



An Appeal by

The 15 World Food Prize Laureates



on the occasion of the

World Food Summit: Five Years Later

Rome

June 2002

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THE 15 WORLD FOOD PRIZE LAUREATES

Rome, 2002



Dr. M.S. Swaminathan
1987, India



Dr. Muhammad Yunus
1994, Bangladesh



Mr. B.R. Barwale
1998, India



Dr. Verghese Kurien
1989, India



Dr. Hans R. Herren
1995, Switzerland



Dr. Walter Plowright
1999, England



Dr. John S. Niederhauser
1990, United States



Dr. Gurdev Khush
1996, India



Dr. Evangelina Villegas
2000, Mexico



Dr. Nevin S. Scrimshaw
1991, United States



Dr. Henry Beachell
1996, United States



Dr. Surinder K. Vasal
2000, India



H. E. He Kang
1993, China



Dr. Perry L. Adkisson
1997, United States



Dr. Per Pinstrup-Andersen
2001, Denmark



and

Dr. Norman E. Borlaug 1970 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
and Chair of The World Food Prize Council of Advisors



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June 2002, Rome

WE, THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE LAUREATES, wish to stress the importance of the conference, *The World Food Summit: Five Years Later* under the leadership of Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

We recall that at the World Food Summit of 1996, Heads of State and Government from around the world pledged their political will and their joint and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries. In the immediate view of those attending that 1996 Summit, the number of undernourished people should be reduced by half no later than 2015.

We note with dismay that, according to the latest information and analyses available, the number of undernourished people is falling only by about eight million a year, whereas it needs to fall by about 20 million a year if the World Food Summit target is to be achieved by 2015. Furthermore, while China achieved major reductions in the number of undernourished people during the 1990s, developing countries as a whole, excluding China, actually saw an increase in that number.

A continuation of the trend of the 1990s for the developing countries as a whole, excluding China, will result in a very significant increase rather than a decrease in the number of undernourished people. Nearly 90 million additional children are born each year, with more than 70 percent of them to poor and undernourished families.

This should be a major concern for everyone. Food, along with sanitary water and shelter, are the most vital of human needs; and the lack of food is a major barrier in achieving other human rights. Hunger is also often a cause and an effect of social instability and conflict. People debilitated by hunger are disposed to be less productive and more prone to infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

The world as a whole cannot enjoy durable peace, social stability and economic prosperity while hundreds of millions of people suffer from abject poverty and hunger.

The 15th Anniversary World Food Prize Foundation Symposium on "Risks to the World Food Supply," held in Des Moines, Iowa, USA, October 18-19, 2001, addressed many of the crucial issues that must be dealt with if greater progress in reducing food insecurity is to be achieved. We also note the leadership provided by the 2001 World Food Prize Laureate Dr. Per Pinstrup-Andersen in formulating and implementing the 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture and the Environment, which, together with the work of FAO and others, offers a solid blueprint for actions to address these problems.

Since the large majority of the poor and the hungry in developing countries live in rural areas and rely for their livelihood on agriculture, including livestock and animal industries, and on activities dependent on agriculture, development policies of these countries as well as donor assistance should give priority to sustainable productivity increases in agriculture and rural development, including essential infrastructure such as rural roads, electrification, and markets.

In the coming decades a technological transformation of agriculture will occur that will be constrained by resource limitations and whose environmental implications will pose questions concerning the sustainability of food production adequate to feed the ever-increasing human population. Therefore, it is imperative that we work together to strengthen the research and policy framework underpinning the necessary productivity increases in agriculture, livestock, and aquatic resources in an environmentally sustainable manner.

We are greatly concerned that funding for international research centers and public agricultural research programs is being cut back. It was efforts at just such institutions--by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Norman E. Borlaug and many World Food Prize Laureates--that produced the great gains in agricultural production during the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, averting famine in many areas. However, there is a danger of critically needed research capabilities being seriously eroded due to inadequate funding. The transfer and utilization of appropriate technologies and moving beyond traditional partnerships is also essential.

In regard to free trading policies, fairness is needed to provide markets to the poorer nations. We would like to emphasize the need for greater market access to food and agricultural products from developing nations. Today, it is often the case that heavy subsidies in industrialized countries and the imposition of non-tariff barriers by rich nations are closing the doors to the products of poor countries.

The causes of hunger are many and complex. We have outlined some of these causes, such as low food production, distribution, poverty, sustainability, and environmental degradation. We have emphasized the need to establish the international cooperation to confront these problems and work toward solutions on a worldwide basis. We believe that none of these efforts will provide a long-

range solution to the problem of hunger unless we also dedicate our efforts to programs to promote population stabilization. Without population stabilization, our dedication to the production and distribution of food will only postpone the problem of even greater hunger in the world.

We therefore appeal to national governments, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, national and regional funding institutions, UN system organizations, and other organizations attending the FAO Conference in Rome to focus their efforts on these parallel goals, with the greatest possible transparency in defining the objectives, programs, and rate of progress of the organizations in reaching their ends.

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

Dr. Norman E. Borlaug conceived of the idea for a World Food Prize after receiving The Nobel Peace Prize.

The \$250,000 World Food Prize is awarded each October in Des Moines, Iowa, USA to recognize the significant achievements of individuals who have reduced poverty, hunger, and malnutrition by improving the quality, quantity, or availability of food in the world.

The Prize was established in 1986 and, in 1990, Des Moines Businessman and Philanthropist John Ruan assumed its sponsorship, providing a generous endowment and moving The World Food Prize Foundation to Des Moines. Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn currently serves as President of the Foundation.

Information about the World Food Prize Laureates and the annual programs conducted in conjunction with the Laureate Award Ceremony is available on the web at www.worldfoodprize.org, or by contacting Ambassador Quinn at:

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