



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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WOMEN'S FOREIGN POLICY GROUP

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“Hunger as a National Security and Global Stability Issue”

Thank you for that introduction. I am thrilled to be here not only because I am among so many friends, but because I have been a member of this organization, as Pat knows, for many years. This organization brings together such a great, diverse group of people and it is really my honor and pleasure to be here today to address this group.

Thank you Lara, who indeed is a long-standing friend of the World Food Programme, and Patricia Ellis and Maxine Isaacs, the Chair of this wonderful organization. I also want to thank all the ambassadors who are here today and other colleagues and leading lights of Washington. We have the President of the World Bank here, Bob Zoellick, who is doing so much on the world hunger crisis. We have old friends from USTR and the State Department; and wonderful people like Karen Brooks, Rosa Whitaker and Patricia Forken, people that drive greater issues in Washington.

I want to say that we will not solve this world food crisis without a much deeper partnership between governments, farmers, private sector and research institutions. I am very pleased to see so many leaders from the private sector here today.

I also want to recognize Karen Sendelback, the President of Friends of the World Food Program and Randy Russell who is the Chair of the Board – both are here today. Anyone who has an interest in learning more about WFP afterwards, the

head of our Washington office Allan Jury is here also and along with the Friends of the World Food Program.

Hunger is on the March

Hunger is on the march. Last week, the Food and Agriculture Organization revised the official number of hungry up 75 million to 923 million. FAO predicts that if food prices and other factors remain on the current course, the ranks of the urgently hungry could soar to more than a billion next year.

The events of the last year and a half have demonstrated powerfully the impact of global economic developments on the world's most vulnerable, many tucked away in small villages, but no longer sequestered from global economic storms.

A grain trader in a dusty stall in Addis Ababa leans on his donkey and tells me he sets his prices every morning by checking the Chicago Board of Trade prices on the Internet. Farmers in the Rift Valley of Kenya tell me they are going to plant one third of what they did a year ago because the soaring price of oil has driven the cost of fertilizer and diesel in their villages up 400 percent virtually overnight. They cannot plant, and hunger spreads.

Agricultural producers in Haiti told me two days ago that one of their biggest fears after they recover from being decimated by four hurricanes this past month, is that the United States – in the midst of a financial crisis – will buy less exports, triggering a new wave of increasing poverty. The macro and the micro colliding as never before in human history.

The events of the last year and a half have also demonstrated powerfully the impact of hunger on the fragile political and economic stability of nations and people across the developing world.

The aggressive acceleration of food commodity prices sparked massive strikes, violent protests and riots in 34 countries, leading to scores of injuries and even deaths. Without food, societies become breeding grounds for instability, civil unrest, terrorism and demagogues. We have learned that food is not just a soft power issue but also a hard power issue. Let me give two real world examples of the impact of the food crisis.

The World Food Programme will help 90 million people this year in urgent need of food. This includes 20 million schoolchildren whom we feed in our school feeding program and this is usually with a cup of enriched porridge – for many, it is a gift of the US’s McGovern-Dole school feeding program. This is often the only reliable food source for these children.

This cup is from our school feeding program in Rwanda, and between June of 2007 and January 2008, 40 percent of the cup and this food was lost, simply due just to soaring commodity prices. This held true for our emergency rations in places like Darfur, where WFP feeds three million people a day. In other words, for the same contribution, a six month price climb meant 40 percent less food. This was just a microcosm of what was happening in villages throughout the world. For WFP, we could either cut the kilo-calories per person by 40 percent, or cut 40 percent of those receiving emergency help.

This has continued really unabated. On March 5 we were buying rice at \$430 a metric tonne, five weeks later it was \$780 a metric tonne, and two weeks after that \$1,000 a metric tonne. In Haiti yesterday, rice was selling for more than \$1,000 a metric tonne and that is expected to rise again with the nation having lost up to 50 percent of the recent harvest in the fury of the recent hurricanes.

In Haiti – a country less than 600 nautical miles off the coast of Florida – weeks of violence last spring triggered by skyrocketing food prices led to the deaths of five people and forced the departure of the Prime Minister.

Such political strife from soaring food prices has been felt from Liberia, to Cameroon, to Mexico, to Pakistan, to Afghanistan, to Indonesia and beyond. So often, these nations are neighbors, friends and allies of the United States whose prosperity, stability and success are so critical to America’s own national security.

And these often disastrous events underscore clearly that hunger must not be viewed solely as a humanitarian challenge, but also as a vital security issue for the United States and indeed for the world.

Hunger as Weapon, Cause and Consequence of Conflict

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are back to the basics. The access to reliable, affordable and adequate amounts of food is deeply questioned today. The pursuit of food security has been at the

core of the rise and fall of civilizations throughout history, and of the mass migration of populations. There is no more central role of government than ensuring citizens have enough to eat. The denial of access to food, in fact, is the denial of the right to life itself. When food security is in question, we must pull together and act. There is no other option.

That hunger can have profound implications for national security is not a new observation. Throughout history, food has been used as a weapon of war and hunger has proven a cause and consequence of conflict, violent civil strife and mass migration. It has toppled governments and enabled dictators and extremists to seize and hold power in recent decades from Liberia to Rwanda to Ethiopia and beyond. Widespread human misery and hopelessness have provided perceived justification and support for crime, unrest, terrorism and revolution.

Combatants, as you know, frequently use hunger as a weapon. They use siege to cut off food supplies and productive capacities, starve opposing populations into submission, and hijack food aid intended for civilians.

Hunger is a protection issue. As Lara mentioned, more than 70 percent of the hungry in the world today are women and children.

WFP lives with the reality of these dangers daily. In Darfur alone, we have 48 drivers missing in action right now as we meet. Pirates attack our ships delivering food to more than two million people in Somalia. Since January 1st, we have lost 12 people in the line of duty.

Hunger can also be a consequence of conflict, leading to the destruction of crops, livestock, land and water, and disrupting infrastructure, markets, and the human resources required for food production, distribution, and safe consumption.

And hunger can, as I mentioned, spark mass migration and instability that so often follows. With increasing food prices and the resulting decline in the availability of food for many, migration can be expected to increase without action.

Addressing Hunger as a National Security Threat

Recognizing the lessons of history, the United States and other nations of the world long ago developed programs and initiatives to address and treat hunger as a security threat. They have used food aid to support allies, promote and strengthen stability, peace and democracy, and open a direct channel to the people living

under repressive regimes. Following World War II, America used food assistance to deliver hot porridge to millions of children in a cup not dissimilar from this one.

Recently, showing this cup in the European Parliament, a leading member of that parliament came up to me quite emotional telling me the same cup of food had helped him and his family following World War II. The same thing happened in Japan, where a government leader told me that he also received a cup of food in school after the war there. A leader from Africa told me the same thing. Nations learned that friend or foe, the unparalleled power of a healing cup of food for building goodwill for generations to come.

In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation launching what would come to be known as the Food for Peace Program. Originally designed to strengthen the food security of war-ravaged Europe, Food for Peace has since provided more than 100 million tons of food aid to more than 150 nations.

High Stakes in an Increasingly Hungry World

But today, levels of food assistance are at the lowest point in three decades just when the national security threat of widespread hunger is far greater and more immediate.

Several weeks ago, at the global conference on aid effectiveness in Accra, Ghana, a Liberian minister vividly recounted how the price of rice had sparked riots and the downfall of the government in the early 1980s, triggering decades of unfathomable human suffering. He said that a poor nation like Liberia does not have official political opinion polls – the price of rice serves that function. If the price of rice is high, there is a corresponding dissatisfaction with the government. Today rice is priced higher than the early 1980s and the remarkable, democratically elected leader, President Johnson Sirleaf, faces deep worries about not only the ability to feed her people, but also the stability of Liberia's fragile new democracy.

I have just returned from Haiti. I have called the global food crisis a silent tsunami, striking the world's most vulnerable wherever they are. I have said it has been triggered by a perfect storm of factors. I have quoted Joachim von Braun of IFPRI, who has said that poor nations who are import-dependent and facing any additional shock, such as a natural disaster or a conflict, face a recipe for disaster.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Haiti is experiencing the perfect storm, within a perfect storm – in fact, four storms. President Préval and the new Prime Minister, who I met with in Haiti, are united in their desire to move Haiti from dependence to a new future. But as President Préval said last week in New York, they have been set back many years due to these storms.

On Friday, I visited Gonaives, a port city in Haiti pounded by the four hurricanes. For those of you who have been to the ruins of Pompeii, you can begin to imagine the devastation. When the storms hit, decades of deforestation, soil erosion and the lack of watershed management, unleashed a landslide of mud upon the city. The city is entombed in mud, with masses of hungry and thirsty people – a population of 300,000 – huddled in dangerous makeshift shelters and on roof tops trapped for weeks without sanitation or adequate food or water.

With logistics help from the United States, Canada, Haiti and MINUSTAH, the UN troops there, we have finally broken through with food, but the situation is still desperate. Many women told me of being beaten and attacked in the dark of night by people seizing the food – the little cup of food they had collected – as people remain separated from their homes and family. As one journalist told me, the city has been virtually “wiped off the face of the map.”

I brought with me the CEO of Yum! Brands – the world’s largest restaurant chain – David Novak, and he announced there that Yum! would be donating four million school meals to the children of Haiti.

I thank the United States for its generous donation announced this week of \$7 million for food. Canada, Switzerland and nations of Europe have given several million of dollars for logistics and food. WFP has now received \$11 million against the \$57 million urgent appeal. The rest of the UN consolidated appeal, which totals \$108 million, has received 3 percent of its funding for shelter, sanitation, water and medicines.

And as I mentioned in Haiti, as soon as we can we will buy much of the food we provide from local farmers to help them get back on their feet.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The financial crisis or any other crisis cannot be used as an excuse by the world not to come to the assistance of fragile democracies facing hunger and even starvation. If we lose governments, the cost of the instability will be exponentially greater than the cost of quick, effective action to ensure the minimum of human need.

Without effective action, the food crisis will continue to compound as nations use whatever tools they have to ensure adequate food for their populations. This past year, fearing the political consequences of skyrocketing food prices, up to 40 nations imposed export bans and trade restrictions on commodities. These policies had a direct and immediate impact on the food prices and food availability in the world, including deeply threatening WFP's basic capability to obtain and deliver humanitarian food supplies.

Even as we streamed an additional \$1 billion in assistance to nations, we were faced with a global train wreck of inadequate supplies and broken contracts.

At the same time, FAO predicts the world will need to produce twice as much food by 2050 to meet growing demand and soaring global population. This could be the huge opportunity for the African farmer and other developing world farmers if we get this right. With so many more people to feed, we must raise production. Otherwise, the shortages will increase in scope and magnitude.

Rising populations might also mean that the mass migrations of the future will continue to dwarf those of the past. Moreover, the countries most vulnerable to malnutrition, hunger and starvation are increasingly important to the security interests of the world.

The Strategic Choice for Policymakers

What shall we do?

First, we urgently need a Bretton Woods for hunger. World Bank President Bob Zoellick has called for a "new deal for global food policy". We urgently support that call. The world should support the comprehensive framework for action pulled together by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with the World Bank, and the Rome-based food agencies and other vital UN agencies. This may be the first time ever that the United Nations, World Bank and IMF and others have stood

together in a common analysis and prescription for a problem. This is no small or insignificant feat.

The G8 can also play a critical role as they did with Japan's leadership putting it on the agenda this year and with Italy's leadership next year in hosting the G8 Summit.

Second, we need emergency action and fast. We are not out of the woods yet. We must avoid the worst forms of human suffering and ensure fields are being planted for upcoming harvests. WFP's budget has virtually doubled overnight, from \$3 billion to \$6 billion. With the extraordinary help of the United States, the administration and Congress are on track to spend \$5 billion on hunger and agriculture during 2008 and 2009. And there have been other bold acts of generosity, such as Saudi Arabia's historic \$500 million donation to WFP this year, and generous action by the nations of Europe, the European Commission, Canada, Australia, Japan and others.

But we will need \$1 billion more this year and the funding needs for next year will be just as demanding.

In addition, FAO, the World Bank and IFAD pulled together a global plan of action regarding emergency help for seeds and fertilizers so we do not miss planting seasons in developing nations. The nations who have invested 10 percent of their budget in agriculture as called for by the African Union, such as Malawi, are breaking the cycle of hunger. We cannot afford to miss upcoming harvests and take a step backwards. Haiti rises to urgent need here having lost not only up to half the current harvest, but also many of the seeds, fertilizer and tools for the next planting season.

Third, we must get ahead of the hunger and undernutrition curve. Hunger is non-negotiable. The "value-chain" of defeating hunger, as I call it, embraces universities, researchers, the private sector, governments, farmers, development workers and the nations themselves of course. It spans from agricultural research (such as the life-saving work of Norman Borlaug and others), to inputs, to planting, to equipment, to harvest, to storage, to delivery, to market connections that depends and thrives on open trade. I applaud FAO's Jacques Diouf for raising attention to the vast decline in agricultural spending, not only among aid agencies, but among government's themselves.

Fourth, even the best agricultural investments in the world are no guarantee that hunger will be eradicated. Those living on a dollar a day no longer can afford the food they need to survive. For the ultra-poor – those living on 50 cents a day – coping strategies are exhausted. We need safety nets just like those built in rich nations, such as school feeding and food stamps. WFP is working extensively with governments and private sector partners, such as the Boston Consulting Group, from Ethiopia to Egypt to India to ensure the application of best practices in effectiveness and efficiency of public distribution systems and school feeding programs and other safety net programs.

School feeding is a particularly powerful safety net, in that it brings so many multiple benefits to the table – schools become the center of life and girls go to school. This is the least expensive human rights program I have ever seen. For 25 cents a day, in fact, we see an even number of girls and boys in school. For example, in Pakistan – where 48 percent of the families said they would never send their girls to school – when a school feeding program was introduced we saw 100 percent attendance.

An extra ration – the equivalent of an extra 25 cents, 50 cents or \$1 a week – given at the end of the week to girls will guarantee that they can stay in school until the age of 16. An extra ration to AIDS orphans at the end of the week guarantees they have a home because people will take them in if they can add food to the family.

In Egypt, it is the Labour Department that supports school feeding because it is the best anti-child labour program they know. It increases learning, concentration and enrollment.

When put together with an essential package of interventions with our partners like the World Bank, WHO and others, it is transformative. If you put some sprinkles on the food, you can take care of iodine, iron and vitamin A deficiencies. If you add a deworming pill you can transform a child's life. If you add hand washing, malaria and HIV/AIDS education it has an even bigger impact; all of this for just 25 cents a day.

The World Bank is putting a real engine of knowledge and commitment behind these efforts. George McGovern has told me that he will not rest until every child on earth has at least a cup of food in school. I think I was the first to take him up on that and priced it out, and under our pricing structures it would cost only about \$3 billion a year for the world to say that no child goes to school hungry. This may not end global hunger, but what an accomplishment if humanity could say that.

And I would like to point out that a little will go a long way here. I believe the Ambassador of Iceland is here. Iceland had come to us to ask how they could make a donation that would really make a difference. So they counted the number of schoolchildren in Iceland and each school child sponsors a child in Africa with a donation for school feeding. So Iceland's donation to WFP has a powerful story which is that every school child in Iceland can know that one child in Africa can go to school and have enough food because of them.

Fifth, we must leverage food aid and food assistance to break the cycle of hunger and undernutrition at its root. This is not your grandmother's food aid. Today more than half our budget is cash, and we use 80 percent of our cash for food procurement in the developing world. This is a revolution in food aid, and I am very pleased that Congress has approved a pilot and State, the Department of Agriculture and USAID are putting in place pilot local purchase projects. We can take this much farther by ensuring those purchases are breaking the cycle of hunger at their root by the way we contract and work with farmers.

For example, this is salt from our program in Ghana and we also do this in Senegal where there is a lot of salt but none of it is iodized. Working with the Micronutrient Initiative, WFP began to buy all the salt locally for our program in Senegal from 7,000 village producers. Because of that guaranteed sell they can get the investment in the technology and the education to iodize their salt. This is a win/win/win situation. It is mostly women salt producers having a guaranteed income, WFP has salt for their program that is iodized, and it comes from the local producers within the nation. Now all the salt those producers are selling in their villages is iodized also, helping President Wade fight goutier and other iodine deficiency diseases which are epidemic in Senegal.

I was just in Ghana where we buy maize locally, we mill it and then women fortify it for us. The fortification powder costs 6 cents to fortify 10 kilograms of flour. They have a job and can now afford the fish that is so vital for their diet that has been missing. Also now the flour is fortified which helps address nutrient deficiencies and they are expanding their little business to sell fortified flour in the village.

We just announced last week with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Howard Buffet Foundation, and the Belgian Government, a \$77 million project to study the way that we do our commodities contracting in 21 nations and we plan to replicate that all across our business after we learn best practices.

For example, if we can give farmers (which we cannot and do not have the capability to do now) a three year contract, maybe they can get the microfinance, seeds and fertilizer investment. We are partnering with FAO, IFAD, NGOs, the private sector and governments to help refine our contracts to see if we can help get the yields up and help those farmers build a new life for themselves.

We also have a new Strategic Plan that has been approved by our Board that approves a toolbox of hunger responses. I was in Myanmar and there was a village where there was food in the stores but the people had no income and they were devastated by the storm. So rather than bring in more food we gave each person 50 cents a day to buy food in local stores, which also helped the shop owners get back on their feet. That is a win/win action. We are looking at vouchers, cash, local purchase and, when needed, to bring in vital food such as in Darfur where there is no food aid to buy and the United States supports 70 percent of the people there who have no other source for food.

Sixth, we must prepare and adapt for climate change. If you read the IPCC report, there are predictions that some nations in Africa will have 50 percent the yield that they have today by 2020. That's 12 years from now. We need early warning systems such as the one WFP helped build in Bamako, Mali, that is now run by the Sahel governments that lets us know nine months ahead of time if there is going to be a drought that would affect hunger numbers.

We need to help nations adapt now with river banks and tree planting. WFP has planted 5 billion trees with its Food-for-work in the past 30 years that have helped nations prepare and preserve soil threatened by erosion and desertification. These types of practical actions are all the more important with climatic changes.

Seventh, we have to ask now what is in the cup? We now have irrefutable evidence that from gestation to two years old a child's mind and body must not be deprived of adequate nutrition. If they are, the consequences are irreversible. The impact of undernutrition on society and GDP is profound – up to 11 percent on GDP.

WFP, as many of you know, limits our overhead by 7 percent. For 90 million interventions we have only a couple nutritionists on staff. We need partnerships and we need help so we can ensure we are delivering nutrition-packed food. I will just give you two examples that I am very proud of. This is a sweet kind of paste developed with WFP and local food scientists in India and this is made from chickpeas. We sent this into Myanmar because it does not require refrigeration or

water and if it is given to a child it is power-packed with nutrition and vitamins. They love it and it tastes great and is great for under two year olds.

This is a date bar developed with WFP by Egyptian food scientists for school feeding. This kind of product is the wave of the future. This is where we can get the greatest impact for the least investment in helping people address undernutrition.

Eighth, we have to reform our anti-famine mechanism – the world’s safety net. We are now in a post-surplus world and WFP found itself competing to buy food on open markets this year. We are a spot buyer of more than \$1 billion in food each year, and have no guarantees, no hedging and no way to protect ourselves from the swings in the market. This cup of food is our hedging device and as prices went up, the food in this cup went down.

I want to thank the World Bank and their expert team who are helping us think through how to do this best, including the possibility of a forward financing mechanism in order to buy food in an orderly way that could help save up to 20 percent of the cost of our global purchasing and delivery process. I also want to thank CSIS for its leadership on the food crisis and other think tanks that are working hard to look at how to do this better.

Ninth, is about access. WFP runs logistics coordination for the entire UN system. We have thousands of planes, helicopters and ships. We build bridges, we take in elephants and camels or whatever is required. As I say, nothing gets between WFP and a hungry child.

We never ‘cry uncle’ but I am ‘crying uncle’ today. There are pirates off the coast of Somalia that are threatening our supply line. We ship in humanitarian food for up to two million Somalis a day – this supply line is their lifeline. We have nothing so much as even a pocket knife to protect ourselves anywhere in the world where we operate. We cannot stop the pirates. What we need is a systematic arrangement of naval escorts with our ships, a naval ship from nations to guide our ships safely near the coast of Somalia. We have done this before and it is a proven, effective way to ensure our food can get in safely without being attacked by pirates. Until five days ago we had no military escorts in place for next month, no nations volunteering. Canada came to the rescue and will continue to provide an escort for the next three weeks and after that, I have no idea how we will get food into Somalia. I should mention that in June the UN Security Council, in agreement with Somali authorities, authorized such actions to protect against pirates.

Tenth, the private sector. We cannot do our Purchasing for Progress, we cannot do school feeding and we cannot solve the nutrition key without deep partnerships. I want to thank institutions like TNT which helped us better our operations, such as helping us get 6 percent more warehouse efficiency which saves lives. And thanks to our many other partners that help us look at our whole value chain of work. We need you.

If we do not rise to the challenge, we risk ceding the field to extremist groups that do not share the values of liberty, freedom and human dignity. I will close by quoting Henry Kissinger who declared during an earlier food crisis that was much lesser in depth and impact in 1974:

“Nothing more overwhelms the human spirit, or mocks our values and our dreams, than the desperate struggle for sustenance. No tragedy is more wounding than the look of despair in the eyes of a starving child. Once famine was considered part of the normal cycle of man’s existence, a local or at worst a national tragedy. Now our consciousness is global. Our achievements, our expectations, and our moral convictions have made this issue into a universal political concern.”

This is not only about compassion, but about global stability and security. It is a call to all humanity to act now.