

Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD)

Public Meeting, February 27, 2015

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Welcome by BIFAD Chair Brady Deaton

BIFAD Chairman Dr. Brady Deaton opened the meeting at 9:10am EST. He welcomed the audience both in the room and through the webcast to the BIFAD Public Meeting, held at the office of the Associate for Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) in Washington, D.C. He expressed thanks to USAID and APLU for their support, and welcomed the panelists to the meeting. The BIFAD Board Members were introduced; four of them were in attendance for the meeting.

- Dr. Brady Deaton- BIFAD Chairman, Chancellor Emeritus of University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri; Executive Director, Deaton Institute for University Leadership in International Development (In attendance)
- Hon. Marty McVey- President, McVey & Co. Investments LLC, Houston, Texas (In attendance)
- Dr. Catherine Bertini- Professor, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse, New York; World Food Prize Laureate (In attendance)
- Dr. Gebisa Ejeta- Distinguished Professor, Department of Agronomy, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; World Food Prize Laureate (In attendance)
- Dr. Waded Cruzado- President, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana
- Dr. Harold Martin, Sr. - Chancellor, North Carolina A&T University, Greensboro, North Carolina.

On behalf of the board, Chair Deaton wished Rajiv Shah, former Administrator at USAID, the best in his next endeavor. They look forward to continuing their work and collaboration with the new Acting Administrator, Alfonso E. Lenhardt.

Chairman Deaton introduced Peter McPherson to give welcome remarks.

Welcome to the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) by Peter McPherson, President of APLU

President McPherson welcomed BIFAD and the audience to the APLU offices. He spoke and reflected on his time as Chairman of BIFAD and as Administrator of USAID. He emphasized the importance of the BIFAD reports, in particular those concerning long term training. The BIFAD member advisory role is key, t the board = provides a helpful perspective. Congratulations to the members for the work they are doing. APLU appreciates it. President McPherson felt that his

time at BIFAD allowed him to think through many issues, including long-term training and institution building.

President McPherson announced that at APLU's recent Board Meeting they discussed establishing a committee or task force to develop ideas on how APLU membership should approach achievement of goals regarding water, carbon footprint, energy, etc. The university community has a central role. This is a domestic and international problem.

Board Member Bertini thanked Peter McPherson for hosting the meeting. Dr. Bertini acknowledged him for his support of women in leadership positions during his term as Administrator of USAID.

BIFAD Chair Deaton thanked Peter McPherson for his commitment and advocacy.

USAID Bureau for Food Security (BFS) Ebola Response

Chairman Deaton introduced Richard Greene and Meredith Soule from USAID Bureau for Food Security. Richard Greene, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, and Meredith Soule, Division Chief for Africa, Office of Country Strategy and Implementation.

Richard Greene thanked BIFAD and introduced the format of the presentation. First, he provided an overall background on the Ebola epidemic, and related food security issues. Then Meredith provided an update on the current program.

The epidemic has seen a total of 23,000 cases so far. Sierra Leone has had the biggest recent outbreak; last week (the week of February 15th), there were 74 cases. The epidemic in Liberia is decreasing; there were only two confirmed cases last week; the Liberian President has recently re-opened their borders. In order to be considered Ebola free a place must go 42 days without a new case.

Guinea had 35 cases last week. The frequency of new cases is declining there as well. However, there is a lack of community knowledge on how the disease is transmitted. Efforts are focused on ensuring that capacity for case finding, case management, safe burials, and community engagement is used effectively as possible. An anthropologist has been brought in to help improve the understanding of how to communicate prevention techniques.

Mr. Greene noted that although the epidemic has slowed, case fatality rates remain high. Women remain the most affected by the disease, and most of the farmers in this region of the world are women, so this has the potential to negatively impact food security.

Mr. Green explained how this situation came to be. He noted that West Africa has the highest population growth rates in the world and is seeing a growth in domestic animal production. This increase in agricultural production gets communities more involved with animals and makes

them more vulnerable to zoonotic diseases. The problem is amplified by human-to-human transmission. According to the Center for Disease Control, there are over one thousand diseases that have the potential to jump from animals to humans through contact. Ebola has a reproductive ratio of 1.6; meaning that for every person infected with the disease they, on average, could transmit the disease to an additional 1.6 individuals. This is a relatively low ratio compared to other diseases such as measles, which has a 1 to 17 reproductive rate. Mr. Green explained that if we had been more proactive about surveilling animals in West Africa, perhaps Ebola could have been discovered in animals six months earlier, with much quicker response rate.

Mr. Green then went on to explain the effects of Ebola on food security. The areas of highest Ebola incidence have been among the most agriculturally productive areas. Thus, during the outbreak, restrictions on movement kept farmers away from the harvest, and trade restrictions further slowed economic activity. Now that the outbreak is dissipating, staple cash crops have become available. The bigger driver of food insecurity right now is lack of household income and lack of purchasing power. It is estimated that by June, the region will see reduced food consumption and up to 25 percent of the population will experience food shortages, which will cause people to begin selling their assets in order to eat. Ebola has also had an effect on nutrition and health, as health centers were closed or sparsely visited during the outbreak, causing a reduction in vaccinations and other preventative services.

The U.S. government has provided over 972 million dollars for Ebola response and has built 15 Ebola treatment units. Now, Feed the Future is developing an Ebola Recovery Partnership in Guinea and Sierra Leone in response to the Ebola outbreak and the food security problems it has amplified. Mr. Greene explained that FTF wants to be flexible and creative in using this opportunity to strengthen food security in these countries. After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the theme around recovery efforts was to “build it back better.” Greene emphasized that Feed the Future has the same goal here; this is an opportunity to put in place some basic elements of food security in these countries and incorporate risk--especially the risk of zoonotic disease--into the analysis and into future programming.

Next, Meredith Soule spoke about the assessment teams that have been deployed by USAID to Guinea and Sierra Leone. Although USAID has a mission in Guinea, Feed the Future has not previously been active in Guinea or Sierra Leone, so the assessment teams were sent out to learn about the food security situation in these countries and how it has been impacted by Ebola.

The teams spent two weeks in the countries. While there, they used GIS mapping to look at poverty spatially throughout the countries; conducted workshops with representatives from the governments, multilateral partners, and the U.N to assess what is already being done to address food security and to determine what FTF’s comparative advantage could be; and conducted SWOT analysis of potential action areas.

The teams' initial findings show that poverty and stunting rates are very high in both countries and that GDP growth rates have slowed recently, in part due to Ebola, and in Sierra Leone in part due to the declining price of ore. Both countries are very ecologically diverse, with a wide variety of crops grown including rice, cassava, maize, potatoes, cocoa, yams, and palm oil. The teams found that key food security constraints that existed before Ebola included low productivity due to lack of modern inputs and labor constraints, post-harvest losses, lack of diverse diets and need for more protein, and a poor existing policy environment. These constraints were exacerbated from the Ebola outbreak as movement became limited, trade restrictions increased, and the existing capacity of governments went to focusing on Ebola at the expense of addressing existing food security issues.

Based on the teams' initial findings, Dr. Soule shared some thoughts on what the Feed the Future Ebola Recovery Partnership will look like. The programming will build on FTF efforts in other countries, looking at eco-loss work and the constraints and advantages of fertilizer. FTF has also put a lot of focus on value chains, and further analysis is needed to see which value chains have the greatest potential in these two countries. Post-harvest storage is another possibility, and FTF can look to some of its work in other countries building warehouses and cooperatives. Alternative protein sources also need to be identified, as many people in Sierra Leone and Guinea currently get their protein from bushmeat. Other considerations include promoting better nutrition through behavior change messaging, creating climate-smart programming, and cooperating with governments and other partners in order to fill in gaps instead of creating overlapping programming.

BIFAD Responses

The BIFAD Board members responded to the presentation by USAID. Chairman Deaton asked about the funding sources. Richard Greene responded that the office budget is managed closely and this item will be added into the existing Feed the Future budget. Plus, it has been proposed that Congress will provide expansion money to both Guinea and Sierra Leone and other partner countries.

Board Member McVey asked for information regarding the risk of Ebola to US cities. Richard Greene responded that he would need to consult the Ebola Task Force but given the low reproductive ratio (1.6) the risk should be limited.

Board Member Bertini requested clarification regarding USAID Leadership in the region and its interaction with other actors. She also requested further detail on the role of US universities in the response. Mr. Greene responded that USAID is leading the USG response and is committed to working with the various actors in the region including the UN lead. A key part of the strategy is to support global coordination. Regarding universities, the Ebola food security engagement is at an early stage. However, Feed the Future has a major competitive advantage with the 24 Innovation Labs, with lots of potential there.

Board Member Gebisa Ejeta requested clarification regarding consumption of bushmeat and plans for intervention. Has USAID considered the costs to bring in technology to countries with poor local capacity? Richard Greene responded that bushmeat has a connection to tradition thus it will always be a source of protein in Africa. However it has been noted that people are starting to become wary of bushmeat as a food source. Meredith Soule added that there is a need to take a deeper look into the interventions. Animal production hasn't decreased. There is food available but it is the resources to purchase the food that seems to be the main problem.

Chairman Brady Deaton thanked Richard Greene and Meredith Soule for their presentation. This is a big issue. BIFAD will be looking into this issue further to provide analysis and assistance.

USAID/BIFAD/APLU Agricultural Exchange on Human and Institutional Capacity Development

Summary Comments

Board Member Ejeta introduced Deborah Rubin of Cultural Practice, LLC, who gave a summary of the USAID/BIFAD/APLU Ag Exchange that took place from November 18-20, 2014. Dr. Rubin thanked KDAD, USAID, and APLU for their contributions to the Ag Exchange and noted that Cultural Practice has written a report summarizing the Exchange that will be revised to include the comments from this panel discussion.

Dr. Rubin gave a historical context of the impetus for the Ag Exchange consultation, explaining that USAID commissioned a series of reports in 2014 to discuss lessons learned regarding human and institutional capacity development (HICD) and that these reports, in consultation with the Ag Exchange, were meant to help USAID develop an action plan for HICD. The three reports (Lechtenberg et. al, Gilboy and Hervy, APLU Knowledge Center for African Higher Education) emerged with over thirty strategic recommendations, including strengthening institutional capacity and partnerships; strengthening access to U.S. higher education for Feed the Future country students, enhancing collaboration between U.S. and developing country universities with other public/private sector institutions.

With the recommendations from the three reports in mind, the Ag Exchange was launched with a webinar on November 17th, and continued with three days of online discussions that engaged 176 participants from 24 countries and included 570 posts. Dr. Rubin noted that this was one of the most robust discussions to date on Agrilinks. Most participation occurred during the first and third day of the exchange, and during the mornings and evenings.

Seven themes received repeated attention throughout the exchange. These themes are listed below.

- 1) Design strategic human capacity building, integrating leadership, management, and technical skills to support institutional capacity building.
- 2) Strengthen long-term institutional capacity development
- 3) Build diverse partnerships of mutual interest and motivation
- 4) Support programs to be flexible, adaptable, and responsive to market needs.
- 5) Build both human and institutional networks
- 6) Increase women's participation in the agricultural sector by establishing and maintaining gender-equitable institutions.
- 7) Increase ICT access and use in agricultural innovation systems based on monitoring and evaluation.

Dr. Rubin also listed a number of issues that were raised in the three reports, but that were not necessarily emphasized during the Ag Exchange Discussions. These issues included the potential of preferred partner institution programs, the importance of performance monitoring, the synergies of formal training and non-training activities, the need for discussion around what makes institutional change sustainable, and the value of impact assessment for various ICT activities.

Drawing on the themes from the Ag Exchange, Dr. Rubin noted two main suggestions for BIFAD. First, BIFAD should look at ways to support cost-effective best practices. This includes strengthening partnerships, testing assumptions against evidence, identifying the critical constraints to success, and analyzing the reasons that past recommendations have not been implemented. Second, she suggested that BIFAD organize targeted convenings with diverse partners on key topics emerging from the Ag Exchange. This convening process could allow experts to come together and share knowledge, and emerge with an action plan. Topics of interest include ICT and HICD in agriculture, strengthened partnerships for institutional change, gender issues in agricultural research and development, and performance measurement.

Respondents

Two respondents, Gretchen Neisler, the Director for Global Connection in Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources, and Carl Larsen, Senior Agricultural Education Specialist at the World Bank, responded to the summary of the Ag exchange.

First, Dr. Neisler made a number of comments on the presentation. She noted that USAID has brought the concept of "trainings" to the center of the HICD discussion. Training individuals in the areas of technical competency and soft skills is important, but if individuals do not use these skills to make decisions at the institutional level, then capacity has not been enhanced. Dr. Neisler felt that the findings from the Ag Exchange appropriately summarized the key principles of HICD. She noted in particular the importance of recommendation 5, building human and institutional networks.

Dr. Neisler also mentioned a few critical ideas that were not fully captured in the Ag Exchange. First, she noted that African institutions need to be at the forefront of charting their own course,

and noted the need to analyze whether the U.S. land-grant model is the most appropriate model to project in Africa. Second, she noted that any long term capacity development strategy requires thinking through how to ensure that Africans who are trained in the U.S. will return home to help strengthen their own institutions.

Dr. Neisler concluded with a few technical notes about the Ag Exchange and presentation. During the Ag Exchange itself, participants were flooded with new emails in their inboxes every time someone posted a comment on a thread they had participated on. This caused some participants to feel fatigued, and perhaps a daily digest email of all new posted comments would be less overwhelming. Dr. Neisler also noted that she would like to know more about the methodology behind the presentation and how findings were determined.

Dr. Carl Larsen began his response by telling a story about visiting two different agricultural institutions in an African country. At the first institution, in a meeting with the Dean, he was told that the institution lost half of their students after their first year, had no knowledge of where alumni of the institution ended up, and had an overall poorly-functioning institution. After this, Dr. Larsen visited a private agricultural institution not five kilometers down the road. This institution had a 100 percent rate of employability for graduated students and overall demonstrated a highly-functional institution. Dr. Larsen learned that almost all of the faculty members at this institution were the same as the faculty members at the other institution. The fact that these two institutions with vastly different levels of functionality employed virtually the same faculty shows that successful institutions truly are a product of institutional capacity and an enabling environment.

Dr. Larsen noted that the presentation had a wealth of information, but that the language used may not be digestible for an outsider. He recommended building the report around the seven recommendations and doing more storytelling to create a format that is attractive to read. He also asked the question of whether we are trying to optimize existing systems or create new ones. Dr. Larsen believes that we cannot achieve what we are trying to achieve by tweaking the existing educational system; he noted that the existing system was set up to train African civil servants, but not necessarily to develop the type of leaders that are needed to foster institutional change. Dr. Larsen made a final point that while best practices are extremely important, they must be adapted to a local context.

BIFAD Responses

The BIFAD Board members responded to the presentation and the two respondents before the public comment period was opened. Board Member Ejeta asked Dr. Neisler about her understanding of the land-grant university model, and what model she would otherwise recommend for a developing country setting. Dr. Neisler responded that she sees that core purpose of a land grant as being to create, develop, and disseminate knowledge and to do outreach. She suggested looking at a mixed-model approach that asks the specific question of how to look at higher education for economic development in a country, noting that any specific models must be developed in the context of the specific institution one is working with.

Board Member Ejeta also raised the question of how to move from making HICD a scholarship topic to something pragmatic. If institutions are not functional on the ground, he noted, it is difficult to gain any traction. He then commented to Dr. Larsen that many African institutions used to be very dynamic, high quality institutions, but have deteriorated significantly over the past few decades. How should the process of rebuilding these institutions go? Dr. Larsen responded that African institutions have the ability to build up themselves, but they do not do so because they have not been mandated to. They have been taught to get their direction from the government and from international aid agencies.

Board Member Bertini commented on Dr. Larson's point that tweaking existing programs will not make lasting change, noting a speech that she heard by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair on this subject a few years ago. In his speech, Mr. Blair said that we must think about how to do aid differently, noting that the old ways of operating do not work anymore. Mr. Blair noted a conversation he had had with an African President, who said that if he went to see the British ambassador to his country about building a road, it would take months or years for all of the proper analysis to take place before the road was even approved. If, on the other hand, he were to ask a Chinese ambassador about building a road, he would show up the next day with shovels.

Chairman Deaton commented that some universities in developing countries really seem to be getting it right, and pointed out the need to have additional dialogue about this. Finally, Dr. Rubin responded by thanking the panelists for their points and noted that she will take their comments under advisement.

Public Comment Period

Chairman Deaton opened the meeting up for public comments. Anne-Claire Hervy of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities made two recommendations. First, she noted that the phrase "human and institutional capacity building" is outdated and misleading. The problem with the phrase is that it makes human capacity building and institutional capacity building seem like two separate things, when in reality the goal is to do human capacity building with the goal of strengthening institutions. She also noted that an institution can have capacity but still not be performing well. Ms. Hervy recommended "institutional performance improvement" as a phrase that perhaps better captures the goal of strengthening individuals in order to improve institutions.

Ms. Hervy's second comment was that HICD has no ties to one specific sector. Rather it refers to the best science we have to build any institutions, no matter what type they are. Thus, agricultural higher education institutions would benefit from reaching out to and collaborating with other sectors to establish best practices.

Next, Dr. Montague Demment of APLU made a few comments about the Ebola presentation. First, in regards to the role of universities in disease prevention, he shared the relevance of programs like Predict at U.C. Davis, which works with zoonotic diseases by identifying microbes that have a strong potential of traveling from animals to humans. Dr. Demment also suggested that universities can contribute through innovation labs, giving an example of livestock innovation labs being used to help develop strategies for decreasing consumption of bushmeat and increasing consumption of safer forms of meat. Finally, Dr. Demment urged for taking action, noting that USAID has the potential to really take a leadership role in reinvigorating the focus on higher education through adaptive programming.

A final commenter stressed the need for an enabling policy environment in order for these processes to work.

Chairman Deaton thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting.