





So we in the Gates Foundation have given a great deal of thought to a nutrition strategy. Our group has spent over a year thinking directly about where we can have an impact on nutrition and how we can have an impact on nutrition. And they have created a very ambitious strategy, which focuses on research into new knowledge in nutrition and to key areas that deal with micronutrients and complementary feeding. Now, all components of this are important but one that I would like to highlight is the importance of new knowledge.

In fact, as much as we know about food, we know very little about the basis, the science, of food. We know how food is absorbed but -- Actually, in presenting this strategy, Bill Gates, who likes to ask difficult and probing questions, said, "Now tell me, what is a micronutrient? What defines what is a micronutrient? How is it that zinc acts?" Now, you know with my background in etymology and molecular biology, I could say, "Well, you know there are some enzymes that require zinc. There are some proteins in which zinc is a very important component. Zinc plays a very important role in the transcriptional regulation of some genes." But that was a very far cry from an answer to why we need zinc. In a sense, the nutrition community has been a little bit of a fractious community. The reason why is, the less you know, the more your opinions count.

So in point of fact, we need new knowledge in nutrition and we have to invest in this because that will allow the other investments we make in nutrition to be wisely and strategically placed. But having said that, the two other key pillars, micronutrients from what we know them and fortification with micronutrients, and complementary feeding are interventions that