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Thank you for inviting me to speak at the African Union once again. I am so delighted to be a part of today's event!

To start off, I would like to thank the African Union and its partners for putting together such an important conference on the topic of food and nutrition. These issues fall under the radar far too often. Let us use today to keep food and nutrition on the agenda.

When I was thinking of things to say in this speech, I could not get one fact out of my mind: The fact that nearly 3 million children die because of undernutrition each year. That is not right. Lost children are a lost future, and we must do everything we can to make sure that they become the doctors, lawyers, teachers [PAUSE] and even athletes that they are meant to be.

As a father and as a person in the public eye, I feel that it is my duty to speak up for children. Children are the key to Africa's success and I want them to grow up to be strong, healthy adults. But for this to happen, they must be given the right nutritious foods they need at the right time.

The right time is the 1,000 days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday. The right nutrition during this 1,000 day window of opportunity can have a **profound impact on a child's ability to grow, learn, and rise out of poverty**. It can also shape a **society's long-term health, stability and prosperity**. Being a runner, I know just how important nutrition is. I need good amounts of the right food at the right time to keep me going to the finish stretch. If I eat plenty of nutritious foods, my mind and body are fast and strong, and I run my best race all the way to the finish line. The same is true for mothers and children. If mothers and young children get the right nutrition at the right time – during the first 1,000 days – children have a better chance of living a long, healthy, and productive life.

Remember: an investment in nutrition is an investment in children, and an investment in children is an investment in Africa.

Thank you, again, for having me with you today. Let us build a world where children have the safe and nutritious foods that they need at the right time