

appropriate highly effective type of education, which becomes the resonating system, capable of responding to new ideas, long before they are fully implemented. . . .

At the Johannesburg summit, Russia could declare its intention to build a new, humanistically oriented civilization. . . . Russia is prepared to formulate and propose large-scale projects for joint international implementation, including the organization of development corridors in Eurasia, the reconquest of territories with extreme climatic conditions (Russia's North, the arid deserts), and the exploration and development of near and outer space, including the colonization of Mars and the creation of an artificial atmosphere on that planet. It is precisely projects like this, which could become the engines of new breakthroughs in the electric power industry, and in air, space, and rail transport systems, and could be directed toward the discovery and mastery of new physical principles.

The proposal of large-scale projects, with the participation of many countries, makes it possible to resituate the questions of the condition of finances and the possibilities for investment in such projects. The world financial system is in a state of high instability. In order to provide investments for large-scale projects, there must be a project for new financial institutions, which work in the interests of development for all humanity.

# Controlled Debate on Famine Kills Africans

by David Cherry

The environmentalists' campaign to persuade African countries now facing starvation, to reject American donations of genetically modified (GM) maize, is "revolting and despicable," U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) chief Andrew Natsios said in Zambia, after its government was persuaded to refuse the U.S. food aid. The green groups, he said, including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, "are using big-time, very well-organized propaganda, the likes of which I have never seen before" in 12 years of American-led famine relief efforts, according to a lead article in the *Washington Times* on Aug. 30.

An estimated 14.2 million people in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Swaziland are suffering from famine, according to the UN World Food Program's September figures. This estimate is an increase of 1.6 million since May; the famine is getting sharply worse. James T. Morris, executive director of the UN's World Food Program (WFP), addressed a press conference in Johannesburg, South Africa on Sept. 16, in which he said the crisis was of "incredible proportions" and was increasing faster than had been imagined. The WFP team had just completed a two-week assessment tour of Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zambia, and Swaziland.

Zambia's President Levy Mwanawasa told journalists at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in the first week of September, "Simply because my people are hungry, that is no justification to give them poison, to give them food that is intrinsically dangerous to their health." His Minister of Health, Brian Chituwo, only days before, at a meeting of Southern African health ministers in Harare, Zimbabwe, reported that some Zambians even fear GM foods could facilitate the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Hysteria of this kind was evident in Lusaka, the Zambian capital, at a public meeting Aug. 12, which the government convened to discuss the issue. There, Women for Change Executive Director Emily Sikazwe said, "I am a scientist by profession. . . . Yes, we are starving but we are saying no to the food the Americans are forcing on our throats. . . . I hope our local scientists are not being used to commit crimes against their own people." Others voiced similar sentiments. President Mwanawasa has now sent representatives to other countries to study the question.

There is no danger from genetically modified foods. There is, of course, a difference between the modification of genes

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that takes place in nature through cross-pollination, and the laboratory insertion of genes from unrelated organisms. But there has been too much varied testing of, and experience with each marketed transgenic foodstuff, to maintain that a hazard exists.

At least one leading environmentalist, Greenpeace founder Dr. Patrick Moore, has broken ranks, to write that “the campaign of fear now being waged against genetic modification is based largely on fantasy and a complete lack of respect for science and logic.”

Kenyan scientist Florence Wambugu, on behalf of a coalition of African scientists, released a statement on Aug. 31 at the WSSD, identifying the safety of GM foods. The statement added, “GM foods have been eaten by millions of people in the U.S., Canada, China, Latin America over several years [eight years in the United States—D.C.] and there has been no documented evidence of any harm to human beings, animals, or the environment. To date, there are over 100 million acres of GM crops being grown globally and the acreage is increasing.”

## Greeks Bearing Gifts

While GM foods pose no dangers, their promoters do: The ancient Mediterranean world said, “Beware of Greeks bearing gifts!” Who is USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios, and what general policy is his agency promoting? One reason that Natsios and USAID bring the good news about GM foods is that doing so serves the interests of the food cartels and other multinationals, such as Cargill and Monsanto. We are no longer in the pre-1985 era, in which publicly and privately funded agricultural discoveries were made freely available. The “Green Revolution” in disease-resistant grains, was a product of that era. But a 1985 ruling of the U.S. Patent Office permitted the granting of industrial patents on plants and seeds, for the first time. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is also now *compelled* to sell the patent rights to its discoveries to the highest bidder.

The oligarchic families who control these food cartel companies, set their sights in the late 1960s on tight, worldwide control over raw materials and foodstuffs, as part of their intention to stop Third World population growth—an intention shared since the early 1970s by the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. State Department, and NGOs such as the Negative Population Growth organization. The loyalty of Natsios and USAID goes beyond the corporations to the grander oligarchic policy.

Will USAID food donations save lives in the current African famine? They will, but they have strong conditions attached, to induce African nations to accept the multinationals’ food policy, as their own.

The relevant, politically acceptable measures in the case of USAID are eliminating national food sovereignty and self-sufficiency, and privatizing all government functions with respect to food production. Giving patent control over all

major advances in biotechnology to the multinationals is only one aspect of the process.

Natsios emphasized his and USAID’s adherence to these ugly measures in his June 11 briefing on the Southern African famine at the World Food Summit in Rome. At the outset, he embraced the work of Nobel Prize laureate Amartya Sen, “the great famine economist” whose theory “is accepted by most of us in the famine discipline as the pre-eminent theory of famine.” Sen’s theory is that the privatization of food production and distribution, and the implementation of the Western model of democracy, are the keys to preventing famines.

In a June 16 commentary in the London *Observer*, “Why Half the Planet Is Hungry,” Sen wrote that “Food self-sufficiency is a peculiarly obtuse way of thinking about food security”; it is “fetishist”; he insists on letting the “free market” solve the problem! In democracies, Sen says, famines do not occur: “The survival of the ruling government would be threatened by famine, since elections are not easy to win after famines.” Sen is Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Natsios went further just two days later, on June 13, in an appearance before the U.S. House International Relations Committee. In his written submission, he promoted the sale of small financial derivatives contracts to African peasants as a way to achieve food security, an idea worthy of his Sen master. The idea is spelled out in full in Peter Hazell’s 1999 paper, “Potential Role for Insurance in Managing Catastrophic Risks in Developing Countries.”

Hazell, of the Rockefeller-backed International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington, D.C., says that micro-derivatives, triggered by extreme weather conditions averaged over an entire area, can protect the Africans from starvation. The derivatives would be “bundled” and sold as catastrophe bonds. Lloyd’s of London, Munich Reinsurance, Renaissance Re (Bermuda), and Swiss Re—as associate members of the ProVenton Consortium at the Disaster Management Facility of the World Bank—all stand ready to “help.” Were high finance not at the end of its tether, such balmy ideas would not be considered, let alone foisted on African heads of state.

Sen’s commentary in the *Observer* was answered in a blistering article by Vandana Shiva in the same pages on June 23. Shiva wrote that Sen is “offering the disease as a cure.” She pointed out that “deregulated imports are a major cause of poverty and famine in countries like India. Globalization has dismantled the system which guaranteed domestic market access for farmers, a system which brought food security to the poor.” Shiva is—surprise!—an internationally prominent environmentalist extremist. Her Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology in New Delhi is close to Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. It is a controlled debate, and it played well at the WSSD: One side promotes scientific advances wrapped in economic strychnine; the other appeals to Africans’ opposition to this economic poison, with an anti-science gospel to keep Africa backward.