PRESENTATION
Speaker: ***Ponsi Trivisvavet***
October 13, 2016 – 3:50 p.m.

Introduction

Per Pinstrup-Andersen
2001 World Food Prize Laureate

Can I ask the next speaker to join me on the podium? It's Ponsi Trivisvavet. And I'm probably not pronouncing your name correct, but I'm doing my best. Welcome. Ponsi Trivisvavet is president of Syngenta Seeds. She leads operations of Syngenta in North America. Her focus is on providing new technologies and a portfolio of products to help farmers increase their crop productivity with emphasis on assuring a reasonable return on investment for the farmer. She drives inventive marketing approaches to reach the broad customer and grower base. Product innovations include leading technologies from major crops such as corn, soy and wheat. Major successes include innovations for the ethanol industry and a variety of integrated agricultural solutions for growers.

Prior to her current role, she was responsible for leading the Syngenta business across the Association of Southeaster Asian Nations, the ASEAN Region, during a period that saw significant sales growth. Before joining Syngenta, she held positions with McKinsey and Company in a number of regions, as well as with Merrill-Lynch in Asia. She holds a Master of Business Administration with distinction—and here is the best part: it's from the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University. You have the floor.

Ponsi Trivisvavet
President, Syngenta Seeds

So, Dr. Andersen, thank you very much for your kind introduction. World Food Prize Laureates, Council of Advisors, Borlaug family, Ruan family, honored guests, good afternoon. It's an honor to be here in Des Moines to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Norman Borlaug and the wisdom of Hippocrates whose quote, *Let food be thy medicine.* This is the theme of this 30th anniversary of World Food Prize.

Though separated by 2,000 years, these two men shared a common passion. They were both driven by an overwhelming desire to help people. The World Food Prize Laureates also share a passion to help others, and later this evening they will be honored for their work in fortifying foods to benefit ten million households across 40 countries. They have lived up to their theme of *Let Food be Thy Medicine.*

Helping people is no doubt why all of us here together, and I certainly, together with my company, Syngenta, is dedicated in doing so. As the leading innovator of agricultural

technologies for the crops, we are 28,000 people around the world working to do our part to help people. And people, for us, mean customers, growers, but more importantly everyone who is involved in crop production. We are dedicated to help growers continuously improve productivity of crops and the yields from harvesting. They must do this with the challenge of limited water, limited availability of land, as well as increasingly challenging situations of the climate change.

To help them succeed, we are taking a smarter and sustainable approach that eases the stress on our earth. But how do we measure whether we are making the real impact to address the food security challenge? And I believe there are three things, three things to make it happen in terms of the food security challenge.

Number one, we have to pledge to help others. And number two, we need to measure our progress. And number three, we need to support providing access to data that anyone can use.

So four years ago, Syngenta dedicated to make a pledge to help others in a concrete way. We created the Good Growth Plan. It is our commitment to making a contribution towards the global food security. It is a contribution that can be measured now year by year but not in the distant future. We need to feed the world population that will grow by more than two billion people in a matter of decades. But Good Growth Plan recognizes that global food security is far more complex than just producing food. The Good Growth Plan is our commitment to improving resource efficiency, reviving ecosystem, and revitalizing rural communities.

As you can see here, we began by setting ambitious but measurable goals in six key areas, and we want to achieve this by 2020. And I just want to start off with these six commitments. In the commitment one, what we are talking about is to make crops more efficient, so we aim to increase average productivity of the world's major crops by 20% without using more land, without using more water, and without using more inputs. And that was the first commitment that we made.

The second commitment is improving fertility of ten million hectares of farmland on the brink of degradation. The third commitment is enhancing biodiversity on five million hectares of farmland. The fourth commitment is closer to my heart. This is about empowering smallholder farmers, especially in emerging nations; our objective is to reach 20 million smallholders and help them increase productivity by 50%. The fifth commitment is to help people stay safe by training 20 million farm workers on labor safety, especially in developing countries. The sixth commitment that we have is about helping every single worker by striving for their fair labor conditions throughout the entire supply chain network of us.

So let me discuss the next one, the second critical part to address the food security. It is about measuring our progress. And you may remember that the business management guru, Peter Drucker, who used to say that measuring was the first step to improving a business. At Syngenta we strive for continuous improvement and believe that—*If you can measure it, you can manage it; and if you can manage it, you can improve it*. So defining specific goals inside our company, like the way we set target for ourselves, focus our business, we understand the impact our commitments can have on meeting our customers and other stakeholders' most pressing needs. And we know the urgency.

But we went a step beyond setting the goals. We went public. Syngenta announced our goals to the world at the beginning. We made ourselves accountable for the promise we made. We

learned valuable lessons, and we're still learning. We have been measuring extensively, and those measures will be useful for government planners and individual farmers, whether they are in the U.S. here or whether they are in Bangladesh, whether they are in Kenya or whether they are in Europe.

So as part of Good Growth Plan, we created a network of reference farms across crops and regions. These farmers are working with our field experts to access new technologies and new solutions to raise productivity. In 2014 we established 860 of these farms. In 2015 we expanded the network to more than 1,000 farms. In some parts of Latin America we doubled the number of reference farms to gain better insights.

So our crop advisors work with reference farmers to use new products and provide the feedback back to our technical teams. We share performance reports with farmers so they can compare results with their peers, their neighbors, and identify the opportunities for improving efficiency. So it helps us, it helps growers, it helps customers—so it's a win, win, win.

The third point that I mentioned is to provide access to data that anyone can use. In the first year of Good Growth Plan, we were generating huge amounts of information, and it was independently audited. One of the first issues that we faced is—what are we going to do with this huge amount of information that we collected? So we could put that in an annual report. We could say that we are making progress with smallholders, we could claim that we are improving crop productivity and biodiversity practices. But who ever knows it for sure? There wouldn't be any proof. Instead, we wanted information available so that people could access it, share it, and benefit from it.

So we worked with the experts at the Open Data Institute. They provided the technical knowhow we needed to publish information in a simple and open format. The expert guidance opened our eyes to just how much could be done. We learned that embracing open access to our information would be good for those in agriculture, and it would be essential to our company's future success.

To give you a sense of what I mean, the Good Growth Plan's productivity data includes efficiency information from thousands of farms. There are different factors, such as soil conditions, level of mechanization, whether the land was dry or it is irrigated, and more. So what we have done and what we are doing now is we are implementing this in 41 countries across Europe, Africa, Latin America, North America and Asia-Pacific. This is exactly the type of data that could be used by farmers around the world to make their operations more productive.

But most agricultural information is locked away, but it could benefit farmers, researchers and others if it were accessible. We're not talking about growers' individual competitive farm information, but aggregate information that can help growers around the world be more successful and more competitive for everyone's benefit.

Increasing productivity farmer by farmer is what has to happen if we are going to meet the global food security challenge. And we realize that open access to information is the key to make it happen. Beyond the Good Growth Plan, at Syngenta we use public data to help our customers increase crop yields. For instance, our research and development teams use public satellite images and soil and weather data. This lets us know exactly where and when to hold the trials to have the best chance of success in breeding crops.

Also our sales reps are now using local sustainability benchmarks so they can recommend the needs to the customers, to the growers what kind of seeds and what kind of environment that the seed should perform best in the grower's field.

So accessing and applying information like this has been very effective for Syngenta. In recent years we have doubled our soybean breeding program's efficiency. We could not do this… Imagine if we have to do all of this by ourselves—we have to send satellite into the orbit by ourselves, or we have to send scientists to check soil conditions around the world. So there clearly is a benefit and there's a business value in using open and accessible data. In fact, we believe that this is critical for our company's future success. And also, for instance, RNA-based biocontrols are one of our most exciting new developments. They have the potential to bring significant benefits not only to the farmers but also to the environment.

So what we have done is we have committed to be transparent at this early stage of technology development. We will make our data available to researchers and scientists for the transparency of that. This is a completely new approach for us, but we know it will help advance the technology for everyone's benefit.

We are also a founding member of International Licensing Platform. We work with industry partners to include access to patented vegetable traits through an e-licensing platform. So the idea is to make it easier to exchange knowhow and genetic breeding material to speed up the development of crop varieties.

Finally, Syngenta's TraitAbility website provides quick and easy access to some of our patented native traits and other technologies. I hope you can see why I'm so excited about the potential of open access to information. It should encourage collaboration and help build trust.

We know food security challenge is bigger than any one organization, and it is why Syngenta partners with others to understand how to better use information to maintain food security. For example, we are working with Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition, or GODAN. So GODAN supports sharing open data to make information about agriculture and nutrition available, accessible and usable to help with the challenge of global food security. GODAN is rapidly growing, currently with over 370 partners from government, NGOs, universities, as well as private sector. We are exploring what information should be accessible to have a positive impact to this global effort.

Open information is a new concept in agriculture. Given what is at stake, Syngenta decided to proceed, and we would like to encourage every single one of you to join us. There's a saying that you may have heard before—*When you share a problem, it is cut by half. When you share a joy, it is doubled.* It is the same thing, and I do believe it works here. We can cut our problems in half by combining our knowledge and skills together, and we can multiply the positive impact by building answers together. This is a collaboration that is made easier when everyone's efforts allow the access to the information.

And I would like to end with this. Dr. Norman Borlaug's famous advice, as all of us know—*Take it to the farmer*—he meant we should use science to develop technologies and have tangible benefits for farmers. What I would like to do is to share with you what it means by helping others, what it means by having it measurable, and what it means by providing open data to the people.

This is my personal experience, and I will never forget about this. This happened in July of 2012. It was a normal day of working whereby I would go to see customers, visit farmers, and this happened in Central Indonesia, in Central Java. So what we did there was we provided simple technology, effectively, just only hybrid corn seeds and the wheat management program, to improve the productivity of that particular village. So I went there, visited the field, walk around the field, saw great corn as usual. But the interesting part was actually when I was about to leave. There was a gentleman came to me. He said something to me, and of course he said it in Bahasa, which is local Indonesian language, and I had my translator next to me.

So he went as, "Ma'am, thank you very much for bringing in technologies into this part of the world, into this village. I'm able to increase my yield from three times a hectare to eight times a hectare because of the technologies. And it was the first time for me in my life that I was able to buy a cow for my family." Suddenly, my Indonesian colleague corrected the translator, that he didn't do it right. This gentleman did not say that. It was not a cow. It was beef. It was meat that he was able to buy to feed his family for the first time, because of the technology that we brought in. That day I will never forget, and I pledge myself that I'm committed to be in agriculture and make a commitment to the agricultural industry.

Thank you for sharing your time with me this afternoon. I'm enjoying the experience of the World Food Prize this week and very much looking forward to tonight. Thank you.

Ambassador Quinn

Ponsi, thank you so very, very much. And before you go, I just wanted to say to you and through you to all our friends in Thailand how deeply saddened we were to hear today that His Majesty King Bhumibol passed away. The World Food Prize had a special connection to His Majesty in that His Majesty was the first recipient of the Norman Borlaug Medallion that we created to honor institutions and people of such high position that they could never really be eligible to receive the World Food Prize but they deserve special recognition. So please convey to everybody that our hearts are saddened by that. And thank you again so much for being here.