

Announcement of
The 2008 World Food Prize Laureates

By

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At the

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Congressman Boswell, Secretary Schafer, Secretary
Negroponte, Secretary Jeffery,

I wish to begin by once again expressing the great appreciation of our Chairman Mr. John Ruan and all of us at the World Food Prize Foundation for the great honor we have in holding our Laureate Announcement Ceremony here in the magnificent Benjamin Franklin Diplomatic Reception room. This is the fifth year that we have had this privilege, and it has added greatly to both the awareness and the stature of our award.

I very much regret that Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, the Founder of the World Food Prize, is not able to be with us today. This is one of the very few times when he has not been present for the ceremony at which the name of the

new laureate is made public. While his health has thankfully improved in recent days, it is still difficult for him to travel. I did speak with him a few days ago and he asked me to extend his personal greetings to all present.

When Norman Borlaug established the World Food Prize in 1986, it was to recognize and inspire breakthrough achievements in increasing the quantity, quality or availability of food and to counter hunger in the world. His hope was that it would one day come to be seen as the Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture.

Since that time, laureates from around the globe have been chosen to receive this \$250,000 Prize including very distinguished men and women from Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Denmark, India, Mexico, Sierra Leone, Switzerland,

United Kingdom, United States and the United Nations.

These individuals have represented a wide array of areas of accomplishment from Plant Science to Micro-Credit, and from Aquaculture to Food Technology. But they share one trait in common: their achievements have uplifted the lives of millions and millions of people.

This year we will add two individuals to this pantheon of laureates whose leadership has impacted millions of the world's poorest children, especially girls. It is my pleasure to announce that former U.S. Senators George McGovern and Robert Dole have been selected to receive the 2008 World Food Prize. They are being honored for their inspired, collaborative leadership that has encouraged a global commitment to school feeding and enhanced school attendance and nutrition around the globe.

The McGovern-Dole international school-feeding program was established by the United States in 2000 operating through the US Department of Agriculture. Since then, it has provided meals to feed more than 22 million children in 41 countries and boosted school attendance by an estimated 14 percent overall and by 17 percent for girls.

The success of the McGovern-Dole program has also led to dramatically increased international support for expansion of school-feeding programs in developing countries around the world. As one example, the UN World Food Program's school-feeding programs have nearly doubled since 2001; in 2006 alone, it fed more than 20 million children in 74 countries.

Senators McGovern and Dole will be presented the World Food Prize at a ceremony at the magnificent Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines on the evening of Thursday, October 16, which is, most appropriately, both U.N. World Food Day and Dr. Norman E. Borlaug Day in Iowa.

Secretary Schafer, given the crucial role your department has played in this achievement, I wish to extend a special invitation to you to be there and participate in this presentation.

That ceremony will be held in conjunction with our International Symposium now known as the Borlaug Dialogue. Our topic this year is Confronting Crisis: the Role of Agriculture in Global Development over the Next 50 Years. We will be discussing all of the issues that were just front and center at the UN Conference in Rome.

I want to extend a special invitation to all of you here to travel to Des Moines for what I believe will be the most significant observance of World Food Day anywhere around the globe. I feel certain that Representative Boswell and the members of the Greater Des Moines Partnership who are here today join with me in saying you will be warmly welcomed. As you leave, please take with you one of our brochures which outlines the amazing array of speakers who will be participating including World Bank President Robert Zoellick and World Food Programme Executive Director Josette Sheeran. Then please go to our website www.worldfoodprize.org to register so that you can ensure your place at these events.

Finally, I would like to encourage everyone to please consider nominating an individual for our Prize following the guidelines in our Invitation to Nominate which you were given as you arrived at the ceremony.

Now it is my distinct honor and privilege to introduce to you an individual who has had a long and distinguished career in the US Foreign Service and then as the Director of National Intelligence, before coming back home to the State Department where he now serves as Deputy Secretary of State. I do not know anyone who has handled a more difficult series of assignments and leadership positions during their career. In all the years that I have known him he has been a man of high intellect and unwavering intellectual honesty with a commitment to rigorous and dispassionate analysis in the formulation of

policy. I am proud to call him my colleague and my friend.

Please join me in welcoming Deputy Secretary John

Negroponte.