

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Cheryl Mills [redacted]
Sent: Saturday, February 19, 2011 8:13 PM
To: H
Subject: Fwd: S IFPRI video

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Cindy Y Huang** <[redacted]>
Date: Tue, Feb 15, 2011 at 9:31 AM
Subject: S IFPRI video
To: Cheryl Mills [redacted], Katie Dowd [redacted]

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Cheryl,
The S video was a big hit. Love this article b/c -- even via video message, S is the headline!
Thanks, Cindy

http://news.yahoo.com/s/oneworld /20110214/wl_oneworld/6353166821_1297679007

Hillary Clinton backs move to end hidden hunger

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Bill Gunyon, [OneWorld UK](#) Bill Gunyon, [oneworld Uk](#) – Mon Feb 14, 5:16 am ET

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has endorsed efforts by world food experts to improve coordination between agriculture, nutrition and health programmes. "This issue cuts to the core of a global crisis that demands action," she said.

"We have been working separately," was a common admission amongst invited leaders of the three life science sectors at a conference in New Delhi which concluded on Saturday.

Entitled "Leveraging Agriculture for Improving Nutrition and Health", the event was organized by the Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

News that world food prices continue to scale all-time highs lent urgency to the discussions. Poor families forced to spend a large proportion of their income on food are heading for difficulties.

Several delegates prefaced their presentations with the statistics that 900 million people experience hunger, whilst a similar number in richer countries are classified as obese.

A quarter of all children aged under five are underweight. Much of the world's farming, whether high or low intensive, is environmentally unsustainable.

As the political spotlight increasingly falls on the food crisis, the Director General of IFPRI, Shenggen Fan, wants action. "We now have a unique opportunity to look carefully at our agricultural system and to determine how to make it function more effectively for people's well-being," he said.

The conference was opened by the Indian prime minister, Dr Manmohan Singh. Describing malnutrition as "hidden hunger", he stressed the importance of essential nutrients in the diet of mother and child in the 1,000 days following conception.

Speaking by video-link, Hillary Clinton promised that "the United States is committed to this fight by investing in its Feed the Future and Global Health Initiatives." Dr Singh also listed government programmes such as the Midday Meal Scheme which reaches 120 million Indian children.

Neither the Secretary of State nor the prime minister mentioned the funding difficulties that threaten their programmes.

Only last week Republican members of Congress were spoiling for a fight over President Obama's Foreign Affairs budget. And last Wednesday the *Times of India* described the government's latest budget allocation for school feeding as "paltry".

The conference agenda too was somewhat reticent on the question of finance. A painful reminder of the high cost of interventions in agriculture emerged from China during the event.

According to Bloomberg reports, the Chinese government is to allocate \$2 billion for emergency irrigation measures to tackle severe drought in the wheat-producing northern regions of the country.

This is equivalent to almost half of the entire World Food Programme budget for assisting 72 countries in 2011.

Many of these beneficiary countries are in Africa where the need for major investment in agriculture is acute. John Kufuor, former president of Ghana, told the conference that "the (green) revolution which has transformed agriculture around the world has largely passed Africa by..... farmers are still scratching a living from the land by hand like our ancestors used to do."

One of the architects of the green revolution in India, Professor M.S.Swaminathan, derives more comfort from his ancestors. He pointed out that proposals to integrate food, nutrition and health echo the holistic approach of "indigenous systems of medicine."

Defying his 85 years in a fluent speech, Swaminathan observed that Ayurvedic treatment is still practised in India. "It deals with the diet of the person - we should combine ancient wisdom with modern science," he said.

Professor Swaminathan is a member of the committee responsible for drafting an Indian Right to Food Act. Prime minister Singh had taken the opportunity in his conference speech to repeat a commitment to present this Act to parliament.

The extent to which this promised legislation merges the rights to adequate food, minimum standards of nutrition and basic health care will be a measure of the influence of the IFPRI conference.

The *Way Forward*, an IFPRI document aiming to distil the conference debates, emphasises the importance of health education, both at household level and for professional practitioners. "Let's make sure that students in agriculture, health, and nutrition don't graduate without knowing something of the other two sectors," the document pleads.

"This is an idea whose time has come," concluded Shenggen Fan.