

Global leaders convene to set the trajectory of agricultural innovation and production

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The World Food Prize Foundation convened a meeting of World Food Prize Laureates, Nobel Laureates, business leaders, policy makers, scientists, innovators and youth at DialogueNEXT in Washington, D.C. on March 25, 2025. The theme, *A Root Awakening*, reflects the stark realization that the current trajectory of agricultural production is veering dangerously away from meeting the food and nutrition needs of an expanding population.

More than 115 organizations have endorsed the call from 153 Nobel and World Food Prize Laureates for moonshot efforts to address rising hunger worldwide. The letter released earlier this year underlined the urgent need for agricultural innovation to avoid a hunger catastrophe in the next 25 years, especially as climate change is already threatening the production of staple foods.

The organizations come from a wide range of sectors, from research and academic to industry and nonprofit. They include one of the world's biggest philanthropic organizations, The Rockefeller Foundation, prestigious research hub Wageningen University and Research and leading nutrition nonprofit, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). Signatories represent all regions of the globe, including the EARTH University in Costa Rica, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in India, AfricaRice Center in Côte d'Ivoire and Australia's Crawford Fund, amongst others.

The original letter from the Laureates warned that the world was not even close to meeting future food needs, with an estimated 700 million people going hungry today and an additional 1.5 billion people to feed by 2050. The letter predicted humanity would face an even more food insecure, unstable world by mid-century unless the international community

ramped up support for the latest research and innovation.

Laureate signatories included Robert Woodrow Wilson, who won the 1978 Nobel Prize for Physics for his discovery that supported the big bang theory of creation and the 14th Dalai Lama. The effort was coordinated by Cary Fowler, joint 2024 World Food Prize Laureate, the former U.S. Special Envoy for Global Food Security. Other World Food Prize Laureates to join the call were NASA climate scientist Cynthia Rosenzweig, Ethiopian-American plant breeder and U.S. National Media of Science Recipient Gebisa Ejeta and Akinwumi Adesina, president of the African Development Bank.

“The International Seed Federation, representing tens of thousands of seed and plant breeding companies across more than 70 countries, is proud to join this global coalition by endorsing the Laureate Letter 2025,” said Michael Keller, Secretary General, International Seed Federation. “By signing this letter, we reaffirm that innovation in seed and plant breeding, supported by robust, science-based policy frameworks, is critical to tackling two of the most pressing challenges of our time: food insecurity and the climate crisis.”

The announcement comes as the World Food Prize Foundation meets with agrifood experts, academics, business leaders and policymakers in Washington, D.C. to confront the challenge of feeding a growing global population over the next 25 years. DialogueNEXT will explore the measures needed in agricultural innovation to ensure 9.7 billion people have access to nutritious food.