

The centrality of public-private partnerships

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Thank you to the American Society for Nutrition, ILSI, and to each of the stakeholders and supporting organizations for bringing us together in this unveiling of principles for public-private partnerships to advance food and nutrition research. I would like to say just 3 things:

- There is **urgency** to the issue of stronger public private partnerships
 - The principles are **necessary** to their conduct
 - While necessary, they are not sufficient. There is a clear need for **next steps**
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- **Urgency.** The urgency is clear. And not only because of the obesity epidemic, although that would be compelling on its own. It's urgent because the opportunities for progress will quicken as genomic insights accelerate, and as questions are prompted by the expanding development of new products, at the same time as the potential pace continues to be challenged by a research paradigm that is still silo'd and linear, despite the realities of limited resources and a networked world.
 - **Necessity.** Common principles are essential for successful cooperative work among parties not from just 2 sectors (public and private), but from at least 4 or 5: government, industry, science, professional and voluntary organizations, each with different perspectives—public health, products, discovery, awareness. Principles to define the shared aims and activities—e.g. with respect to goal orientation, actionability, multisectoriality, balance, transparency, measurability—are key. You'll hear the details on this count from Sylvia Rowe in a few minutes.
 - **Next steps.** Most importantly, we now need to look to their implementation—their use to fashion an agenda of priorities, and their use to assess, validate, and accelerate activities in play. We now need to consider how best to designate or establish the ongoing capacity to regularly assess the needs, progress, and the capture of collaborative potential. There are multiple options for doing so. With respect to the agenda, for example, we've heard already about the National Nutrition Research Roadmap of the Interagency Committee. And, with respect to facilitating the use of the principles and enhancing the level of collaboration, organizations such as the FNIH, FFAR, FNB, GUIR all can be helpful. One approach might be to have a formal stocktaking of progress on both the agenda and the collaboration at some pre-set periodic interval—e.g. semi-annual, annual—with responsibility for the

organization rotating serially among sectors: government, industry, science, associations.

Whatever the course, there is a strong need—an obligation—to get on with it. The urgency and the times demand that each of society's institutions rise above their self-interests. Indeed, it seems to me, as some of you have heard me say, there is an obligation to begin with the assumption that all work in these areas will be collaborative, and that the burden of proof should be very heavy on solo action by individual institutions.

Frankly, the greater the level of adherence to solo actions, the greater is the public skepticism and suspicion as to motives. We need, in effect, not just to suspend *disbelief* that multi-sectoral collaboration is possible—it is possible—but we ought to suspend our *complacency* as to the heavy lifting required to make it happen. And we need to suspend the *ownership mentalities* when it comes to forging the vision, forging the research path to progress in transforming these principles to practice.

Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today, and thanks to each of you for your vision and commitment. I look forward to what's to come.