

# **Ertharin Cousin**

## **U.S. Candidate for Executive Director of the World Food Programme**

### **Vision Statement**

Our goal is a world where the international community joins forces to eliminate global hunger and ensure that all of the world's people and countries can achieve sustainable food and nutrition security by: ensuring that the requirements of those in urgent need are met swiftly, effectively, and respectfully in times of crisis; bringing solutions to scale; investing in small holder farmers, linking producers to local markets and local markets to the global economy; and building the capacity of communities and countries to pursue their own food security strategies.

### **Leadership, Management, and Reform**

Food insecurity manifests itself in many ways, and the World Food Programme must be positioned to understand and address each of these. Shocks triggered by sharp increases in world food and oil prices, the emergency needs generated by natural and man-made disasters, and the human suffering and indignity borne of the inability of some parents to feed their children are some of the key systemic, urgent and moral challenges that the World Food Programme must be able to address.

The World Food Programme must also be positioned to take advantage of new opportunities to advance its core mission, from bold, new international attention to food security and the rise of diverse, new leadership on development to new potential to tap the private sector and build on the game-changing contributions of science and innovation.

In order to meet these challenges and seize new opportunities, the World Food Programme must be more agile, accountable, focused, and effective. As Executive Director, I will draw upon internal and external talent to build a leadership team that can modernize both the mission and the practices of the organization. I will empower my remarkable colleagues who bring vast and diverse experience to our shared efforts and hold accountable our leadership at the regional and functional levels. WFP will be both responsive and responsible.

As Executive Director, I will focus the leadership of the organization on **five fundamental objectives**:

#### **1. Build into all WFP policies and programs a clear and deliberate focus on capacity-building.**

Over the last 20 years, a number of countries that were once aid recipients have become donors. We have seen substantial gains ranging from increased nutritional standards to expanded agricultural production in states across the developing world. As a result, we are increasingly able to draw upon local talent and expertise, even when we stand-up emergency operations in times of crisis. Yet, we have not seen a commensurately robust, sustained, and systemic focus on and investment in local and national capacity-building.

We need to learn from ideas, technologies, and experience of UN member states that have succeeded in improving or achieving food security and facilitate dialogue with countries that are now making food security a priority. We need to target assistance and other support to ensure that key regional organizations and countries - particularly in areas that have seen repeated humanitarian crises - have

the infrastructure and capabilities needed to respond themselves and depend less on external goodwill. WFP also needs to play its part to accelerate progress toward the Millennium Development Goals, making sure gains are sustainable and helping countries rely less on external assistance and more on domestic capacities rooted in the economic development that can not only halve but actually end global hunger. Our focus must be not only on how the World Food Programme can get food aid into the hands of a young girl whose family does not produce enough to sustain her, but also on investing in her and her family so that she will no longer need international aid. The experience and the assistance of emerging donors can play a vital role in this process, and WFP must catalyze progress through the use of innovative practices such as twinning and triangular cooperation.

## 2. Diversify and sustain robust partnerships.

Long gone are the days when an organization like WFP had to rely on a small set of core partners and donors. Today, WFP can avail itself of a full spectrum of strategic partnerships with its traditional sister UN agencies - the FAO and IFAD - as well as other UN system partners, such as OCHA, WHO, UNEP, UNICEF, UNDP, and UNHCR; with traditional donors and emerging partner countries like Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South Africa; with the G20 and the G77; with the World Bank and regional development banks; with the private sector; and with NGOs. We must also build on growing commitment and capacity that already exists, including in regional organizations such as Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and the African Union, which has used its Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program to reverse the decline in agricultural investment and develop robust, peer-reviewed food security strategies across that continent. The success of these partnerships needs to be sustained, leveraged, and scaled. This requires going beyond sharing information and collaborating on projects to shared strategies for securing the systemic policy and programmatic changes needed to significantly decrease hunger and foster greater food security throughout the world.

## 3. Ensure the organization's policies and programs are transparent and driven by evidence of impact.

Meeting immediate, urgent food needs and promoting longer-term solutions to food insecurity are both extremely challenging tasks, and WFP's broad range of policies and programs offers a rich foundation for generating knowledge about the effectiveness and sustainability of the organization's efforts. While WFP has been an early adopter of measures to improve accountability and transparency, we must ensure that programmatic changes become cultural changes, embedded throughout the operations of the organization so they deliver the value that both recipients and donors deserve.

WFP should be a standard-bearer in evaluating impact. Its evaluation policies and practices must be expanded and strengthened to ensure that: new initiatives and pilot programs are shaped by rigorous program design and informed by evidence; the data and analyses generated by evaluations inform future policies and program design; and these evaluations are informed by and responsive to local experience and expertise.

## 4. Refocus attention on administration and internal management.

With more than 14,000 staff and responsibility for international operations in more than 70 countries, the World Food Programme needs more modern, transparent, and effective administrative systems. Specifically, WFP must craft and implement internal management policies to ensure that:

- Staff are empowered and held accountable;
- Operating units are cohesive;
- The entire organization shares a common strategic vision;
- Administrative and management problems are readily surfaced and effectively addressed.

The demands of high-level diplomacy and the crises or opportunities of the day must not supersede the responsibility of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme to manage effectively more than 14,000 staff and ensure the efficient administration of core and country operations.

#### 5. Provide a forum for change.

The food security landscape is changing dramatically with shifts in global markets, the rise and fall of national and regional economies, the effects of climate change, gains and losses in development, and increased vulnerability to systemic shocks. Meanwhile, humanitarian emergencies to which WFP has traditionally responded are no less complex. Yet, the potential solutions to world hunger are also diversifying - from new breakthroughs in technology and the successes of emerging economies to local innovation and on-the-ground leadership. The World Food Programme must tap and feed this growing body of knowledge in order to lead in bringing solutions to scale.

In addition to incorporating new knowledge into its policies and operations, WFP senior management, in concert with the Executive Board, can catalyze an essential global dialogue about food and nutrition solutions that give membership, staff, and all stakeholders new ways to address the diverse and complex challenges of creating a food and nutrition secure world. These discussions should drive the organization towards greater innovation, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.