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WORLD FOOD SECURITY: A USDA PERSPECTIVE

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Last year, once again, we were visited by the ghost of Thomas Malthus. As 1996 began, headlines around the world warned of an imminent food crisis likely to spare no nation. It was a crisis, some said, that would dramatically inflate the rolls of the world's hungry and bring sharply higher U.S. food prices -- a crisis that could erode confidence in the new world trading system, push debt-ridden developing nations into bankruptcy, and exacerbate global tensions.

While much of the commentary was balanced, we were reminded often of the 200-year-old theory of Mr. Malthus suggesting that population growth would eventually outrun food production. Some of the articles early last year, quoting various experts, seemed to imply that the downward spiral had begun, the race was being lost, and that all the choices ahead were bad ones.

Not a pessimist by nature, I've never shared this view. I must confess that the gloom-and-doom scenarios remind me of a few lines from a humorous essay: "More than any other time in history," it goes, "mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness. The other, to total extinction. Let us pray we have the wisdom to choose correctly."

Last year's would-be crisis never fully materialized. The ominous headlines faded as it became evident that grain producers around the world were responding to higher prices. Once again, the market system worked. Yet I don't want to make light of the serious challenges we face, or of those who regularly sound the alarm, reminding us of the consequences if we fail to address those challenges, reminding us of the uncertainties ahead, and reminding us of urgent needs still unmet.

Food security touches on the most basic and fundamental of human needs. In many parts of the world, the lack of food security is measured not in prices but in calories, in poor health, and in lives. It is the chronic malnutrition that millions of people suffer day in and day out. It is hunger and worse -- like we see in the continuing food crisis in the Great Lakes region of Africa, triggered by civil strife and exacerbated by poverty and failed economic policies.

If 1996 began with a threat, it ended with a promise -- a renewed international commitment at the World Food Summit in Rome to improve food security and reduce hunger. I will discuss the Summit, our view of where efforts should be focused, and the U.S. role in this global challenge. But, first, I want to set the stage by reviewing some of the trends and developments we see today that relate to global food security.

Trends and Developments Relating to World Food Security

Few subjects provoke more intense debate than issues related to hunger, whether one is discussing root causes and solutions or current trends and future projections. And trying to measure progress is sometimes like being on a train with the shades down: Although you know you're moving, it's not always easy to discern the direction.

Without doubt, we have a very long way to go to end hunger. But I think the evidence also suggests that the world has made some solid progress. Overall, global food production continued to grow faster than population during the last few decades. The 5.8 billion people in the world today have, on average, about 15 percent more food per capita than the world's 4 billion inhabitants had 20 years ago.

Of course, distribution is very uneven, and most people don't eat averages. Nevertheless, FAO estimates that the proportion of the world's people who lack food security declined from around 35 percent in 1969-71 to 20 percent in 1990-92 -- a decline made more impressive when you consider the rather significant growth in total population over the same period.

Despite the progress, an estimated 800 million people today still suffer from chronic hunger or malnutrition, with the greatest concentration in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. While the numbers are declining in Asia, those in sub-Saharan Africa are increasing. Currently, around a third of the population in sub-Saharan Africa is chronically malnourished.

Looking ahead, we can take some encouragement from the fact that growth in world population is slowing -- down to about 1.4 percent per year from a high of 2 percent or more in the 1960's and early 1970's. Fertility rates in developing countries have fallen a lot faster than anyone had predicted. If this trend continues, we are no longer talking about a doubling in world population over the next 30 or 40 years, as has so often been predicted. In fact, recent long-term projections of the U.S. Census Bureau suggest that global population may stabilize at somewhere in the range of 9 to 10 billion around the middle of the next century.

It is important to note that none of this means that population growth has ceased to be a concern. Even according to the recent projections, roughly a billion people -- another India -- will be added to world population by 2010. The world is currently growing by around 80 million people a year -- 80 million new mouths to feed. Almost all the growth is occurring in the lower income developing countries, many of which are net food importers.

Moreover, if population pressures are perhaps not as great as once anticipated, strong demand pressures are now being generated by rapidly rising incomes, especially in the developing nations of Asia, and by increasing urbanization as more people in developing countries leave the farms and migrate to cities. The growing taste for meat in developing countries puts substantial additional pressure on world grain production.

We can point to a similarly diverse mix of indicators on the supply side. We know that the rate of growth in world food production has slowed and that agriculture has become more dependent on yield increases as less new land is readily available to bring into production. We recognize the threat of environmental degradation and failure to adopt sustainable food production practices. FAO, for example, projects a substantial *potential* shortfall in the global supply of fish and seafood products by the year 2010 related, in large part, to overfishing and degradation of the aquatic environment.

On the other hand, we have all seen how easy it is to underestimate the production response when the market -- through prices -- signals the need for more output. And if there are some troubling signs for future food production increases, there is also the prospect of new productivity-enhancing technologies now entering commercial use, as well as the increased emphasis on sustainable food production systems and environmental protections around the world.

During the 20th century, at the global level, food production more than kept pace with demand. In general, food became more plentiful, as well as less expensive relative to income. Many believe this trend will continue into the 21st century, but we cannot summarily dismiss those who hold a more pessimistic view. Anyone looking for some certainty in economic projections is certain to be disappointed. As is often the case, the final conclusions usually depend on the initial assumptions underlying each study.

There is broad agreement that demand will grow and that developing countries, such as China, will continue to increase food imports. However, projections differ significantly on the magnitude of the increases over the next few decades and on whether the demand can be met by developed countries. Whatever the case, the view of a world moving from what has been characterized as an era of large surpluses into an era of growing demand was reinforced and given greater urgency by the rapidly tightening stock levels of late 1995 and early 1996.

If we agree that the world does not face an imminent food security crisis, we must also acknowledge that a number of developing countries are not so fortunate. Several countries now dependent on food aid are facing even more serious access problems in the foreseeable future. A recent USDA study projected a near doubling in total world food aid needs over the next decade just to maintain the current -- and often inadequate -- levels of consumption in some 60 food-aid recipient countries. The study points to a looming mismatch between food aid needs and food aid resources, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Food aid availabilities today are the lowest in 20 years, reflecting severe budget constraints and reduced stock levels in the traditional donor countries.

The World Food Summit: Addressing the Challenges

These, then, are some of the challenges, concerns, and uncertainties that brought representatives from around 180 nations to the World Food Summit in Rome last November. Secretary Glickman led the U.S. delegation.

Speeches by heads of state, agricultural ministers, and others dealt with a range of issues. Some nations called for a reversal of the current trend toward declining levels of food aid. Others emphasized debt relief for poor countries, greater dissemination of agricultural research, internal agricultural policy reform, population control, and trade liberalization. Some expressed concerns about what they see as the uneven benefits of freer trade for poorer nations. Some participants were disappointed by the lack of an explicit commitment to "a right to food" -- a view shared by the nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) in their own forum on food security that ran parallel with the Summit.

Differences aside, the atmosphere was constructive, and there were few surprises. The most difficult task had been completed prior to the Summit. The Rome Declaration and the World Food Summit Plan of Action were negotiated in advance and then approved by acclamation in the opening session.

From the U.S. point of view -- a view I think widely shared -- the Summit was a good start. First, it focused needed attention on those who suffer chronic hunger and malnutrition around the globe. Nations undertook a renewed commitment to alleviate hunger, setting as a goal the reduction, by half, in the number of people currently suffering from undernutrition no later than the year 2015. Some of you may vaguely recall the groundbreaking 1974 World Food Conference, where participants set a goal of eliminating hunger and undernutrition within a decade. The new goal still represents a very ambitious challenge, but it is more realistic -- it seems reachable.

Equally important, the Summit Plan of Action helped define the steps that are needed to improve food security and reduce hunger, taking a comprehensive approach that requires actions by both developing and developed nations, as well as by the international community and multilateral institutions.

Without listing all the recommended actions, I want to focus on three areas addressed in the Plan of Action that we believe deserve particular attention:

- ▶ The adoption of appropriate policies by developing countries.
- ▶ Increased emphasis on research and new technologies, including policies encouraging the transfer and use of these technologies in the developing world.
- ▶ Continued recognition of the central role of trade and market-oriented trade expansion, coupled with efforts to ensure that the benefits of freer trade are widely shared.

First, we believe that food security can only be achieved with appropriate policies within individual countries. Food-importing developing countries can get help from outside, but their problems cannot be solved from outside. Leaders in these countries need to enact the internal policy reforms necessary to release private sector initiative and help pull their countries out of poverty and dependence.

Many battles have been won in the struggle against hunger over the last two decades, and we have learned what kinds of policies are conducive to economic development, external investment, and increases in agricultural production. For example, we know that economic policies should facilitate efficient markets, rather than attempting to substitute government action for markets. This means, in part, passing real prices back to producers in an economy linked to global markets. Governments should work to sustain a stable economic environment that encourages full participation by the private sector, and should invest in infrastructure, education, and social safety nets. Institutions and land tenure systems should provide incentives for land users to protect and enhance the long-term productivity of natural resources. General development policies should be established that do not discriminate against the agricultural sector or rural areas.

We know what policies have worked, and we have seen the results in Asia and Latin America -- even in a number of least-developed countries with a legacy of past problems. For example, since the end of civil strife and with the help of structural reforms, the food supply situation has improved markedly in Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Uganda. Food security does not come from a few high-income countries accumulating massive stocks as a result of misguided domestic policies. It does not come from misguided policies of self-sufficiency in developing or developed countries. The countries that have demonstrated the most progress in achieving economic development and food security are those that have seriously pursued market-oriented policy reform.

Food aid is still needed. Technical expertise and developmental assistance is needed. The wealthier countries and the multilateral development banks should assist those countries that demonstrate the political will to enact market-oriented reforms and restructure their own national food and agricultural policies. The fact that so many countries are pursuing structural adjustments in their economies and agricultural sectors today is a very positive sign.

Second, we believe future food security depends on continued and even stronger emphasis on agricultural research and development at the national, regional, and international level. And this must include policies that encourage the transfer to and the use of new technologies in developing countries. The "green revolution" of the past may have run its course, but new developments hold great promise. Early results in the emerging field of biotechnology are especially encouraging. Right now, researchers are revolutionizing agriculture by finding new ways to increase yields, improve disease and pest resistance, adapt crops to different growing conditions, and promote sustainable agricultural development with reduced use of pesticides.

New corn varieties emerging from biotech research that resist both drought and acidic soil could feed an additional 50 million people a year, according to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Among other projects, USDA scientists are working on a carrot that is three to five times richer in vitamin A, so that a few cents worth of seed on just a square meter of land could potentially provide 100 percent of a person's annual need for the vitamin.

Almost all the gains in food production over the last 20 years have come from genetically improved crops. Biotechnology is a tool that allows researchers to shorten the time it takes to produce new plant varieties from a decade or more to just a few years. High-yielding varieties can be more quickly developed, and natural pesticides and resistant traits can be genetically engineered into crops. An estimated one-third of the world's crops are now lost each year to insects and plant diseases.

Nations need to work together to ensure that the benefits of the new technologies are not lost in a maze of restrictive and unnecessary regulations. While safety must always be the primary consideration, sound science should be the guide. Theoretical risks that lack foundation must be balanced against the real risks of not taking advantage of the benefits that new technologies may offer. In the case of biotech foods, these risks may fall disproportionately on the world's poorest nations. People should not be asked to go hungry for want of a higher yielding variety of corn, when all the evidence tells us it is as safe to produce and consume as any traditional hybrid. Developed and developing countries alike need to take advantage of these new scientific tools that will help producers safely feed a growing world.

The importance of increasing productivity through technology is illustrated by USDA projections for sub-Saharan Africa, the most serious case in the world today. In that part of the world, a doubling in the projected rate of increase in grain yields over the next 10 years could cut the region's food aid needs by half and reduce global food aid needs by 25 percent.

Third, we believe that trade liberalization is one of the most critical, most fundamental, keys to greater world food security. U.S. efforts helped ensure that this view was incorporated as one of the core commitments in the Summit Plan of Action.

How Trade Liberalization Enhances World Food Security

Food security can be seen as a combination of several components. One, of course, is production, including the amount and composition of agricultural products produced around the world. But production is not enough. In the past, we often had large food surpluses in a few countries existing side-by-side with severe shortages in others. Another component is access to the food being produced -- the distribution of food around the world. Free trade addresses both factors.

A fair, open, market-oriented trading system is best suited to aligning supply with demand, maximizing output over time, and reducing wide swings in production. When real prices are passed back to growers, this encourages production where countries are competitive and provides the incentive for growers to produce what the market demands. It facilitates the efficient movement of capital and resources into sectors where demand is rising. It discourages wasteful policies of self-sufficiency. And it tends to unleash the initiative and ingenuity of millions of farmers and agriculturalists worldwide.

In terms of access, freer trade provides importing countries with a wider choice of suppliers and allows them to take full advantage of the world market to make up for shortfalls in domestic production. The variability of production is almost always lower at the global level than it is at the country level.

Of course, freer trade involves obligations. It requires that food exporting nations remain consistent, reliable suppliers. Export embargoes and taxes undermine the foundations of an open market. Importing countries also have an obligation. If farmers in exporting countries are going to rely on market signals to determine what and how much to produce, those signals should not be interrupted or distorted. Exporters need to know the markets will be there -- they need reliable buyers and buying patterns they can count on. Communication, consistency, and predictability are crucial to an efficiently functioning market that responds to consumer needs.

Although the trade policy reforms of the Uruguay Round are still being implemented -- although further steps need to be taken in the next round of agricultural trade negotiations -- we can already see evidence that market-oriented trade policy reforms within and among countries are working. The evidence is found in the dramatic response of growers around the world to the tight grain stocks and higher prices that generated so much renewed concern about food security.

Global wheat and coarse grain production for 1996/97 is forecast at 1.47 billion metric tons, the highest production level ever recorded. This year's output is expected to be up 134 million tons from last year, the second largest year-to-year increase ever. More importantly, global grain acreage is up 17 million hectares in 1996/97, a remarkable turnaround in light of the steady decline in planted area during the last 20 years.

Recent gains are not confined to grains. Livestock consumption worldwide continues to show dramatic growth, reflecting not only higher incomes but also increased productivity. Since 1992, global consumption of beef, pork, and poultry meat is up 17 percent -- nearly twice the increase in population. Likewise, trade in processed and other consumer foods is virtually exploding.

Price signals communicating market demand are reaching the world's producers, and they are responding by increasing production. It is true that tighter grain stocks have raised questions about market stability and the potential for greater volatility in production and prices. However, market-oriented policies and freer trade can substantially reduce this risk if demand signals are quickly and clearly communicated to the marketplace. Does anyone believe that the risks of market volatility are any less if exporting nations can turn on or shut off exports at will, or if large government-monopoly importers can disrupt markets at any time for any reason?

Nations need not fear freer trade from a food security standpoint. In a world where trade flows freely across borders, food security is not constrained by the limitations of self-sufficiency. It is not measured by food aid budgets. It is not a function of how much each nation produces, but rather of global production, freedom of movement in products, and affordability -- the ability of developing and developed countries alike to buy the food they do not produce year after year.

And it is in this last area that trade liberalization appears to offer the greatest long-term benefits. For the United States, for Japan, for Europe, for dozens of fast-emerging developing countries today, trade expansion has proven to be an engine for economic growth. It has spurred rapid development and generated rising incomes in countries once mired in poverty.

At the beginning of this year, The Washington Post ran a series of articles exploring some of the impacts of the growth in international trade and investment in a world where borders are no longer barriers. One of the articles, titled "Free Trade Helps Lift World's Poor," talked about what happens when free trade is combined with a receptive investment climate, a good infrastructure, and a stable political and economic environment. It pointed to the hundreds of billions of dollars pumped into developing countries by private companies and investors, lifting entire countries and literally millions of people in the developing world out of poverty. It took note of how economic growth in developing countries can benefit all nations, providing new markets, new opportunities, for developed and developing countries alike.

While the series highlighted the Asian miracle, it also examined the other side -- the lingering poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and the unequal distribution of the benefits of development in many nations. If some nations and some people within those nations continue to prosper while others languish behind, the result will be a growing gap between rich and poor.

This is why it is so important that developing countries undertake internal policy reform and create a stable political and economic environment that widely distributes the benefits of growth and provides a safety net for their citizens. This is why it is important that development assistance be used, where possible, to encourage market-oriented reforms and the building of infrastructure and human capital. And this is why developed countries should not pursue policies which send the wrong signals to their own producers or distort international trade flows.

In supporting a fair and open trading system, we are seeking not only a more prosperous America, but a freer, fairer, and more prosperous world. The vision that launched the Uruguay Round remains our vision today, and it goes beyond the significant direct benefits to the U.S. economy and U.S. agriculture. It is a belief that freer trade is a means of raising living standards worldwide, promoting sustainable economic growth and development, and contributing to closer, stronger, and more stable international relations. It is the recognition that freer trade and open markets encourage and foster freedom in other areas as well. It is the conviction that in an increasingly interdependent world, freer trade provides the best assurance of food security for all nations.

Certainly, freer trade does not solve all problems, but it is far better than the alternatives. The benefits of freer trade are greatest when all nations are participating, and all nations are contributing. It is not in our interest to see nations left behind. Coupled with internal policy reforms, development assistance, support for agricultural research, and food aid where needed, freer markets can contribute substantially to a more food-secure community of nations.

By embracing these objectives, the World Food Summit Plan of Action provides what we believe is a solid, well-balanced set of recommendations that can be useful to individual nations and the international community in addressing the problems of hunger and food security. But the Summit was only a start. The full measure of its contribution -- its ultimate success -- will depend on the political will that countries demonstrate, individually and in concert, in the followup this year and over the years to come.

U.S. Role and Stake in Enhancing Global Food Security

The United States has long been a leader in building a more food-secure world, and we will continue to play a leadership role in the followup to the Summit. As Secretary Glickman said at the Summit, "The United States shares the belief that hunger is a fundamentally unacceptable human condition, whether it exists on American soil or anywhere in the world."

But a food-secure world is also very clearly in our own interest. U.S. agriculture, the U.S. economy, and U.S. security are tied to the global community of nations. Both agriculture and the U.S. economy as a whole are increasingly dependent on trade. Moreover, a world in which 800 million people lack adequate nutrition is not likely to remain a peaceful or stable world.

By any measure, the U.S. contribution to world food security is unmatched. The United States is the world's leading exporter of food and farm products, supplying an estimated 23 percent of the total value of world agricultural trade. We are committed to being a reliable supplier. This past year, despite very tight grain supplies, despite the actions taken by the European Union, and despite internal pressures, the Secretary announced that there would be no restrictions on exports. We stood our ground, despite all the pressures. We even opened up our food security grain reserve to ensure that wheat would be available to hungry nations in need of assistance.

The 1996 U.S. farm law reinforces the U.S. commitment to be a reliable supplier -- to respond to the demands of the global marketplace. As a result of the new law, farmers are free to react to market signals and to determine what area to plant to what crops. We saw the response to some extent in this first year, and we'll see it even more in the future. In the new global trade environment, reliability of supplies is a commitment that must be shared by all food-exporting nations, just as reliable market access is a responsibility that all food importers must recognize.

The United States also has a historical commitment to food aid, development assistance, and support for international agricultural research and the international financial institutions. These efforts will continue.

As part of U.S. preparations for the World Food Summit, a food security policy paper was developed that outlines eight broad areas where the United States intends to focus its efforts toward improving global food security and reducing hunger. Among these are encouraging the adoption of market-oriented agricultural and food policies; supporting agricultural research and technology development at home and abroad; maintaining the global momentum toward freer

trade and ensuring that the benefits are equitably shared; maintaining the U.S. commitment to provide food aid and developmental assistance where needed; and supporting multilateral efforts to improve food security.

We will continue to provide developmental and technical assistance, using that assistance wherever possible to encourage and support the efforts of developing nations to implement market-oriented policy reforms. An investment in economic and agricultural development is an investment in future trade. We know from long experience that as agriculture improves and brings higher incomes in developing countries, diets change and imports increase. Developing countries take nearly half of U.S. agricultural exports and they represent our fastest growing markets. Economic development is market development.

We recognize that food aid will always be needed because of natural disasters, drought, civil strife, and unforeseen and often unavoidable events. The United States remains the world's leading supplier of official food aid, and private donations by Americans for emergency food distribution and other international relief are even greater than U.S. government aid. We will continue as a leading contributor to food aid efforts.

As aid budgets in the United States and other traditional donor nations shrink, we are also working with other countries to fully implement the Marrakesh Decision, which was one of the Uruguay Round agreements signed in April 1994. This decision recognized that some of the poorer net-food-importing countries may experience short-term difficulties in acquiring adequate food supplies as trade reforms are implemented. It recommends a number of actions to assist those countries, including efforts by individual developed countries and development banks to provide the technical and financial assistance needed to improve agricultural productivity and infrastructure.

The Marrakesh Decision also urges negotiations toward ensuring that adequate food aid is provided where most needed. Discussions have now begun under the Food Aid Convention to consider ways of expanding the list of food aid donor nations and the list of products that can be pledged. In recent years, we have seen countries such as Japan playing a more active role in food aid, and it is appropriate that a number of countries now enjoying a new-found prosperity should assist in this global effort. We also foresee a greater role for the private sector, both in anti-hunger and development efforts. We cannot end hunger solely on a government-to-government basis. The capital, resources, and expertise of the private and nonprofit sectors are needed.

Planning is already underway to move forward in implementing the U.S. commitments outlined in our policy paper for the World Food Summit and in the Plan of Action endorsed at the Summit. These efforts are being coordinated by the Interagency Working Group on Food Security (IWG), which is co-chaired by USDA, AID, and the Department of State. Following the Summit, the IWG agreed that the next major step would be the development of a long-term U.S. action plan on food security, with both international and domestic components. In formulating this plan, we will seek broad non-governmental participation. This is to be a U.S. action plan; not just a U.S.

government action plan.

An advisory committee on food security will be established, which includes representation from all non-governmental sectors that contribute to food security. A major conference is also being planned for this spring, tentatively scheduled for May. The purpose will be to deal with the entire range of Summit followup issues and to help develop the U.S. action plan, defining appropriate roles for government, the nonprofits, the private sector, and society at large.

We have had initial consultations with the interested NGO's and private sector representatives about the conference and the development of the U.S. action plan. We hope to have a first draft of the plan completed by late summer.

At the same time, at the multilateral level, we will continue the discussions on food security issues and implementation of the World Food Summit Action Plan in various multilateral fora, including the UN, FAO, WTO, and OECD. This must be a global effort.

Finally, we will continue to aggressively pursue the trade liberalization agenda. As I have already noted, we believe that a fair and open trading system is the best way to ensure stable, affordable food supplies throughout the world -- for consumers of all nations. Free trade provides the incentive and opportunity for producers everywhere to respond to market demand in an open trade environment, without import bans or export embargoes.

Conclusion

In his recent State of the Union address, President Clinton spoke about the challenges we face as a nation in preparing for the 21st century. He said, "We face no imminent threat, but we do have an enemy -- the enemy of our time is inaction." This also applies to the challenges we face in global food security.

The world will enter the 21st century -- the new millennium -- with some 800 million people going to bed hungry or malnourished. If, as a global community, we succeed in meeting the goal set at the World Food Summit, that number will drop to around 400 million by 2015. Of course, 400 million people without adequate nutrition is still far, far too many, but it would be a substantial accomplishment, an unprecedented achievement. Based on the current population projections for those years, it would mean a drop from roughly 14 percent of the world's people in this predicament to around 5-6 percent.

Success in this effort will require an unprecedented and concerted global commitment. It will require that food-insecure countries "get their policies right." It will require continued trade liberalization and the development, transfer, and adoption of new, safe productivity-enhancing agricultural technologies. It will require actions to protect natural resources and reduce environmental degradation and loss of productive lands and forest. It will require the peaceful settlement of disagreements, rather than armed conflict, as well as continued efforts to stabilize

populations and eliminate gender discrimination. And it will require economic growth, stimulated by freer trade, market-oriented internal policies, and developmental assistance -- growth that brings higher incomes and reduces poverty.

It is a tall order, a formidable challenge, but we do not see it as impossible. What we cannot afford is complacency and inaction.

There's a story you may have heard about the difference between heaven and hell. In hell, each person has a dish of food and a spoon -- but these are very long-handled spoons. There's a lot of turmoil and chaos as each person fights for room to get the spoon from dish to mouth. So long and awkward are these spoons that people just can't reach their mouths. In the jangle and clash of silverware, food is spilling, everyone is bickering, and no one is getting much to eat. In heaven are those very same plates of food and the same long spoons. But it's a calm and convivial scene, with everyone getting a taste of everything and everyone well fed. The difference is that the people around the table are using those long spoons to reach across and feed each other.

The world has made progress in reducing hunger, and I believe this progress can continue. For humanitarian reasons, economic reasons, security reasons, it is in everyone's interest.
