



**BOARD FOR INTERNATIONAL FOOD & AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
(BIFAD)
PUBLIC MEETING
MEETING MINUTES**

**JANUARY 30, 2014
Horizon Ballroom, Ronald Reagan Building
Washington, D.C.**

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**Board for International Food and Agricultural Development
U.S. Agency for International Development, Ronald Reagan Building, Room 7.8-061, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW,
Washington, DC 20523-2110**

**BIFAD PUBLIC MEETING ON HIGHER EDUCATION – PARTNERSHIPS,
POLICIES AND PROGRAMS
Meeting Minutes**

Board Members Present:

Brady Deaton (Chair), Catherine Bertini, Waded Cruzado, Harold Martin, Sr., the Honorable Martin McVey

Chair Brady Deaton Opens Meeting and Reviews Agenda

Chair Brady Deaton welcomed those assembled to the meeting which was globally streamed and Twitter-active. BIFAD wants to communicate with a broader audience going forward. This was a regular BIFAD meeting for the purpose of discussion among Board members and to hear presentations in preparation to fulfill BIFAD’s advisory role. BIFAD’s previous meeting was cancelled due to the October government shutdown. Chair Deaton recognized the efforts of BIFAD Executive Director Susan Owens. BIFAD Members introduced themselves. Five members were present; one member was absent and one seat is vacant.

BIFAD is committed to the success of USAID. BIFAD tries to look at alternate and competing opportunities that USAID has or could realize. Chair Deaton said the Board would hear from three panels during the course of this meeting. The world population is expected to rise to nine billion by 2050, requiring a doubling of global food production as well as tremendous scientific advances, all within the context of environmental sustainability. Over the last century, world economic activity increased 50-fold, food production increased 20% per capita, exceeding population growth. Eighty percent of the world’s population is reliant on four staple foods: wheat, rice, maize and potatoes. One third of produced cereals are used to feed livestock. Consumption of meat and milk doubled over a period of 30 years in low to moderate income countries. Estimates of post-harvest losses and food waste vary between 20 and 40%, representing an area of immense potential gain to feed the world’s people. All of the pressing issues pertaining to feeding the world’s population compete for a limited amount of money to help solve them. The Bureau of Food Security has made significant progress in evaluating important changes among the most needy of the world. Decisions must be made, and those decisions should be based on sound evidence.

Old and New Business

Update on BIFAD HICD Study – Brady Deaton

BIFAD commissioned this study when Administrator Shah identified understanding Human and Institutional Capacity Development as an important need of USAID. BIFAD commissioned Victor Lechtenberg and a team of researchers to analyze the HICD mission of USAID. The team’s report has been delivered to BIFAD, though it has yet to be considered. Significant time at the Board’s next meeting will be given to discussing the report.

Dr. Victor Lechtenberg, of Purdue University, provided an overview of the approach taken in the study. BIFAD requested the team to focus on four areas: increasing the impact of institutional improvements, strengthening access to US higher education systems, enhancing collaboration between US and developing-country universities, and increasing developing-country access to US technologies. The report is positive with respect to USAID's work in HICD. Institutional Capacity Development deserves more attention than it has received in the past.

Acknowledgement of Service to BIFAD – Jo Luck

Chair Deaton thanked Jo Luck, former BIFAD member, for her “tremendous support” of the Board. On behalf of USAID and BIFAD, Chair Deaton presented Ms. Luck with an award.

Ms. Luck said serving on BIFAD was a privilege and was happy to serve. She thanked Chair Deaton for his leadership.

BIFAD Member Outreach Report – Chair Deaton at Accra Innovation Lab & Waded Cruzado at 4th International Conservation Agriculture Conference in Southeast Asia that was held in Cambodia

Chair Deaton said USAID and its various Innovation Labs around the world host workshops so that participants may see what is happening in the field. Chair Deaton attended one such workshop in Accra, Ghana, and was impressed at the range of resources that were brought together there. The meeting's purpose was to share technologies and strengthen linkages among the various institutions represented there.

Chair Deaton moderated, along with Susan Owens and Beth Mitcham, a discussion at the workshop on HICD. Key issues include research planning, strategies for implementation, new linkages to scale up impact, aligning efforts and improving communications.

Member Cruzado said the 4th International Conservation Agriculture Conference held in December in Cambodia was a great opportunity. The main focus of the conference was on agriculture and food processing. In her keynote address, Member Cruzado spoke on the land-grant model and its applicability to the principles and theory of conservation agriculture. The centennial of the Smith-Lever Act served as an opportunity to speak on the importance of extension, which Member Cruzado believes will be important as conservation agriculture practices are disseminated in Cambodia.

“It is a new day” for Cambodia, its agriculture and many of its socio-economic indicators. Conservation agriculture, built on principles of minimum soil disturbance, permanent organic cover and diverse species, has been in Cambodia for about ten years, taking strong root in large, mechanized operations. Can it be translated to small-holder farmers?

Member Cruzado was especially interested in the confluence of conservation agriculture and women's empowerment. Success here means higher self-sufficiency for women and

higher levels of nutrition for them and their families. One of the main values of the conference was to provoke reflection among stakeholders: what have they done and what did they accomplish? How do we deal with the capital and knowledge barriers around conservation agriculture? How do we lower the abandonment rate of early adopters? How do we balance long-term research needs and short-term interventions to farmers?

Board Discussion

Member Bertini asked for further comment whether gender differences and the potential role of women farmers were appreciated in Cambodia. Member Cruzado said the recent efforts are effecting real cultural changes. Though there has been a tacit understanding in Cambodian culture that women are better administrators of family finance, moving into leadership roles in agriculture and trade is a major development.

Higher Education – Strategy, Partnerships and Programs

BIFAD Member Moderator – Chancellor Harold Martin

Panelists:

Eric Postel, USAID Assistant Administrator

Ticora Jones, USAID/OST Senior Advisor for HESN

Anne-Claire Hervy, APLU Associate Vice-President for International Development Programs

Member Martin said the panel would focus on higher education partnerships and their capabilities with respect to international food security efforts. The world's population is growing and food security will be increasingly important, especially in areas where people lack physical and economic access to food. He introduced the panel members.

Mr. Postel said his talk would focus on USAID's efforts to deepen connections with institutions of higher education writ large. His bureau includes the Office of Education, and the team which manages efforts in higher education is led by Eric Johnson. Two "backdrops" for his remarks: 1) USAID has "a long-standing special relationship" with institutions of higher learning, and 2) because times are changing, approaches to partnership must necessarily change. Indeed, they have already done so. Institutions of higher learning are under immense pressure to graduate students with 21st Century skills and global perspectives. USAID funding streams have changed dramatically over time. The current understanding of the evolving philosophy of aid effectiveness now calls for ensuring necessary skills are held by local leaders, rather than US participants. This understanding is changing USAID partnering approaches. USAID has more AAAS Fellows than any other part of the federal government. USAID wants to do more work with foreign and domestic universities, and indeed, with their students, in addition to their faculties. USAID wants to better mine data and get it to researchers. A new position has been created at USAID to ensure effective two-way communications between the agency and its partners.

Dr. Jones, Program Director of the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN), said the network is intended to help harness the enthusiasm of those in the field to create more

effective partnerships. HESN is a multi-disciplinary community of practice focused on data and data analytics, implementable solutions in scale, and student engagement and innovation. The HESN now partners with seven universities and their respective partners. HESN faces the challenge of bridging the gap between existing partners and untapped potential. A variety of innovative partnerships will help improve people's lives and health.

Dr. Hervy of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities participated in the production of a report, entitled African Higher Education: Opportunities for Transformative Change for Sustainable Development, intended to assess the landscape of African higher education, its challenges and opportunities, and to provide recommendations for future investment. The report pays special attention to the return on investment of higher education, as well as the role of higher education in international development. The report makes several recommendations falling into two categories (on the development and management of USAID's higher-education portfolio, and programmatic priorities of interest to most countries), among them: concentrate investments, combine system- and institution-level interventions through the use of partnerships, more deeply implement USAID HICD policy, focus on faculty and staff development in the next generation of academics, strengthen the use of e-learning, support the search for other-than-public revenue, support the development of quality assurance mechanisms and workforce relevance. These recommendations are not intended to prescribe what should be done in a particular institution or country.

Updates from USAID on Feed the Future

BIFAD Member Moderator – Honorable Marty McVey

Panelists:

Richard Greene, Sr. Deputy Administrator, Bureau for Food Security

Julie Howard, Chief Scientist and Sr. Advisor to the Administrator on Research, Education and Extension, Bureau for Food Security

Rob Bertram, Director, Office of Agricultural Research and Policy, Bureau of Food Security

Member McVey said the USAID-led Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative is the United States' contribution to significantly reduce poverty and under-nutrition. He introduced the members of the panel.

Mr. Greene said much has been accomplished in Feed the Future's four years of implementation. Extensive administrative arrangements have been made to help ensure the program's success, including a research agenda and a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system. The next phase of the Initiative will bring all of the work done so far to bear on making country-level progress. Upcoming nutrition work will focus on early-life interventions and nutritional agriculture, with a special eye to women's education.

Dr. Howard said her talk would focus on current thinking and activity with respect to scaling agricultural technologies. Small-holder farmers are slow to adopt the use of improved seeds, fertilizers and other pivotal technologies. How can USAID and its

partners accelerate the pace and scaling up of adoption? Scaling is about increasing impact in people's lives and building momentum across projects. Importantly, Feed the Future has spent the past year taking stock of its inventory of scaling technologies. Next, it asked missions and partner organizations to assess what of their efforts seem most promising. The missions have grabbed hold of this challenge and some are even ready to enter "take-off" stage. New advances in Bangladesh and Senegal are about to take off. How do we ensure that the missions are aware of what resources are available to them going forward? The Feed the Future Innovation Labs and the CGIAR Centers will have a critical role in extension efforts going forward.

Dr. Bertram said a "changed portfolio" is the result of all the partners working together. Much of that change is a matter of growth, but change has also come in other ways. Eleven new grants have been made under BFS's most recent RFA. Sixty universities are in the partnership and 13 of those are HBCUs or other minority-serving institutions. New ways of interacting in the CRSP model have been identified and implemented. Stronger linkages with CGIAR partners are forming. Partners are making positive advances in many areas, especially climate-resilient cereals, legume productivity, advanced technologies for pests and diseases, nutritious and safe foods, sustainable intensification, integrated pest management, as well as Human and Institutional Capacity Development. Efforts to advance higher education uptake are ongoing.

Member Bertini said all the work going on was exciting and energizing. She thanked the panel for its update. Chair Deaton asked about the release of Bt eggplant varieties. Dr. Bertram said efforts are stalled due to internal policy in India, but there has been success in Bangladesh and the Philippines. Questions from Twitter pertained to civil and political unrest in the Philippines, Feed the Future's focus on nutrition, challenges with respect to scaling up and working with the private sector, transmitting lessons learned to the various mission directors, and the perceived shift from staple to higher-nutrient-density crops in Feed the Future's focus.

**US University Student Engagement in Global Food Security
BIFAD Member Moderator – Brady Deaton, BIFAD Chair
Panelists:**

Patrick Tracy, ACDI/VOCA
Elizabeth Mitcham, UC Davis

Chair Deaton said students constitute the future of our society. Attitudes among students in higher education are shifting dramatically toward issues of poverty and nutrition. He introduced the panelists. BIFAD wants to do everything possible to stimulate a new sense of engagement among university students to work abroad.

Dr. Mitcham said collaborative research efforts have always involved capacity-building, especially with respect to student training. Since 1978, 4,000 degrees have been pursued under CRSP-type programs. US research students form strong bonds with the researchers at the partner universities in other countries. CRSP programs also bring researchers to the US, allowing bonds to form here, as well. Oftentimes, students are

included in the management processes of CRSP programs. The Trellis program at UC Davis connects US graduate students with NGOs in developing countries to work on horticultural projects. The D-Lab program, originally from MIT, looks at adapting technologies for the developing world.

Mr. Tracy said ACDI/VOCA has been fielding volunteers for 40 years. Requests from the field for longer-term volunteers led to the leveraging of graduate students as part of the Service Learning Corps program. Five volunteers were fielded in the program's first year. Feedback was positive, and 15 volunteers were fielded the next year, 2013. An area for improvement: too many students and not enough assignments.

Chair Deaton asked for comment on the difference between undergraduate and graduate programs. Also, how closely do the panelists work with missions in placing students abroad? Mr. Tracy said, inasmuch as ACDI/VOCA is predominantly funded by USAID and the grad program came from the missions, their relationship is close. Funding is often the determining factor; fielding a volunteer is costly. Dr. Mitcham said undergraduates tend to be less expensive than graduates, and cost varies across universities. Earning degrees in other countries is usually less expensive than in the US. Member Bertini asked for comment on university-based programs working on food security. Dr. Mitcham called the Board's attention to the Blum Center at UC Berkeley, which encourages students to engage in food-security work. YPARD provides a compilation of many agricultural projects within the university system. A question from Twitter pertained to where the onus lay for the vetting of student talent caliber. Dr. Mitcham said it lay mostly with the Principal Investigator, either in the US or the developing country. Mr. Tracy said, upon receiving a scope of work, ACDI/VOCA attempts to match an appropriate student to fulfill it, and the field office would decide whether to accept the nominee. In working on these student programs, is the goal student exposure or development impact? Dr. Mitcham said it depends on the program, but a good program will do both. Mr. Tracy said his organization's programs tend to focus on developmental impact. Dr. Mitcham said working together is what these programs are all about.

BIFAD Award for Scientific Excellence in an Innovation Lab and Remarks

Member Cruzado said the BIFAD Award for Scientific Excellence is given to a student researcher who has made significant contributions to a Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research. The 2013 BIFAD Award for Scientific Excellence was given to Elana Peach-Fine, a graduate student at UC Davis. Ms. Peach-Fine's work has contributed to use of Innovation Lab information resources and technologies, as well as increased understanding of plant pathology. Administrator Rajiv Shah said highlighting the connection between ending extreme poverty and the continuing education of American students is a win-win. He thanked Ms. Peach-Fine for her work and being a role model, and congratulated her for the award. He hopes she will be another in a long line of students advancing scientific knowledge while tackling issues like hunger and poverty around the world.

Public Comment Period

Chair Deaton opened the meeting to public comment on the day's topics. Dr. Fred Davies said issues which demand further attention are information and extension delivery in the developing world. Extension programs are deteriorating in the US even as these programs are expanding in other countries. Dr. Arvin Bunker asked what role BIFAD feels it has in so-called "sandwich programs." Chair Deaton said the HICD study calls specific attention to these programs. The University of Missouri has extensive MOUs with partner universities for the sharing of best practices and institutional knowledge. Dr. Muni Muniappen asked whether the land-grant model that was so successfully implemented in India has been forgotten by USAID. Dr. Bertram said it has not; a lack of large-scale projects has prevented USAID from tackling something like the land-grant model. Dr. Mitcham said the sandwich program model is often used at the Innovation Labs for Collaborative Research. Member Cruzado suggested further discussion of this topic at a future meeting. Dr. Jean Ristaino said the Trellis program should be expanded to allow undergraduates to participate as these students can be sent for a small amount of money for a tremendous impact in a short time period. A commenter on Twitter called to the Board's attention universitiesfightingworldhunger.org and its accompanying summit which will be held February 28 through March 2 at Auburn University.

Wrap-Up of Public Meeting & Adjournment

Chair Deaton thanked all the attendees for participating and adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m.