

Doing What Works: Capacity Crowd Supports Urgency, Hope and Success in Saving Children's Lives and Transforming Futures

International leaders, St. Louis innovators and allies in the fight against world hunger amplify locally led economic development and sustainable food systems

ST. LOUIS, MO, UNITED STATES, October 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Meds & Food for Kids \(MFK\)](#), a nonprofit dedicated to ending childhood malnutrition in Haiti with its U.S. bureau in St. Louis, convened the third [annual Zero Hunger: Doing What Works forum](#) with keynote speaker [Ambassador Ertharin Cousin](#) on September 18th. More than 200 international leaders, St. Louis innovators and passionate allies in the fight against world hunger gathered to learn about, amplify and support the solutions that work to build sustainable food systems locally and globally.

Conflict, climate change and systemic poverty conspire to prevent access to affordable, nutritious food and escalate hunger in the U.S., Haiti, and worldwide. At stake are the lives of innocent children and the stability of nations.

UNICEF reports that more than half the Haitian population, a record 5.7 million people, experience acute food insecurity. An estimated 129,000 children need life-saving treatment to fight acute malnutrition and risk of starvation.

In the face of this challenge, Chris Greene, Chief Executive Officer of MFK, welcomed the capacity crowd and introduced keynote speaker, Ambassador Ertharin Cousin, with a message of both urgency and hope. "Locally led solutions that work offer hope by changing systems – not just to



Ambassador Ertharin Cousin brought extraordinary experience and insight to MFK's forum. Cousin, a globally recognized champion for food security, has served as executive director of the UN World Food Programme and now leads Food Systems for the Future Institute.

save more lives today, but to ensure that we have a better tomorrow,” said Greene.

Ambassador Cousin is a globally recognized champion for food security. She served as executive director of the United Nations World Food Programme and U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Agencies for Food and Agriculture. She now leads the Food Systems for the Future Institute (FSFI) as managing director and CEO, advancing equitable access to affordable, nutritious food. She brought her extraordinary experience and insight to her presentation Exploring the Future of Aid: Local Leadership, Public-Private Collaboration, and Sustainable Change.



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BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN RELIEF AND RESILIENCE

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We have the tools and we know what works. Every dollar delivered not only saves lives – but transforms the future of children in Haiti. MFK defines sustainable resilience and systems change.”

Ambassador Ertharin Cousin

Ambassador Cousin emphasized the value of local leadership and public-private investment in tools that local communities use to create capacity for change, break the cycle of dependency, build resilient operations, and create sustainable food systems.

“Meds & Food for Kids bridges the gap from relief to resilience,” said Ambassador Cousin. “Haiti is a case study, because the work you are performing is a proof point of a model that applies everywhere. The future will be built on the power of local leadership, integrated value chain, public-private collaboration, adequate investment, and a

relentless focus on the first thousand days of a child’s life to bend the curve of stunting and maternal mortality.”

“Investment must strengthen markets and create dignity beyond charity,” she continued.

“Every dollar delivered not only saves lives – but changes systems – and transforms the lives of children in Haiti and children everywhere. Meds & Food for Kids defines sustainable resilience and systems change.”

WE HAVE THE TOOLS AND WE KNOW WHAT WORKS

Just 700 miles from Miami, Haiti is one of the United States' closest neighbors and one of the poorest places in this hemisphere. Ambassador Cousin addressed the social and moral necessity of this work as it affects migration, security, and economic opportunity across our region.

"Strong neighbors make for a strong America," she said. "We have the opportunity to help people flourish where they're born, including in Haiti. When Haiti suffers hunger and instability, America feels it. But when Haiti thrives, when its food system nourishes its people, when its communities are resilient, America has the opportunity to benefit."



MFK founder, Patricia B. Wolff, MD, was recognized as the first and only physician named as a World Food Prize Foundation a Top Agri-Food Pioneer. She expressed gratitude for the scientific, business and engineering expertise supporters share in serving MFK's mission.

Ambassador Cousin concluded, "Beyond geopolitics, there is a moral truth in a world of plenty. No child should suffer or die for the lack of food. Every religion in the world says we should feed the hungry and care for the children. Whatever you believe, we know these are the right actions to take. We have the tools and we know what works."

RECOGNIZING PIONEERING VISION AND LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT

A highlight of the evening was recognition of MFK founder, Patricia B. Wolff, M.D., who recently received the 2025 Top Agri-food Pioneer Award by the World Food Prize Foundation. A pediatrician and former clinical professor of pediatrics at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Dr. Wolff founded MFK in 2003 to address the needless suffering and deaths of children from severe, acute malnutrition that she witnessed during her medical mission trips to Haiti.

In turn, Dr. Wolff recognized and expressed gratitude to the more than 130 members of the MFK Founder's Circle. These are people who provide significant financial support – and share the scientific, business and engineering expertise – required to produce and distribute ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) at MFK's modern, solar powered factory in Cap-Haitien and train thousands of farmers through its agriculture program.

Over more than 20 years, the MFK team has developed an internationally recognized model of

sustainable, locally led economic development that incorporates agricultural innovation, local manufacturing, and nutrition science. MFK produces and delivers lifesaving therapeutic food and delivers it to starving children, even in Haiti's most isolated communities.

Despite the challenges in Haiti, Meds & Food for Kids' innovative, locally driven approach has treated more than one million malnourished children, trained thousands of Haitian farmers, and built a model for sustainable food systems that strengthen communities to thrive.

ABOUT MEDS & FOOD FOR KIDS

Based in Haiti, Meds & Food for Kids (MFK) saves lives and transforms futures by treating malnourished children and mothers, training farmers, and creating jobs. MFK has treated more than one million malnourished children and pregnant and nursing mothers with ready-to-use therapeutic and supplemental foods (Medika Mamba/Plumpy'Nut, Vita Mamba, and Plumpy'Doz) produced at MFK's factory in Haiti.

MFK's solar-powered factory in Cap-Haitien – managed and operated completely by local staff in Haiti – provides a sustainable solution that interrupts the cycle of poverty, the root cause of hunger. MFK provides education and support to small plot Haitian farmers to increase the quality and yield of their peanut crops, training more than 3,800 farmers.

MFK partners with more than 150 clinics, schools, and humanitarian agencies in Haiti, including UNICEF and the World Food Programme.

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