Speaker 2
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00:03
And engaging Minnesotans with the world and.

Speaker 1
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00:05
Exploring important international issues. For a complete list of programs and to join us, visit [gobbleminnesota.org](http://gobbleminnesota.org/) to the second part of our program, from the discussion on weapons hunger overall and as a weapon of war, to a discussion of how we can tackle or how people are tackling hunger by building partnerships that can support food production and broader prosperity. We have three representatives of local organizations here in Minnesota, as we've just heard from Chase how much Minnesota is doing. We have a nonprofit and two businesses, and I'd like to introduce our next three panelists. Their Fuller BIOS are in the program announcement. But just very briefly, first of all, Jeff Dijkstra, who is cofounder and CEO. Welcome Jeff. Of the partners in food solutions.

Speaker 1
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01:14
He has experience in business relief and development and brings these different threads together to create partnerships of diverse organizations to tackle hunger. Secondly, we have Perpetu Rey, who is vice President of Innovation, Technology and Quality Growth at General Mills. She's been volunteering with Partners in Food Solutions since this organization began over ten years ago, and she serves on the board of Directors. Likewise, we have Kojo AMU Gutfrid, who is president of Cargill's cocoa and Chocolate North America. He serves also on the board of Partners and Food Solutions, also Books for Africa and Kip, Minnesota here all local organizations. So, welcome to the three of you. First, I would like to give Jeff the floor to give a short overview of Partners and Food Solutions, the nonprofit that you found.

Speaker 1
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02:24
And after that, I'm going to ask each of the three of you some questions in turn, more like a round robin rather than each of you giving remarks. So thank you very much. Jeff, to you first.

Speaker 3
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02:39
Yeah.

Speaker 4
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02:40
Thanks, Margo. Great to be here with you guys today. Great to hear from Chase and the good work that WFP is doing. So, Partners and Food Solutions is a consortium of seven of the world's leading global food companies, including two representatives. They General Mills and Cargill. These companies have come together to share the know how and expertise through their employees as volunteers with small and growing food companies across ten African countries. We do this because we believe, and we've now seen, that when you help a food company in Africa get better at what they're doing, a couple of things are accomplished. One, you're creating markets for smallholder farmers, and on the other end, you're able to help produce more locally grown, locally produced food. Africa is still importing more than $40 billion of food each year.

Speaker 4
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It's a continent that can feed itself, and ultimately, as the world population grows, as we reach 10 billion, likely by 2050, we're going to need Africa to not only be feeding itself, but also feeding other parts of the world. So our work is harnessing the know how and expertise of talented employees from these seven companies and then sharing that with these companies across Africa. To date, we've engaged more than 20 African food companies, several hundred of those in very deep, intimate ways. And so we're excited about the work that we get to do, get to leverage to the private sector. Working with entities like WFP, we help a number of their suppliers. Chase mentioned plumping that and our Utf. Rather than shipping that from France or from the US.

Speaker 4
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04:17
We can help local manufacturers make that product on the ground and get it right to the people who need it most. So that's just a high level overview of what we're doing. And great to be here with you.

Speaker 1
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04:28
Thank you very much for that. I'm going to ask you one follow up question. How have recent events like the Pandemic rising inflation, supply chain issues that we've been hearing about, and Russia's devastating invasion of Ukraine, impacted the ability of your organization to help people, to reach people?

Speaker 4
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04:52
Well, the good news is our model has always been remote. So we have local staff on the ground who find these high potential companies and then package their challenges back to us, that we then tap into experts from our network of food companies. So we've been able to continue our work. That said, we have seen tremendous impact from all the things you mentioned. And if you imagine what we've experienced here in the US, here in Minnesota, then multiply that's the reality for many of the countries where we're working, in food companies in particular. We were just in Zambia last week with our members of our board and visiting some of these clients and hearing firsthand that the ripple effects of things like fuel prices. Being able to import the raw materials you need.

Speaker 4
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05:38
Whether that's packaging or other food materials like wheat that come from regions like the Ukraine. We're seeing that hit these companies. Hit them hard. And ultimately. That means higher priced food for the people who can least afford it. So the knowledge and expertise that we're bringing, in many cases, the connection to capital that we're able to provide these companies is what's keeping them moving forward, keeping them on the cutting edge of being able to be more efficient, more innovative. All of our partner companies, General Mills Cargo, have been dealing with this in their own way. And so the expertise is able to be shared onward with our clients across Africa.

Speaker 1
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06:18
And these partners that you've just mentioned are continuing to support your program goals, despite their own problems and their own issues?

Speaker 4
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Yes, thankfully, they continue to step up. I think our model is tapping thousands of employees for an hour or two a week, for three or six month project. So for any individual person, it's not a heavy lift. But the collective impact of all of those experts coming together from around the world to help African food companies makes a significant difference.

Speaker 1
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06:49
Thank you very much. Perpetua, I'd like to ask you a question. Why does General Mills support an organization like this? What do you gain, what do businesses gain from this cooperation, partnership?

Speaker 2
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07:04
Sure. So General Mills, we always think that the g in the General Mills stands for good. And so part of that good that we give back is really around our responsibility to use our scale around the world to reduce hunger, to improve food waste, and to reduce food insecurity. And so for us, having a partner like Partners in Food Solution is an amazing way to be able to live out that mission. We're able to link our employees to these small and growing companies and bring in our expertise. And that could be whether it's in food safety, it could be in R and D, in packaging, in finance and marketing.

Speaker 2
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07:48
But our employees have a way to bring their technical skills to parts of Africa to really live out that idea of reducing food insecurity and making sure that we have a very safe food system in Africa. We found that it's been an amazing recruiting point as we talk to newcomers coming in and understanding what we stand for. To date, we have had over 900 of our General Mills employees involved in it, and really from a range of whether it's on multi month project, so it may be a six to eight month project to places where somebody has a critical skill and they're fielding a one or two hour call, but adding tremendous value. So for us, we really look at it as a win partnership.

Speaker 2
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08:37
We get to live out our mission of doing good in the world and also having a great avenue for our employees to give back.

Speaker 1
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08:47
Thank you. Kojo, to you really the same question. Why is it important for Cargo to be involved with an organization like Partners and Food Solutions?

Speaker 5
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09:01
Simple answer why not? But actually, when we look at our belief is in this space, no single company, government initiative organization can solve these food security issues alone. So it is critical that we, as Kaiko partner, not only to address the immediate needs, but to build a resilient global food system for the future. As we look at Africa's food and AG industry, right, it has a vital role of feeding a growing population, and it's imperative that we play a role in building and growing the African food economy, not for today, but also for the future. In addition, when we look at our purpose as kaggle, as being a place to nourish the world in a safe, responsible and sustainable way, in order to do that, we put food security and building a resilient global food system at the center of the company's priorities.

Speaker 5
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09:58
So when we look at our 157 years of experience in complex food supply chain systems, connecting the farmer to family tables, we just see working with PFS, bringing our knowledge in this space to enable PFS to achieve its goals is quite critical. And that's why we lean in. And as Forbeto also talked about in terms of giving our employees the ability to learn about different challenges, to give back to challenges around the world. This is why we are so involved, and we see TFS as an important partner for us.

Speaker 1
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10:38
So it sounds like what you're saying is that not only are you feeling like you're making a difference in these countries, but you're also helping within your own company and developing different skills. So, Jeff, I have a question for you. You're partnering with some of the largest food companies in the world. Is there a gain to be had from working with the food giants? Are you also working with smaller organizations? And has it been hard to get cooperation from some of these large corporations?

Speaker 4
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11:20
Yeah, I think what's been really fun in this journey, this began 15 years ago, initially with General Mel's leadership for the reasons you just heard, wanting to leverage their expertise in knowhow to make a difference. You know, what we bring when we bring these seven companies together is literally 800 years of collective know how that doesn't exist anywhere else. And I think each of our partner companies understand, as you heard, they know the value of what they do. And so the opportunity to share that in a part of the world that desperately needs growth in that sector, but to do that in a way that's actually additive to their employees. When we survey our volunteers, we know that they're helping create impact on the ground.

Speaker 4
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12:06
With these food companies, what we consistently hear is that they're also gaining skills, having experiences, learning from colleagues, from other companies, learning from our entrepreneurs that they're helping. All of that creates a value add back to the partners. And so we have found over the 15 years, every partner that's joined us has stuck with us year after year through some ups and downs in the food industry. And I think that's because of their core values and because of what it means for their individual employees. I think we know in Minnesota, and this is true across the country, employees want to make a difference, employees want to make an impact.

Speaker 4
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12:46
And the companies that can create natural avenues for that to happen, we believe, are at a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent and then helping them gain the skills that are sometimes hard to gain in a big company. Each of the CEOs of our partner companies would say they want their people to be more entrepreneurial. It's sometimes hard to do that when you're in a really big company. So working with an entrepreneur, a place like Kenya or Zambia or Ghana, there's cross shared learning. That happens in both directions there.

Speaker 1
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13:17
Thank you. So now I'd like to ask both of you, Perpetua and Kojo to talk about some examples of the ways that your companies are working with partners Food Solutions to address food security. I'm sure you both have examples that you can draw from, and I think that would be really interesting to hear about, perhaps Kojo first and then Pervita.

Speaker 3
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13:47
Yes.

Speaker 5
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13:47
If I look at this fiscal year that we're in, basically we have volunteers engaging 70 different services, given more than 2000 hours and service in about 60 different clients across ten African countries. Right. And we believe these efforts have really been able to support over 200,000 farmers. That's one, as we continue to volunteer, that's a key piece. But the other piece that came up during the Cobet piece was Fast Action Support, where we had some of our clients and that were really struggling to keep the doors open. And so, Kygo, we put together a quarter of a million dollars as a pilot program in order to really show up some of these companies. And these funds, these immediate funds, really helped support about 450 staff or some of our client companies.

Speaker 5
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14:40
So those are the two things that I can think of that we did this year particularly to support.

Speaker 1
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14:50
Parbita. Can you think of some examples or some ways that you personally have benefited from working with partners in Food Solutions?

Speaker 2
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15:00
Sure, I can touch a little bit on that and I think a little bit. Going back to Kojo, I mean, we have continued to support a multitude of projects. I think we're working right now. We've worked in the past with about 350. But I'll maybe take a slight pivot and talk a little bit about what I've been able to work on. So right now I'm mentoring two individuals. So one is a gentleman and he runs Tomato Joe's, which is a company in Nigeria. And he works on different tomato blends. And so we've really been able to talk about how he's processing his food, how he is looking at the competition. We have discussions around innovation.

Speaker 2
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15:48
And so for me personally, it's given me this enriched understanding of what is the sort of environment, what are the challenges that he has to have a supply as he is looking at the competition and this main food of Joffre rice and what works and what doesn't. So we've gone to very technical discussions. We've had broadbased discussions. And so while it's I'll use an N of one being able to talk about it. I can just see where some of that intellectual knowledge that we have sitting within General Mills can really help him have a bigger impact on reducing the waste that he has and working with the farmers to make sure he has a good supply. Especially during times during Cobid and things when things were a little bit erratic.

Speaker 2
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16:41
So that's one example, but we have hundreds of other ones that are very similar.

Speaker 1
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16:47
But I love the fact that you're both being very specific and you've given it's not general answers. It's actually you're helping so many hundreds or one person making specific decisions. And I think that's where you can really bring the expertise at a broader level or and also at the very specific level. And also it must be very professionally, personally for you, satisfying, not just professionally satisfying.

Speaker 4
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17:24
Margot, one thing I'd add is we've watched this over the years. If you think of every challenge or new opportunity that a cargo or General Mills has faced over their 150 plus year histories, those are the same kind of challenges that our client companies across Africa are facing. They're in order of magnitude smaller. But the physics is physics. A processing piece of equipment breaks in the same way, right? Or can be optimized in the same way. So we're really leveraging all of those years of lessons. And our client companies that might be five or seven years old don't have to relearn those or learn those in the hard way, in the way that journals and cardinals have over decades and decades. Thomas Friedman, another Minnesota, his book The World is Flat, that's now gosh 15 or 20 years old.

Speaker 4
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18:17
This is really modeling and living that out. There is no more over there. As we've all seen these last couple of years, we are impacted by what happens in every corner of the globe. And so oftentimes we feel the negative effects of this. Partners and Food Solutions is an example of the positive effect that a food scientist sitting in Golden Valley, Minnesota can literally help improve a business in the eastern province of Zambia in real time. So that's the gift of what we.

Speaker 5
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18:45
Get to see unfold, I think also hit on it. I think one of the things that understated is also impact, PFS impact on food safety. Just when you talk about a lot toxin, just food, just making sure that people are eating safe food, I think from a PFS standpoint and just from the companies really ensuring that all our clients have good food safety, good safety processes, even though in some countries it's probably not regulatory yet. So I see that as a huge impact as we want to continue to have safe food in Africa.

Speaker 1
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19:25
Thank you for mentioning that, because that's clearly we talk about food security. The fact the food itself has it's not just access to food, it's access to safe and healthy food. So thank you for mentioning that. Jeff, you kind of answered my next question. But I'm just wondering is how does volunteering of your partnering together across continents, people who have necessary skills and similar skills, how does that work also in this whole area of food security? I mean, how can you develop or how did you start working on that?

Speaker 4
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20:13
This was really born out, as I mentioned, General Mills early on, knowing they had expertise, not sure necessarily where to aim at. And in the early days of this, we started finding these companies that had analog issues, even though they were 8000 miles removed. And because General Mills, Cargill, all of our partners, had centralized R and D, it wasn't a stretch for them to imagine that, well, we already take problems from a business in Brazil, build a team in Minneapolis to go to work against that challenge and then deliver that back. And they quickly realized that it was no different if that company was in Zambia or Kenya. So there were some prototypes within the businesses that allowed for distributed knowledge sharing. It was just a question of aiming that now in a different target. In this case, African food companies.

Speaker 4
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21:07
So in a lot of the countries where we're working deep talent, the entrepreneurs we work with are amazingly talented, but oftentimes don't have access to some of the same technical skills. So they might have a vision for a new product. They know there's a market for a new product. They have the ingredients for new product, but they don't have a product developer or they don't have a quality expert that can help make sure that new product would be safe. So we're just tapping into the expertise of the General Mills and Cargilles and our other partners to help bring those dreams and ideas to life. So it's, again, one of the upsides of our flat world.

Speaker 4
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21:49
20 years ago, someone would have had to get on an airplane, go spend two or three weeks on the ground, and that would limit the scale of impact when we can take an hour or two from thousands of people, aggregate that, and then have that pulled by the client. So we're not pushing anything. It's the client saying, I need this. We can operate at scale and really create significant impact.

Speaker 1
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22:13
So you're acting as a global matchmaker, in a way. Needs and skills. Yeah. How do you find these clients? Do they come to you? Do you advertise in the countries? Do you work in certain countries in the world that you've identified? And then I guess I'm just wondering how the organization starts with identifying a problem.

Speaker 4
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22:39
Sure. So it's certainly evolved over the years, but we now have staff that work for us that are food experts in their own right. They're people from the countries where they're working. They're high skilled. They would be hired by any of our partner companies. They're really our boots on the ground in a lot of these countries. The food industry is unfortunately relatively small. So we know through our local staff who some of the high potential companies are, and then we make them aware of what we can bring, and then they really have to self select and step forward. As I mentioned, our model works on poll. If you're doing remote knowledge sharing, you can't push that and probably shouldn't.

Speaker 4
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23:17
So it's finding these high potential companies to our local staff and then our local staff really working with them and listening to understand what are their challenges. We do see common issues again and again, so we're able to help get to some of those right problems. But then it's really based on what that client is wanting to do and where they're wanting to go that we then tap into the right pool of experts on this side. We've, over the years, added other services. We help, as I mentioned earlier, connect these companies to capital. If you have expertise that don't have the investment you need to bring that to life, then you're a little better off, but not fully better off. We place apprentices, so we hire local talent out of the local universities.

Speaker 4
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24:00
We cost share those that job into that company, and they become our boots on the ground as well to help implement. They're getting their first job, and that company is getting oftentimes their first technical experts. So a number of other things that we crowd into these clients, all designed to help them reach their full potential.

Speaker 1
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24:21
Thank you for explaining that. So, Kojo and Perbita, how does your work at your companies, Cargill and General Mills, how does that inform your role as a member of the board of Partner for Food Security? Partner Food Solutions. Sorry about that. What have you learned also from being on the board of Partners for Food Solutions?

Speaker 2
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24:58
I can go.

Speaker 1
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24:59
Was that clear? Sorry.

Speaker 2
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25:02
So I'll kind of break it into two parts that's okay. So first, for me, representing General Mills on the board, it's really what Jeff and his team do, really, is bring together here's where we're trying to go, here's where the biggest need is, and for us to really reflect, to say, where can we add our proprietary gifts as General Mills to really support those ambitions? So it could be either it's entering a new country, so what are the things we need to do to help support that? It could be were talking a little bit about food safety, where were seeing this as a bigger need across multi areas and really looking at we look at food safety at General Mills as something that we try and share broadly and openly because we feel that all boats rise.

Speaker 2
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25:54
And so here, you know, were able to provide our technical expertise around food safety. We were able to run training for different companies to come and really skill up in their understanding of food safety to build Hassa plan to talk about passing a World Health Organization audit. So really being able to understand what is the biggest need and how can we work to support that, either across multiple board, multiple companies, to be able to deliver something like that, or something that we can go in deeper. For me personally, being on the board, I think, has really made me a better global citizen. So I've just learned much more about the continent. I didn't really know that much before I started working in Partners, and food solutions.

Speaker 2
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26:47
So understanding where the commonality is, as well as the differences, meeting incredible small business owners, some of them are on our board. And so for me, it's just been a really enriching piece to not only provide technical expertise, but also just to be broader in my thinking as I show up at work.

Speaker 1
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27:10
Thank you for that, COJO I think.

Speaker 5
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27:13
For me, just as we said earlier, working with Cargo, 157 years plus experience over my 20 plus years with Cargo, Square has been involved in a lot of the supply chain complexities, right? So just the urgent needs and the long term supply chain challenges, I think that's what I bring to the board. In addition, having locations in Africa, so we've got a couple of locations in the assets in West Africa, some in East Africa and some in North Africa. And being able to bring those partner, those offices with PFS footprint on the ground release ways where I think we can multiply the effect to our clients who are doing a bit of that. Personally, what I've learned from being on the board is relationships or partnerships works, right? It does.

Speaker 5
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28:05
Whether on a large or on a small scale, having partnerships to solve a problem clearly works. And the last time we've seen with some of our clients also is thriving. Clients boost the community. So when we look at when we help our clients really develop a product satisfactory, they hire people and it just helps the community. And we all know economic prosperity is the way that sustains, right? So being able to see how that works personally, being from Ghana and in, we had our food crisis and I remember standing in line for bread with my family because we just didn't have any food. And at that time, Ghana was going through those crisis.

Speaker 5
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28:51
So when I see what PFS does in general around really building that resilient system for the supply chain, when I do go home once a year and I go to the grocery stores and I see local products on the shelf, it is a testament of the work that PFS does to show all this up. And as most of you, I think Chase touched a little bit on that. As these countries can build their own local system, they rely less on imports, which indeed also helps the foreign exchange situation. So that's what I've learned, that it does work. And concepts like PFS can help change an economy, can help change the community.

Speaker 1
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29:41
Thank you very much. Does each of your companies are there other ways that we haven't just discussed through PFS that your companies are addressing food security either locally here in Minnesota or globally?

Speaker 2
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30:02
So absolutely. With General Mills. We work very closely with feeding America second harvest locally. We also do a lot of donations. We contributed about 41 million meals across these different partners. We also are really focused on ensuring that children are getting access to nourishing meals. And so we support about a million different kids to ensure that we're able to do that. And then we're also looking at a lot of different ways to eliminate food waste. And so using Food Feeding America's Meal Connect platform, we've been able to recover about £3.1 billion of food since about 2014. And so lots of different ways that we work hard to go against that mission around reducing hunger and reducing waste and ensuring we reduce food insecurity.

Speaker 1
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31:07
Thank you.

Speaker 5
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31:08
Kojo, on the cargo front, they're definitely doing a lot of work. So I think I'll just highlight a couple of them over the past six months. And Chase, take a note bit about this. Over the past six months, we've reopened the food corridor that reconnected the supply chains around Eastern Europe, right around the Black Sea, that's one, to help indeed make the products flow. We have past year had about 1.4 million farmer trainings across the globe in terms of really sustainable AG practices that will help protect crops and increase productivity. When we look at Ukraine specifically, we are located about $55 million to support our Ukraine colleagues and humanitarian efforts in that region. And in that case, we also partnered with a lot of NGOs, food banks and employees chipped in to help.

Speaker 5
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32:03
We do a lot of partnership with TechnoServe in Africa, and then we have a lot of partnerships in the US. I think one of the highlights that probably made a lot of the news was around in North America specifically was around the US baby formula, right? So Kaga really played a key role here in advice in the White House and the baby formula shortage. And what are the critical ingredients that Kaga needed to make sure were available to our customers to make sure that we could get baby formula back, that supply chain back running? We have a lot of in North America, working with Feed America, we donated about $4.9 million to the network of food banks and just working on multiple projects and partnering with Care to be able to deliver.

Speaker 5
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32:52
So there's a long list, but I would say as cargo, we believe that indeed we need to make the world a better place where we want to nourish the world in a safe, sustainable, and responsible way. And through that, we always look at multiple ways to really engage our local community and the world at large and really making sure that we help the world thrive.

Speaker 1
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33:14
Thank you. And thank you both for explaining and discussing the ways that General Mills and Cargill are making a difference and trying to address foods safety, food security, poverty. And I just would like to end by asking Jeff a couple more questions and really about PFS. How many countries I guess maybe I heard and I've forgotten, but how many countries are you working with now? Do you have plans to expand? And if you could talk a. Little bit about that and what you would need.

Speaker 4
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34:01
Sure, yeah. So we are working in ten African countries. We've done projects in other parts of the world, more as one offs when we find the right high potential food companies. But our focus and emphasis is very much on Africa. We like to go as deep as we can in the countries where we're working and work with every company that can benefit from what we do before we go wide. We add about a new country or two every year to year and a half. So we are looking at a couple of new companies, countries in Africa. We also continue to add corporate partners. We started with General Mills, and then we added Cargo, DSM, Hershey, Smuckers and others. And we'll continue to add expertise as we need it on that side.

Speaker 4
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34:45
And we also have individual Minnesota who support our work, which we're incredibly grateful for. I think the last thing I'd say is I was listening to Permita and Kojo. I think. And knowing I'm speaking to a Minnesota audience. This I don't think would have happened or taken birth any other place but Minnesota because it was individual business leaders like Ken Powell. Former chairman and CEO and who's now on our board at PFS. Who was challenged. Actually. By Kofi Anna. Another Minnesota connection. He went to McAllister after he was Secretary of General of UN. They bumped into each other and Kofi challenged Ken to do something on this issue. And I think a lot of CEOs might have gotten that challenge and parked it, especially. Ken was three weeks into his tenure as CEO when he got that challenge.

Speaker 4
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35:35
But Ken came back, pulled together a group of leaders just like Kojo and Perbita, and said we should do something. And I think that's the piece that to me is uniquely Minnesota, that is action oriented, that has businesses that truly at their bedrock level, have values that go beyond just bottom line. And so we're incredibly grateful for not only two companies here, but seven of our partner companies, and again, the Minnesota routes that make PFS possible.

Speaker 1
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36:10
Well, thank you very much and thank you, all three of you for this discussion. And I wish you good luck in the future, both in your individual, the individual work that you're doing, and also through PFS. So thank you very much. And at this point, I'd like to switch back over to Tim Otigard and Global Minnesota. Goodbye, everyone.

Speaker 6
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36:41
Thank you, Margo, for doing a really wonderful job moderating the discussions here today. Thank you to Jeff Praveda and Kojo as well, and Chase prior to them. And Jeff said it better than anyone just how uniquely Minnesota this response is, and the amazing support that our community, our leaders, our political leaders, our corporate leaders, how important they've been in this fight against food insecurity. To wrap things up here today for our discussion of World Food Day 2022, we will continue this theme of what great Minnesota support is taking place here in addressing food and security by inviting John Gutterey, senior Vice President of Enterprise Initiatives at Ecolab Inc. To talk about the great work that Ecolab is doing in this area as well. So John, if you'd like to join us here, we can talk a little bit about what Ecolab's role has been.

Speaker 6
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37:58
And I think.

Speaker 3
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38:02
Thanks to what a wonderful discussion already, I'm really proud on a couple of levels. One, to be part of it and to be invited by Global Minnesota and organization with whom I've worked for a long time and I've been a board member with them, but also as a corporate citizen here in Minnesota. It's just incredible how many wonderful brands and companies doing really good work in this critical area, and people are really honored to be part of that. So thank you for inviting us and thank you for sharing the time and sharing the curiosity during such a critical moment in the world.

Speaker 5
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38:39
Thank you.

Speaker 3
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38:40
John, are you able to share your video? Yeah, absolutely. I thought it was being turned on by you guys. There we go. There you are. Good to see you, John.

Speaker 6
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38:50
And again, thank you. We know that you have a very personal connection with Global Minnesota. Having served on our board for the past six years, I believe.

Speaker 2
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38:59
Correct.

Speaker 3
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39:01
It's been a wonderful organization. Go ahead.

Speaker 6
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39:04
Well, we appreciate your support and of course, ongoing a partnership that we have with Ecolab. But right now, I guess I will turn this over to you. And we've got some slides to share as well as you pull those up.

Speaker 3
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39:18
The conversation has been fantastic and I'm so glad just to be able to call along and again, honored to be part of it. Ecolab, for those of you who don't know us so well, just briefly introduce our company. Everything we're talking about today is right in our wheelhouse. Anything that has anything to do with safe food, clean water, healthy environments, we're very interested in it and we'd like touch it and work to improve it and make it as sustainable as possible. So this is a conversation that's near and dear to what we do every single day and highly align with our values.

Speaker 3
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39:57
One of the questions that comes to mind as I listen to the conversation unfold and the last group started touch on it there, which is a great pee up question I would have is it food if it's not safe to eat? So is it nutrition or nourishment? Is it food if it's not safe to eat? And that's really where Eco Lab gets involved. We play throughout every element of the food system. So from where things are grown, raised, then on to production, processing, packaging, shipping, distribute, and then selling and serving, that's where Ecolep plays. So everywhere that your food has started to your mouth, to your body. Ecolab is involved in making sure that it's safe.

Speaker 3
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40:48
And some of the things that we touched on this morning around food security are extremely important to us and show up in the way that we innovate, the way that we think about big problems that we can help solve, how we can make the world better. So considering food waste, considering how food waste impacts food security and the availability of food, that's really important to us. And we will play in those areas throughout the food chain. One of the things that I'm working on right now, which is super fun and stimulating, I work with a couple of different organizations in Minnesota that are involved in agricultural areas, food production areas, all part of the Greater MSP. Many of the companies that we have with us today, greater MSP economic development effort in Bold is one of those.

Speaker 3
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41:45
There are others out there, a research institute that I'm involved in. Global Minnesota highly involved in a lot of this stuff. And so much of my day to day work is in and around what we're talking about today. And on behalf of our company, I'm here just to talk a little bit about this theme around food security, food safety, and how we create a cleaner, healthier environment for everyone and one that is inclusive for everyone. So, next slide, please. So if you think about global health, how can we help the world deal with pandemics? Unfortunately, that's still quite timely. Equalab was very much involved at the very beginning of that in terms of slowing the spread of the last one.

Speaker 3
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42:36
Helping keep all of us clean and healthy and safe and mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 and learning from those experiences that all of us had around the world and putting into place practices that make the next one less disruptive because this will not be the last time that we're dealing with global pandemics and outbreaks. Climate change is another one. All of our natural resources are under strain, under stress, whether we have a war in Ukraine or not. That's probably revealing and adding pressure to what we're dealing with. But climate change is something that we're going to have to deal with and it's not going away. And the need to find solutions is now. It's not tomorrow, it's not next year, it's not five years down the road. It's absolutely right now. And Ecolab wants to be a big part of that.

Speaker 3
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43:29
And that really starts with how responsible are we with the resources we have, how responsible are we with water? So a lot of the things that we do are to not only ensure clean water for all of us in a healthy environment, but also industrial water that goes into the products and services that we interact with and that we need. All of those things consume a lot of water. And so ecology helps treat that water, helps recycle that. Water help maximize the life of that water and get as much as we can out of it, and then again retreat it before it becomes effluent and goes back into our system so that the impact on the environment is as minimal as possible.

Speaker 3
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44:07
Those are some of the things that we're doing with regard to helping the sustainability of our Earth, our planet, and for future generations, and dealing with the effects of climate change that are already upon us in terms of demographic shifts. That's one of the things I was thinking of at the very beginning of the conversation around food security. We not only have more people, which means a bigger demand on the resources that we do have. It's unequal, it's asymmetrical, it's disproportionate. And one of the things we learn at Equalab over the last 100 years of our existence is as a market, as a geography. A country starts to move along the economic advancement continuum. The needs of the citizens change, and interaction with natural resources, whether it be water or food or agriculture or whatever, also change.

Speaker 3
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45:05
So we find ourselves often getting involved at some of the basic levels around food production that's essential, and then growing with the advancement of the economy into more sophisticated goods. And that's something that's been actually really good for our company, because it allows us to innovate along that maceuration curve. And so natural resources are interacted with and consumed as economies, as countries, as societies evolved. And we're seeing that around the world, the needs of our diets have changed. So the needs of people around the world are different than they were 100 years ago, even 50 years ago. And so what you have to do to keep proteins healthy and safe is not the same as what you have to do for plants.

Speaker 3
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45:53
So those are things that ecolab does, is grow with that, innovate with that, work with some of the partner companies that we've heard from today, and with research institutes to do a great job dealing with that and dealing with shifting times and what. We hope there will be many more of those. The need for sustainable proteins is right upon us. Cargo is a big player in that area, and we'll be there as well, learning how to deal with that, learning how to keep that processing going and keep it clean and healthy. So that covers the diet trends. The element of our model, our business model, has been not just augmented, but really amplified by digital innovation and digital evolution. Our model is really around innovating, around the customer's needs.

Speaker 3
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46:40
So that means spending time close to the customer, understanding what they're trying to achieve, how they're trying to serve their customer, and how we can help them do it better. That means developing a lot of expertise along the way, in addition to the innovative products and services. How does that expertise interact with the customer at the moment of truth? And digital has allowed us to speed that up, almost bring it really in real time, and in some cases, even with artificial intelligence, be anticipatory about that. So as technology grows, as digital innovation grows, so grows our ability to work with customers, to work with industry, to deal with big problems like food security, like climate change, like water conservation, responsible use of water. So those are things that we really look to in terms of big mega trends.

Speaker 3
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47:33
And things like this techstars farm support program that I mentioned before that is really about ecolab getting involved. Cargill has been involved with us in that space as well to attract digital entrepreneurs that are working to disrupt elements of the food system in a positive way. So where are there things along the food chain that are not being done well enough, that are ripe for disruption or innovation? How can we learn from or along with those entrepreneurs? And how can we create an environment where that learning and the application of that learning moves fast? So those are things that we're working on Eagle Lab and things that I'm having a lot of fun doing. And we on behalf of Minnesota, the big goal is to attract more of that kind of talent, that entrepreneurship, that innovation and food system.

Speaker 3
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48:22
Pioneers to the Midwest and particularly to Minnesota covered some of this. This is just a little bit on the statistics around how massive the opportunity is or how massive the need is, however you want to look at it. And then things that we've talked about at the beginning and kind of thread throughout these geopolitical crises may not be an everyday thing, but they are inevitable and they will be disruptive. They are disruptive and they have massive impacts on societies around the world, on the supply chain around the world, and on the ability of the world to continue functioning and providing for one another. So these are things where the word resilience was used a couple of times.

Speaker 3
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49:10
Having a resilient food system and a resilient supply chain and a coordinated effort or at least a shared ambition to take on things like food security is not just good for the planet. It's good for each of us. It's good for each of us here in the United States, right here in the Midwest, but it's good for all of us around the world and for the future of the world. Next slide. The burden is enormous. As we talked about a couple of times. If you look at this on the foodborne illness side. That's really an area where ecology. If you think about where food comes from. Particularly proteins. All the way throughout the food chain. From transportation processing. Transportation preparation. And serving.

Speaker 3
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50:00
There are so many contacts with food that create opportunity for pathogens to make their way into what ultimately makes their way into our body. And focusing heavily on food safety ensures that the food we do have, as my opening comment, opening bullet is safe to eat. So the question again is it a meal if it's not safe to ingest or digest? And we believe that food safety is every bit as important as the food provision. If you put food in your body that's not nutritional or is causing damage to you, it's not healthy, it's not a meal, it's not something that should be part of our life. So we have a responsibility not just to grow and produce food, but we have a responsibility to make sure that it's transported safely and served safely.

Speaker 3
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50:49
And that's where we focus our innovation and our energy. So, trends in food safety and we participate in a lot of different boards. We not only influence through boards, through private companies, through partnerships with some of the companies we've heard from today. We also work on legislative issues, research issues, and then these are kind of the big blocks and some of them are the Holy Grails. There's track and trace from farm all the way to fork and ensuring safety, reliability and healthy provision of food. That's ultimately what companies related to the food industry and the AG industry want to be able to provide. We can provide that on a regular basis in a sustainable and dependable basis. We're well on our way to solving some of the world's biggest challenges. And so we do a lot of work on working with innovative companies.

Speaker 3
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51:43
Whether it be in software. Whether it be in a mix of software as a service and hardware. Whatever it may be. We want to find ways to deliver those solutions faster and more reliably and be able to talk about where does the food come from. What has touched it. What is it interacted with when it comes to your plate. Is it safe to eat and what is it providing you? And the digital innovation, the capabilities that are coming out these days allow us to accelerate that and certainly take big leaps forward in terms of this continuum. So that talks a little bit more in detail about the continuum.

Speaker 3
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52:23
But this farm before program that we're involved in, this shows a little bit about where we touch the food system that is basically a representation of the food system and where innovation can touch it and where digital innovation can touch it and where we want to play to make things better. Ecolab has businesses in every single one of those areas. So we have a financial vested interest. The sustainability of our company is dependent upon innovating and doing a better job in each of those areas. And our values say that's where we want to be. We want a better planet, we want a bright future for the next generation, and we want to protect what's vital to the world. And what's vital to the world would be things like food, water, and the environment at large. Next slide.

Speaker 3
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53:14
So we have these 2030 impact goals that we've codeveloped with our customers, with the segment and our customers. And we're dedicated to helping our customers achieve those, helping them work in a way that's contributory to those certainly not impacting them negatively. And so it's really around water, food, health, and climate. At Ecolab, we're motivated by that. People who walk into our door every day are excited because those fundamental things, that's life, that is literally not literally life, is dependent on those things. And there's not just a demographic support of that business model and the longevity of it. There's an existential need to work in those spaces and to do better in those spaces. And so we feel needed by the world. We want to be needed by the world, and we want to have a significant impact on the future of the planet.

Speaker 3
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54:13
Few quotes here. I'll give you a second to read these, but it's reinforcing a lot of what we said or what we talked about today. So 2030 is not that far away, and I think that should be our goal. I'm sure that our friends at the World Food Program would love to echo this many times over, but that is an ambitious goal. It's a necessary goal, and it is certainly under threat from climate, and it's under threat from disruptive geopolitical unrest like we're seeing in Russia and Ukraine. And so the need is only growing. It's growing intensity, it's growing in size, and it calls on all of us big privately held industry and publicly held partnerships. I want to thank you guys, and I'm looking forward to some good Q and A, and I'm looking forward to more good discussions.

Speaker 3
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55:22
This has been fantastic. Back to you, Tim.

Speaker 6
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55:26
Thanks, John. It was amazing how many different areas Ecolab touches in the work that you're doing, all across the supply chain, from production, through manufacturing, distribution. What don't you do?

Speaker 3
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55:52
Yeah, well, I think that's one of the key points I want to get across is there's a strong sense of responsibility that we feel. Number one, and we do touch when it comes to food and water, we're going touch it throughout the value chain. I think for all of us as humans, we need to understand, take water as an example, how much we consume, but just building a car or anything that we interact with in our lives, the amount of water that is consumed with that, and how important it is for all of us to be responsible in our water management or water usage, number one. And then with regard to food, it is a precious resource that is scarce. Things do disrupt the food system. And it's not just about the provision of food.

Speaker 3
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56:37
It's about the provision of safe and healthy food. Because we've seen what happens when the world gets sick and it's not good, and we can interact with food that does make us sick. And so I think it's both of those things. And to answer your question, which is a great question, we would be asked that every time. What don't we touch? We used to have a slogan everywhere it matters. It sounds arrogant when we said it, but it's relevant. We focus on other things now about protecting what's vital. But I think that's just basically the same thing. And we're proud of that, but we also take that extremely seriously.

Speaker 6
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57:16
Well, and I appreciate you're really bringing into this discussion the issue of sustainability, which is really critical, especially in the areas of water which you're so deeply involved. Are there parts of the world where ecolab is particularly engaged in that sustainability aspect in regard to how it affects agricultural production?

Speaker 3
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57:45
That's a great question. So not directly on the AG side, although I would say this. All of the things that come out of AG, whether it be proteins or plant life, they also need to go get processed. And being processed, there's typically a large consumption of water and then there's also things around water keeping them safe to eat, but also the longevity of produce or longevity of proteins so that they don't spoil, which cost basic would be the water that you've already used is going to waste. So that's something that we're conscious about as well. Then I would say on the other one is we know that where areas are going to be successful feeding their people, they're eventually going to get into more advanced layers of the economy, which means industrialization of the economy.

Speaker 3
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58:45
And so instilling good practice and instilling a say a conscious mind about the sensitivity and the scarcity of water needs to start very early. You can't wait until human beings are already starting to change their habits or their needs or their demands. And so those are things that we also believe we feel responsibility for education and working closely with government. I mean, we work with you guys. We've had some great visitors that have come from around the world that are in, let's say, water scare areas simply because of the climate. And they've come to learn how can equalab and how does equalab help companies, particularly with industrial water, be more conscientious about the usage of it, more conservative in the usage of it? And so these are all components of responsible interaction with our planet and with the limited resources we have in societies.

Speaker 3
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59:38
You get what you get what Mother Nature has given us, and you're not going to reproduce a lot of that, not yet anyway. And so learning how to be really responsible and viable with the resources we have, I think is the first step.

Speaker 6
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59:54
I think that kind of forward thinking and that really clearly and express commitment to that is one of the reasons people around the world really view ecolab as a partner in these efforts. So, John, thank you so much for joining us today. Thank you for Ecolab's leadership in ensuring the safety, sustainability and abundance of the world's food supply. We're really proud to have you call Minnesota home and thank you for being a part of Global Minnesota as well.

Thank you guys, and thanks for all the great colleagues that share the panel with me. It's been fun. Thanks John.

That brings us to the end here of our World Food Day 2020 program. As John showed, Minnesota companies like Ecolab are really leading the way in these efforts. And we would say other program, other companies, as we saw today, such as Target, General Mills, Cargill, we thank them for the work that they're doing in addressing food insecurity as well, along with organizations like Partners and Food Solutions, the World Program USA. And finally, just like to thank all of our Global Minnesota members who make this important discussions like this possible. So thank you all for joining us today and we look forward to seeing you at future programs. Thanks.