

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

EMBARGOED until 11:00 a.m. EDT, June 18, 2014

Remarks by

AMBASSADOR KENNETH M. QUINN
PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE FOUNDATION

As Prepared for Delivery
At

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE
2014 LAUREATE ANNOUNCEMENT
CEREMONY

JUNE 18, 2014

DEAN ACHESON AUDITORIUM
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

Assistant Secretary Rivkin, thank you so very much for your very kind introduction and for hosting our ceremony.

Secretary Kerry, on behalf of our Chairman John Ruan III and his wife Janis, my wife Le Son, our Council of Advisors, I want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to you for again presiding at our Laureate Announcement Ceremony.

2014 is a most special year for the World Food Prize as we celebrate the Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Centennial. In that regard, I am so very pleased that Norm's granddaughter, Julie Borlaug, is with us today as we take another step in honoring the founder of the World Food Prize.

The highlight of the Borlaug Centennial thus far was the unveiling of Norm's statue in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol on March 25, the 100th anniversary of his birth, with the bipartisan Congressional leadership, Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, the Iowa Congressional Delegation and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack all participating. I am so pleased that Senator Tom Harkin and Representative Dave Loebsack and Mrs. Barbara Grassley, the wife of Senator Chuck Grassley, could be here today.

That same day, USDA hosted a symposium in Dr. Borlaug's honor at which Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden spoke, and I am so pleased, Secretary Harden, that you are here today, along with 32 USDA Wallace Carver Interns who are alumni of our World Food Prize youth programs.

There were also two other significant events in March that honored Dr. Borlaug and which have special relevance for our announcement.

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

- One was in Chennai, India, at the M.S. Swaminathan Research Center. Dr. Borlaug's most impactful work in launching the Green Revolution took place in India. Ambassador Jaishankar, thank you for being with us.
- The second was a celebration in Mexico at the International Center for Wheat and Maize – CIMMYT – where Dr. Borlaug's earliest research led to his developing “miracle wheat.” I am so pleased that Chargé Gomez could be here to represent the Mexican Embassy.

It has been something of an anomaly that while Dr. Borlaug's major breakthrough achievements came in wheat, the World Food Prize he created has never been presented to anyone who has worked with that crop, even though it is the most widely grown cereal crop in the world. That will change today, and in a way that will demonstrate that same Mexican – Indian – American and, I would add, Iowan, connection.

The 2014 World Food Prize Laureate is an individual from India who worked closely with Dr. Borlaug in Mexico and who then carried forward and extended his work, breaking new ground with his own achievements. As the head of CIMMYT's wheat-breeding program for several decades, our Laureate developed 480 high-yielding disease- and stress-resistant wheat varieties that have been grown on 58 million hectares in 51 countries, thus increasing world wheat production by more than 200 million tons. Norman Borlaug himself described our Laureate as “a scientist of great vision who has made a significant contribution to the improvement of world wheat production, working for the benefit of hundreds of thousands of farmers in countries across the globe.”

It is my honor to announce that The World Food Prize Borlaug Centennial Laureate – born in India and a citizen of Mexico – is Dr. Sanjaya Rajaram.

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

As we celebrate the United Nations International Year of Family Farming, it is most fitting that the 2014 World Food Prize Laureate is an individual who has truly fulfilled Dr. Borlaug's last words – "Take it to the farmer."

I want to extend the warmest possible invitation to everyone here to join us in Des Moines October 15-17 as we present the \$250,000 World Food Prize to Dr. Rajaram and hold our Borlaug Dialogue symposium on the topic of *The Greatest Challenge in Human History: Can We Sustainably Feed the 9 Billion People Who Will Be on Our Planet by the Year 2050*.

In that regard, I am honored to announce that His Excellency, Ernest Bai Koroma, the President of Sierra Leone will deliver the keynote address at the conference.

It will come as we present \$150,000 grant to four 40 Chances Fellows who were selected as part of an initiative of former Prime Minister Tony Blair, Howard G. Buffett and the World Food Prize, to implement start up initiatives in Rwanda, Liberia, Malawi and Sierra Leone. Ambassador Stevens, thank you for honoring us with your presence as we make this announcement.

As you leave, you will receive a brochure highlighting our program. I urge you to register today to reserve your spot at our events.

It is now my privilege to have the greatest honor any Foreign Service Officer can have, to introduce the Secretary of State. Secretary Kerry and I first crossed paths in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam in 1968 when the war was raging. I had the opportunity to go into combat on the same type of brown-water navy patrol craft that the Secretary commanded as a young naval officer on those narrow, jungle-lined canals that crisscross that region. So I know firsthand the courage required to carry out that assignment. In the 1990s when I served as the chair of the U.S. Interagency Committee on POW/MIA accounting, I again saw now Senator Kerry's political courage in leading efforts to get the fullest possible accounting for

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

our missing men. And now as Secretary of State, I have again admired his courage and determination to take on the most intractable diplomatic issues, as he has represented our country so effectively and so proudly around the globe. Therefore it is my great privilege to introduce, a son of the Foreign Service, Secretary of State John Kerry.

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THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

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