



For Immediate Release  
**Media Contact:**  
**Anastasia Andrzejewski**  
**+1 212-251-9129**  
**aha@thp.org**

## **OVER 1.6 MILLION AFRICANS MOBILIZED TO END OWN HUNGER**

**New York (June 11, 2008):** From June 26-29, hundreds of global leaders will participate in the 2008 Tällberg Forum in Sweden which brings together leaders from all sectors to discuss the "challenges and opportunities that stem from global interdependence." On June 27, Jill Lester, President & CEO of The Hunger Project, will speak about The Hunger Project's Epicenter Strategy. This strategy builds the capacities of grassroots people; empowers women, and; mobilizes communities to take cooperative action for self-reliance. To date, the strategy has catalyzed more than 1.6 million Africans to take actions to realize their vision for a future free from chronic hunger and abject poverty.

Regarding her participation, Ms. Lester remarks that "It is critically important to promote the success and sustainability of grassroots driven development. To emerge from abject poverty, people must be the authors of their own development rather than the beneficiaries of top-down, service-delivery models. I hope that sharing lessons learned and best practices will inspire others to support a methodology based on building self-reliance in an integrated development model."

Ms. Lester will also appear as a panelist in *From 'Systems-thinking' to 'Systems-doing'* on June 28. Her scheduled co-panelists include José-Maria Figueres Olsen (former President of Costa Rica), Maud Olofsson (Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden), Jonathan Lash (President of World Resources Institute) and Ingrid Srinath (Secretary General of Civicus, India). The panel will share their experiences of running initiatives that take a holistic, systems view.

The Hunger Project works in 13 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America to end hunger and abject poverty. Its programs address three essential elements: the mobilization of people at the grassroots level for self-reliant action; the empowerment of women as the key change agents; and the strengthening of local government.

Jill Lester became The Hunger Project's President & CEO in 2008. Previously, she served as a senior executive at Australia's largest retail bank, the Commonwealth Bank, where she played a key role in establishing and developing the bank's philanthropic subsidiary, the Commonwealth Bank Foundation. Her government service includes work with Aboriginal communities and as a diplomat with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Ms. Lester has sat on the board of the Australian Red Cross and the Ministerial Advisory Council of AusAID.

For media inquiries regarding the Epicenter Strategy, The Hunger Project or Jill Lester, please contact Anastasia Andrzejewski at 212-251-9129 or [aha@thp.org](mailto:aha@thp.org).

Ends/

**Forward email**