

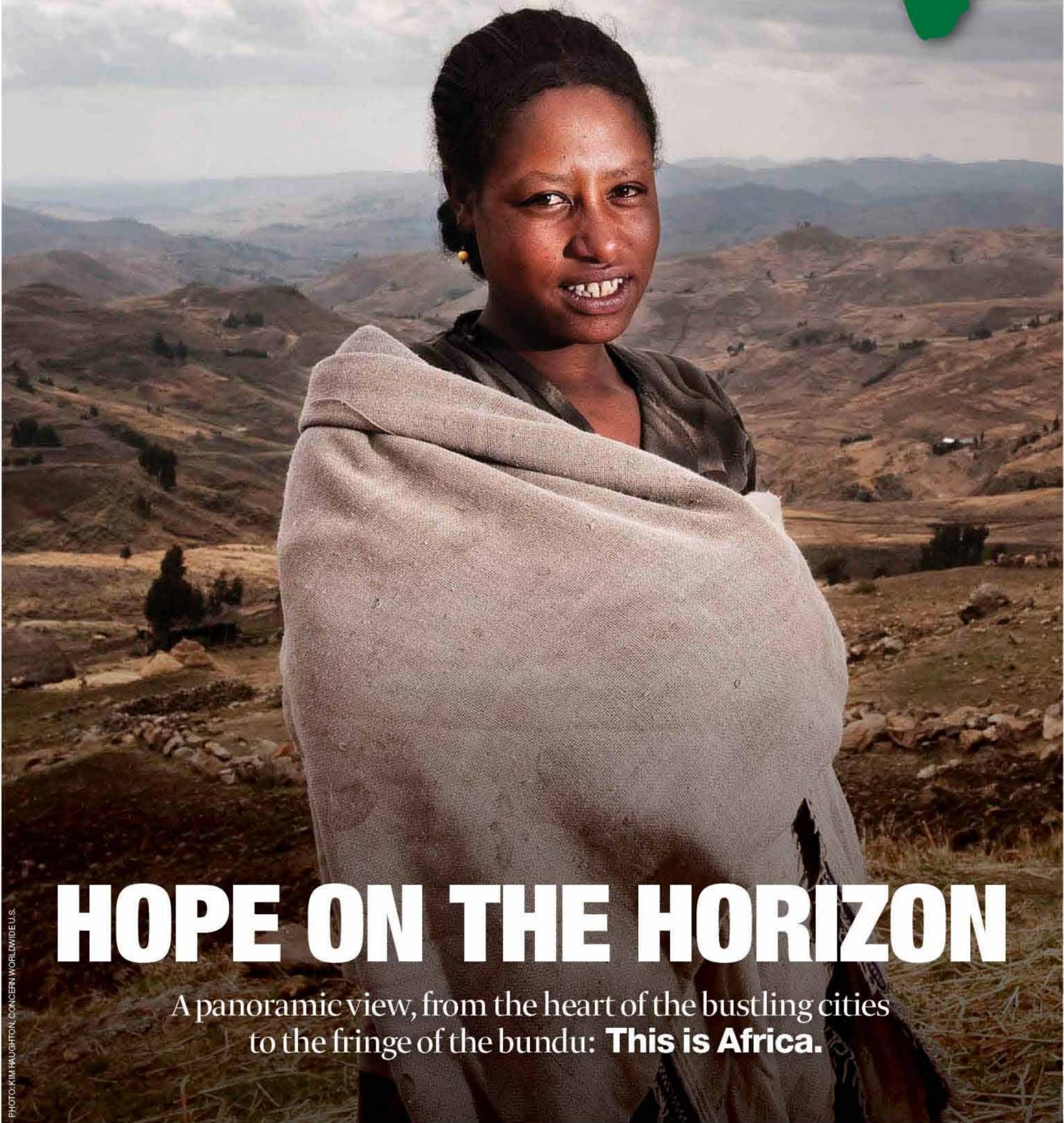
A long, dusty road
Paving the way for
sustainable development

A crisis crops up in Sahel
A new drought threatens
food security



**MEDIA
PLANET**

INVESTING IN AFRICA



HOPE ON THE HORIZON

A panoramic view, from the heart of the bustling cities
to the fringe of the bundu: **This is Africa.**

PHOTO: KIM HAUGHTON, CONCERN WORLDWIDE U.S.



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Q&A

Why is nutrition so crucial in the first few years of a child's life?

→ The 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday are the foundation for his or her entire life. If child is undernourished during this critical window, they can suffer irreversible mental and physical damage that can translate to a weakened immune system, making her more susceptible to disease, and lower cognitive processing abilities that limit her ability to learn and thrive. The effects go far beyond a child's life. Malnourished women are also more likely to give birth to underweight babies, highlighting the need to ensure that mothers have access to nutritious food both during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. In countries where much of the population is stunted due to undernutrition, the reduced lifetime earnings could be responsible for the loss of about two to three percent of Gross Domestic Product every year.

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Sowing the seeds of success

■ **Question:** Have there been advancements in food security in Africa, especially programs offering long-term, sustainable agricultural solutions?

■ **Answer:** Breakthroughs have been achieved by providing not only quick relief, but also avenues that will help Africa sustain its own food resources.

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he will eat for the rest of his life.

In the spirit of that Chinese proverb, several government agencies and private sector companies — including the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Peace Corps and General Mills' hunger fighting nonprofit, Partners in Food Solutions — are working to eradicate food shortages in hard-hit African countries.

By strengthening agricultural and rural economies, while promoting reliable access to sufficient, safe and affordable food, Africa is alleviating poverty and creating wealth.

Africa making strides

Progress has been made in Africa, but some regions still fall below acceptable standards and malnutri-



tion is as high as 35 percent in the sub-Saharan region. The continent still accounts for over a quarter of the world's hungry population. That's all changing thanks to the efforts of those in Africa in tandem with U.S. experts.

The MCC, an independent U.S. foreign assistance agency, is at the forefront of the fight against poverty. Created by the U.S. Congress in 2004, MCC knows that one size doesn't fit all, according to Katherine Farley, senior director for agriculture and land at MCC. "We select eligible countries based on 20 indicators and we require countries to identify their own priorities for achieving economic growth and poverty reduction," she said.

To date, MCC has made food security investments in 11 African countries, ranging from Mali to Mozambique, with specific goals in mind.

MCC's food security investments will result in 250,000 hectares under new or improved irrigation, 227,000 farmers trained, \$71 million agriculture or rural loans distributed, and 3,500 km of rural farm-to-market roads completed.

Transferring knowledge to Africa

"We help companies across Africa create healthier, locally produced foods," said Jeff Dykstra, executive director of Partners in Food Solutions, a non-profit organization founded by General Mills linking the technical and business expertise of volunteer employees at General Mills, Cargill and DSM in collaboration with USAID to food processors in Africa. "It is the right thing to do. These countries are our future, too." Building the food infrastructure, he added, benefits everyone by

increasing food security, employment and demand for local crops.

Technology is at the heart of advancements in African food production. Partners in Food Solutions, for example, can provide support to companies on the ground in Africa via telecommunications. "Our volunteer experts can share their expertise online with companies in very remote places in Africa. All of this wasn't possible even a few years ago," he said. Partners in Food Solutions, working with NGO partner TechnoServe and USAID, has worked with 36 food processors impacting more than 95,000 small-holder farmers who support almost 600,000 family members.

An example of teamwork taking place is in Malawi where Partners in Food Solutions volunteers, working with the World Food Program, assisted local suppliers of corn soy blend in improving the quality and shelf life of a product serving more than one million Malawian school children each day. Partners in Food Solutions aims to broaden the program over the next five years to include as many as 10 corporate partners.

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