

2012 THE "BORLAUG DIALOGUE"

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Ban Ki-moon

Introduction by:

Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn

President - World Food Prize Foundation

The only thing that was wrong last night was I think Dr. Hillel really didn't like Noa, the singer, so he said, "I didn't like her - I loved her." Congressman Leonard Boswell is here. That's Congressman Boswell, so, good - thank you for being with us this morning. And our World Food Prize laureates are here, Dr. Ejeta, Catherine Bertini - so good of you to be with us this morning. Other laureates - I'm sure there are other laureates - I don't mean to not mention you. Phil Nelson is over here, so thank you so much for being here, and members of our Council of Advisors. And, oh, Dr. Vasal is here. So mark down who's here. Dr. Gupta is here. Phil Nelson, Phil here, let's see. Okay, about to mark you absent. So I'll be back up in a minute or two when we get the word the Secretary-General is coming here. Oh, Your Excellency, Sheikh Hamad Al-Thani, vice chairman of the Food Security program. Your Excellency, thank you so much for being with us last night and this morning. And our laureate David Beckmann just walked in, just narrowly missing... He knows how they take church attendance. So we'll be back in just a minute. Finish up your breakfast.

Now, the man who needs no introduction in Des Moines or at the World Food Prize, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon - welcome.

BREAKFAST KEYNOTE:

Ban Ki-moon

Secretary-General of the United Nations

Thank you. Ambassador Quinn, Mr. John Ruan, chairman of World Food Prize, Dr. Daniel Hillel, 2012 World Food Prize laureate, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning. It's a great pleasure to see you again.

I think that most of you were here yesterday at the Prize ceremony, and I was so excited yesterday to be part of that very moving ceremony, and I thank Dr. Hillel. When I saw him and his movie, video presentation about his life and contribution, I thought that as the Secretary-General, while we are very much troubled by all these conflicts and humanitarian crises, I thought that the world will be better because we have such a dedicated and visionary person like Dr. Daniel Hillel, and I really thank you very much for your contribution.

And I thank all of you who are starting so early this morning. But I am sure that you start your day every day early like this. Anyway, early bird catches worm.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was a privilege for the United Nations to be involved in this process, in these common efforts to help all the people, 870 million people, to have access to nutritious food. That is one of the top priorities of the United Nations. But this is not only the United Nations, but we need your support. United Nations cannot do it alone.

Any country, however powerful, resourceful one country may be, like often people say that the United States is the richest, most powerful country. But United States cannot do it alone, let alone the state of Iowa. However, much you produce agriculture product. I know that this small state of Iowa produces 6% of the global soybean and corn production. This is amazing, great. But we need everybody, whether government or institution, NGOs, business communities, philanthropists or scientists – I think we need to work together. Otherwise, we will not be able to meet the target of Millennium Development Goals.

Millennium Development Goals has one of its very important priority, number one goal is to cut by half the number of people who are starving, who are living in abject poverty. The World Bank has announced in 2010 that we have reduced this number, but we have achieved that goal, but because of continuing economy slowdown here and there worldwide, particularly in developed worlds, we need to do more. Still, we have 870 million people who are starving, who go to bed hungry every night.

Just to think about the young people, small children who are not able to eat. Just to think about the mothers or parents who have to choose among their children whom to feed, whom not to feed. Normally it goes to boy children; when mothers, they have only one food left, then they go to the boy children. They sell their children, girl children to wealthy or rich people or landlords. This again very heartbreaking, heartbreaking situation.

It's not that we don't have, we are lacking food. I am told by experts like Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Programme, and IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural

Development that we have enough food, we have enough food to feed all the people, seven billion people in the world. Then why there are still almost nearly one billion people starving? Because of climatic conditions, because of price volatility, because of very cumbersome and very strange food distribution assistance.

That is why at June this year in Rio de Janeiro on the occasion of Rio+20 Summit meeting, this is what we call Sustainable Development Conference, I launched, together with FAO Director-General and WFP executive director of IFAD, general hunger challenge that main purpose is to make food assistance resilient and make food access to everybody to nutritious food and reduce as much as we can the loss of food at the time of production, and one should responsibly consume our very limited food. These are basic proposals which United Nations is going to promote.

Then to provide the food to all the people around the world, we have to address this issue comprehensively. It's not only you produce more food but we have to address climate change, we have to address energy issues, water scarcity issues. Recently I have launched a Sustainable Energy for All initiative. By providing energy, we can help double and triple the production of agriculture, crops. I believe that energy is something like a golden thread which weaves and connects all the challenges we have – climate, food, water and health and even gender, gender issues.

Therefore, we are putting highest priority on energy as a part of comprehensively addressing the food crisis. Yesterday I had an interview whether this is a crisis. So I said, no, this is not a crisis. We had a crisis in 2008. But immediately after that I launched a Global Taskforce, a high-level taskforce to address this global food crisis, and it has been working well, and I have been still chairing. I have been chairing this meeting myself without fail all the times. Dr. Cousin, who is the head of WFP, has always been participating. This comprises of all the United Nations agencies, including World Bank, IMF and also OECD, so this is a global address.

If government leaders and community leaders or scientists, they put this food crisis issue, food security issue as a major plank of their policy, then I think we can address this issue; we will be able to provide the food to all the people in the world.

So that's why I'm asking you, whether you are students or whether you are scientists or government leaders or business leaders, we have to work together. We have to work together.

Soon you will be listening to Ambassador Cousin, head of WFP, so I try to be brief. Yesterday, in fact, I have spoken out at length, so there's not much left for me. I just wanted to appeal to you and thank you for your commitment.

Let us work together to make this world better for all. Let us try to realize our dream, our dream, that is, where everybody can live freely without any want, particularly this food. This is a basic human right. And I count on your strong commitment and leadership. And I thank you very much, all the best to you.

Ambassador Quinn

That was wonderful. Can you stay one second, and I can present this to you. Mr. Secretary-General, we know that it's very hard to be inspiring early in the morning at breakfast, but you have inspired everybody in the room with your words this morning and last night. And as you leave, we would like you to take with you this replica of Dr. Norman Borlaug's Congressional Gold Medal. You know, Dr. Borlaug has the Nobel Peace Prize. This is America's highest civilian honor, and he has the Presidential Medal of Freedom. And there are very few people who have all those honors. And this is a replica of his Congressional Gold Medal, and we hope when you look at it that you'll remember how grateful we are that you came to be with us and how inspired we are by your words.

Ban Ki-moon

Thank you.