

Media Release

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**“When we develop women as leaders, we will bring an end to hunger”
– Dr Wandira Speciosa**

The Hunger Project Australia (THPA) is proudly hosting Dr Speciosa Wandira, the former Vice-President of Uganda, a member of its global Board, and one of Africa’s most respected political and social leaders.

Dr Wandira will visit Australia between 14th and 22nd May. Her engagements include a key note address at the Future Summit , speaking to senior business women in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth; alumni at the Universities of Western Australia and New South Wales; and addressing the Australian Israel Chamber of Commerce.

After serving as Uganda’s Vice President from 1994 until 2003, still the only woman in Africa to hold such a position, Dr Wandira has been traveling the globe in support of affirmative action for women, who she believes are the key to making positive changes in society, such as the ending of hunger. [Dr Wandira’s biography is attached].

Dr Wandira will be hosted by The Hunger Project Australia, a non-profit strategic organisation committed to the sustainable end of world hunger. At the heart of TPHA’s strategy are three distinct but inseparable thrusts - a grass roots focus on building self-reliance, the empowerment of women as agents of change, and the forging of effective partnerships with local government. This strategy is currently implemented in 13 countries throughout Africa, South Asia and Latin America.

The connection between the empowerment of women and the process of ending hunger is often not obvious. However, research shows that when women are supported and empowered, their entire community benefits. Dr. Wandira will speak from her firsthand experience and dedicated advocacy for this critical issue.

“Dr Wandira has a remarkable story of political leadership, social activism and personal courage. She embodies the kind of leadership within Africa that is working and needs to be recognized as essential for efforts in addressing chronic hunger to be effective and sustainable,” said Cathy Burke, CEO TPHA.

THPA is funded by an expanding group of Australian individuals and companies who partner grassroots leaders to end hunger. To find out more about the work of the Hunger Project, go to www.thp.org.au.

Dr Wandira will be available for media interviews while she is in Australia.

For more information on The Hunger Project Australia or Dr Wandira’s visit please contact:

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Our generation can be extraordinary: Together we can end world hunger

Biography: Dr Wandira Speciosa



Dr. Speciosa Wandira, Global Board Director, The Hunger Project Former Vice President, Republic of Uganda

Dr. Wandira served as Uganda's Vice President from 1994 until 2003. When she was elected, she became the first and only woman in Africa to hold such a position. Since then, a great deal of her time and energy goes into advocating for affirmative action for women and other marginalized groups, including the elderly and disabled. She points out: "My mission is to see the emancipation of rural women through functional skills development and access to micro-financing to ensure internally generated improvement."

At the community level, she was elected village leader under the National Resistance Movement (NRM). Her involvement at this level encouraged her to be more active politically and she was later elected Women's Representative for the Kampala District in the NRM Council when it was in power. She has always remained close to the people who elected her.

A committed member of the Democratic Party, serving both the youth and women's wings, she became Chairperson of the Advisory Committee to President Museveni's successful election campaign.

She held a number of positions in the NRM government. She served as Deputy Minister for Industry from 1989 to 1991, and as Minister for Gender and Community Development. In 1994, Dr. Wandira was appointed Vice-President and Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. Also in 1994, Dr. Wandira was elected member of the Constituent Assembly that drafted Uganda's new constitution. In 1996, she was elected Member of Parliament for the constituency of Kigulu South in the Iganga District.

Dr. Wandira is an active member of a wide range of local organizations. She is Chairperson of the Senior Women's Advisory Group (SWAG) on the environment, and a member of both the Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited (UWEAL) and the Uganda Women Doctors Association. Her commitment to gender, peace and development issues is the reason behind her current position as Chairperson of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD).

Her active involvement in all these fields is reflected through her nomination for many awards and the appreciation shown by people and organisations in Uganda and abroad. In 1994, Dr. Wandira was named "Woman of the Year" by *The Monitor*. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) awarded her the "Ceres Medal" for her contribution to food security and poverty eradication in 1998. In the same year, she also was nominated "African Woman Entrepreneur" and the Center for Development Activities in Washington, DC also crowned her with their Leadership Award.

Dr. Wandira was born in the Inganga District in Eastern Uganda. She has four children and has adopted several more from disadvantaged families in various parts of Uganda. A medical doctor by profession, she studied at Makerere University in Kampala.