



**Women's Foreign Policy Group  
Annual Luncheon  
September 29, 2008  
Washington, DC**

**Josette Sheeran**

UN World Food Programme Executive Director

*Hunger as a National Security and Global Stability Issue*

**Lara Logan:** Hello everybody, I'm Lara Logan, I am Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent for CBS News and a Correspondent for 60 Minutes. I am the Mistress of Ceremonies today at the Women's Foreign Policy Group's Annual Luncheon Event with our Keynote Speaker Josette Sheeran, who is Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme. I am delighted to welcome all of you to today's program with Josette Sheeran, who became the eleventh Executive Director of WFP in April 2007. As such she oversees the world's largest humanitarian agency, which plans to feed some 90 million people in 80 different countries in this year alone. Having seen the World Food Programme in action over the last 15 years from Africa to Asia to all over, I can tell you they really do feed that many people in that many places. There probably is no other agency in the world whose reach is that deep and whose people are that committed.

Last year our keynote speaker was Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. This year we are extraordinarily pleased to honor Josette Sheeran. She is not just a role model for the next generation; she is an inspiration and a powerful leader for women worldwide.

After lunch we will hear remarks from Ms. Sheeran, who has just returned from a very brief visit to Haiti where she witnessed first hand the devastation in the town of Gonaïves, and I'm sure we'll be hearing about that in her remarks. After Josette Sheeran has spoken I will moderate the Q & A.

It is with great pleasure that introduce you to Maxine Isaacs, who is the Chair of the Women's Foreign Policy Group Board. Please join me in welcoming Maxine.

**Maxine Isaacs:** Thank you Lara, for so graciously giving us your time and joining us today. Lara has just moved to Washington, D.C., and this is her first official event. We are honored to have her as our MC today. I'm thrilled that all of you could join us. This is an amazing group of women leaders who really show the breadth of the Women's Foreign Policy Group's family and friends. All of you are very special people. I want to acknowledge a couple in particular. I would like to begin by thanking Mary Catherine Toker. She's Vice President of Governmental Affairs for General Mills. She very

generously and graciously agreed to chair today's event. She and General Mills have shown enormous support for the Women's Foreign Policy Group.

I'd also like to recognize the many ambassadors who are here today, many of whom are serving on our honorary committee and the information about that is in your program. Because I can't introduce all of you by name – I tried that once and it was a disaster – I would like to ask first of all for all the women ambassadors to stand. And now the other ambassadors – thank you so much for being with us today.

We also have officials from the UN, the World Bank, and some senior state department officials with us today and if you would be willing to stand we would like to acknowledge you as well. Thank you very, very much.

We are privileged to have UN World Food Programme Executive Director Josette Sheeran as our keynote speaker today, which is capping an incredible year for the Women's Foreign Policy Group. We have a very successful and interesting web site and newsletters, which if you're not acquainted with them I hope you will become so and our programs have been wonderful this year. We have an embassy and author series and also a series highlighting the work of Carnegie Scholars on Islam. This year's speakers have included the UN Deputy Secretary-General Migiro, UNDP official Kathleen Cravero, the ambassador of Oman, as well as prominent authors including Barbara Slavin, Elizabeth Bumiller, Robin Wright, and Linda Robinson, who have been keeping us informed about the very important and pressing issues of the day. The other program that's very near and dear to our hearts is our mentoring program. We've had two mentoring fairs this year – one at New York University and one at Georgetown.

Our interns who come to us through that program and other means are very special and important to us. We need your support so we can continue our international affairs programming, which expands the dialogue on foreign policy and our mentoring programs to support and encourage the next generation of women leaders, which is supremely important. Together we can make a difference and ensure that women's voices are heard on pressing international issues. Before I end I want to thank the Women's Foreign Policy Group staff, especially Kimberly Kahnhauser, who coordinated this event, and Sara Barker, who leads our communications efforts and all the interns and volunteers who made this possible. If all of you would stand briefly so we can applaud you as well. I want to turn this over to our chair Mary Catherine, but I want to remind you there are question cards on the tables. I am being reminded to tell you the names of our board members who are here and to recognize them: Dawn Calabria, Donna Constantinople, Debbie Dingell, Isabel Jasinowski, Gail Kitch, Teresa Loar, Tracy McMinn, Susan Rappaport, and especially our wonderful leader Pat Ellis, without whom none of this would be possible. If all of you would stand I'd like to applaud you. Thank you.

I do want to take this opportunity to introduce to you our chair, Mary Catherine Toker from General Mills, who has been a wonderful support to the Women's Foreign Policy Group and brings so much to this event. Thank you, Mary Catherine.

**Mary Catherine Toker:** Thank you Maxine. It's a very special privilege for us at General Mills to chair this day's very special gathering. It's appropriate for us to honor Josette Sheeran, the World Food Programme's executive director, who has been on the front lines battling the global food crisis during an unprecedented period. And it's not just the severity of the problem that has changed, of course. The world hunger crisis has also become much more complex with direct links to some of the most pressing global issues and challenges we face today. This includes recent financial turmoil, soaring energy costs, global warming, trade policies that distort the agricultural marketplace and prevent subsistence farmers in the developing world from competing, and of course government mandates for putting corn in our gas tanks. The world community is now realizing that we can resolve this crisis only if we find new ways to work together. Happily for us, today we have in this room today leaders in government, international organizations, non-profits, and the corporate sector that are positioned to join in this effort.

Josette, we look forward to hearing from you about how we can support you and find new ways to collaborate to help you in your mission. Finally, I want to commend Pat and the Women's Foreign Policy Group for shining the spotlight on this issue and for bringing all of us together. I also want to thank our sponsors and supporters and I ask that you stand when you hear your names and I would ask the audience to hold off on your enthusiastic applause until I've named everyone so we can get to lunch. I'll begin with our benefactors: Maxine Isaacs and James A. Johnson please stand. Our patrons: Abbott, CH2MHILL, General Motors Corporation, Nestle USA, and Shell. Our sponsors: The Academy for Educational Development, CNA, the ExxonMobile Corporation, Kraft Foods, Microsoft Corporation, Proctor and Gamble, and Susan Rappaport. I want to thank our in-kind supporters: the Coca-Cola Company and the many embassies that donated wine. I would also like to thank our host committee members and ask them to stand. Thank you so much for all of your help this year. I now invite you to enjoy your lunch and we will continue with the program shortly.

**Ms. Logan:** Hello again everyone. I hope everyone enjoyed their lunch. We would now like to begin the program for today and before I introduce our keynote speaker, Josette Sheeran, who is the executive director of the UN World Food Programme, I would like to introduce a short video which will show you a little about how the UN World Food Programme works and how people are trying to cope with rising food prices.

[video and applause]

It is now my honor and also my very sincere pleasure to introduce today's keynote speaker, Josette Sheeran, executive director of the UN World Food Programme. Josette is an important and powerful leader, not just a woman leader but an example for all. She has had an incredibly impressive career in management at the United Nations, in government, in the media, in the private sector, and also as the head of a think tank and Empower America. She has a resume that would make anyone blush, not just the women in the room. In April 2007 Josette was appointed as the 11<sup>th</sup> Executive Director of WFP.

WFP is an organization that reaches out to hungry people but most importantly to people who can't help themselves. It has a special emphasis on women and girls who suffer disproportionately from both hunger and malnutrition. WFP also works with people affected by HIV and AIDS, orphans, victims of war and natural disasters. It also reaches out to school children in poor communities.

As long as 15 years ago in Malawi I was fortunate enough to visit a WFP program called Food for Work, and as far back as then WFP was right at the forefront of sustainable development. Not just giving handouts to people, but trying to create programs and policies where people could sustain themselves. Food for work was about giving people a stake in their community, not just handing out free food but giving them opportunities – building materials in exchange for food, being part of a community. It was a very impressive program.

Josette Sheeran has been at the forefront of sustainable development, not just in her role at WFP, but also in her role prior to that, and that is something I'm sure she'll be talking to you about today. Something very interesting because when you travel the developing world today because whether in times of crisis in response to natural disasters or just in normal times like today for the people of Zimbabwe, for example, where there is a hunger crisis there that has almost been forgotten about. It's in those places where sustainable development and the ability to help themselves and that is something that has been a personal drive in your [Ms. Sheeran's] career. I'm sure we'll be very interested in hearing more about that because that's really the key to making any of this enduring and lasting.

We are truly fortunate to have Josette Sheeran here today because she is constantly on the move, constantly traveling. I know what it feels like to live out of a suitcase. Especially with all the recent natural disasters around the world that certainly keeps someone like Josette very busy and those disasters that have been exacerbated by the world food crisis, which is something that while everyone sits here with their stomachs full which is something, having been born and raised in Africa, I often think about people who never know that feeling.

Many years ago I was desperate to get to Mozambique. I was told what a wonderful country it was and that one of the most amazing things was the incredible cheap food and the seafood you could get there. My first meal at a restaurant in Mozambique there were all these street children sitting outside staring in through the window. I thought how could anybody eat in this place when you are faced right in front of your eyes with people who have nothing and are literally starving? I try very hard not to forget. Everyone knows that feeling you get when your blood sugar level drops and you're absolutely desperate for something to eat and that feeling of sitting down [to eat]. It very often crosses my mind at that point what it is like for people who are starving and hungry and don't get to know that feeling, they don't get to feed their bodies.

In Josette's work traveling all over the world she has seen that and has made it her mission to try and do something about it. I think it's a truly great thing. I'm fortunate and

honored to be able to introduce her and to hear her speak today. She is just back from Haiti, where she witnessed the devastation caused by the hurricanes there. We have the Haitian ambassador here and others who are anxious to hear her impression of that and what she can tell us about her experience there and the impact of the hurricanes.

Just a little of her history – prior to joining the UN she served as Under-Secretary for Economic Energy and Agriculture Affairs at the US Department of State, where she was responsible for economic issues, which includes an incredible list of everything from economic development to trade, agriculture, finance, energy, telecommunications, and transportation, which I would say makes her qualified to rule the world.

In 2006, as I mentioned, Josette was appointed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance, and environment. Ms. Sheeran has also served as Deputy US Trade Representative in the Office of the Trade Representative where she advanced the African Growth and Opportunity Act and was responsible for trade negotiations with Asia and Africa. Of course in those developing countries where protectionism in agriculture makes it very difficult for individual farmers to sustain themselves and for African and other developing economies to compete in the global economy – another topic that you have a lot of experience in and I would like to ask everybody in the room to please join me in welcoming our keynote speaker Josette Sheeran. Thank you very, very much.

**Ms. Sheeran:**

**“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% 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% 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% less food. This was just a microcosm of what was happening in villages throughout the world. For WFP, we could either cut the kilocalories per person by 40%, or cut 40% of those receiving emergency help.

This has continued really unabated. On March 5 we were buying rice at \$430 a metric ton, five weeks later it was \$780 a metric ton, and two weeks after that \$1,000 a metric tonne. In Haiti yesterday, rice was selling for more than \$1,000 a metric ton and that is expected to rise again with the nation having lost up to 50% 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% 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% 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% 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% of the families said they would never send their girls to school – when a school feeding program was introduced we saw 100% 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% 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% 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% 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% on GDP.

WFP, as many of you know, limits our overhead by 7%. 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% 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% 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.

**Ms. Logan:** We only have about another ten minutes and I know we have a whole stack of questions here, so I won’t take up a lot of time since I know you want to hear from Josette. One of the issues you raised was that of piracy. Of course no one really wants to take responsibility for what’s happening in international waters off the coast of Somalia, which is one of the most dangerous places in the world right now. It doesn’t just threaten your distribution to Somalia though, does it? There’s a lot more at stake. Tell us what you need. You need governments to provide ships, safe escorts for you.

**Ms. Sheeran:** Yes. This has been approved by the Security Council. It is legal to do this and it is agreed to with the transitional authority officials in Somalia that we can have ships escorted in to within a mile and a half of the coast of Somalia. And it works. The escorts do not need to fire a shot. We’ve had on and off these escorts for the past year but again, we have no other nations lined up to do this. We do not have any ships that will sail the food in unless we have escorts. It’s way too dangerous now. We’re really stuck without the escorts. We’re waiting for nations to step up to the plate to escort the ships in.

**Ms. Logan:** I know there are lots of ambassadors here so I’m sure you’ll be eagerly taking that home and speaking to your governments about that issue. Another issue here that is very close to my heart: please speak to the issue of Zimbabwe. Given the political situation do you anticipate a change for better food availability? I guess my question, as far as Zimbabwe is concerned, why is there not more of an outcry and what is the true nature of the situation for the people there regarding the food crisis?

**Ms. Sheeran:** The crisis in Zimbabwe is really multi-fold because Zimbabwe used to be one of the greatest sources of food for our program but also for the nations in the southern African region. It was a supplier of food. Not only have we lost that supply, but at various times we’re helping to reach up to a third of the population who are in desperate need of food. Add up a combination of factors, including changes in the economic policy and agricultural policy we see the dramatic decline. Droughts have added to the troubles there. A consecutive seven years of drought in the region. All NGOs were cut off from doing business there for the past three months, although it has re-opened now. So it’s made it very challenging. WFP is there in a major way; our

principle is to distribute based on need. Not based on politics, not based on tribal affiliation, not based on region, but on need and that's what we're doing there. We're standing with the people and hopefully things will get better. Zimbabwe should be able to produce enough food for Zimbabwe and also for many nations around it.

**Ms. Logan:** Your job is based on need, but what do you do in a situation like Zimbabwe where the government clearly uses food as a political weapon – withholding food from opposition supporters, hijacking your food supply and others to give to their own supporters or force people who are desperate and have nothing else to vote for them?

**Ms. Sheeran:** Sometimes there is confusion because the Zimbabwean government, like many, has their own food distribution system and there have been many statements about who is getting access to that food. We do not run that and that is not our food. We control our food all the way from when it's donated to us, all the way to delivery to individuals. We track that very tightly. We do not allow that to be violated and we determine it based on need. I think we're able to reach many, many people who need the help very much in Zimbabwe and it's regardless of political affiliation as it is in every nation that we work in.

**Ms. Logan:** How frustrating is it for you as part of an aid community where you see the value and significance and critical role of sustainable development. I'm thinking of developing economies like Afghanistan where billions of aid money is being poured in but 80% of that money goes back to the donor country. The Afghans are very frustrated with this. You have a situation where there is no sustainable economy being created and for example trying to create alternative livelihoods for farmers isn't very successful when, if wheat prices are high, the rest of the world just dumps all their wheat they don't want on Afghanistan and there's no real incentive for farmers there to farm wheat because there's no money in it.

**Ms. Sheeran:** First, let's not despair too much. The proportion of hungry in the world has dropped from 37% in 1969 to 17% last year. We probably have a tick up because of the food crisis. We are nourishing more people than ever before in human history and we are on track to cut the proportion of poverty in half by 2015. WFP's largest program 15 years ago was in China. We now do not help one person in China. We're always available if there is a need and governments are overwhelmed, but China now takes care of its own needs. We have gotten out of more countries than we're probably in right now. Just this year Morocco took over 100% of its school feeding program; Jordan took over 100% of its school feeding program. Even Yemen, rocked back by the high food prices, took over 90% of the school feeding program. Countries are making progress. We see part of the food crisis is vastly increasing demand not only from all over developing countries but where income has been rising and you see high rates of growth, so this is good news.

Secondly, I think there is a high demand for greater aid effectiveness. Many countries want to be able to play a bigger role in their aid future and want greater efficiency and effectiveness. I support ways to get villages more involved directly. WFP has thousands of women on village counsels that help advise us on how we do our work. You always



hear the most amazing things from them. I was in Darfur and asked the women if you had a magic wand, what would you want? They asked for three hand grinders because we bring in the wheat and they literally have to stone grind it. That's a gourmet item here, right? Stone ground wheat. It takes these women all day – this is what their life is. \$260, three hand grinders, and their lives are transformed.

We have to be willing to listen and we have to be willing to hear the voices of the people who know how to solve their own problems. I was in Pakistan and asked victims of the earthquake. Again, I tell you, you get the women together and you really hear it the way it is. There was a ton of money pouring into this village and I asked if you had a magic wand what's the one thing – this is a great question – the one thing you would want. They all yelled out that they wanted buffalo. They said they had lost their buffalo in the earthquake and the buffalo provides all the milk, cream, and cheese that sustains the young children and the pregnant women. A buffalo is \$1,000. But in a way it was too little for anyone to act on. I mentioned this in another speech in Washington, as Karen Sendelback knows, and the women in the audience wrote checks. I want you to know the buffalo is there. WFP does a lot of things and getting buffalo up mountains is not one we had experience with before – but the buffalo is there.

This sustainable solution has to come in connection with people who know how to solve their own problems. The imposition of answers often does not work.

One thing I did in Haiti was listen and learn about what we can do better to embed, even in the emergency response, the solutions to the problems that keep recurring. That has to be the wave of the future in all of our work.

**Ms. Logan:** I know we're getting close on our time, so one last question from Standford Financial Group. What progress has been made in persuading net food crop exporters to desist from imposing trade restrictions? A nice political question for you.

**Ms. Sheeran:** I think we have to clearly delineate the broader problem of trade restrictions and export controls, which I'll leave to my friends at FTR and WTO and others to continue to work through. These are complex issues, but something that should not be complex is for the world to agree to exempt humanitarian supplies from export controls and excessive taxation. We have gotten a little easing up. Some countries have lifted their bans, but it's harvest season. We had a situation in Liberia where we got the money in. We could help President Johnson Sirleaf in June. We could not find food; we could not get food in there until October 15. We are buying as far away as Brazil to get food to Somalia. It is vastly expensive. Humanitarian food is less than 1% of the global food supply so we're asking for humanitarian supplies to be exempt. This is how I spend a lot of my time, calling up nations and saying please, please let us buy some food for the neighboring country that is under such trouble. Some of these things have to go beyond ad hoc. It's too risky and it could trigger the wrong kind of panic if people saw that we couldn't even keep the humanitarian [aid] going to help prevent the worst kind of suffering in this crisis. To me this is an easy one. Actually getting the mechanism to get it done proves less easy.

**Ms. Logan:** One last point: Don't let the financial crisis be an excuse.

**Ms. Isaacs:** Josette Sheeran, you have inspired us and I hope you have motivated all of us. We really appreciate your being here. We'd like to present you a certificate on behalf of the Women's Foreign Policy Group to thank you for your leadership and providing a role model for the next generation of women leaders. Thank you so much. Lara Logan, it's a treat to have you here. Welcome to Washington and thank you for all your help.