

Food For Thought

Progress In The Fight To Overcome Hunger

by Heinz Imhof

(NAPSA)—The World Food Prize is a unique opportunity for those committed to agriculture to come together from a wide range of backgrounds.

This year's World Food Prize laureate, Dr. Pedro Sanchez, is a man whose research has made a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of subsistence farmers and others depending on agriculture in the developing world. Dr. Sanchez took an area of non-productive tropical soil in Brazil and through painstaking research brought to life 30 million hectares of land, so the total grain harvest tripled.

By adopting his Agroforestry approach, 150,000 farmers in Africa have substantially increased their yields, in some cases by as much as 200 to 400 percent.

Real progress in the fight to overcome poverty and hunger in the developing world goes beyond direct assistance to subsistence farmers. The needs of rural development must be addressed more broadly and this includes fundamental needs such as education, health and rural infrastructure.

While this is traditionally the focus of public sector development assistance, the private sector can lend insights to public-private partnerships, particularly in communities where company operations are centered.

Through Syngenta's seed and crop protection activities, our industry has made a significant contribution to increased crop yields and developing products for inhospitable conditions. We have made progress on yield protection—through targeted control of weeds, diseases and pests. In



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doing so, we have focused on the most effective ways to manage the land currently in production and provide farmers with the appropriate tools.

Dr. Sanchez has demonstrated that any practical application of science and technology will have to be closely applied to local conditions. At Syngenta, we have promoted crop enhancement through seeds and crops adapted to local conditions. We have created products that require less water for use in arid regions.

The principles exemplified in Dr. Sanchez's work should inspire and encourage us.

Whether we can push back the ravages of hunger and bring hope to subsistence farmers, while preserving natural resources—depends on our joint skills and ideas.

Heinz Imhof is chairman of the board of directors of Syngenta AG.