearly 3.5 million farmers over 5 million hectares of land, yielding an additional 250,000 tons of wheat, and generating \$63 million in smallholder income alone.

But this is really just one example of a renewed commitment to science and technology. We're also working with the CGIAR to support the important new effort to redesign that institution into a series of mega

programs. These programs focus on high-potential research into new seed varieties, effective agricultural policy reforms, and better water and soil management practices.

In response to and in support of this new effort, we've doubled our investment in these mega-programs, making the United States the single largest supporter of the CGIAR. And we're strengthening partnerships with U.S. land grant universities.

This year we're focused on making unique investments in Feed the Future pilot countries, and I'll speak more about that. But we're focusing in particular on beans in South America and aquaculture in West and East Africa. And in each of these areas we expect to see 15 to 30 percent productivity improvements in the specific countries that are the target of that effort.

Finally, we're transforming our food assistance program in order to make it faster and more effective. We've accelerated our time to crisis to a matter of days in terms of food deliveries and are now the fastest provider of food aid in the world. We've focused our assistance on vulnerable populations, like pregnant women and infants, as part of a new effort to prioritize the first thousand days, from conception to age 2, when children are most vulnerable and when the gains of improved nutrition yield benefits through their entire lifetime. And we're responsibly transitioning away from monetized food assistance and trying to provide more direct support to private, voluntary organizations.

To continue to help create real incentives for the development of local agriculture in vulnerable countries, we've dramatically ramped up local procurement of food in instances where access, not availability, is what leads to crisis and famine. This year we've spent \$250 million in local procurement of food aid, up from nothing just a few years ago.

And we're pushing ourselves even harder than that. We don't just want to buy local food from anyone — we want to try to create markets for the most vulnerable smallholder farmers, those who are the subject of our Feed the Future strategy.

We do this in part by serving as a major supporter of the World Food Programme's Purchase for Progress initiative, dedicated to procuring food from very smallholder farmers and building the market infrastructure that really allows them to upgrade their post-harvest management and achieve much higher prices for what they've produced.

The \$20 million we've contributed to this program this year will directly increase the incomes of nearly half a million smallholder farmers. And perhaps more importantly, we intend to study the results so we can document what's working and what is not. We genuinely believe in this approach, and we're exploring its expansion, especially in particular important priority agricultural communities, such as Southern Sudan.

But there's more. What's really exciting and what I really want to share with you is not what we are doing but what our country partners are doing on the ground. And I have one slide here; I don't know if that will work. Good, great. This slide shows two maps of Tanzania, showcasing the regions in that country that have poor or borderline food consumption, based on a recent assessment by the World Food Programme.

As you can see, food insecurity has spread throughout the country, from Kagera in the northwest all the way to Mtwara in the southeast. You have essentially a belt of states where hunger and malnutrition runs rampant.

That reality shows up in human statistics. One third of Tanzanians live below the poverty line. 44 percent of children under 5 show signs of stunting. And malnutrition underlies between one third and one half of all child deaths in the country. Despite 5+ percent GDP growth in a consistent way over the last decade on an

annualized basis, we have not seen the kind of poverty reduction that would make a meaningful dent in these numbers. And Tanzania is currently not on track to meet its MDG-1 poverty and hunger targets.

So keep all of this in mind as you look at this map of where food insecurity is particularly severe. And that's why we're joining with the government of Tanzania and its many, many partners. And I believe we have Ambassador Augustine Mahiga here to represent Tanzania today. If he's not here, we saw him yesterday.

But we're all collectively placing our bets in the region identified by the bright green area. This map shows the target regions and specific value chains that the Tanzanian government has chosen to prioritize for investment based on smart, selective and rigorous analysis. This analysis is driven by fundamental understanding that is now defining everything we do in our Feed the Future strategy. And it's that we simply cannot do everything everywhere and expect to do it well.

These regions demonstrate a significantly higher potential for growth, encompassing the major road, rail and electrical grid pathways of the country and new investments that they expect to receive. By providing a thoughtful strategy that offers a tight geographic focus, the government of Tanzania is also able to lean on other bilateral and multilateral partners and ensure that their support is complementary and aligned.

While USAID will make investments in agricultural value chains, the Millennium Challenge Corporation will rehabilitate and invest in building out the trunk road system. The African Development Bank is providing credit to the country to develop feeder road infrastructure. And all of this together will provide much quicker and much more robust access to markets.

JICA, the Japanese bilateral aid agency, is building an irrigation scheme, and the World Bank is building in this region a regional center of excellence in rice research.

To focus all of the tools of our government, we are working with the State Department to support Tanzania to liberalize its seed sector and to reform its tax and export policies in order to avoid the current prohibitions on market access that effectively limit lending and market activity for smallholder farmers.

But it's not just the public and multilateral sectors that have a strong and additive role to play. This coordinated focus in a specific area of potential productivity is helping private firms expand their investments in Tanzania, across the investment corridor the government has identified, which is essentially the east/west corridor that cuts through the bright green area.

Yara is providing investments to build out a better fertilizer system. Unilever is looking to source sustainable projects from that region and to foster further demand. And General Mills, thanks in part to a new partnership with USAID, is providing technical assistance to local millers in a focused and effective way.

But the main private sector partners aren't global firms. They include the dozens of local Tanzanian firms that work with smallholder farmers to sell seeds and transport and process product. I recently saw Joe DeVries here from AGRA who told me that they have six small seed companies that are thriving as demand for hybrid seed goes up, because in part of this regionally focused, market-oriented and comprehensive strategy.

We're offering their companies debt guarantees through tools that USAID has, like the Developing Credit Authority, trying to equip them with the spark they need to mature their businesses further and really help grow the rural economy.

And today, knowing how important it is for private firms to have an easier way to work with USAID and other bilateral aid agencies, we're unveiling the Feed the Future Private Investment Center, a new public-

private partnership hub that will ensure that we see the same level of private sector interest and engagement really implemented in all 20 of the Feed the Future pilot countries.

This hub will expand on existing relationships with multinationals and local businesses, facilitate engagement so firms have a single point of entry, partnership and support with USAID, and will allow us to coordinate all of the different tools that we have at our disposal throughout the federal government to support efforts to improve private sector engagement and Feed the Future strategies in countries.

Companies interested in joining this effort can email us at FIFbusinesshub@usaid.gov.

In addition to regional selectivity, the strategy in Tanzania concentrates resources in rice, maize and horticulture value chains. We focus on rice because we believe it can best spur real economic growth and that there is huge productive potential, potentially benefiting 80,000 Tanzanian rice farmers over a 5-year period.

We focus on maize because of similar reasons and similar aspirations for scale. If you saw Jeff Raikes' remarks yesterday, I believe he showed a short film, demonstrating the effects of new strains of maize, in that case the drought-tolerant strains, can provide, boosting yields by 30 percent in low rainfall years. If we adopt these types of new strains of maize varieties, we can conservatively estimate that it would help almost 130,000 smallholder farmers escape poverty by 2015.

Horticulture development helps improve nutrition in the country as well, by addressing the severe micronutrient deficiencies that lead to the child stunting and child malnutrition that I spoke about a moment ago. And importantly, horticulture, we know, disproportionately benefits women farmers and women smallholders because cultivation time is flexible and labor intensive.

Since these can be intercropped with traditionally male crops like rice, although we all know women do almost all the work even in rice production, it does give women access to quicker, cash-based crops and access to improved strategies for dietary diversification for children and improving household nutrition overall.

So that's our strategy in Tanzania. And we estimate that our assistance will over time help lift more than two million smallholder farmers, the majority of the women, out of poverty in a sustainable way.

But we will not treat that as faith. We intend to carefully measure and evaluate our results. As a field, we've collectively underinvested in collecting baseline data and quantitatively evaluating programs and agricultural productivity performance at scale in many of our priority areas of investment.

That's a trend that we all must reverse, and the U.S. Government will help by partnering with host countries, providing resources to FAO and the World Bank and others to do household-level surveys and analysis of actual information in order to help us both document outcomes when we achieve success and learn from failures when things we do don't achieve their intended benefits.

I'm so excited about Tanzania's leadership and commitment and the fact that they were courageous enough to pick a specific area of focus and specific value chains, which allow now the global community to organize itself against their vision.

But it's not just happening in Tanzania. I was in Bangladesh with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who launched a strategic approach that focuses on the southern productive regions of Bangladesh, focusing on specific rice, wheat and maize growing areas, and focused very much on some new crop varieties that are more stress-tolerant and that will boost the nutritive impact of these staple crops.

From Ethiopia to Senegal we're seeing governments make some of these tough choices to invest in one or two subregions and a handful of value chains, and then to ask donors, partners, multilateral institutions, NGOs and civil society organizations to align against their strategy in a focused and productive way.

If this approach works in just the four countries I've mentioned, our interventions will benefit approximately four million farm families and help lift nearly 17 million people out of poverty. This includes almost 1.6 million children who will be able to escape a life of daily hunger.

I want you to think about that for one moment. A few years ago — and I spoke about this at this meeting previously — I visited a hospital in Bangladesh and met eight women and their malnourished infant children. I remember that day vividly. I remember above all how quiet those kids were. They didn't scream at the pain they experienced, they didn't cry for more help, nor did they laugh or smile or speak. They suffered in silence.

Staring into the eyes of those children suffering from extreme hunger and witnessing that lifeless glaze on all eight of their faces is really something I will never forget. It's an image rendered especially poignant for me as my wife and I prepare to have our third child.

So let's not forget in all of our statistical clarity how meaningful it is to say that we can end that plight for 1.6 million children in just four of the first 20 Feed the Future countries. We've seen that success is possible. Malawi showed us how quickly a country can ramp up its agricultural production with the right conditions. Ghana showed us the benefits of steady reductions in food security, and Brazil is currently showing us that you can go all the way to eliminating hunger by doing some smart, innovative things with nutrition as a complementary intervention.

If we can learn from and replicate these types of successes in all of our Feed the Future pilot countries, we will have created the foundation for a sustainable new Green Revolution.

We should be honest with ourselves even as we celebrate the success of this event and of you all as amazing and very capable leaders. We should be honest about the stakes involved. For USAID our agricultural investments are the flagship effort of mine and represent a fundamentally new way of doing business that I hope becomes the model across the entire agency. It's strategic, it's data driven, it's results oriented. And our credibility and mine rests on the success of this program.

For our administration, Feed the Future is a core plank in the most important development strategy delivered by a sitting president since JFK wrote a letter to Congress in 1961 that created the United States Agency for International Development.

But our stakes are really nothing compared to what the world faces. We live on a planet whose population will grow by 2 billion in 40 years; 2 billion additional people will move from very poor populations to the middle class, completely redrawing the agricultural map as their diets and tastes change. And this will occur in an environment with decreasing resources, increasing demands for water and energy and an increasingly unstable climate.

In the face of a tough global economy and constrained budgets everywhere, maintaining a high level of donor commitment to this work will be difficult. Already, unfortunately, we're seeing some donors fall away.

So we must not only be able to measure and demonstrate convincing progress in the narrow window that we have to succeed, we must be loud, persuasive and vocal advocates, not just for ending hunger but the specific strategies and a databased approach to achieving that outcome.

We must build a lasting, durable political constituency — and, David, we look to you — domestically but also globally, that maintains the commitment and focus the world has now rediscovered. We've seen the repercussions of our inattention over the last several decades. You all taught me about that with great specificity and intensity. But now let's show the world the power of our vigilance.

Thank you.