

Young African agribusiness innovators fellowship launched

The World Hunger Fighters Foundation will award annual Borlaug-Adesina Fellowships to young Africans to develop new technologies, champion public policy, and develop viable businesses in the field of agriculture.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

The young leaders will gain experience in international agriculture research centres, including food and agribusiness companies.

Felix Tshisekedi, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a guest speaker at the launch of the foundation in Des Moines, Iowa, said: "Agriculture can be the source of peace in Africa. It can create jobs and act as a stabilising factor in countries witnessing conflict. Agriculture is helping to disarm former combatants in my country, for instance."

During a panel discussion moderated by the president of the World Food Prize Foundation, Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo described the hunger fighters initiative as critical to Africa's food security.

"The problem of youth unemployment, criminality, and many other related problems will be solved substantially if we take agribusiness, food security, and social security altogether. One of the feedback from this year's World Food Prize event is that agriculture should not be taken as a development affair, but rather as a business."

Ending hunger and malnutrition will help achieve lasting peace in the world, African Development Bank, President Akinwumi Adesina told guests at the launch. Together, let's end hunger in Africa. Together, let's end hunger in our world," said Adesina, who is the patron of the World Hunger Fighters Foundation.

"When I won the World Food Prize in 2017 and the Sunhak Peace Prize in 2019, I pledged the prize monies and a few matching donations totalling \$1.1m to the creation of the World Hunger Fighters Foundation. This young crop of hunger fighters and agripreneurs will pick up the baton and in turn, do great things across the world."

Of 1,300 applications, 10 outstanding African youth have been selected for the 2019 Borlaug-Adesina Fellowship.

The fellows are:

- Lourena Arone Maxwell (Mozambique),
- John Agboola (Nigeria),
- Adonai Matha Sant' Anna (Benin),
- Olufemi Adesina (Nigeria),
- Ifeoluwa Olatayo (Nigeria),
- Victor Mugo (Kenya),
- Emmanuel Maduka (Nigeria),
- Marianne Enow-Tabi (Cameroon),
- Solomon Amoabeng Nimako (Ghana), and
- Nicholas Alifa (Nigeria).

"My rooftop farms are based in Ibadan, Oyo State, in Nigeria. We use a vertical model to plant lettuce and cucumber. Since we were close to consumers, we were able to sell to them with fast and easy access to nutritious foods while lessening the impact of transportation on the whole agricultural value chain," said 30-year-old Ifeoluwa Olatayo.

She aspires to impact more than 200,000 smallholder farmers across Africa in the next few years by connecting small-scale rural farmers to urban markets through a distribution system.

The late Nobel peace prize laureate, Dr Norman Borlaug, whose work helped feed one billion people, used his award to set up the World Food Prize Foundation. It annually awards the prestigious World Food Prize, known as the Nobel prize for food and agriculture.

The event concluded with the launch of a much-anticipated authorized biography written by Leon Hesser entitled *Against All Odds: World Food Prize Laureate Dr Akinwumi Adesina and His Drive to Feed Africa*.

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