

The World Food Prize
Laureate Announcement Ceremony

Remarks by
Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn

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U.S. Department of State

THE WORLD FOOD PRIZE

Undersecretary Hormats, thank you for your kind introduction. It was my good fortune to serve with Bob Hormats at the National Security Council, where I developed great respect for his knowledge and ability, a respect that has only grown over the years. We were so pleased that he participated in our World Food Prize symposium two years ago.

Secretary Clinton, on behalf of our Chairman John Ruan III and Janis Ruan, it is a great privilege for the World Food Prize to once again be able to announce the recipient of our award here in the elegant Benjamin Franklin Room at the State Department. It has special memories for me, my wife Le Son and our daughter Kelly, as it was here that I was sworn in as Ambassador.

Secretary Vilsack and Administrator Shah, it is a special honor to have you with us for this ceremony, our seventh consecutive announcement at the State Department.

The last year has been a difficult one for the World Food Prize. Last September, Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, our founder and our inspiration, passed away. We are so very pleased that Norm's daughter, Jeanie Borlaug Laube, and his granddaughter, Julie Borlaug, could be here today. Then on February 12 of this year, John Ruan, Sr., the man who rescued the World Food Prize and gave it a permanent home in Iowa, also left us. We are so very grateful for the messages of condolence that Secretary Clinton, Secretary Vilsack and Administrator Shah you provided on those occasions.

When Dr. Borlaug established the World Food Prize in 1986, it was with the hope that it could one day come to be seen as the Nobel Prize for food and agriculture. Since that time, our \$250,000 Prize has been awarded to 31 individuals who have made exceptional breakthrough achievements in increasing the quality, quantity and availability of food in the world. Their life-saving accomplishments come in a wide variety of specialties, including: plant breeding, soil science, early childhood nutrition, livestock health, famine relief, microcredit and the role of women in development, to name but a few.

This year, we will add two names to that pantheon of Laureates, as we honor two individuals who have led significant achievements in an area which has yet to be recognized by the World Food Prize – the critical efforts of non-governmental organizations in mobilizing and empowering grassroots citizens to combat hunger and poverty.

In choosing these two individuals to share the 2010 World Food Prize, our Selection Committee noted that while they did not work directly together, their efforts are complementary; and through their leadership of two dynamic nonprofit organizations, they have had a dramatic impact in uplifting the lives of countless poor and hungry people around the world.

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It is therefore my great privilege to announce to you today that the winners of the 2010 World Food Prize are Ms. Jo Luck, the president of Heifer International, and the Reverend David Beckmann, the president of Bread for the World.

Jo Luck has spearheaded the effort to build Heifer International, based in Arkansas, into one of the premiere hunger fighting non-profit organizations anywhere in the world, bringing diverse livestock animals to extremely poor families and providing them with an opportunity for improved livelihoods through animal husbandry, technical training and community development.

David Beckmann, a native of Nebraska, through his work first at the World Bank, and then as head of Bread for the World, has had an impact both: in shaping international development programs so that they truly reflect the needs of the poorest people in the world; and in mobilizing grassroots efforts to press for more focused policies and increased appropriations for hunger alleviation by the US government and its partners.

I want to extend a warm invitation to everyone here to join us in Des Moines on October 13 through 15 for the Laureate Award Ceremony, at which we will present the World Food Prize to these two humanitarian heroes, and also to attend our Borlaug Dialogue international symposium.

We have taken for the theme of our conference Dr. Borlaug's last words, "Take it to the farmer." As such, we will focus on global efforts to uplift smallholder farmers, the majority of them women, in developing countries.

Last October, it was our great honor to have Bill Gates choose the World Food Prize as the forum at which he delivered his first ever speech on agriculture and bringing the Green Revolution to Africa. It is my pleasure to announce that H.E. Kofi Annan has agreed to deliver the keynote address at the Borlaug Dialogue this year.

As you leave, you will receive a brochure with information about the Borlaug Dialogue and how you can register to attend.

Secretary Clinton, we were grateful to have you participate in our symposium last year via video feed. You have a standing invitation to join us in person. Secretary Vilsack, we are so very pleased that you will once again join us at our symposium. Administrator Shah, as an old friend of the World Food Prize, we would be delighted to welcome you back, as we would Undersecretary Hormats.

For a Foreign Service Officer, even an old retired one like me, the highest honor you can have is to introduce the Secretary of State. Ladies and gentlemen, the Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton.