David Lobell: -- and it's great to see you all here today. It's a real honor to be able to introduce Ambassador Ertharin Cousin who is our speaker today.

As many of you know, Ambassador Cousin has been spending the year with us here at Stanford and it's been a really remarkable year. She's been giving lectures all over the place all the time and it's been a real I think inspiration to all of us. We've learned so much from her.

I'm not gonna spend time reading out her resume because that would take a big chunk of the time that we have allotted here, but I'm gonna give you a few of the highlights and then I'll hand it over to Ambassador Cousin for her comments.

So Ertharin, she's a Chicago native. She got her undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois, Chicago and then went onto law school at the University of Georgia. After that she's had really a series of successful careers in the private sector, in philanthropy and in government in international diplomacy.

So starting out working in the Clinton administration as a liaison to the State Department, then at Albertson's, then at America's Second Harvest. She's continued to rise through these organizations and providing the leadership really always with the focus of helping hungry people in this country and around the world.

In 2009 she was named by President Obama as Ambassador to the UN Agencies for Food and Agriculture in Rome, which came with a very nice house as I understand it.

Then in 2012 she was named as Executive Director of the World Food Program where she was in charge of a massive organization helping 80 million people a year in over 75 countries.

To top all of that off, she's been spending the last year here as the Payne Distinguished Lecturer at Freeman Spogli Institute. So there's a lot more detail on her resume.

I would just offer a couple of comments that you won't find on her resume. One is I find it quite remarkable that in her time at WFP as she's dealing with just a growing number of massive crises around the world, she had the vision and discipline to really spearhead a lot of effort on longer term agricultural development.

She was in particular instrumental in something called the Farm to Market Alliance in Tanzania, which has been conceived out of this notion that we can't just focus piecemeal on different parts of the food system, but really trying to invest simultaneously in all parts of the food system from the seed production all the way to the storage and the markets and the distribution. That program has been remarkably successful serving now over I believe 250,000 farmers. She's, rightly I know, very proud of that effort.

The other thing I find interesting about Ertharin, one of the other things, is that if you Google the woman who feeds the world, you'll actually see a picture of Ertharin Cousin. I think that's a pretty nice thing to have associated with you. Not only that, it's a picture of Ertharin flanked on one side by Michele Obama and on the other side by Oprah Winfrey. It's almost saying here are three very successful women, but only one of them is actually feeding the world. So it's quite a distinction that she holds.

The way we're gonna run today is Ertharin has I know a set of comments that will last about an hour or so. We'll have time for Q&A and then we'll have a nice reception out here on the lawn. So please join me in welcoming Ambassador Ertharin Cousin.

[Applause]

Ertharin Cousin: It's always fun when you're introduced by a colleague who knows you quite well. Roz has done it so many times and she allowed David to introduce me today.

My time here at Stanford has been nothing less than a gift. I have Roz and the other leaders in the Center on Food Security and the Environment to thank for that gift.

After five years of, as you just said, feeding 80 million people around the world and running from one hot spot in the world to another first as Ambassador, then as the Executive Director of the World Food Program, having a year to actually think about the challenges, the problems, as well as to begin to have the capacity to articulate more of the solutions that are necessary. Some of which I'm going to share with you this afternoon has been a blessing.

So this is my opportunity to publicly say as I deliver my last Payne lecture to my colleagues here at Stanford, Wally, Roz, David, Mark – who else is here? All of you, thank you for the collegiality,

thank you for welcoming me, thank you for allowing me to spend this year with you.

Let me get started. The global community committed in 2015 to achieving the sustainable development goals and providing an opportunity for peace and prosperity for all, a big vision. It was understood when all of the countries of the world came together and made this commitment that the goals were inextricably tied together and achieving one goal required achieving all of the goals.

As I stand before you today I am no less committed to achieving goal two, yes, that woman who feeds the world. That's me. And continuing to work towards universal global food security. Achieving this goal requires overcoming the challenges creating food insecurity.

Food insecurity is a situation in which people lack access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and to maintain an active and healthy life. The three component factors which determine the measure of food security, availability, access, utilization or more easily understood as consumption, determine when you are food secure.

So despite the commitment to zero hunger in 2017, global food insecurities increased from 777 million people to 815 million people. Of the 815 million people chronically food insecure, 489 million live in countries affected by conflict.

The data supports a correlation between hunger and conflict yet despite the rhetorical appeal of the statement that food insecurity directly causes conflict, scouring the research one will find no evidence supporting a direct causal nexus between food and security and conflict.

The research on this issue, while growing, today remains relatively sparse limiting our ability to identify a clear causation relationship between hunger and conflict.

I find myself, surprisingly, in agreement with the FAO study on conflict and hunger and that study states, "Food insecurity may be a trigger of conflict, but never the sole cause." Much like the challenge of developing the nexus between climate change and conflict, stating food insecurity causes conflict requires demonstrating food insecurity as more than a contributor, but the causal factor generating an increase in conflict, which requires controlling for all the other factors.

Needless to say this is difficult because where acute food insecurity exists, the factors influencing instability and conflict are quite complex and vary from situation to situation, context to context.

So why does causation matter so much? Isn't it and shouldn't it be enough that we have a correlation between hunger and conflict? Shouldn't that correlation provide sufficient impetus for policymakers to act?

But in reality, for policymakers, understanding the relationship between hunger and conflict is important because oversimplification of the hunger to conflict nexus could create potentially inaccurate conclusions and program responses. Particularly important in cases where affected populations may require more nuance as opposed to simply saying in order to address conflict, we just need to give people more food. Not necessarily the right answer.

Clarity on the role of food security and unrest is also definitely justified and requires in any conflict modeling exercise to predict the incidence or the onset of instability or potential civil arms conflict particularly when military is defining when a response may require armed or military action. Getting it right matters.

There is one area where there's an emerging consensus that rising food prices increase the risk of unrest, but even here there's no evidence of a direct linear relationship between high food prices and citizen action, but some agreement does now exist that food insecurity, specifically the issue of food access or affordability provided a trigger in 2007 and '08 when some 40 cities around the world erupted in riots and civil obedience during the global food price spikes.

A growing body of research is focused on each one of these 40 scenarios in an effort to better understand the relationship between the additional sources of grievance and the trigger provided by the food price spikes leading to widespread turmoil that followed.

Important findings in the literature include an especially interesting discovery. High food prices affect the affordability of food. The very poor and the chronically food insecure often lack the ability or even the interest to engage in riots when food prices spike. They couldn't afford food before it spiked. Why would they riot when prices increase.

An interview and focus data show that these most vulnerable populations find little interest in participating in these riots, but they do benefit. The chronically poor and hungry, while not usually participating in the protests, often benefit from the protests particularly when the government response includes a distribution of in-kind food assistance.

So the government may be responding by providing food to those who weren't even on the streets. In a related finding food riots triggered by an increase in food prices tend not to cluster or current areas where the poor and the food insecure live, but instead in communities that are able to mobilize in downtown areas, urban areas or middle class areas. The protest locations coincide with the people involved in the protest; the young, the middle class, the educated and urban people.

Whether unrest occurs is also dependent on the protest group's ability to generate collective action. Mobile phones communications has resulted in increasing particularly young people's participation in riots and protests, but this access to communication and social media tools do not overcome government responses that may limit the ability to riot or protest or perform any type of collective community action where there is repressive action that will limit or eliminate citizen action.

Most importantly what the literature and evidence suggests is in addition to high food prices, at the core of the various scenarios is deprivation.

As an example, in Burkina Faso, one of the first countries to experience a spike with 65 percent increase in food prices. In response to these high prices riots broke out in the second and third largest cities in the country. The government mobilized the army and other military forces so no riots occurred in Ouagadougou, the capital and the largest city in the country. They were able to maintain the protests in the smaller cities keeping the capital free particularly because one of the things the protesters were doing were burning down government buildings.

But in addition to the military action that the government took to repress the conflict, they committed to lower taxes on food including removing back tax. They negotiated with retail stores to reduce the price of foods. The government removed customs duties on imported food commodities. As a result they lowered food prices.

The government also released food stocks into the market to make more food available and lower prices across retail addressing that middle class young person's problem, but they also then did an in-kind food distribution addressing the challenges of the poor who weren't even on the streets.

The situation was a bit different in Cameroon. Large scale riots occurred in February of 2008 after food and fuel prices increased, but many of the protestors in those riots were demonstrating against the attempt by President Bea to extend his 25-year rule. There were as many signs protesting the president as there were protesting food prices even though the government addressed it as a food price strike.

So over ten days strikes and riots spread to 31 cities around the country. The government very interestingly agreed to a reduction in import tax and negotiated lowering food prices by retailers across the country. The same kind of things you saw in Burkina Faso.

One interesting difference: the opposition leader was arrested. Despite the protests against the Constitution, the Constitution was changed, the president stayed in power. Some would argue that the protest allowed the president to garner popular for support for staying in power by providing the food to the masses that then stopped the riots.

Another well documented and often discussed is a Tunisian riot in 2010, which many would argue, set off the Arab Spring. That, you will recall, situation commenced when a young Tunisian man performed self-emulation – I can say that word – in protest to high bread prices, but he wasn't just protesting for high bread prices. It was lack of employment and the repressive Ben Ali government that he was also protesting.

The popular uprising which followed were met by violent responses from the government. While many in the crowd carried signs decrying high food prices, few would argue the protests were caused by food or hunger issues alone. These protests and the ensuing government action are credited as the onset of the Arab Spring and the degree to which food and food prices actually served as the main issue behind the unrest remains unclear today and scholars and operators continue to disagree.

But it's not just about high food prices. The most vulnerable and chronically food insecure populations reside in the most climate marginal and climate vulnerable places on the planet.

When I started at WFP 80 percent of the people that we served were in climate marginal places because of quick onset emergency floods, droughts, hurricanes. When I left, 80 percent were in conflict and we'll talk more about that as I go on, but that 80 percent that we were serving because of the floods and the impact that climate was having, those people are still there. Many of them are now caught in conflicts, but all of them remain impacted by the changes in climate.

As a result, climate related events tend to jeopardize and food security in terms of availability and access. Research has found a risk of conflict particularly where divisions exist between population groups or where coping mechanisms are lacking.

They found that agriculture dependent communities in low income context, droughts and food insecurity are more likely to increase the likelihood of violence and conflict at the local level.

As we join together for this conversation today, we are witnessing this situation right now in the Sahel where some five million people will require food assistance in the coming months because of yet another drought in the region. Drought is, of course, not a new phenomena across the Sahel region yet because of climate change the drought cycles occur ever more frequently. The length and impacts of the droughts become ever greater.

The areas at risk include parts of Mali, Niger, again Burkina Faso, Chad, Southern Mauritania and Northern Senegal. To date farmers and families that have been interviewed have already exhausted food stocks and their meager financial resources with the next harvest not until September.

With no rain the September harvest will bring no relief to most of those who will be impacted and who are impacted by this drought. Climate change effected drought reduces the amount of productive land access across this region and increases agricultural encroachment on key productive grazing lands for pastoralism and livestock corridors.

What you see is as the amount of productive land reduces and shrinks that there's ever more conflict and clashes between the herders and the farmers. Violent clashes have occurred across this

region during previous droughts. This year those clashes are set to begin again.

But this year there's something different. Another worrying factor should concern not just those in the country and the region, but the entire global community. Government across the Sahel, the state governments have failed to provide the investments to support the hunger needs of these people. In each of these countries the populations that are affected are far from the capitals of those countries.

As a consequence, violent extremist organizations have expanded their ambitions, capacities and geographical reach across the Sahel. Boco Haram, best known for their attacks across Northeast Nigeria have expanded their impact into Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

One you probably don't even know, the Islamic State in West Africa. ISWA emerged out of a split with Nigeria's Boco Haram in 2016. ISWA now also operates in Northern Nigeria and Niger and is growing ever stronger and influential.

Some reports suggest that because of a recent influx from the fall of Raqqa in Syria and Mosa in Iraq that more of those fighters have now joined IWSA in the Sahel. Like Ansar Ud Deen, the Al Qaida affiliate operating in Northern Mali, IWSA is reportedly working to capture the hearts and minds of farmers and herders across the region providing access to grazing lands and food assistance where people would otherwise go hungry.

IWSA and Ansar Ud Deen are reportedly beginning to provide the type of provisional governance and leadership, witness in Moso and Raqqa. Reports even say IWSA is protecting populations and their livelihoods from Boco Haram in Northeast Nigeria giving them the hearts and minds of the people who have escaped from Boco Haram.

These groups have turned or are turning areas into no go for governments giving populations little choice but to depend upon them or go hungry.

Stories of families receiving food in return for the initial recruitment of their sons are becoming ever more prevalent. Just north of the Sahel in Libya, Al Qaida continues to occupy and control swaths of the country and just west in Algeria Al Qaida and the Maghreb continues to control swats of land there and they're

all beginning to get stronger and provide more impact to the population as this drought continues.

The potential for increased unrest and instability across this region multiplies as the hunger grows and agitation expands. The long and growing presence of these groups in the region suggests military action alone will not overcome their increasing resilience. Addressing the growing food security needs of the affected population is a weapon. It should be one of the primary weapons the international community deploys alongside any military response in these marginalized communities.

The challenge the Sahel faces today is not the problem of one country or even of the region. The nature of this problem, the geographic location of the region makes the Sahel a problem and a potential global security problem.

So tackling these drivers of militancy will ultimately require building the resilience of the community particularly as the threats of climate change continues to impact their lives and livelihoods.

The Sahel represents just one community of hungry, vulnerable people potentially affected by climate change. Climate simply exacerbates the cycle of hunger when populations lack resilience.

The example of the Sahel offers a real time opportunity and picture of the challenges that we have the potential to address by addressing the fragility in the face of climate change for these marginal populations. If we don't, food and security will act as a trigger when competition over natural resources and impacts of climate affect their ability to make food available.

In fact, the impacts of natural resources and land and water is the issue that many argue began the Syria crisis and still serves as the root cause of the Syria crisis because there was water for irrigation as a result impacting the agricultural production when there were three successive years of drought in Syria, which created instability in the population, protest in Damascus resulting in a government that didn't respond, an economic crisis that followed and here we are eight years later with a conflict that is not just a Syrian conflict, but a regional conflict.

So factors including food price spikes, climate change, disputes driven over agricultural land and natural resources may increase food insecurity and exacerbate instability and create conflict.

The research and analysis regarding what combination of these factors will ultimately result in conflict remains inconclusive. Yes, we do need more research and analysis to ensure policymakers, government and donors do the right thing, but what we do know today is in addition to the factors already discussed, a strong correlation exists between fragile governments with weak institutions or those with entrenched patronage, corruption, little if any accountability to citizens where economic exclusion for large sections of the population perpetuate poverty, hunger and violence. Resilience building must become the mantra in response to the question of addressing the challenges of these violent occurrences.

Designing better theories of change or programs for resilience building to ultimately overcome the challenge of hunger requires a multi-dimensional data driven response.

When I was at WFP I often said we must put the people we serve at the center of our solutions. Too often whatever the problem if hunger was a symptom or the result, my team would say food was the answer. That was not always the right answer.

When the problems may have been educational, access to financial resources, lack of livelihoods, climate related agricultural development challenges or even detrimentally impacting trade policies, food was not always the answer.

So we must realize that by putting people at the center, policymakers move towards a whole society approach, multi-dimensional, multi-sector approach, fundamentally addressing what are true root causes of hunger and building resilience while avoiding the possibility of instability and violence.

It may be useful to consider hunger a possible trigger mechanism or in the way the Pentagon now describes climate as a threat multiplier. A more resilient population may better withstand not just this challenge of food insecurity, but the other factors that together could increase the risk of conflict.

On the other side of the equation, there is no doubt. Conflict creates and increases food insecurity. Let me repeat that. There is no doubt. Conflict creates and increases hunger.

Earlier this year, together the European Union, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Program released a new study confirming that conflict often compounded by extreme

climate shocks and high prices of staple foods is now not only a driver, but the main driver of food insecurity.

What we know about the case studies that have been performed today in the available empirical data suggests conflicts create and increase hunger of affected populations for the following reasons.

Frist, most conflicts occur in rural areas. You see it. Where do the majority of attacks occur? In the agriculture and rural areas. Fifty-six percent of population affected by conflict shocks live in these rural areas. As a result, conflict costs on the entire agricultural food system increase from the very outset of a crisis.

Shock from assaults and attacks during active conflicts limit access to land and crops are destroyed naturally. If bombs are falling, farmers can't access their land.

In modern warfare we witness fields of crops destroyed as a part of the tactics of war. We witness bakeries in Syria targeted and bombed to limit access to the main staple food for the majority of Syrian people; bread.

In cities where facilities are not destroyed, fighting hinders food production and distribution. There's a growing body of data which suggests that in countries affected by conflict, not just violent shocks, but the indirect shocks of conflict, uncertainty and fear may affect agricultural productivity. As a result, food security.

During active conflict, as we said, farmers can't access their land. Once fighting occurs in the rural area, even when it stops, affected farmers continue to be afraid for themselves, for their families and while they are able to access their land, they farm quite differently than they did before the conflict began. They plant smaller areas of land where they think they may have control. They're more likely to plant subsistence, lower value crops. Food that their family needs, but not necessarily food that they will sell.

Further, because of the fear and shock and uncertainties, farmers are likely to keep small, ruminant livestock rather than cattle and they will sell valuable income generating assets. Why? It makes them more mobile if they need to leave because if it begins again, they can travel lighter and they'll have financial resources to move with their family.

This behavior, while providing farmers tenuous household food security contributes little or nothing to the food security of the

larger rural community or definitely contributes far less to the far flung urban populations.

As a result in cases even previous where the farmland was previously productive, agriculture food systems breakdown reducing access and availability to food causing prices to increase.

In South Sudan today where food is available and there's many places where food is unavailable, but where it is available in urban areas, inflation has increased the price of food in some areas to as much as 800 percent.

In Syria after the eight years of conflict, ever shrinking agricultural output, limited access to the food that is grown, food inflation in Damascus averaged 65 to 70 percent. This in a country which before the war served as the bread basket for the entire region. These prices and the inability to access food exhausts the resilience of rural as well as the urban populations often forcing them to flee in search of food.

Active conflict in rural areas as well as simply the shocks of war in the rural areas drive hunger in rural as well as urban areas.

Second, conflict affects a country's economy, production, trade and public finances. If you're spending money on war, you have little financial resources as a government for much else. Governments involved in conflict use limited government resources to support their war fighting needs.

Again, I will use the example of Nigeria. I find Nigeria absolutely fascinating. So Nigeria, after purchasing $496 million in military equipment from the United States, recently approved an additional $1 billion of extra budgetary expenses for the procurement of military equipment.

Since the Boco Haram crisis began in 2009 with diminished oil revenues and decreasing agricultural outputs, this left a very limited amount of budget dollars for the Nigerian government for addressing the increasing nationwide nutrition and food insecurity challenge. As a result, we have seen significant increases. Not just in the Boco Haram region of food insecurity and malnutrition, but in the central and southern regions of the country as well.

In addition, Nigeria's infrastructure has been near collapse including the lack of reliable power in the urban areas of Lagos and Abuja. The lack of development has been so bad that more

businesses leave the country every year though Nigeria is the fastest growing population on the continent of Africa.

The incidence of violence in the conflict zone and the governments' precipitous budget situation have reduced investor confidence. Government agencies, agricultural extension services and research institutes that support the agriculture sector have been reduced to minimal functions during the conflict.

In the conflict areas, hunger in 2017 reached near famine level proportions. In fact, the MFS actually suggests that there was a famine of children inside the Boco Haram controlled areas, but because we don't' have visibility into those areas, we have no data to support or prove that the famine actually occurred.

But the challenge was that in this oil rich country of Nigeria, they were required to go hat in hand to the international community for financial assistance to feed their people. Many of the governments were slow to respond because they said, "we're not giving Nigeria money when South Sudan and Somalia need assistance. Nigeria should have the capacity to support its own people."

It wasn't until it was near famine that we could count, that we had data to support that the international community interceded and then provided financial support to assist.

The government's conflict response limits their financial response capacity to an evolving and increasing challenge, which is creating and increasing hunger across the entire country, which leads to the third factor. How conflicts increase hunger.

Yes, conflicts result in population displacements, which create or increase food insecurity. Nigeria is now experiencing increasing population migration. Admittedly conflict is not the only reason people are leaving or migrating from Nigeria. It should also be noted in the conflict areas in Nigeria, like many other conflict affected countries, those fleeing the conflict first move within their own country. Despite everything else you read, people move sometimes two and three times inside their own country before moving outside of the country.

Nigeria is no different. They've seen movement from Maiduguri into Kano, Kano to Abuja before those affected move on.

This same pattern of displacement and migration is repeated across every conflict country. On a visit to Syria I sat in Damascus in the

living room of a family who were housing three additional families. All of those additional families had been displaced by conflict. Two of them, this was their second place to which they'd moved.

Everyone was always moving first inside their country. They were moving first, of course, for security, but then where was the food, where was the water, where was the safe shelter and medical attention.

A recent WFP study confirmed that nearly nine out of ten Africans, once they move two or three times inside their own country settle on the African continent while eight out of ten Asian migrants and once they move inside their own countries, settle and remain in Asia. Access to resources will determine where they settle and for how long.

Each of these moves reduces resources, increasing food insecurity, increasing hunger. Populations often move without adequate resources detrimentally impact the nutrition rates particularly of the children and the elderly in their households.

Roughly half of Syrians residing in Jordan and Lebanon today indicated a preference to move onto Europe. Not beaches they did not want to go home because that same population, their first priority was to return to Syria, but having moved inside the country, having moved now outside the country, they were citing economic opportunity and minimal access to food and other assistance because donors are again reducing their support.

So this same WFP study suggested every one percent increase in food security in this population, this already displaced population, resulted in a two percent increase in migration. These numbers should raise policymakers' interest in the investment in meeting food security needs particularly during times of crisis, particularly for population on the move.

Conflict also increases hunger when humanitarian actors are unable to meet the food security needs of the affected population. Over the last five years one mantra that many of you may have heard is that the humanitarian system is broke and broken because uprisings and conflicts where the emergency food assistance needs of vulnerable populations are only quickly and regularly addressed when there is adequate funded humanitarian response. Otherwise the system is broken.

Addressing the food needs during conflicts requires five essential conditions: presence. We need the actors there, both international and national actors supporting the needs of those who are affected by the conflict. Access, unfettered access to all the populations and we'll talk a bit more about that in a minute.

Adequate and timely funding. Too often it's not until bloated bellies are seen on CNN that the funding comes in. For many that's too late.

Of course you must have operational capacity. In Haiti what we saw was over 3,000 NGOs coming onto the island. Many of them having no previous experience, but having access to financial resources and presence, but because they didn't have the experience, they did not provide the assistance that was required.

Finally, particularly in a conflict situation, you need legal as well as de facto protection for humanitarian access. The hardest calls I have ever had to make were calling families to tell them a family member who worked for WFP who was fighting to save lives had lost their own life during a conflict, but those were calls that we're required to make.

The conflict dynamics also often affect the impact of the severity of a food security crisis. When these five priorities and these five factors are actually met. Where the conflict, the length of the conflict, is short, you will see a much I want to say much better, much more effective humanitarian response.

You ask why. Because the length of the conflict often determines the coping strategies of the affected population and the level of food insecurity suffered. Sure, quick onset uprisings in conflicts impact populations and their food security in much the same way as quick onset emergencies of flood or drought.

Donors tend to act the exact same way when there's a quick onset, quick ending emergency. The media coverage. The media doesn't get bored when it's a quick emergency. What you find with a conflict like Syria or Northeast Nigeria or Yemen is that you may get coverage for a day or two and then it's as if the conflict ends, but when the conflict is short, when the impact occurs to a visible, identifiable population, the media will pay attention. Donors pay attention. Humanitarian actors receive those five and are able to move forward supporting those five factors that we discussed.

The Kenyan crisis in 2007 and 2008 after their disputed election and the 2012 Gaza conflict represent 2 quite different, but representative short conflict shocks which created food insecurity, but where the humanitarian community with the donors and international community were able to effectively meet the needs of the population and then return the population to pre-conflict levels in short order.

In each case, the international response mirrored the actions of a quick onset emergency. In Kenya, a political economic and humanitarian crisis erupted when President Kibaki was declared the presidential election winner. Protests broke out in Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa and other cities across the country.

Riots in the streets resulted in a very aggressive military action with over 1,300 lives lost, 600,000 people displaced, disruption in agricultural production and the destruction of markets across the country all in a matter of 2 weeks.

The humanitarian response adequately supported by donors was swift offering broad-based in-kind assistance and food vouchers, as well as food assistance to all of the affected population.

The humanitarian response quickly evolved into a development response led by government rebuilding burned out urban markets, helping reestablish brokers to ensure consumers food availability and access to nutritious food.

Because of the short duration of the conflict, the quick and relatively adequate response rate of the government-led recovery and development investment in several social protection programs, an acute food insecurity problem was relatively quickly overcome.

While some population in targeted areas were food insecure before the conflict and remain marginal and vulnerable today requiring continued assistance, the level of food insecurity did not increase beyond those pre-conflict levels.

In the Gaza example, you'll recall on November 14, 2012 the Israeli armed forces launched an air strike that targeted and killed the acting chief of Hamas, the Hamas military wing and one of his associates. The attack was followed by an escalation in violence across Gaza ending a little less than 20 days later on November 21st.

Again, the humanitarian operator and the donor's response was swift. Bread baking and food distribution centers were planned, implemented quickly; almost overnight. An already vulnerable population received immediate scaled humanitarian assistance. Fishermen and their families were some of the hardest hit. During the escalation and conflict naval bombarded prevented fishermen from accessing the sea.

In the aftermath of the conflict, very quickly the Gaza fishing area was expanded from three to six miles. This post-conflict recovery activity increased fish caught by Palestinian fishermen in Gaza by approximately 39 percent providing additional resources for their families, additional food for the population.

Because of the short duration of the conflict and the significant humanitarian response, the food security of an already highly vulnerable population was not appreciably, detrimentally effective.

Shortage of food were experienced, of course, during the conflict, but the levels of food available returned rapidly to pre-conflict levels. When the conflict ends and emergency response handovers occur to recovery program or they evolve into development programs or resilience building programs, vulnerable populations will return to pre-conflict levels.

But in recent conflicts, too often the dynamics are complex making conflict, commencement and cessation ebbing and flowing between violence and fragile peace produced by post-conflict weak governance and structural instability.

As a result, few recently conflict affected countries today are truly ever post-conflict creating protracted food security situations generated by these no less protracted conflicts.

The FAO counts some 19 conflicts in this category of protracted conflicts. These are the conflicts which today account for that 489 million people who are food insecure because of conflict.

The literature suggests the internationalization of conflict primarily driven by the global war on terror is the primary reason for these extended conflicts and the increased food insecurity that results, but in reality not every protracted conflict is an internationalized conflict. Each protracted conflict situation presents a unique and complicated relationship between food insecurity of the affected populations and the actors involved in the conflict, both directly involved and those involved indirectly often times by proxy.

It's also dependent upon the response of the humanitarian community, both actors and donors. The non-internationalized protracted conflicts potentially have severe or widespread humanitarian consequences yet because of limited or little impact of these conflicts on the international community, they're deemed to have little if any strategic importance to any major power or donor nation. These conflicts are orphaned.

Donors provide limited if any financial assistance. Humanitarians struggle to meet ever growing needs of increasingly hungry populations. Political resolution of the conflict meets with little success and when it does succeed, the result is too often the ebbing and flowing between conflict and peace always with a cross-cutting challenge of food insecurity.

In these orphaned protracted conflicts, donors often expect humanitarian actors to treat the affected populations as they would in any emergency crisis reducing financial resources to incentivize the handover of beneficiaries from the humanitarian actors to recovery and development actors. Donors expect this even when fighting limits access to fields, access to jobs. Fear and insecurity, not food insecurity, but insecurity, from going ebbing and flowing of fighting limits the safety and security of the safety of families, particularly mothers and their children.

So even when active conflict and the fear, as well as the uncertain of battle limits realistic access, donors stop funding or reduce funding.

So to meet the humanitarian needs of the targeted population, humanitarians begin to cut rations, reduce numbers of those who are served, transition those they can to development activities. As a result, in these protracted conflicts, these orphaned protracted conflicts, food insecurity increases, hunger increases.

The places that I'm talking about, you know them. The destabilization in Northern Mali that we talked about earlier, unrest in Central African Republic, the violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar, the Crisis in the Philippines, Darfur in Sudan. When was the last time you heard anybody talk about Darfur? And the ongoing and ever increasing political crisis resulting in conflict in Burundi.

Each one of these conflicts has gone on for more than five years ebbing and flowing between cease fires, peace agreements, failed

peace agreements and fighting. Ebbing and flowing from hunger to the threat of famine.

Agricultural production in the conflict area of each country diminishes year over year. Unfortunately the literature suggests when these orphaned protracted conflicts involve disputes over government control, the fighting is not only of greater intensity, but encompasses more geography across the country increasing the intensity of food insecurity.

South Sudan represents the best example. South Sudan where tribal disputers for control of government to expand it, the conflict geography and as the conflict has progressed over time, expanded beyond the issues of government control to encompass the challenges of inflation, banditry, disputes over oil. Now spilling over even into the agricultural belt of the nation, which had historically never experienced conflict.

Late and limited donor resources coupled with the challenge of humanitarian in access in some areas resulted in a doubling of the number of hungry people in South Sudan and not a near famine, but a famine in one area of the country in 2017.

As we sit here, again a famine is threatened in South Sudan. The international community gives attention to these orphaned crises when lack of access or lack of financial resources may result in famine. Raising awareness and even bringing the hunger issue of forgotten conflicts, Yemen, South Sudan, Northeast Nigeria, Somalia, to the attention of the UN Security Council.

The UN Security Council, while now spending more time on the issues of conflict and food security particularly as related to these four near-famines of 2017, have unfortunately offered little unanimous agreement or solutions beyond the rhetoric of asking donors to contribute more, demanding access for humanitarians and reminding actors to move quickly from humanitarian response to development activities.

But access is a question that the Security Council does arrest, but without conclusion. Recently much has been written about the challenges of access for humanitarian responders. The literature recognizes the linear relationship between humanitarian access and food security. Even when humanitarian actors receive adequate financial resources without access, hunger is a guaranteed direct result.

Lack of access, the inability to reach those in need with assistance and the inability of those in need to reach assistance providers. Lack of access will increase hunger, as I said, but this is nothing new. Besieging cities to starve and entrench population is not a new 21st Century battle tactic. Today's access issues include these historical challenges, but with 21st Century innovation these old tactics are made new again through precision military tactics and counterterrorism strategies.

For example, the bombing of ports and the refusal to allow rebuilding in the name of limiting terrorist access when the ports are the only reasonable means for delivering food to the civilian population.

On question of proportionality and legitimate military needs, the bombing of hospitals or simply the removal of medical supplies from humanitarian convoys, all actions which increase the hunger of population.

Much attention is given by the Security Council, the donors and sometimes even the international media community to the use of these tactics particularly in internationalized protracted conflicts. Too often access challenges produce the food insecurity when international humanitarian law clashes with counterterrorism or counterinsurgency activities.

I can't tell you the number of times I stood before the Security Council, donors, governments and the media pleading for all sides to provide the access that was necessary in situations for humanitarians to meet the needs of women and children so they would not go hungry. Begging for access and more often than not, to no avail.

Governments, academics, humanitarian practitioners and other actors at like acknowledge the existence of the four humanitarian principles; humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Yet these principles are implemented, interpreted on the ground. The way they're interpreted often leave the most vulnerable without food, shelter or medicine.

Recognizing conflicts, impact on hunger, I will simply ask a question I've asked before. Are these principles and our international laws adequate for the challenges of today's conflicts particularly with a growing and evolving global war on terror.

Achieving the sustainability development goals requires achieving peace and security for all. Until we accomplish peace on earth, I'm waiting for that day, but until we do, we must adequately answer these questions and ensure our ability to address the hunger crisis of all those affected by conflict.

Yes, there is a correlation between hunger and conflict. The reciprocal case is even clearer. Conflict creates and in most cases increases hunger and each of these situations create the potential for security challenges not just inside the affected country, but in the region and even globally.

Let me conclude by saying – I'm skipping all of this. You guys have listened enough. I'll let you ask me questions, but I just want to conclude by saying food security during times of conflict will, of course, occur. The question is whether those suffering have hope because the conflict is short, donors are providing assistance, humanitarians are providing the assistance, governments are responding to their needs. That's my Utopia.

Or we are addressing the challenges that face us in a realistic way, including providing access to clean water and medical assistance and that needs are met and that people, even during conflicts, are not forced to suffer.

They need not suffer just the scourge of war. If they need suffer the scourge of war, they need not suffer the challenge of food insecurity.

In 1949 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the FAO. Believe that or not. In presenting the award, the chair of the Nobel committee quoted the FAO Director, General Boyd Orr stating, "We must conquer hunger and want because hunger and want in the midst of plenty are the fatal flaw on civilization. They are the fundamental causes of war, but it is no use trying to build the world from the top down with political ideas of spheres of influence and so on. We have to build from the bottom upwards to provide for the primary requisites of life for people who have never, have never had those primary requisites and build from the slums of the country upwards."

These words were true and the world embraced them in 1949. When those we sought to help lived in Europe and the countries affected by World War II. These words remain just as true today when those we primarily seek to help live in Africa, the Middle

East and Asia. It's up to us to hold our leaders accountable. Thank you.

[Applause]

[End of Audio]