

Back in Seoul-- 33 years ago-- as the second decade of the 21st century draws to a close, the single greatest challenge that the human species has ever confronted is this: can we nutritiously and sustainably feed the 9 to 10 billion people who will be on Earth by the year 2050, especially given the increasingly adverse impact of climate volatility. A second inextricably linked existential issue is whether global peace and stability, so integral to meeting that overriding global food security goal, can be maintained.

Essential to fulfilling both of these challenges is whether the human dignity of all, particularly the poorest and most malnourished, among them the women and children can be preserved and elevated.

In my capacity as President of the World Food Prize, I have traveled over 12,000 from our headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa in the American heartland, to be here to proclaim that, given these overriding global challenges of agriculture and peace, there could be no more fitting choice than the selection of Dr. Akinwumi Ayodeji Adesina, son of Nigeria, the 2017 World Food Prize Laureate and President of the African Development Bank, to be the 2019 Sunhak Peace Prize Laureate.

More than any other individual, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina already embodies the personal attributes, substantive knowledge, and broad vision that has produced a several decade long array of impressive achievements that have already uplifted the lives of millions of people in his native Nigeria and indeed across the African continent. Through this exceptional leadership, President Adesina has shown us the path that must be followed if the world is to remain at peace and meet and overcome the unprecedented humanitarian and ecological challenges we face.

At the same time, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Waris Dirie for her truly remarkable leadership on behalf of the human rights of young girls and for her selection as a 2019 Sunhak Prize recipient. Together, Dr. Adesina and Ms. Dirie, these two Laureates truly will bring a distinct focus on uplifting Human Rights and Human Development in Africa and thereby advance the Sunhak Peace Agenda for the Future.

The selection of Dr. Adesina, our 2017 World Food Prize Laureate, for this extraordinary honor as a Sunhak Laureate not only recognizes his multiple and diverse achievements, but also provides a 50 year-long historic linkage to the first con-joining of the issues of peace and confronting hunger through agricultural advances. In 1970, Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, a native of my home state of Iowa, received the Nobel Peace Prize for developing miracle wheat, which saved millions and millions across South Asia from famine, starvation, and death. Dr. Borlaug, lauded as the Father of the Green Revolution, founded the World Food Prize in 1986 to inspire those breakthrough achievements that would be needed to eradicate hunger and malnutrition as world population inexorably expanded.

That same year, Dr. Borlaug became a personal mentor to a young economist from Nigeria who had just graduated from Purdue University with a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics and was

starting a position at the Rockefeller Foundation. For the next several decades, with Borlaug's encouragement, Akinwumi Adesina, supported by his wonderful wife, Grace, embarked on his odyssey to transform Africa, just as Borlaug had spread the Green Revolution through Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. I am sorry that Grace could not be here, but she is with their latest achievement-- the birth of their grandchild.

I met Akinwumi Adesina for the first time in Accra, Ghana in 2010, shortly after Dr. Borlaug had passed away. It was not on the stage of the first AGRA Forum that he was organizing, but in the breakfast room of the hotel when he befriended an American sitting alone on his first mission in Africa. Akin, as his friends call him, and I bonded over our mutual connection to Dr. Borlaug and became lifelong friends.

Over the next years I watched as my friend amassed an amazing array of achievements that brought him increasing international attention and a nomination for our award. Ladies and gentlemen, the challenge of feeding 9 to 10 billion people will ultimately be decided in those areas with between one and two billion people: in China, in India, in Latin America centered around Brazil, and in Africa. Success will be determined by investment in science and research, enhanced nutrition, expanded rural infrastructure, especially roads and policies that unleash innovation and increase crop yields, all designed to uplift small holder farmers. Above all, peace will be a critical element of success.

Of all the regions, Africa with its broad array of geographic subdivisions and multiple political leaders, offers the most difficult challenge of harmonizing all these diverse factors. It will be there in Africa that the greatest challenge in all human history will ultimately be decided. Can a peaceful Africa feed itself?

Last November sitting in the audience of over 1,000 potential investors at the African Investment Conference he organized in Johannesburg, I listened as African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina mesmerized the attendees, imbuing them with the sense of "Yes, Africa can." Standing there with the legacy of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Nelson Mandela, the man who transformed South African agriculture and brought peace to that country, to guide him, my friend Akin Adesina was expounding his vision of how all of African agriculture can be transformed by Africans themselves, and thereby bring peace to the continent. It filled me and everyone who was standing to cheer him, with hope and optimism about Africa's future. The name Adesina has two meanings-- crown-- lead forward.

As a World Food Prize Laureate and now with the Sunhak Peace Prize, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina has an even higher platform from which to lead the way forward to successfully confront this ultimate challenge and bring a Green Revolution and peace to Africa. I know that Dr. Norman Borlaug is looking down this day with a large smile on his face for all you have done, my friend, and for all you will continue to do.

Congratulations!