

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Board for International Food & Agriculture Development (BIFAD)

SUMMARY: 138th BIFAD
Meeting held on June 18, 2003
1307 New York Avenue, NW
Ground Level Meeting Room
Washington, D.C.

BOARD MEMBERS attending:

William DeLauder, Acting Chairman
Michael Deegan
Carl Lewis
Anthony Laos
Stewart Iverson, Jr.
Sharon Quisenberry

Opening Comments – William DeLauder, Chairman, ad interim welcomed the Board members who introduced themselves. Dr. DeLauder explained that the Board Chairman, Peter McPherson was on special assignment in Iraq.

Agenda:

- Presentation and Discussion of Sub sector Reviews and Recommendations by SPARE (Strategic Partnership for Agricultural Research & Education, a BIFAD sub-committee)
- Update on the Long Term Training Initiative
- Presentation of Progress in Assessing the USAID-University Relationship
- Comments from Floor
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Item I: Presentation and discussion of Sub-sector Review and Recommendations by BIFAD sub-committee - SPARE (Strategic Partnership for Agricultural Research & Education)

Dr. Robert Evenson, SPARE chairman, first presented facts from his paper on the Green Revolution that was recently published in Science Magazine. He explained that this article should give the Board a useful perspective on development, the global agricultural development experience and the U.S. funding of development as these facts relate to CRSP activities. Main points covered:

1. Acceptance by host countries of new technologies from the CGIAR centers and the Green Revolution vary from area to area. Diffusion rates are highest in Latin America, next in Asia and slowest in Middle East and North Africa and slowest of all in sub-Saharan Africa.
2. There is a strong correlation between rate of development, per capita growth of income, use of fertilizers and other technology.

3. There is also a very strong correlation between growth rate and the level of human capital development/ capacity. The only route out of poverty is to build human capacity. If you do not have human capacity, you do not see growth in personal incomes.
4. Historically, it was USAID that built the essential human capacity that allowed for the Green Revolution to occur in the poorest countries. But recently USAID has abandoned much of its support to agriculture, the corner stone of economic development. Now, with the projected importance of biotechnology, renewed investment in developing human capacity is even more necessary and vital for the future of the developing world.

SPARE general comments and recommendations:

1. The CRSPs, through their good relationship with the US land grant colleges system, have shown very good results. Specifically, the CRSPs just reviewed, i.e. IPM, Global Livestock, and Aquaculture CRSPs, are doing very good work and SPARE recommends continuing support.
2. The main crosscutting recommendation is that USAID and the university community should seek additional innovative and efficient means of implementing educational programs with emphasis on building capacity.
3. SPARE, during its review of the three CRSPs, came to the conclusion that following the policy of having individual activities of a particular CRSP competed as part of each five-year renewal, the leadership of the CRSP, i.e. the Management Entity (ME), should be openly competed after 10 years. SPARE believes that there is the perception that CRSPs are entitlements and once a university gets one, it will last for years. The issue is open healthy competition. SPARE is ready to put this forward as a recommendation to BIFAD.
4. The CRSP Council had indicated to SPARE that this recommendation caught them by surprise and therefore requests a delay in putting it before BIFAD. SPARE agrees that discussion time was inadequate and is willing to wait.

A number of questions and comments came from BIFAD members and members from the audience. From the comments, it was clear that the meeting felt strongly that not enough time was given to the CRSP council to provide feedback to SPARE on the recommendation to limit the ME to 10 years. BIFAD members asked for a Terms of Reference for the ME.

The discussion ended with the approval by BIFAD of a motion asking that the CRSP council meet and prepare additional commentary for SPARE on the recommendations. SPARE, in turn, will meet and present their recommendations and commentary to BIFAD by August 10, 2003.

Item II: BIFAD LLT proposal update.

Howard Gobstein presented the revised proposal titled Renewing USAID Investment In Global Long-Term Training and Capacity Building In Agriculture and Rural Development to the Board for approval, publication and distribution. Mr. Gobstein stated that over the past 6 months the proposal has been significantly changed and improved. Since the January BIFAD meeting, over 65 comments have been received by the principal author, Carl Eicher. The main change from earlier drafts has been to add a strong complement of capacity building and to expand on examples of low cost methods of training.

Art Love described the plans for activities that represent the early implementation activities of the proposal. The first activities will be training needs assessments in the countries of Mali, Mozambique and Uganda. The plan is to use the information from the assessments to instruct the crafting of a Request for Agreement (RFA) that will invite competitive university partnerships through the established model of the Association Liaison Office (ALO).

The Board unanimously accepted the report and the Chairman extended his thanks to all persons who worked on the proposal.

Item III: Update on document on Review of the USAID-University Relationship.

Ken Sherper presented his draft report that looks at the issues that may constrain the relationship between USAID and universities. The paper offers suggestions and recommendations on how those issues may be overcome. Mr. Sherper outlined the main points of the paper stating that there is an emphasis on agriculture. Most important is that capacity building of humans and institutions should be the foundation activity that USAID should undertake. Universities have major contributions to make in development but need to do a better job of collaborating with USAID.

A lively discussion followed with many members of the meeting giving comments and suggestions relating to the draft report. Mr. Sherper asked for people to send him comments that he would incorporate into a final report. BIFAD decided that the draft should be placed on the BIFAD webpage and also distributed throughout the university community. Mr. Sherper proposed that he would have a second draft for the Board to review before the next meeting.

Item IV: Other Business.

BIFAD member, Senator Iverson, brought forward the suggestion to have the next BIFAD meeting in Des Moines, Iowa, in connection with the World Food Prize day, i.e. October 16th in

Des Moines. He indicated that there is a pending request by the organizers to have Peter McPherson give a presentation at the October 16th meeting. Dr. DeLauder agreed to follow-up on the suggestions and get back to the Board. It was agreed that a report and firm recommendations from SPARE, an update on LTT and the Sherper report would be on the agenda of the next meeting. Another member suggested that he would favor a regular report on CRSP activities.

Comments and Closing:

- a) Participant from the floor suggested that the presentation of the BIFAD award winners could be made on the Hill to include certain members of Congress.
- b) Participant from the floor commented that, in the context of the FY04 budget discussions, there was poor reception to the President's proposal for a separate "famine fund". He further expressed the opinion that foreign assistance was not getting a very friendly hearing on the Hill that would negatively impact the Agency's ability to implement an aggressive program of economic growth in agriculture. BIFAD members were encouraged to talk to folks on the Hill.
- c) In closing the Chairman recognized the outstanding work of BIFAD federal officer, Mr. Larry Paulson, who will soon leave for a new assignment in India. Mr. Paulson was acknowledged for the excellent way he kept the BIFAD members informed, making arrangements for meetings and all in all making the jobs of the Members easier.
- d) The Chairman accepted a motion for adjournment. Motion was seconded and the 138th meeting of BIFAD was adjourned.