Beyond the Headlines
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Famine in the Horn of Africa

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Patricia Ellis: Good afternoon everyone and thank you all for coming. I'm Patricia Ellis, President of the Women's Foreign Policy Group, and I have one of our Board members, Diana Negroponte, here with us. We promote women's leadership, women's voices on pressing international issues of the day such as our topic for today—the famine in the Horn of Africa. We're so pleased that you could join us for this very important event, and we have a great speaker, Allan Jury. He's the Director of US Relations for the World Food Programme. He's been here in Washington for three years, before that he was Director of External Relations, and he had a previous career for 25 years in the State Department—so, great credentials to talk about today's topic.

He's going to bring us up to date. This topic is changing by the minute, and that's why we're so pleased—and it's August, and so many people have come out—because we wanted to shine the spotlight on this. It's part of a series we do: Beyond the Headlines. We've covered things on Egypt, Libya, and women in the Middle East. We had a recent program on women and war, and we've had the Ambassador of Pakistan and women ambassadors from Africa speaking to us. So it's been a very exciting time for us. And this fall we will have some exciting programs, including some exciting Author Series programs, so look out for the announcements; they'll be coming soon. So Allan's going to bring us up to date on this tragic and dire situation of the famine in the Horn of Africa, where there are so many people having to flee and go from Somalia into the neighboring Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, and so many people have been dying. And that has included about—this figure probably could be outdated—but what I keep hearing is 29,000 children under the age of five have already died.

There are two big things that have happened over the weekend that I wanted to mention to you. One is that Jill Biden and Rajiv Shah were in Kenya, on the border, in the largest refugee camp. And they were there to bring more attention and to encourage Americans to give more, because they just feel that this issue needs more awareness and that people haven't been giving enough. And we'll discuss that during the Q&A. And the US—and maybe it has happened, but just prior, in my journalist's hat, checking the wires up to the last minute—the US government is about to announce an aid package of 100 million dollars towards the famine. And the other thing that happened over the weekend is al-Shabab—the al-Qaeda related organization—has moved out of the parts of Mogadishu that it occupied, and so we'll also talk about the impact of this because obviously it's been a major issue in terms of access and security and getting the food in there.

And so today's program—it's very informal. It's a roundtable. Allan will speak, I'll open it up for questions, and then we'll engage the audience. And it really—we want to have a good discussion and so we're looking forward to that. So please join me in welcoming Allan Jury. [*Applause*.]

Allan Jury: Well, thank you, Pat. I'm pleased to be here, and I'm going to try to keep my remarks relatively brief—no more than 15 minutes. Because I think in this size group, the great thing is you really can have a dialogue and questions and answers, and I really want to take advantage of that—to answer your questions. I thought I'd start with giving a bit of background on the conditions—what

caused the drought, where are we at; turn a little bit to Somalia in particular which is the hardest hit; conclude a little bit about what the international community is doing—focus particularly on WFP where I have more of the details, but I'll allude to what others are doing as well; and then wrap it up. And that'll be sort of my opening presentation.

The drought conditions in the Horn, coupled with conflict in Somalia, have affected about 13 million people in the region of the Horn of Africa. WFP is targeting 11.5 million of these, with the largest groups being 3.7 million in Somalia, 3.7 million in Ethiopia—which include over 200,000 refugees from Somali—and nearly 3.2 million in Kenya, which again includes nearly 500,000 refugees from Somalia. So you see how difficult the situation in Somalia is. We're over 700,000, approaching a million people who have already fled the country.

Now the roots of this crisis—at least the proximate roots of the immediate crisis—began after the failure of the 2010 October, December rains, and the harvest that flowed from them. So you had a loss of significant rainfall in virtually the entire area centered around where Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia meet—that part of the Horn of Africa. And in the 2011 rains, the initial rains began late and were also erratic, so that further exacerbated the problems. In some areas of northern Kenya and southern Somalia, rainfall was less than 30% of the last 15-year-average. So we're talking about a dramatic reduction in a region that has almost no irrigation and relies almost exclusively on rain-fed agriculture, both for farming but also for pastoralists, which are very important to the region. So we had shocks and failed short rain harvests in both pastoral and marginal agricultural livelihood zones of Somalia, northern Kenya, and southern eastern Ethiopia.

Now, concern about the famine had already escalated in June, when the Famine Early Warning System—the US system which is very closely coordinated with the UN and all the other systems—indicated that [in] 2010-2011, for Kenya and Ethiopia, their affected areas at least had been [through] the driest or the second driest year since 1950. So we're talking about a really, really severe drought. Now, at this stage, they're pointing out that the drought has not necessarily lasted as long as some earlier droughts—although it could, depending on what we hear about the next rainfall—but it's particularly severe. And its impact has been exacerbated by extremely high food prices, generally reduced coping capacity, and, as we lead into Somalia, extremely limited humanitarian access to the worst affected areas of southern Somalia.

It is that access issue and the conflict on top of the drought that has made Somalia the hardest hit by the current crisis. Two weeks ago the UN humanitarian coordinator, in close coordination with all the food security analysis systems, including the US FEWS NET [Famine Early Warning Systems Network], declared famine in two areas of southern Somalia. And on August 3rd, they broadened that famine to include three other areas basically in the central south portion of southern Somalia, including internally displaced people in Mogadishu. And it's important because it's not the Mogadishu residents for whom famine has been declared, but it has been declared in terms of the people who are fleeing to Mogadishu from other affected areas in the immediate vicinity. And certainly this news has deepened our concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in southern Somalia. It's really a life and death situation, and access will be key to moving forward and trying to address the challenges.

Without massive increase in international assistance and access to deliver it, the expectation is famine will be expected to be declared across all of southern Somalia within one to two months. So an immediate large-scale response is definitely called for, and we're talking about over the next two to three months. Assistance needs will certainly remain extremely high through December of this year. There will be another rainy season normally in October-November, and we'll have to assess at that point whether rains get back to normal or we have another continued drought cycle, in which case the levels of need could remain quite severe because yet another harvest wouldn't really deliver much food; but at least through December, and then we'll see what the rains are like in the fall, to see if it deteriorates after that.

Just a little bit so that people understand what we mean when we declare famine. Famine is based on something called the Integrated Food Classification System, which measures conditions in terms of

both levels of child malnutrition and levels of mortality among the population. And based on the survey data from the Food Security Analysis Unit, the prevalence of acute malnutrition in southern Somalia exceeded 20% in all areas, and is higher than 38% in 9 of the 11 surveyed areas. That's extremely, extremely high. You're talking severe acute malnutrition—you're talking 38% of affected people are close to really serious, life-threatening situations. And the under-five death rates are higher in these areas than the 4 per 10,000 people per day that is considered a really acute crisis. Trying to estimate how many people died in a situation like this, where we have so limited access, is a very conjectural thing. Pat mentioned 29,000; what the UN and what AID's monitoring systems—at best we can say is tens of thousands in the past 3 months. It's a very significant crisis.

Now we're in a situation where, as I said, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Somalia is now about 3.7 million people. And this is drought, but exacerbated by conflict, particularly in the south. The challenge is that the majority—2.2 million—are in areas of the south that are generally inaccessible to many, if not all, humanitarian actors. There's some isolated access in these areas, but it's very imperfect and very incomplete. The World Food Programme, for example, has not been allowed to operate in these areas since January of 2010, primarily by groups affiliated with the so-called al-Shabab Islamic group that controls most, but not all, of the territory of southern Somalia.

As I said, you have a situation which is as many as 1,300 people a day are arriving in Kenya, fleeing Somalia—massive growth in that refugee population, close to topping 500,000. I think it will be any day now, could be now—close to topping 500,000 in those camps, and we are projecting and budgeting and thinking in terms of what we need to do, that it could be as high as 600,000 within the next couple of months. I mean 1,300 people a day is 40,000 people a month coming in. And the malnutrition rates among the arrivals are alarmingly high. Some people are talking about that road from the south Somalia—and 80 kilometers further because when they hit the border they still have 80 kilometers until they get to the camps—as literally the "roads of death." Our executive director, when she was briefing on her trip, said that over half the people that she met who are new arrivals in that Dadaab refugee camp—which is the area that Pat was talking about, where Jill Biden and Administrator Shah visited over the weekend—that over half the people she talked to, of new arrivals, had had one or more family members left on the journey. Either they died, they got too sick to move, or they were too elderly to continue. This is how serious the conditions are there.

Now turning to what WFP is trying to do, and the international community is trying to do—this is a comprehensive approach involving the full range of UN actors, NGOs and governments. I think in the face of tragedy there are a couple things about how we acted that show some signs of encouraging response. One I think is the incredible uniformity of assessment information. There is almost no disagreement among the major informed players, whether it be NGOs, the UN, or the major governments who have independent food security monitoring systems—principally the European Union and the United States—because there's such a strong, integrated sharing of information. The assessment data, the number of people in need, where the areas of need are—there's tremendous agreement on that. All agencies are working together to try to see what can be done to scale up.

The biggest challenge does remain: southern Somalia, where virtually all of the agencies have had significant access problems, some worse than others. We're really exploring all types of innovative opportunities to see how one can do humanitarian programs in Somalia, but it's very challenging. The regional authorities, the local authorities—the relationship to the centralized structure of al-Shabab is unclear. You can make some progress with local authorities and then have the centralized authorities sort of take that back. You have almost no security capacity to put international workers on the ground in southern Somalia, so you're very reliant on the local Somali connections you made, and trying to figure out, when somebody comes to you and says, "Trust me I can deliver," and verifying at least to some degree whether that's true and to what extent they can do it independently, is a real challenge. But WFP is working in this area, a number of NGOs are working in this area, UNICEF is trying to use its connections, the International Committee of the Red Cross is also working. WFP in particular has already been assisting, even before the famine was declared, about one and a half million people in

Somalia, including about 300,000 in and around Mogadishu. We are also, as I said, looking at ways to reach another 2.2 million people.

We have a particular focus right now on specialized nutritional products that are designed to address the needs of young children. Together with UNICEF, who specializes in what's called "therapeutic feeding"—which is the feeding for, really, the kids who are near death—our division of labor is that we concentrate on so-called "supplementary feeding"—which is still suffering from significant malnutrition but not quite at the hospital center area. And we've been focusing on getting in large volumes of a number of products specifically designed to do that. Many of you have heard of Plumpy'nut; the supplementary feeding equivalent of the Plumpy'nut is called "supplementary Plumpy." We've been putting that in through airlifts, into both Mogadishu, as well as the one other area in the South [where] we have some access, which is the area of Gedo, which is an area in south central Somalia, close to the Ethiopian border. It's because of its proximity to the Ethiopian border that there has been access there, and [it is] not quite as heavily controlled by al-Shabab elements. So we've been expanding those programs. We have 19 nutrition centers in Mogadishu, for example. We continue to move in significant amounts of Plumpy sup, fortified biscuits, other products specifically designed to meet emergency needs—both caloric, and special nutritional needs of children.

And I think, concluding on Somalia, it's probably the most dangerous country we operate in. International agencies lost 14 people—staff members have been killed in the last two years. We will pursue efforts to mitigate risks, including through robust assessments and monitoring. But we, like many others who've been involved in this assistance, are calling on the international community to stand together in recognizing that there are some risks, and that we have to draw the right balance between what risks we can tolerate and the great risk of famine and death.

Let me just conclude by looking a little bit at the other countries. Somalia is really where the thing is worst hit, and I think that's no accident. Kenya and Ethiopia both have been investing in mitigation efforts—particularly Ethiopia, with a very ambitious project called the Productive Safety Net Programme, designed to create a more structured approach to chronic hunger, to tackle it and have response mechanisms that mitigate the effect of severe shocks, primarily climactic, although they could be food price shocks. The result is, although Ethiopia still has a tremendous number of people affected—as I said, overall, about four and a half million, about three and a half million which WFP is assisting, about a million are handled by NGOs and other programs—this is significantly less than what we've seen in Ethiopia in droughts of similar magnitude. And I think that shows that a lot of the work that has been done to build greater resilience and drought mitigation, particularly in Ethiopia, has paid off. Although the longer the drought goes on, the tougher it is for that to pay off.

But Kenya also is severely affected. It's got that double challenge of its own drought, and they're obviously very worried about the pressures from Somalia and the number of refugees that are coming across—and that produces a lot of challenges. So it's important that the world not forget Ethiopia and Kenya, but we have better success, we have better preparedness, and we have greater capacity to scale up [there]. And I think that reflects governments and structures which have been built over time, and which are better able to respond in terms of meeting emergency needs, and even in some cases—particularly in parts of Ethiopia—to actually eliminate, for some portions of the population, the need for emergency assistance at this time.

It's a massively expensive operation. The overall appeal for the whole UN is like two billion; WFP is looking for, just for our food component, about three quarters of a billion over the next six months. The response has been significant so far. Well, first, because a number of the programs—again, primarily Ethiopia and Kenya, but also north and central Somalia—were established earlier in the year, we didn't start from scratch. We had a number of governments who did contribute early in the year, and in result of the latest emergency appeals, we've received indications of pledges of almost 250 million dollars. So we're looking at needs somewhere between 200 and 250 million beyond those pledges that we need through basically January. And that is a lot of money. There has been a pretty significant response so

far, from a wide range of countries. And the US, of course, is the biggest by a long shot, but we've gotten significant contributions from a number of other countries—European traditional donors, also from some you might not expect. We received a pledge of 50 million dollars from Saudi Arabia to help Somalia. So it's not exclusively from Western countries. So the demand is significant and we still have significant need for resources, but I think there has been a growing response from a number of donors. So we're—I won't say optimistic, because the demand is so much—but certainly there is enough of a response that we have reason to be hopeful that resources will come through.

The biggest challenge remains the ability to reach southern Somalia. If we are not able to significantly improve the access in southern Somalia, it will be very difficult to keep the worst forms of this drought and famine from showing even more disastrous numbers in the next two to three months. And that is the challenge we face.

And I think the last concluding remark I'd make is [that] the immediate need is emergency assistance, but we cannot forget the need to build into the recovery process programs to deal with resilience for these populations. We do have successful examples in Ethiopia and Kenya and parts of northern Somalia. You can and you must think about how you can minimize the impact of climactic events. When drought comes in a country that has virtually no irrigation, you can't eliminate the fact that there'll be significant needs for emergency food. But you can—particularly in the areas that are not the most marginal, but are sort of in the mid-range-marginal—you can take steps that reduces the impact. And I think we've had experience in doing that, and we need to build that back in as we get behind the headlines. And that, I think, has been the fear of past droughts: people respond to the Horn, they make lots of statements about how it's a drought again, we have to build back better, we have to do something. Except when the numbers go down, for the number of people who are in camps that you can take pictures of, suddenly the interest significantly diminishes. And hopefully this cycle will not repeat that cycle. Thank you. [*Applause*.]

Ms. Ellis: Okay, I'm going to open it up—I just wanted to recognize another board member, Isabel Jasinowski, who has just joined us. Okay, I have a few questions in a few categories. I want to start with the news, move to the donors, and end with the long-term. So the first part is—and it relates to the two news stories that I mentioned—one, the movement of the al-Shabab out of Mogadishu: what impact do you think that will have, and how important is it? And the other newsy story of the day was this announcement that the US is going to be giving another 100 million. How significant is this and how encouraging will this be towards other donors and Americans in general? Because they're saying that they want to encourage Americans to give more as well.

Mr. Jury: The al-Shabab move out of Mogadishu—it matters, but the core of the most urgent needs is actually not in Mogadishu City, although it's an area where we can reach more. So there are a lot of—as I said, the displaced are particularly disadvantaged in Mogadishu. It should help, although we've had incidents in the last—I guess I would have said 72 hours but I think it came really Friday so maybe it's not quite 72—of violence in some feeding centers, even in the areas that are not under the control of Shabab. It's really going to see what kind of law and order we get set up to permit access in Mogadishu, but it will make a difference. But what we really need to do is to be able to get in the corridors leading out of Mogadishu through a place called Afgoye into the Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle—the areas that pan out from Mogadishu. So it should make a difference, it's potentially welcome if some form of order can be established where they pull out of, but it in and of itself is not going to be enough—particularly if people get weaker and weaker and are unable to flee.

In the current southern situation there is some access in some areas, but essentially you've got your hope, if you don't have food—and not everybody doesn't have food, but a lot of people don't—is to try to make your way to this area along the Ethiopian border, either inside Ethiopia or just on the border in the Gedo areas, to make your way to Mogadishu or to make your way to Kenya. And the longer we get into the famine, the more we need to be able to get close to where people actually are. Because they're just not going to have the strength or the security to get out.

On the hundred million dollars and the US announcement—since I don't know what's in it, and I just started to hear about it—it is significant. The US, as I said, has already been the biggest donor, and it's certainly welcome. I think it will have an effect of stimulating others to give. It is interesting that the private response to this is certainly far less than, say, Haiti, which affected less people. But it was less than the Pakistan floods as well. I mean, I wouldn't say it's less—Pakistan floods were a lot less than Haiti. I mean I think Haiti is close to home.

I think there is a risk that people will see the Horn of Africa and go, "One more drought in the Horn of Africa, does this ever stop?" I do think this is significantly different than some of the other droughts we've seen in the past, in the sense that I think Ethiopia's better prepared, although it still has a lot of people at risk, and in a sense that the conflict and lack of access and governance challenges in Somalia itself really exacerbate this problem for that part.

Ms. Ellis: Just in terms of the pace and the amount of response, I'm just wondering how much you would attribute to the fact that there's been relatively little media coverage, because the media has not gotten in there. And just going back in history to the Ethiopian famine—and I was a journalist then—once the BBC was in there extensively, and once all the footage started coming out—and there are many other examples—people started responding, because Americans did not know about it. And so I'm just wondering how much is—and you mentioned the fleeting media coverage, which is also a problem—but how much is a lack of media coverage? As you said, it's farther away, donor fatigue—how much could be related to, you know, the economic situation in the world? And could you just comment on the Saudi response? Obviously they are not that far away, and they have other connections, but it is quite interesting because Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries have not at least given that much in the past.

Mr. Jury: Well, I think it is picking up a lot of media attention in the last three or four weeks, two weeks. I think you're absolutely right—the difficulty of visiting where the effects are. Already right now, this is a Horn of Africa famine that covers four countries, and basically everything you see on your screen is a picture of new arrivals in a single refugee camp—Dadaab. There's not even much coverage of Dolo Ado in Ethiopia. Basically I think of it as, [in] my long experience, it reminds me the most of, say, in the 70's when you had the fall of the Khmer Rouge and the only story you had was to drive from Bangkok to Aranyaprathet on the Thai-Cambodian border, or the Rwandan genocide and you basically could go to the Goma refugee camps and that was the story, or Peshawar to see Afghanistan. So you don't really have access to the worst-hit areas. But I think media attention is way up now.

I think a big part of it is the Horn. It takes a lot to jolt people out of, "Isn't this always the way it is in this region?" The early warning of the Horn of Africa crisis, which was fairly significant in March and April of this year, was not really grabbing anybody's attention. Until it gets to the magnitude of almost historic, almost apocalyptic—which is where it's gotten in the last month—there is a tendency to sort of say, "Isn't this just the way this region sort of always is?" And I think that has been a big factor. Certainly the economy is another factor in terms of individual giving, but I think that's probably the biggest factor.

WFP has done well, not as well as Haiti, but there have been 2.5 million dollars worldwide in private donations given to us online—and I'm not talking about corporate sponsors for the most part, I'm talking about individual responses—which is pretty good by our standards. It's not as high as Haiti; Haiti sort of set the mark—the Haiti and the tsunami emergencies sort of set the mark for private sector giving. And maybe visibility is part of it, maybe sudden onset is. There's something about a tsunami and an earthquake which just grabs the immediacy. Drought kind of takes a longer time to develop. Those are sort of the thoughts. But I think the biggest is just, "Isn't this the way this region always is." And until it gets to almost apocalyptic proportions, nobody sees something different about it.

Question: I'm Colleen Conroy. I think, also, the coverage of al-Shabab has been very off-putting to many people. I was just in Chicago. There was a doctor there at a session on Somalia. And people all around me were saying, "I'd like to give money, but I'm not giving money because, with this political

conflict, it will never get to the right people." And that's been front page now for several weeks. And I think your question is interesting, when what does this mean with al-Shabab withdrawing from Mogadishu? You know some of these facts are not very clear to any of us.

Ms. Ellis: Well, it just happened. This was just over the weekend.

Ms. Conroy: Yeah, but we still have it imprinted in our heads, they're still there, they are a main part of the problem of food and water getting to people.

Question: Jeanne Townend, I think that's just as prevalent in the press as the crisis. And I think it is off-putting to a lot of individual donors.

Isabel Jasinowksi: Could you give us some advice if you want to give? As to which organizations? [*Inaudible*] I do think there is some skepticism about these various organizations. I know I was—someone said to buy something called the "United Campaign Fund," or something like that, and I didn't even know who they were, so—but I would personally want to contribute money. If you could give me some advice on that, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Jury: Well, I'm always going to start with WFP USA [*Laughter*] which is our affiliated national committee, which you can contribute [to] online at WFPUSA.org. There are a number of reputable NGOs. The big international ones. I'm reluctant to name all of them because I'll forget somebody who doesn't have an operation and—Save the Children, Oxfam—I'm trying to remember if World Vision is operating—if it is there they're normally a big organization in the food sector. But the challenge, in the end, is who you operate with in Somalia, and that's the tricky thing. Even internationals: their staff—international staff—is basically for the most part in Nairobi, a very small sliver of Mogadishu, and they are able to operate pretty freely in the north and central area, but that's not where the main part of the crisis is right now. There are some areas affected. And I would tend to say the big international NGO with a reputation in assistance. I think the Red Cross may get in, in a significant way and I know that the American Red Cross often supports the International Committee of the Red Cross. I don't know whether they're doing a campaign for that. I mean those are some of the kinds of people that, if you were trying to be concerned about, I'd think about.

But I think peoples' point about al-Shabab, in a sense, is a big factor as well. And it's been a factor, frankly, for all of us who are working down there, because until the last four months the overwhelming message from most people, most governments has been, "Be sure you don't have any of your aid misused in the South." And it's really only been in the last three months they've started to loosen that, and the last month the message has been, "Try everything you can to explore a way to get into the South."

Those are legitimate concerns, by the way. I think it's easy to sort of dismiss them, but it is a challenge. When we pulled out in January 2010 from the al-Shabab areas, it was not because somebody said, "We won't fund you there." It's because we felt that the conditions that were being imposed on us were so—with taxes and requirements, and so forth—that we no longer had confidence that enough of our assistance would get through to the people that needed it for us to feel comfortable to continue to operate in those areas.

Ms. Ellis: So Allan, just take the question on the Saudis and then let's open it up.

Mr. Jury: Oh the Saudis. Well with the Saudis you can never be completely sure as to why they choose to choose a particular channel at any given time. They have a good relationship with us; they've always given us a small quantity of assistance. In the 2008 Food Price Crisis, which was the last area that WFP significantly expanded its operations, Saudi Arabia decided to give us a check for 500 million dollars, which was the largest single contribution, I think, that they'd ever given to the UN system. So we have an established relationship with Saudi Arabia. They do have a number of trade and other commercial ties to Somalia—in cattle and some other things—so it is of particular interest. And I think

choosing WFP for this is probably a function of the relationship that we established since their big contribution they made in 2008.

Ms. Ellis: Okay let's open it up and I'll take a few questions together, you can just identify yourself.

Question: Janet McElligott. I'm looking at just sort of the logistics. I know Plumpy'nut costs maybe a dollar, maybe two. But what's the cost to get it either from the port in Mogadishu or Mombasa, and inland, and then the theft and the drop-off rates? I can't help but think that'd be kind of a nightmare.

Mr. Jury: Well, the advantage of Plumpy is, in the quantities you add to your general distribution ratios, its tonnage is smaller because it's a concentrated product. We're mostly airlifting it in, and for the time being we're mostly using it in Mogadishu proper and in these areas in Gedo, because we don't have access into the internal areas.

The logistics cost of the Somalia operation at the best of times is always higher per ton than virtually anywhere else we've had. I would say now, just by—[if] you track our various rates, it's the highest I think. We have good access to the port at Mogadishu. We have an arrangement with the European Union to provide military escorts to ships moving into Somalia to prevent attacks from pirates, but logistically it's significant.

I think the real challenge will be moving in and through to the internal side, although we had a long network—before 2010, and in 2008 and 2009, we were moving as significant as a tonnage as is being proposed now. So we have some established contacts with trucking and other firms, if they can get conditions where the risks are not so high that they simply refuse to move into those areas. So I think there's capacity there.

Diana Negroponte: And how do you mitigate the impact on price when you set about buying 100 million dollars worth of wheat grains? I assume on the world market?

Mr. Jury: Actually, international food aid is a pretty insignificant part of the global trade. We actually have to worry more about the price effect when we're buying regionally and locally, because there we're a much bigger player. I don't think it will be difficult to get the commodities eventually, with a limited global market price effect. The challenge is going to be—and this is a typical problem when you have a crisis—that people rush in with a lot of money, [and] okay, now your money problem is to some degree, I wouldn't say solved, but less of an immediate problem over the next two, three months, but you can't convert the money into food so quickly. Particularly when the crisis is so broad in the region that your regional procurement options are quite limited, without either not being able to find the food, or having a significant price effect. So I actually think that we're going to face a—I think we'll have a cycle. We have food in place, in many cases, and can borrow stocks, and we don't have all the access to southern Somalia that we need. So in the short-term we've got some possibilities to meet the immediate needs, but I think in like a month or two from now, there's going to be challenges in keeping the pipeline going while the money gets converted into food. Fortunately—and this is an example of preparedness that our donors gave us, we pushed for and they gave us—which is, we had the authority to do a forward purchase facility. To use some reserves that we had to buy food without knowing which country it would be to, but to have a general area—would it go to Mombasa port, would it go to Djibouti port. And we have maxed the use of our forward purchasing facility to load up basic grains and foods, which will somewhat mitigate against the—you know, the money flows in, but then everybody says, "How come the money didn't get converted to food in 24 hours?", which is not really possible to do at the quantities we're talking about.

Question: Morgan Roach, from The Heritage Foundation. Last week, the Obama Administration announced that it was in the process of lifting restrictions on organizations delivering food aid. How do you see this facilitating the process? And, if I may add a follow-on, what is the likelihood of this food aid, if it is, when it is delivered, how likely is it to end up in the hands of al-Shabab? Is it a high probability, low probability? What is the priority?

Mr. Jury: Okay, on the restrictions—the changes are primarily designed to increase the risk tolerance in the most risky areas. In other words, it certainly would not, I would think, suggest that people should go in if they think, or permit going in—permit's a strong word—it certainly isn't designed to encourage aid organizations to go in if they think there's no chance at monitoring and it's a complete crap shoot as to whether this food will get to who needs to get to it or not. What it is designed to do is to allow one to figure out, perhaps increase the risk tolerance of operations in potential Shabab and local areas. So while in the past, the rules would have suggested, "If you thought there was a chance—not unknowingly—but if you knowingly thought there was a chance of a single toll checkpoint, anywhere on your route delivering food, in any place, where a little bit might be taken from your truck for taxes, you couldn't do the whole operation." Now, what it's suggesting is, "If you feel you have reasonable assurances from local authorities, but despite those, you run into problems along the way," as I understand it. And I think this is not a legal opinion, because this is a very tricky issue, these issues of these regulations—but a reasonableness standard is beginning to be applied, as to whether you can meet those things.

But we would not go into an area, for example, WFP, where it was, basically, I would try for a crude term, "dump and trust"—you know, just haul it in there and hope somebody gets it. And we wouldn't do that, whether there were US restrictions or there weren't US restrictions.

I think the challenge is going to be getting access to scale. I think you will have NGOs, I think you will have contacts that will identify a village, a town, a small district, where you've got reasonably good reliability—based on past contacts and based on independent checking through multiple Somali sources—that you can probably distribute to a thousand families, even 10,000 families. The challenge is going to be getting a system you have that degree of reliability in, that will meet a hundred thousand people, a million people. I think that's going to be the biggest challenge: how fast can we scale up?

Question: My name is Diane Al-Habieli, I'm not with any organization. I wanted to ask about funding on the Arabian Peninsula. I know that the Saudi king just gave 50 million dollars, but I believe the United Arab Emirates—a lot of the population along the Peninsula has huge disposable income. And every year—it's Ramadan now—and every year for Ramadan you must pay your zakat, which is 2% of your extra income for charity. And I have seen in the newspapers there—especially the Gulf news in Abu Dhabi, or the Gulf News is in Dubai—and people are very aware. There are pictures, they are very aware of Somalia. And I think that they would be ready to donate, if they knew where to put that money and where to send that money. Because here in the United States, if I'm on the internet, I can find a place where I know, "I'm living in the United States, I hit this button, I send it there." But if I'm living over there—and then the other problem would be that with the governments there the way they are, of course King Abdullah could come up with 50 million dollars. They take contributions at all the mosques—the government controls all that money. But there still are a lot of individuals, and the pennies count up. And there's Kuwait, there's Qatar. These places—if you can reach those people, there's a lot of money there, willing, from regular people.

Question: Amanda Bateman, Louis Dreyfus Commodities. My impression has been that Africa has generally been reluctant to embrace biotechnology with regards to seeds. And now, I have recently read—I believe it was University of Minnesota with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation—that they introduced a "super wheat" that was essentially drought-resistant. So my question is: what role should genetically modified seed play in that country, in terms of mitigating the effects of drought?

Question: Michelle Brooks, I'm with the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases. Particularly I was interested in the connection between soil trend and [*Inaudible*] otherwise known as worms, that can impact nutrition and ability to absorb food. The question I had—it's really around 2008. What lessons learned are being applied now? And then, how is Feed the Future Initiative overlaying into this crisis right now?

Ms. Ellis: We'll take those and then we'll come for another round.

Mr. Jury: I would agree that we should try to tap the private charitable giving on the Arabian Peninsula more. We do have a fundraising office in Dubai that tries to work with a number of the institutions that have historically been places where people give zakat money and other things, to try to tap into that. It's a very challenging environment—it's a very personalized environment, is what we've found. You could make a good connection, and it works for a while, and then they change people and it's like starting over. It's hard to make it institutional. But, yes, I think we're trying to work with organizations in there.

We do work with Islamic organizations in specific areas, trying to get access inside Somalia, for example. Some groups affiliated with the Islamic Conference are trying to take the lead in opening up access to an area called the Afgoye Corridor, which is basically a road leading out of Mogadishu into central Somalia, and it's where a lot of the internally displaced people who haven't been able to get into Mogadishu come. There's probably a half million internally displaced people which we used to be able to access, until about five months ago when there was change in the alignment of the forces there. And we've been trying to work with the Islamic Conference and affiliated groups to reestablish access into that area. So it's definitely something that more needs to be done on.

Biotechnology—I think it does have a role. So far, most biotech research has been oriented more toward the needs of temperate markets, because that's where the money is, to be very honest. There is work being developed that is more applicable to use in the tropics. We've had quite a bit of debate on biotech GMO [Genetically Modified Organisms] and biotechnology policy with regard to the World Food Programme, and with a diverse membership. The position we officially take is that it's up to governments to decide whether they're going to use it, or accept food that has biotech or not. We do point out that in the case of food assistance, that if there are restrictions on GMO modified foods, it could affect our ability to timely source the contributions—which frankly is a serious challenge in this one, because our two main sources of commodities right now are the United States and, if I didn't mention when I mentioned Saudi Arabia, a very significant growing contribution of commodities from Brazil. But Brazilian soy and corn and US corn and soy are almost all produced with biotech. And if governments will not allow that in, or require it to be milled in some ways—

Generally we've found that the governments' opposition to biotech, at least in countries we've operated, is more commonly on the environmental propagation. In other words, there are some—I won't say there are no countries who've ever said, "We're worried about human consumption"—but they're more concerned about it drifting out and being used as seed and becoming plant, affecting their plants. And whether that's because they're concerned about their domestic market and environment, or they're concerned that this will limit their export opportunities to Europe, where if you have—that's a big part of it. So definitely, if a country restricts biotech, existing food, it poses challenges for us. But in the end it's their decision. I think it is one tool that is out there that has to be looked at, but so far the amount of actual applied research which is productive in tropical climates versus more temperate climates is not as much as sometimes is portrayed. I guess I would say that it is a valuable tool but it is far, at this point, from being a silver bullet.

Ms. Ellis: But Allan, have the Europeans objected to the use of this in other places?

Mr. Jury: The Europeans require certification on imported food that has extremely strict standards. And many African countries are worried that they would have their exports prevented from being used in European markets, because the level of biotech GMO presence in a commodity for it to be prohibited from being imported in Europe, in some circumstances, under some regulations, is extremely small. We've had countries in Africa, that we've lost—we've had months of shipments tied up because their level of contaminate measurement is so small that we've had food that we're pretty sure is not biotech, that's been transported by ships who previously transported holds of biotech food, and there's enough contamination in there to have the whole ship held up in port. We've had that happen to us in countries. Our real key for us is: be predictable in your regulation, don't change it halfway through the ships there. That's our biggest problem. If we know you're not going to take biotech corn in a country x, we can plan

around that. If you sort of say, “I’m not sure, but I may make a port inspection at the last minute and decide this boat can’t come in,” that creates a serious problem for us.

And the last question was: lessons learned from 2008. Boy, you could spend a whole time on—I think one of the main lessons learned, and I think we’ve seen this in Ethiopia, is that response to drought and climactic shocks cannot be viewed as just a onetime emergency response. You need to build in systems. There are going to be chronically hungry people who need assistance in many times. You’re going to need to build in systems to try to develop resilience, which you can do in a number of ways. We do “Food for Work” programs extensively in Ethiopia, and a lot of those build small watershed management or small-scale—various environmental activities. That means that for that village, the level of drought that has to occur before they lose everything is a greater level of drought than if we hadn’t done those mitigation measures. I think that’s one of the big ones.

I think the other thing—a lesson learned—is: we never follow up enough after these droughts with the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities. We sometimes do reasonably well with more traditional agriculturalists because we kind of know that better, whether it be seeds, or irrigation, or pest control. But the agro-pastoralists and pastoralists have a really—it’s a complex dynamic, just to deal with the issue. They face a crisis in this type of crisis that we forget about, or we don’t spend enough time, even though there’s plenty of research on it—tons of it. They’re the classic, what I call, “sell low and buy high.” What do they live off of? They live off their cattle. Drought comes, and the first thing they have to do is sell their cattle, because they can’t get enough water for their cattle, much less water for their family. Well, when everybody’s selling their cattle, guess what the price for cattle is? Zilch. Then, the drought ends, and people go away. Except these guys, to have a livelihood, have to buy back their cattle. Everybody’s buying back their cattle at the same time, the price of cattle’s real, real high. We forget that a lot of times in these droughts, you destroy the people’s assets, and they sell off assets, and maybe they can live off selling off their assets for a while. The irony is, when the drought goes away, they’re not back to square one—they’re back to square one minus ten.

And for some people—particularly people who use the kind of long-term assets, like cattle, and pastoralism—their, actually, greatest hour of need is sort of when the emergency food is rising out, and they need somebody to help them restock their cattle and livestock supplies. And I’ve talked to some people in Rome and our headquarters. I think we’re going to try some innovative stuff, as will our colleagues in the Food and Agricultural Organization, to think more creatively about what we can do for the pastoralist communities.

Ms. Ellis: So, last round of questions. One, two, three, four. We’ll take a few more. Go ahead.

Question: My name is Nida and I am with the Women’s Foreign Policy Group. In terms of modern famine, what we’re seeing is that famine isn’t just an environmental problem. Aid groups have a lot of money, and the global market is so vast, and infrastructure has spread so much, that it’s possible to get aid even to very remote regions. And to really have famine, you not only need governments that are weak, but governments that are taking food away from people who need it. For instance, with Somalia, you have al-Shabab taking away the food. But the thing is that this is going to become more common, I think, throughout the future, because you’re going to have that same situation. And a lot of the time the groups that are doing this are going to be on lists of groups that the US says are terrorists groups, and therefore [you have] the same problem that you were talking about earlier, as well as the problem that people won’t want to give money to the aid organizations because they’ll be scared of the same problems—that it won’t get to the right people. And basically what I’m saying is that it’s going to be, I think, a trend—that it’s only going to grow stronger in the future. So how do aid organizations deal with that and maybe change their message to international communities, how do they plan for it, and do we have to start to change the way that we’re seeing aid in famine situations?

Question: Hi, I’m Maria Demeke, from Deloitte Consulting’s Emerging Markets Program, and I’m actually from Ethiopia so I’m very glad to hear that things are going a little bit better than the last few

famines. I'm curious about the government relations between Ethiopia and Kenya within the region, how they've been coordinating, how that has been effective or ineffective. And then also your perspective on your organization's relationship with the governments—both Ethiopia and Kenya and you've talked a lot about Somalia and lack of government there, but if you could talk a little bit about what kind of positive and/or negative relationships that there are.

Ambassador Lange Schermerhorn: I'm Lange Schermerhorn.

Ms. Ellis: And you were ambassador in the region.

Ambassador Schermerhorn: In Djibouti, ten years ago. You didn't mention Djibouti!

Mr. Jury: I did, I did! [*Laughter.*]

Ambassador Schermerhorn: This isn't a question so much as an observation. The timeframe we're talking about—lessons learned from 2008—well, one of the lessons supposedly observed, but apparently not learned: after the drought of 1984, they created a sub-regional organization called IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development]. And the purpose of that—the two pillars originally were food security and economic development; reconciliation has been added later on. And the idea was, we needed an institutional framework in the region to address these problems, because so many of them were cross-border problems that you couldn't look at bilaterally. And, here we are, we have IGAD, and I'm wondering what your organization, if anything, has any—do you play any role, do you consult, do you coordinate with them? Did they help you in any way?

Frederick Tipson: Now, just a question about the ethos of political neutrality and impartiality that's animated WFP for eons. How do you adapt that, under circumstances where you clearly have good guys and bad guys, and people who are actively trying to prevent you from doing your work? How do you operate organizationally in an environment where impartiality almost seems to be a quaint notion?

Ms. Ellis: And lastly, I just want to throw this in as a follow-up to what Nida was basically saying. For the long-term, how are you going to work to ensure food security? These things are going to keep reoccurring, and whether it's political instability, or environmental factors, etcetera, we have to deal with the short-term, but we do need the long-term strategy.

Mr. Jury: The first—let's go through each of the four in sequence and try to move fairly quickly. You're absolutely right about famine. As Amartya Sen [said], who's sort of the doctrine, and the Bible, and the guru of food security, famine is a "man-made" condition. It is definitely a function of governance.

We do, I think, have, in most places in the world—there are a few exceptions, perhaps in certain circumstances—where if we have access we can overcome the worst of famine-like conditions, although you might still have significant food insecurity. I don't know if it's going to be increasing—you're positing we're going to run into more of these types of situations. I think there are some places where we do—I think, generally, if you compared the continent of Africa, in terms of access issues and governance issues, to where we were 20 years ago, I would say we're better off than we were then. I think West Africa is not as difficult to operate as it was when you had Charles Taylor running around, and the Sierra Leone rebels, and things like that. I think even the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda and that part is less disruptive, if not peaceful. Southern Africa, with the exception of Zimbabwe—which is very difficult in a lot of ways, although less difficult even there than probably it was a year ago—is better.

You do have, probably, a heightened problem of access—and it gets at Fred's questions too—in areas that are involved in insurgency or conflict, very strongly linked to extremist movements associated with the global terrorism situation—which is the Somalias and the Yemens and parts of Afghanistan and

Pakistan. It is more of a problem, and I would say, is that a growing problem everywhere in the world? I don't know. It's a challenging one.

It's also the impartiality question. I'm going to combine those two because they're in a sense related. I don't think impartiality means being unconditional. What I think it does mean—and we've done it in southern Somalia in the past, and Afghanistan the same—that it means saying that these are the conditions under which we can deliver food and effectively help your people. If one side will give us these conditions and another part won't give us these conditions, we may not be able to operate in the other part. Now I think that's still consistent with impartiality. It's not saying one side is right or the other side is wrong—although it's implied—but it is a conditionality. But it's a conditionality based on humanitarian access and humanitarian principles rather than a political evaluation of the countries.

In fact, before al-Shabab created a greater unity of the commands in southern Somalia, this is precisely how we were doing it. In southern Somalia we were saying, "Here are the operating conditions from WFP, here's what we need to do things." And we'll talk to individual districts, and we made it very explicit, and said, "District X met our conditions and so the food is flowing there. If you would like food to flow to where you are, you will meet our conditions too." And places like in North Korea—the North Koreans have come to us sometimes, and have said, "We don't want you to access this district, and we'd like you to substitute this other district." And we say, "This is where we've got food insecurity by our definition. If you're not going to let us into this district, we'll just do ten fewer districts. We're not going to do ten districts that aren't food secure because you don't like the ten districts we chose." Obviously we can't force our way in there, but we won't go there. And I don't know whether that is making you political. I would argue it's not. I would argue that it's consistent with your impartiality. But I think humanitarian organizations have the right to say, "There's a lot of people who need our humanitarian assistance. If you won't provide certain minimum operating conditions to ensure its effectiveness, we'll go elsewhere."

The problem, of course, comes when it really is a famine-like situation. And that is a judgment which it's almost impossible to answer. Will you go to the extreme of letting 2 million people die in southern Somalia—or it won't be 2 million but it will be hundreds of thousands—because the conditions are still—I'm not going to say optimal, they're never going to be optimal—they're still far from what you would consider minimally reasonable. And I think that's a difficult political and moral choice that too often—frankly, on these risk management things, the biggest frustration for people who every day have to deal with this in the humanitarian community, is people who aren't there and don't want to deal with those moral choices. So they pretend that there's a way out. It's like the old joke I say about the—how does an economist get out of a locked room? He assumes a door. [*Laughter.*] And that's what too often people in these risk environments do. They assume a third, not-difficult choice because they don't want to make the difficult choice. I don't think there's an easy answer to that question. I think they're difficult choices, and I think the most difficult when you get to the famine level of conditions. Because when you're somewhat short of that, you can sort of say, there's a lot of need and there's a risk reward balance.

Now on the other two quick things—government relations and IGAD—yes we do work with IGAD, and the regional organizations. IGAD has—I'm not an expert, I don't work with it every day, I'm here in the Washington office—my sense from my colleagues is, it has not always shown the strength and promise that we'd hoped it would. But we still do work with IGAD and we do try to work with the regional institutions. We're trying to build up relations with the African Union—the African Union more involved in some of the interregional dimensions.

Relations with governments—Somalia, obviously we've already talked [about] extensively. It's very challenging, and it's always been a source of tension with the existing government now. Not so much because al-Shabab's there and we can't operate, but everybody wants us to work through the government, and sometimes no one wants to admit that the government doesn't control as much territory as the government wants to claim it controls, and if we actually want to reach those people we

might have to deal with some people who might be loosely affiliated with the government, or not very affiliated. [*Laughter.*]

The Ethiopia and Kenya situations—[*Off the record comments.*] Kenya was probably our best for many years. They had one of the best preparedness structures, best structures to deal with drought. It has probably suffered some from the whole paralysis of the government and the coalition. We have found ourselves, sometimes our programs, in a kind of political football between dueling members of parliament from the different sides. This comes up a lot with what distribution channel, what NGO we use, why this NGO, not the other. And it gets caught up in the politics of it. But overall, I think both Ethiopia and Kenya we've worked reasonably well with. And of course in Ethiopia you have a couple of different channels with the NGOs and things as well, so you can use different channels.

But I think it does show—somebody said in one of the questions, I think maybe you, Pat—how do we ensure that we can operate in this world. And the answer is no humanitarian organizations can ensure. In the end we are a partial response to the failure of governance. Some people in the humanitarian community somehow feel the need to apologize for that. "We're only a band-aid," some people say. I'm proud to be a band-aid. The world is full of conflict and inhumanity and human rights abuses and I don't pretend that, as a humanitarian organization, I can solve all those. Can I ameliorate, can I mitigate the effect on individual human beings? Can the institution do to some extent? Yes, I think it can. I think it does have limits. I wish that we could solve the root cause of problems. I think we should make efforts in the political sphere and in the economic sphere, parallel to what we're doing in the humanitarian sphere. But until we completely solve them, I think the humanitarian response is a good one.

Which brings me—actually, I forgot to ask—Feed the Future. I think Feed the Future has a relationship to all this. I think it poses a really interesting question for Feed the Future. Sometimes people say, "Investment in agriculture or programs like Feed the Future"—I'm not pointing at Feed the Future—"will prevent the need for food aid in the future." And they can, if that's what they're really targeted on.

But I think one of the—an issue like this really brings home the strong question: what's your goal in an agricultural development program? Is it to increase, as fast as possible, the share of GDP generated by agriculture?—Which is a legitimate goal. I'm not saying which goal you should choose, but if you choose that, you will probably invest in higher productivity areas where there is some chronic hunger, but you will not invest in the areas that will most likely produce the emergency tomorrow. Or is your investment to address hunger and the future of food aid? In which case you'll invest in areas that probably have a bigger payoff in that term, but probably have less of a payoff in terms of long-term agricultural growth, or percentage of GDP. I think anybody who's examined East Africa would say that the upside of investment in pastoralist agriculture is not great from an economic growth point of view. But from a resilience famine prevention point of view, they're always the first areas in.

Look at the map. Whenever the rain goes, it's southeast Ethiopia on the Ogaden, western south Somalia—this is worse in south Somalia because of the governance problems otherwise it would hit a small area normally—northeast Kenya, northwest Kenya. They're semi-arid lands that don't grow very much, in which the wheat harvest—as I said, once [about] my trip in northwest Kenya, where the termite mounds are twice as big as the food piles.

And these areas you can invest, but it's a different kind of investment philosophy. And I think if there's one thing that I talk to my colleagues in AID and others [that] we can maybe get out of this is: what's the right balance between agricultural growth and resilience for the most vulnerable? Because you have to strike that balance, if your real objective is to end hunger and famine rather than to increase economic growth from agriculture. They're mutually reinforcing but not identical objectives.

Ms. Ellis: Well, we've come to the end of an absolutely great program. I know we all learned so much and we just want to thank you, Allan, for helping us to understand this very complex and very difficult problem. So thanks a lot; thank you all for coming. [*Applause.*]