

work on this summit. And I want to recognize Ambassador McGovern and Senator Dole, two of the leaders who played a pioneering role in the first White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health, back in 1969.

At that time, malnutrition, hunger, and obesity were too often an accepted part of our society, and we didn't have the right resources in place to address them. Our foods weren't labeled with nutritional information. Our national school lunch program wasn't administered properly, and we didn't even have the means to measure the levels of hunger and malnutrition in our own country. The 1969 White House Conference changed all that by encouraging the Federal Government to expand and strengthen its programs to reduce hunger and promote good nutrition.

As President Nixon said then, the moment is at hand to put an end to hunger. Today, more than 30 years later, we have made great strides in understanding and promoting the link between nutrition and personal health. Our national investment in nutrition assistance has increased more than thirtyfold since the first conference. In 1999 alone, we delivered more than \$33 billion in nutrition assistance to our children and our hardest pressed families.

Thanks in large part to your efforts, these programs play a key role in promoting the health of our entire Nation. The Women, Infants, and Children's program has given millions of young families, more than 7 million Americans, both the wise advice and the nutritious foods they need to grow healthy and strong. Children enrolled in WIC programs are immunized earlier, perform better in school, and spend less time in the doctor's office.

Our national school lunch program now provides nutritious lunches to more than 26 million children in 95,000 schools across our land. Our food stamp program brings nourishment to millions of Americans every day, and our improved and expanded Head Start program reaches even younger children and more families than ever.

But while we've come a long way in promoting good nutrition and health, too many Americans still are malnourished, without food, or living unhealthy lifestyles. Nearly 55 percent of our population is overweight or obese, including one in five children. And today, four of the leading causes of death in the United States are nutrition-related. That's why we must continue to help more Americans live healthier lives.

For 7 years now, our administration has tried to do that with substantial increases in funding for WIC, Head Start, and child nutrition programs. This year our budget builds on that progress.

I want to thank all of you for leading the way to a healthier America. If we keep working together, we can ensure that in the 21st century, our people and our Nation are in the best shape ever.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 5:30 p.m. on May 11 in the Map Room for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 26. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador George S. McGovern, U.S. Representative, U.N. Agencies for Food and Agriculture; and former Senator Bob Dole. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Upcoming Elections in Peru

May 26, 2000

I deeply regret the decision by the Peruvian electoral authorities to proceed with the elections this coming Sunday in spite of the well-documented concerns of the OAS observer mission. Even a relatively brief delay would give the OAS mission an opportunity to monitor the electoral process with greater confidence.

As things stand, the OAS mission will not monitor Sunday's vote. I believe that is the correct decision under the circumstances.

Free, fair, and open elections are the foundation of a democratic society. Without them, our relationship with Peru inevitably will be affected.

We are consulting with our partners in the hemisphere and the international community to determine appropriate next steps.