

Dr Boerma, it gives us great pleasure to invite you to give this the first Boyd Orr Memorial Lecture, entitled: 'The 30 years' war against world hunger'.

The 30 years' war against world hunger

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Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am both moved and honoured to have been invited to give this inaugural lecture of the Boyd Orr Memorial Trust. And the first thing that I should like to do is to offer my very warm congratulations and those of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to the Rowett Institute, the University of Glasgow and the Nutrition Society of Great Britain for their initiative in having combined to form this Trust in recognition of all that Lord Boyd Orr did to try and improve human welfare. There is no doubt that the name of this great Scotsman, who was FAO's first Director-General, deserves a special place in the history of modern times. The creation of this Trust will help to perpetuate it.

I regret that Lady Boyd Orr was unable to come here today to attend this Lecture. Many people besides myself will recall how deeply devoted he was to her and how great a source of strength she was to him. We are all proud to honour his memory on this occasion, but she has very special reason to be proud.

Mr Chairman, I have entitled this Lecture 'The 30 years' war against world hunger.' My purpose of course is to give some idea of what has happened in the 30 years since the international community created FAO under the leadership of John Boyd Orr in order to take action on a world scale against the most basic problem affecting human survival and well-being. Hunger and malnutrition are of course as old as humanity itself. The fight for food has been carried on relentlessly in all parts of the world, at all times and in all manner of ways. Even the global war on hunger which Boyd Orr was chosen to be the first to direct in 1945 had been prepared for in different ways over a number of years: by his own pioneering studies on malnutrition in the United Kingdom, for example; by the efforts of Stanley Bruce and F. L. McDougall effectively urging a 'marriage of health and agriculture' to the League of Nations in the 1930s following the earlier work there of Wallace Aykroyd and others; and by the high act of statesmanship of President Roosevelt in calling the famous Conference on Food and Agriculture at Hot Springs, Virginia, in 1943. But there is no doubt that the actual foundation of FAO was intended to signal the start of operations on a far wider and more ambitious scale than ever before. For the first time, it was to be a war against world hunger, with the lives of human beings everywhere at stake. I shall have more to say about that in a moment.

I should first make it clear, however, that, in talking of a 30 years' war, I am not of course attempting to draw any comparison with the famous European conflict of the same name in the 17th century. Apart from anything else, there was a peace

settlement (the Peace of Westphalia) which at least brought it to a conclusion. So far as our war against world hunger is concerned, there have been plenty of palavers, but the end, after 30 years, is still not in sight. About that, too, I shall have more to say in due course.

Let me now go back to the beginnings of this war we have been engaged on for these last 30 years, to the first session of the FAO Conference in Quebec in October 1945 when the Organization was founded. John Boyd Orr attended the Conference not as a delegate but as a technical adviser to the United Kingdom delegation. Yet there seems to have been a strong general feeling from the start that he should be the first Director-General of this great new enterprise in international co-operation. Almost everything he said carried his unique stamp of global vision combined with a keen practical sense of real human needs and an impatience with the kind of reverence for details that gets in the way of action.

For example, the Conference was only a few days old when, still an adviser to his country's delegation, he had to respond to a demand for the expression of his general views. The first point he made was the need for FAO to act as a source of accurate, authoritative information on food and health in the whole world. Typically, however, he immediately went on:

'But we cannot wait, under the present circumstances of the world, until we get all the exact and detailed information. There are certain things we know about already. We do not need any investigation to know there is a food shortage in India; we do not need any investigation to know that in the poorer sections of our own industrial cities there are people living way below normal health standards; we do not need an investigation to know that there are people so poor that they cannot get a proper diet.'

Later in this speech he outlined his broad vision of the place of FAO in the whole scheme of co-operation among nations when he said:

'Here we have in this Organization a most valuable means of bringing about some degree of world unity. If nations will not agree on a food policy which will benefit them all, they will agree on nothing. At an early date therefore we should go before them and say, 'Here is a food policy; here is a thing you can agree upon and on which action can be taken immediately.' And we can prophesy that if action is taken immediately it will begin to solve some of the apparently unsolvable economic problems of the world of the present day. . . . Then I think you will begin to develop . . . a technique of co-operation in getting this policy applied on a world scale. It should be easier then to develop international co-operation in other fields.'

Just over a week later, he was elected Director-General. In his acceptance speech, he insisted that, with the creation of FAO, something new had arisen, namely that 'All the governments have agreed to co-operate in a great world food scheme, which will bring freedom from want of food to all men, irrespective of race or colour.' And, after describing in bold and inspirational terms some of the many benefits to mankind that could follow from this, he threw down a challenge to the delegates: 'You say it is a dream? Then, it is the business of FAO to make that dream come true.'

These last remarks that I have quoted from John Boyd Orr's statements at Quebec in 1945 were made at the very moment at which he had been entrusted with the command of FAO. His acceptance speech can therefore, I think, fairly be regarded, for historical purposes, as amounting to the real declaration of war on world hunger by the international community at large. But it is one thing to declare a war. Waging it is something quite different. What, then was his strategy?

There was of course an immediate post-war food crisis. To deal with this, he convened in Washington in May 1946 a Special Meeting on Urgent Food Problems. Out of this meeting there emerged the International Emergency Food Council which, for 2 years, performed a vital function in helping to ensure a reasonably fair distribution of available food among countries in need. But this of course was only short-term action. Of far greater potential significance, the Washington meeting asked him to work out definite proposals for a world food policy along the lines of the ideas he had expressed in Quebec, including proposals for longer-term international machinery designed to prevent both shortages and surpluses. Thus, a few months later, he presented the Second Session of the FAO Conference in Copenhagen with his specific ideas for the great strategic concept in the war against world hunger that will always be associated with his name: the World Food Board.

The basic idea behind the World Food Board was to create an international agency under the aegis of FAO capable of dealing with world food problems as a whole and in particular of putting an end to the absurd paradox that had so cruelly manifested itself in the 1930s when, on the one hand, many millions of people had suffered hunger and malnutrition due to shortages of food, while, on the other, the increasing power of agricultural production in a few countries had led to huge unmarketable surpluses bringing farmers to ruin. The first object of the proposed Board, then, was to stabilize food prices on the international market, protecting producers by buying a commodity when the world price fell below an established minimum and protecting consumers by selling when the price went above an established maximum. One of the objectives of stabilization of course was to ensure a continued high rate of production sufficient to meet the world's growing consumption. As part of the whole process, the Board would need to build up a world reserve of food to level out good and bad harvests: but, even more important, reserves that were large enough to meet any famine emergencies due to major crop failures. The Board would also have funds that could be used to relieve the pressure of surpluses by disposing of them on special terms, that is, below ordinary market prices, to countries which were in urgent need of them. Finally, in presenting his proposals to the Conference, Sir John said (very significantly in the light of what has happened since) that, although he had dealt first with the question of price stabilization because of the looming danger of a sudden collapse, he believed that, taking the long view, the most important function of the Board would be to promote measures to bring about increased food production in the underdeveloped countries where hunger and malnutrition were worst.

In his speech, Sir John foresaw some of the objections that might be raised against his proposals. Firstly, where was the money to come from? He did not

actually dismiss this objection, but he put it firmly in perspective. 'Mankind,' he said, 'does not exist for the benefit of finance. Finance must be the servant of human society. We have the knowledge and the resources to provide the food and, indeed, all the other things men need to lead a full life. This is a challenge to financial experts. Surely they would never admit that our present financial system is unable to cope with the great material wealth which science has made possible, and which men so urgently need.' And he concluded tellingly, 'There is no doubt that if Governments decide that a World Food Board ought to be set up with the necessary funds, experts will find the solution to the financial problem.'

Another objection which he foresaw, and raised almost with relish, was that his proposals would force governments to give up some of their national sovereignty. With withering logic, he pointed out: 'In the years between the wars there were international agreements for limiting the production and distribution of goods. If nations were willing to yield part of their sovereignty to perpetual scarcity in the interests of trade, they should be willing to yield at least as much sovereignty to create a world of plenty in the interests of the people.'

Mr Chairman, I remember the Copenhagen Conference well. It was the first Session of the FAO Conference that I attended, then as a delegate from the Netherlands. I can recall the rugged conviction with which this great scientist and humanist, shrewdly and yet with all the warmth of sincerity, urged his grand strategy for a world in which farmers would have fair prices, the hungry and the needy would obtain the primary necessity of life that was their birthright and the nations of the world would in the process draw closer together in a bond of common human interest.

And at times it almost seemed as though his grand strategy might prevail. I do not want to make this Lecture a compendium of extracts from other men's speeches, but I cannot fail to revive the memory of a remarkable tour de force at one of the plenary sessions by the former Mayor of New York, Fiorello LaGuardia, who was then head of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. He certainly pulled no punches and he went right to the heart of the matter. After informing the delegates that 'I am no diplomat. I have always told the truth', he threw himself wholeheartedly, and with raw but rousing eloquence, behind Sir John's World Food Board proposals. He barely concealed his scorn for speakers who had accepted these only 'in principle' and strongly warned against losing time in involved machinery for studying them. And he ended up as follows:

'Gentlemen, we have tried the old system, and it has not worked. We are taking something of a chance, but even if we are entirely wrong, it cannot be worse than a system we had where one country has an abundance and another country is in need. . . . Talk about differences over boundaries, what causes those difficulties? The need of food and the need of existence. If nations can be assured of sufficient food . . . we will have no boundary questions. If FAO clicks, the Security Council will have little to do.'

He was of course exaggerating, but perhaps not all that much. Did Lord Boyd Orr not later receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts?

In the event, however, it was the views of those who accepted the World Food Board proposals only 'in principle' that carried the day. More and more, one heard delegates talk in soothing but evasive terms of approval of 'the general objectives' of the proposals. Finally, the Chairman of the Committee that actually considered them summed up the prevailing opinion when he said: 'This Conference . . . accepts the general objectives of the proposals. . . . It does not say . . . that a World Food Board shall be set up forthwith. What it does say is that there is a necessity for international machinery for achieving these objectives.' A Preparatory Commission on World Food Proposals was established to examine not only the Director-General's ideas but any others that seemed pertinent.

This was effectively the end of Boyd Orr's World Food Board. The Preparatory Commission convened a few weeks later. As a matter of passing historical interest, I might mention that I represented the Netherlands, while the representative of the United Kingdom was a young Member of Parliament, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works, a certain Mr Harold Wilson. The Commission worked for 3 months and produced a Report which, while containing, I think, a number of valuable ideas, fell far short of what Sir John had in mind. Specifically, the only new international machinery it proposed was the FAO Council. Ironically enough, in view of recent events to which I shall refer later, this was to be generally known as 'The World Food Council'. But in practice it has over the years come to occupy itself more and more with largely administrative questions concerning FAO.

What had gone wrong? Why did Sir John's grand strategy fail to be accepted? Speaking for myself, my chief worry, shared by others, was about the technical feasibility and logistical difficulties of setting up international food reserves, and there is little doubt that the practical problems involved had not been sufficiently thought through at the time. But it is very clear in my mind that these practical difficulties were not the main reason why the proposals failed. Even at the time, I could see that they were by no means insuperable provided that governments had sufficient political determination to accept the strategy of the World Food Board as a whole. And the sad fact of the matter is that they did not have it.

The Preparatory Commission was in fact to a large extent interpreting, in what could be called technical terms, a political mandate implicitly entrusted to it by the Copenhagen Conference. It is, as you may know, not uncommon in international diplomacy for technical experts to be brought in to provide respectable reasons to cover awkward political decisions. And it is quite clear, despite all the fine words at Copenhagen, that governments were not politically prepared to buy Boyd Orr's proposals.

Again, you will ask why. After all, there had been little doubt about the sincerity of the intentions of the delegates at the Quebec Conference less than a year earlier. At the risk of oversimplifying, I have little doubt in my mind that the rock on which Sir John's grand strategy foundered—one, you will recall, that he had himself foreseen but, being a man far ahead of his times, had fatally underestimated—was the force of national sovereignty. What basically disturbed governments, now that the immediate compulsions of war had passed, was that his

proposals would have meant their yielding up some measure of individual national control.

I have dwelt at some length on the story of the World Food Board proposals, not only because we are here to honour the memory of Lord Boyd Orr, but because they represented the most courageous and far-sighted strategy so far devised in the war against world hunger. And, at the very outset of the 30 years that the war has gone on, they went down to political defeat. Let me stress again: it was a political defeat. It is this that one must grasp if one is to understand the course of the rest of the war until now.

For what was made unmistakably clear by the events of 1946 was that whatever ideas FAO henceforth had for improving the world food situation were only worth pursuing to the extent that they were likely to be politically acceptable to governments. Since FAO is an intergovernmental organization, this may not seem so very surprising. But in fact it has implications that have placed serious restraints on our ability to carry on the war against world hunger with real effectiveness.

One has to remember, first of all, that FAO was originally endowed with a kind of international moral force of its own that was indeed the main weapon with which it embarked on the war. There is no doubt that John Boyd Orr was not alone among the founding spirits of FAO in believing that civilization has a profound moral obligation to provide food for those who are hungry and in need. Thus, when governments, for national political reasons, side-tracked the very first attempt to translate this international moral force into practical terms, one of the essential, if unwritten, principles on which the Organization had been founded was seriously weakened. As a result, FAO has never again felt itself able to put forward any great practical scheme at the same high level of bold, global vision which might have made a major impact on a world food situation that is still a disgrace to the 20th century.

There is another complication about the extent to which the political wishes of individual governments have limited what FAO has been able to do effectively in the war against world hunger. This is the fact that the governments which, by reason of their financial resources, are in a position to bring the greatest influence to bear on how much activity the Organization undertakes are obviously not the governments of countries where hunger and malnutrition is most acute and widespread. In point of fact, the richer or developed countries have shown a fair amount of understanding and support over the years for the needs and problems of the poorer developing countries, both inside and outside FAO. But their interests, in matters of trade, for example, are not the same and, when the test comes, it is their interests that have generally prevailed.

This leads me on to a very important point regarding the orientation of the war against world hunger. When FAO was founded, the world was just emerging from the ruin and devastation of the Second World War. There were few countries anywhere where there was not a threat of food shortages. Within a few years, with the remarkable recovery of Europe in particular, that situation had changed. From then on, the essential problem of world hunger and malnutrition has lain in the

developing countries, which together account for more than two-thirds of the human population but where there has not been enough food produced or available at reasonable prices. It is in those countries where the war has had to be fought for most of the last 30 years. It is in those countries where it must be won if what we describe as the 'world' food problem is ever to be overcome.

I should also make it clear that, in concentrating as I have so far on the global initiatives of Lord Boyd Orr at the outset of these 30 years, I do not of course mean to suggest that FAO should have been regarded as solely responsible for prosecuting the war against world hunger. Clearly, the vast bulk of the efforts had to come—as they have come—from countries themselves, whether one thinks in terms of self-help on the part of the developing countries or aid to them from the developed. It nevertheless remains true, as I have said, that FAO was given a certain moral and intellectual leadership in the struggle. It has, moreover, acted as an important promoter of efforts and has, for better or for worse, reflected fairly accurately the extent of countries' own political commitments to the struggle.

If we look at the broad course of the actions that countries themselves have taken in the last 30 years to overcome world hunger, certain things stand out. Let us take the developing countries first. Contrary to what is often believed, they have in fact made considerable efforts. By one means or another, they have, taken as a whole, managed to increase their food production sufficiently fast to keep ahead of a rate of population growth that is unprecedented in history. This is a remarkable feat. But unfortunately it is far from enough. Whatever the production statistics may say, there are, we estimate, close on 500 million people in those countries who suffer from permanent hunger and malnutrition. The basic cause of this is the appalling poverty that prevails, and is still spreading. Since most developing countries are so heavily dependent on agriculture, a much more dynamic expansion of the agricultural sector is needed, not only to produce more food but also as part of intensive rural development programmes to improve the lot of the impoverished rural masses. Looked at in these terms, governments of these countries have, generally speaking, not given agriculture and rural development sufficient resources or sufficiently high priority. In many cases, of course, this has been because total national resources have been inadequate to bring about the kind of transformation of the agricultural scene that is needed. But, in others, scarce resources have been allocated to priorities which have tended to serve national pride rather than the basic interests of ordinary people. And, in the majority of developing countries, far from enough has been done to bring about greater economic and social justice, particularly in rural areas, through measures for such vital matters as agrarian reform, increased employment and a fairer distribution of income. Unless these are vigorously tackled, the root causes of hunger and malnutrition will persist.

But, whatever the developing countries have succeeded in doing or have failed to do, it has been clear all along that they could not on their own conquer the vast extent of hunger and malnutrition in their midst. They have needed, and still need, a great deal of help from outside. And, while I said earlier that developed countries have shown a fair amount of understanding and support over the years

for their needs and problems, I do not think anyone can claim that the amount of practical assistance this has generated has been anywhere near adequate. There have been some encouraging developments along the way: the launching of food aid programmes by the United States in 1954, for example; the long years of dedicated work at the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations which ushered in the dawn of the Green Revolution; and the considerable number and variety of bilateral technical assistance programmes. But, in the context of a war against world hunger, these do not make up for the tight-fistedness regarding financial aid in comparison with the needs, nor the clinging to entrenched trade positions which have prevented developing countries from earning sufficient foreign exchange to buy the amounts of food or fertilizers they require.

What, then, of FAO? What has it been able to achieve over the last 30 years? Despite the political limitations I mentioned earlier, it has in fact done a considerable amount. To take only some of the important facets of its work, it has, firstly, built up a vast and probably unique range of knowledge and understanding about what needs to be done to solve the great variety of technical, economic and social problems that together make up the world food problem. It has actively applied this knowledge in countries throughout the developing world, working with local governments, the United Nations Development Programme and bilateral programmes on a host of projects for the technical development of agriculture, fisheries and forestry, for rural education and training, for marketing, for nutrition and home economics programmes and so forth. It has used its experience to work out detailed agricultural policy options for governments of developing countries and give them the advice they have sought. It has promoted wider agricultural research in and on behalf of these countries. It has constantly brought governments together in a search for solutions to problems ranging from trade in agricultural commodities to agrarian reform. It created the Freedom From Hunger Campaign to bring home to the consciences of people everywhere the gravity of the world food situation. Together with the United Nations, it set up the World Food Programme to provide food aid on a multilateral basis. It has responded to a number of special calls for its assistance, as in the drought-stricken countries of the Sahelian zone of Africa in the last 2 years.

I could go on for some time without exhausting the list of FAO's activities over these 30 years.

But, with all that has been done, whether by individual governments or by FAO, the war against world hunger has not progressed very far towards victory. Neither the advances and spread of agricultural science and technology, nor the millions of hectares that have been brought under cultivation, nor the strivings and debates of economic planners and sociologists, nor such financial resources as have actually been made available, nor the shipments of food aid, nor FAO's own manifold, ceaseless and dedicated efforts—none of this has measured up to the dimensions of the world food problem or of the human poverty that is the chief cause of it.

The fact is that, for most of the 30 years, the international community has been fighting the war against world hunger in piecemeal fashion, without the over-all sense of commitment and integrated purpose which alone can win wars. Having

failed to accept the necessary kind of general master strategy that John Boyd Orr offered, it was unable or unwilling to replace it with anything comparable. And the reason for all this, as I indicated earlier, has quite simply been the lack of political will on the part of governments. So long as no major world food crisis threatened, they felt no need for the kind of massive, concerted action that is required to overcome the world food problem once and for all. So the war drifted on, some advances being made here and there but with no frontal assault on the more difficult areas, with the result that the over-all shape of the struggle did not fundamentally change.

But now, in the last 3 years, a major world food crisis has emerged. With the combination of bad weather conditions in 1971, 1972 and 1974 over most of the world's main grain-producing areas and the running down of the North American reserve stocks on which the rest of the globe had ultimately depended for so long, the world has suddenly found itself alarmingly vulnerable to the success or failure of each year's harvests. For this reason alone, food prices have, as you know, risen to much higher levels than those of 3 years ago. But alongside the food crisis, there has also been a world economic crisis. And the combination of the two, while extremely disagreeable for the great majority of countries, has struck particularly fiercely at the poorer of the developing countries, which together contain about one-quarter of the entire human population. With the high prices, they have found themselves unable to import either the food they need or the fertilizers they require to grow enough of their own. A few months ago, the situation looked desperate for a number of these countries. And, while it seems to have temporarily eased partly due to some last-minute emergency assistance, the crisis is by no means over yet. We foresee that emergency assistance is probably going to be needed for the rest of this year and beyond.

There is every evidence that, when the world food crisis started breaking in 1972, it caught the world by surprise. And yet it should not have done. All the long years of merely probing at the world food problem, of failure to launch an all-out attack on world hunger, more or less guaranteed that sooner or later the time of reckoning would come.

Be that as it may, action had to be taken fast, however late in the day. And I am glad to say that the first important counter-attack was not only launched by FAO but was a revival, in modified form, of at least part of the original strategy of Lord Boyd Orr. This was the proposal I put forward early in 1973 for minimum world food security. Clearly, as the events of the previous months had shown, the world could no longer go on in the same primitive state of vulnerability to the weather so far as its harvests were concerned nor continue to be so heavily reliant in the last resort on the stocks in North America, which were now dwindling fast. The central feature of the plan I advanced is to free humanity from uncertainty about its basic food supplies in the event of wholesale crop failures over wide areas through an internationally co-ordinated system of national reserve stocks of grain, involving all countries, both developed and developing, which are in a position to participate. As I say, the reserves are to be held nationally rather than, as Sir John proposed, internationally. But there is to be international co-ordination of the scheme.

Hopefully, the world will one day be ready to accept the idea of international reserves. But, in the crisis as it stood and being only too familiar with the political limitations on our action, I considered it best to move one stage at a time and at least achieve the basic amount of world food security that is essential. This, at any rate, has been accepted.

Indeed, if anything positive has come out of the present world food crisis, it is that it finally seems to have brought home to governments how dangerous the realities of the world food situation are. As a result, there are more visible signs on their part that they are prepared to take the war against world hunger more seriously at the political level than in the past. The most important manifestation of this was the calling of the United Nations World Food Conference in Rome last November.

The achievements of the World Food Conference make quite impressive reading. Focussing on the regions where the real battle against world hunger has to be won, it adopted a comprehensive series of important substantive resolutions for increasing agricultural production in developing countries. It backed these up by providing for arrangements for a greatly increased flow of external financial resources to support the efforts which these countries would have to make themselves. It strongly supported the idea of minimum world food security, both by endorsing my own proposal, now in the form of an International Undertaking, and by agreeing to set up a Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture to be operated by FAO. It called for an improved policy on food aid, for which it set a minimum target of 10 million t grain/year. And, to give real political backing to the necessary follow-up action to the Conference, it called for the establishment of a World Food Council at ministerial level as an organ of the United Nations General Assembly serviced within the framework of FAO, with Headquarters at Rome.

Mr Chairman, the World Food Conference marks a definite advance in the war against world hunger. Although, from the substantive point of view, there was little that was new to FAO (indeed, most of the substantive resolutions adopted were based on FAO's own painstaking preparatory work) it provided the essential element that has so largely been absent from FAO's endeavours over the years: the direct, concerted thrust of political will on the part of governments.

I should add that this new thrust of political will has coincided with—is, indeed, part of—a new drive towards a remodelling of economic patterns in the world that has been embodied in a series of basic principles for a New International Economic Order adopted at a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in May 1974. The promoters of this drive are of course the developing countries, aroused by the success of the newly rich oil-exporting countries in bringing about a notable redistribution of international wealth. The fact is that the developing countries are no longer resigned to a situation in which the achievement of political independence has indeed given them a voice in the councils of nations but a voice so weak, due to their continued economic dependence, as to count for virtually nothing when it comes to the important decisions at the international level affecting their economic prospects. They are no longer prepared to accept the fact

that the larger part of the world, their part of the world, should be permanently relegated to conditions of poverty which tend to worsen rather than improve and which prolong and sometimes intensify the hunger and malnutrition from which many millions of their people suffer. They demand a much stronger voice in determining their own economic future, and there is no doubt that, with the trail that has been blazed by the newly rich oil-exporting nations, their voice is being listened to with a great deal more attention than before. That was made clear at the Special Session of the General Assembly which adopted the New International Economic Order, and it was undoubtedly a major factor in making the World Food Conference the advance in the war against world hunger that I regard it as being.

It has taken 30 years and much suffering to achieve this advance. And, while we all have reason for encouragement at the fact that the international community seems to have recovered at least some of the sense of urgency about the world food situation that has been missing for most of these years, we must remember that it is only an advance from what many people would regard as a basically defensive position. It is far from being the end of the war. The millions of hungry and malnourished still remain. Moreover, advances can be halted or can themselves falter for lack of sustained drive. In short, what we have embarked on as a result of the World Food Conference and the new international economic crusade of the developing countries is merely a new phase of the war, a more hopeful one certainly, but one which will have to be prosecuted with a much more active and consistent sense of political commitment than in the last 30 years if the problem of world hunger is to be finally overcome.

I cannot, Mr Chairman, end what I have to say today without some reference to a subject which was of course at the heart of Lord Boyd Orr's own work, which is of particular interest to many of you here and which is of considerable importance in any discussion of world hunger. This is the question of nutrition.

In a world food situation such as we face at present, the most immediate priority is to ensure that the millions of people in developing countries who are short of food are actually fed. But this of course is far from being the whole picture. Governments must of course take all possible measures to increase the production of food. But, if their people are really to benefit, they must increasingly take questions of nutrition into account. Indeed, I would say that production plans must increasingly be geared to nutritional requirements. The trouble is that too many such plans follow traditional lines, and, since nutrition is still a relatively new science, nutritionists tend to be regarded as a class apart. They are usually to be found in Ministries of Health, too rarely in Ministries of Planning or Agriculture. And yet it is essential that they should be as closely associated as possible with agricultural planning. This is as true of rich countries, where the heavy demand for meat, often at the expense of health, leads to an excessive absorption of grain supplies to satisfy it, as in the poorer countries where it is a question of planning for much more modest but essential requirements. In so far as the problem of world hunger is basically an economic problem, nutrition must be regarded as an integral part of the framework of economic planning.

Mr Chairman, I have been mainly concerned this afternoon, in talking about the

'30 years' war against world hunger', to measure where we started against where we stand today. For much of the time, I have probably not sounded very encouraging. Even in my observations on the outcome of the World Food Conference, I have been obliged to sound a note of caution. But let me end on a more positive note. Despite discouragements, Lord Boyd Orr remained throughout his life as much a man of faith as of vision. I, too, believe that, even if we do not achieve all that we set out to do, it is eminently worthwhile to go on trying by one means or another. Although world hunger has not been conquered in these 30 years and although we have had set-backs, there is today a new determination to overcome the problem. In that alone there is cause for hope.

Thank you.