



Remarks by Ambassador Milovanovic at the Opening of the Norman Borlaug International Agriculture Science and Technology Fellows Program Conference

Skopje, May 21, 2008

Ministers, Deans, guests from U.S. universities, ladies and gentlemen.

I am delighted to be here with you today to celebrate the first graduating class of the Norman Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program in Macedonia.

Today's ceremony is testimony to the strong relations between the U.S. and Macedonian agricultural and scientific communities. Programs like this one, in which experts from Macedonia work together with U.S. experts in the same field, are among the best ways to strengthen the ties between our countries. Such cooperation provides real, concrete benefits for both the United States and Macedonia.

The American people, through their tax dollars, support many programs that foster cooperation in a variety of academic and scientific areas. The Borlaug program is the newest U.S.-supported academic program for citizens of Macedonia. I am glad that Macedonian agricultural experts now have the opportunity – because of the Borlaug program -- to develop strong academic ties with their colleagues in the U.S.

The goal of this program is to promote food security and economic growth through the transfer of agricultural science and technology. For that reason, it is fitting that the U.S. Department of Agriculture named the program after the legendary American scientist, Dr. Norman Borlaug.

Dr. Borlaug, a Nobel Laureate, is known as the "Father of the Green Revolution." His work on increasing agricultural production is credited with having saved millions of people in Africa and Asia from starvation. Dr. Borlaug is also the recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.

The recent world-wide increase in food prices has once again highlighted the importance of sound agricultural policies and continued research into new agricultural technologies.

Through the Borlaug program, agricultural scientists and policy makers receive four to eight weeks of training at U.S. universities. This training encompasses a wide range of agricultural fields and technologies, as the presentations later today will highlight.

I am delighted to celebrate with you today the accomplishments of eight of Macedonia's brightest and most promising scientists, who will present the results of the hard work they have done at six of our great American institutions: Iowa State University, Purdue University, Tuskegee University, University of Missouri, Ohio State University, and the University of Wisconsin.

On behalf of our Mission in Skopje, I would like to congratulate each of you for being among the graduates of the first Macedonian Borlaug program. I am certain that the knowledge and experience you have gained in the U.S. will benefit both your personal careers and Macedonia's agricultural economy. I wish you all great success in your future work.

I also welcome the representatives from four U.S. universities who are here with us today. Your attendance at this conference demonstrates your continued commitment to the exchange of scientific knowledge with your Macedonian colleagues.

Our Macedonian colleagues from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Faculty of Agriculture Sciences and Food, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, the Institute of Animal Sciences and the Veterinary Directorate also deserve thanks for their cooperation in successfully launching the Borlaug program in Macedonia.

Last but not least, I want to acknowledge our colleagues who worked tirelessly to plan and implement the Borlaug program in Macedonia. Special thanks to Mr. Abiola Adeyemi from the Foreign Agricultural Service in Washington for supporting this program from the U.S.; to Ms. Rozita Mrenoski from our Economic office at the U.S. Embassy in Skopje who did all the hard work for the preparation of the program here in Macedonia; and to Dr. Hassan Ahmed, the Regional Agricultural Attaché in our Embassy in Belgrade who made it possible to have the first Norman Borlaug program in Macedonia.

I wish you all a very productive and enjoyable workshop. Thank you.