

**Board for International Food & Agriculture Development (BIFAD)
155th Meeting Minutes**

“Higher Education on a New Stage in Global Agricultural Development”

October 14, 2008

Des Moines Marriott Downtown, 700 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa

WELCOMING AND OPENING REMARKS (ROBERT EASTER, CHAIRMAN)

BIFAD Chair Robert (Bob) Easter opened the meeting, welcomed those present, and introduced the those present at the table, including Board members William (Bill) DeLauder, H.H. Barlow, Timothy (Tim) Rabon, and Catherine Bertini; and Allen Christensen (past Board member), Kerry Bolognese, and Ron Senykoff. He briefly reviewed BIFAD activities over the last year and topics that would be discussed in the meeting that day.

PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

BIFAD’s Conference of Deans I: Universities in Partnership, Outcomes & Planning for COD II (Allen Christensen, Immediate past member of BIFAD)

Bob Easter introduced Allen Christensen, who just recently completed his term on the Board. Allen Christensen provided the historical setting of the events leading up to this time for BIFAD, and reviewed the history of Title XII. He noted how in the last few years, BIFAD has made the decision to become proactive, calling for a Conference of Deans where the deans came at their institutions’ own expense to focus on a vision for the future; and how out of the conference, the White Paper was created.

The question is now, what will come next? A second Conference of Deans is being considered where the input of the private sector will be sought as well. The most recent Administrator has really listened to BIFAD, but the Board is now waiting for a new Administrator, as it discusses where it shall go into the future.

In the Board’s discussion of Allen Christensen’s presentation, the following points were made:

- The universities that are involved have great capacity and interest in being involved. The Deans who participated are anxious to be engaged meaningfully and want a long-term commitment from USAID.
- The participants definitely understand the issues, but many of those who were involved as faculty 25 years ago are retired, and the students from developing countries who they trained are retiring as well; they feel a sense the urgency.
- There is capacity in the US university community. The challenge will be that we are going to have to do research that addresses the needs of subsistence farmers, and addresses the holistic development at the family level.

- Universities will have to give credit in the tenure and promotion process to people who commit themselves to seeing that this is done. We need people in the PhD process who are committed to solving those types of problems.
- While there has been in the past great frustration about the opportunities to be involved, we are now at a stage where we are breaking down those barriers. It was notable that it was not difficult to come to a consensus over what the priorities would be. The challenge is now moving from priorities to how to implement them, and how to think more broadly about the involvement.
- It is more than just production – it’s a system. Whatever strategies we use to move forward have to involve the whole value chain, including marketing and other issues.
- Regarding partnership arrangements, while we have a lot of expertise in these institutions, there is a sense in developing countries, and particularly in Africa, that they want to be more involved in driving their own development. They know better what their own issues are. We have to find a better way to work in mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Agricultural technology is highly location specific, and so is development. What works in one country may not work across the board. One of the tragedies since World War II is that there has not been an institutional memory created. The Global Development Commons is one way to create that shared collective knowledgebase.
- Allen Christensen was thanked for his perspective and contributions to the Board; his knowledge and humor will be missed.

The “White Paper”: BIFAD Recommendations to USAID (Robert Easter, Chairman, BIFAD)

Bob Easter reviewed the contents of the White Paper that came out of the April 2008 Conference of Deans. The paper describes the role and process of BIFAD in serving as a gateway to university knowledge, as well as the strengths that the university community brings. He noted that the meeting was very well facilitated, and participants came to a consensus quickly on the priorities of capacity building, value chain development, and economic and community development (including youth leadership development). A number of recommendations were made, including one to establish within the agency an ‘Ag Czar’ who was very familiar with all aspects of agricultural development. They presented the White Paper to the Administrator on September 9, and she was well prepared to discuss it.

Points made in the discussion that followed covered:

- The responsiveness of the current Administrator, and the challenge to carry this over to the next administrator.
- The need to include some follow-up language with a set time in writing about how BIFAD will follow-up.
- Strong encouragement for Bob Easter to transmit the White Paper to the Transition Team.

MITIGATING THE FOOD SHORTAGE: PERSPECTIVES DURING A FOOD CRISIS, (ROBERT THOMPSON, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS)

Bob Thompson introduced his interest in mitigating the food shortage and advocacy for getting agriculture back on the international development agenda by providing some history of his 40

years of involvement in international agriculture and agricultural capacity building. He then talked about the recent world food crisis, discussing the impact of food price inflation on poorest countries, the projected population growth particularly among those living in extreme poverty, and other factors affecting the food crisis. He emphasized that while we certainly have a food crisis, he would not argue that we had a global food crisis – although, in the long-term, there is the potential for a global food crisis.

Given this growing demand, Bob Thompson reviewed the challenges faced in agriculture, and discussed the role can universities play in training individuals and in institutional strengthening, particularly in the domain of building capacity for the long-term, particularly for food production in the developing world. There is great potential for engaging young American faculty members in this, and both the U.S. and developing countries will benefit significantly if we get back in this business in a relevant way. One other area of opportunity is in U.S. university experience in building public and private partnerships, which will become particularly important in areas of the world where countries cannot afford to pay what is needed.

Following Bob Thompson's presentation, the following points were discussed:

- Irrigation has role but generally it will not be large irrigation schemes. There could be some great benefits from refurbishing some of the existing schemes.
- Africa has the capability of becoming self sufficient and becoming an exporter. The first steps to make this happen are first in governance, including the legal and public policy environment (e.g. legal rights for women); infrastructure is then next, particularly to improve the roads, and reduce the transportation costs. Then there is a need to invest in research – scientific knowledge to draw on, and adaptive research; it will take training more people to do this.
- Research should be linked to engagement, so that farmers are using that research. Unfortunately each area is under a different ministry (e.g., education, agriculture), and they don't talk to each other.
- Extension is another area to consider, with regards to what happened in Brazil. Brazil had a far stronger extension service in the 70s than research. In Africa there is a weaker extension capacity; the extension staff is usually from urban areas with a lack of understanding of farmers. The challenge of rebuilding extension huge and can be broadly defined to include not just extension agents – NGOs play a key role.
- The population numbers portrayed were median projections. Education of girls brings down fertility rates as do investments in opportunities for women.
- Private-public partnerships are important. The private sector is usually much better funded. More and more of these companies are building their research capacity to be able to work closely with universities. We've had to develop new models, and one is working more closely with the private sector. We can continue this with the support of USAID.

CREATING WIDER OPPORTUNITIES FOR TITLE XII IN PARTNERSHIP WITH USAID (KAREN TURNER, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE)

Karen Turner spoke on the idea of partnership, on the context of the food security issue, and on the BIFAD relationship. She described the relatively new Office of Development Partnerships (ODP), and its recent goal of tripling the value of the resources available through working with our partners. She noted that in regards to partnerships with the private sector, USAID is moving from an emphasis on social responsibility to one on the commercial interest in the increasing development of the developing world, understanding that there are certain countries and certain contexts where there is not a commercial interest, and there, the foreign assistance has to play more of a role.

Food security is a complex issue, and solutions will require collaboration between multiple and diverse partners, both immediately as well as investing over the longer term, to ensure sustainability. There is also an issue of mutual responsibility, receiving and giving assistance by developing countries, and with an emphasis on country-led development.

What this means for BIFAD and Title XII institutions is that given the need now to get back into agriculture, there is an opportunity for a strategic partnership between BIFAD and the Title XII community, and USAID. The Title XII community and BIFAD bring tremendous experience and expertise in agricultural development over the last decades. The role that BIFAD can play is in bringing a strategic partnership that can inform our vision for food security, help prioritize critical actions, and can help identify ways in which to strengthen host-country institutions' implementation of country-led solutions.

It is important for the evolution of the Agency and BIFAD that this is a strategic partnership in defining the strategic approach for the US to provide leadership in the global response to the food insecurity, and in activating the tremendous resources of the US universities. The most sustainable partnerships are where there are shared priorities – that is where we are able to form our relationships and work together. One of the benefits of being in the ODP is looking across the agency, working with other partners, and seeing the opportunities for where these partnerships can be built.

Karen Turner concluded by noting that the Conference of Deans and White Paper are positive steps toward a strategic partnership with USAID, and the hope is to continue those steps. USAID is still in the process of mobilizing additional resources for agriculture. This is expected to be reflected in the FY09 budget. Most important is that USAID can effectively demonstrate a very sound strategic program for the US to engage in food security and agricultural development issues.

Bob Easter thanked Karen Turner for her comments, noting that her words were encouraging and reflected how the Board felt towards its work with USAID.

**PANEL DISCUSSION: “FORMING THE UNIVERSITY BRAIN TRUST FOR INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT”
(PANEL MODERATOR, IRV WIDDERS, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY)**

Dr. Irv Widders thanked BIFAD for the willingness to host this panel and acknowledged Ron Senykoff as a visionary for establishing the panel. The scheduling is strategic. The White Paper has been released that establishes the platform for the conversations of the morning.

He reviewed the two objectives of the panel, and emphasized the importance of getting the perspective of CRSP directors who work across multiple landscapes, and of the faculty with diverse expertise and a wealth of experiences. The common denominator is a shared commitment and passionate dedication to serve humankind through their scholarly academic research and outreach activities to developing countries. The US university community represents an incredible brain trust that represents a great resource that could be a tremendous benefit to USAID and the Department of State for strategic planning of new program development in international agricultural development, not to mention the contributions we could make in implementing foreign assistance programs.

He explained that each panelist had been asked given one of four questions to respond to. He reviewed the process, and told them to say what is on their mind.

Dr. Fred Cholik, Dean of the College of Agriculture at Kansas State University

1. “Why should an external brain trust be of value to USAID and the Department of State for the development and implementation of strategic approaches to address the complex issues associated with international agricultural development and global food security?”

Dr. Fred Cholik offered five points in his presentation.

- In the war on hunger, we’re losing. While agriculture production is not the sole factor, it is one of the factors. There is technology that can change that, but there has to be an investment and a commitment to change that.
- The increasing complexity of the food system is something that must be addressed – food, fuel, feed, and environment. Agriculture in the past has shifted through the domestication of plants and animals; and then from ox and horse to mechanical systems. We are on the cusp of a new third paradigm shift, a shift which we are still developing – that of molecular biology. Molecular biology has great tools to create a paradigm shift, and that has not been realized yet. Where we are with our feed or fuel, and especially our environment has to be considered. The system is more complex; and food production is the first step of that system. Other critical parts are transportation and addressing post harvest loss; processing for food safety; development of products with increased nutrition and affordability for people around the world; and consumer acceptance.
- Any time you are dealing with complex issues, an integrated approach is critical, based on fundamental sciences – and integration of sciences is critical. We are past the days

where an individual scientist, institution, or program can address these programs. We are required to develop those partnerships, and we have a long tradition of doing so. We must identify the expertise and where it exists. The other part of this relates to the statement paraphrased from Dr. Borlaug, that you first must know and understand the wants, needs, and dreams of someone before you can serve them. It takes a lot of work, and the key is listening.

- This is a long-term problem, and long-term issues must be addressed. 1) The key is developing the youth, to have the brightest and best involved, but overseas and in the U.S. 2) A second part of this is knowledge-based – we have to develop solutions based on knowledge. Knowledge is an ever changing thing; what used to Ph.D. level is now middle school level. 3) The application of that knowledge is important: How do we put it in the hands of the user? How do we use the model of the land-grant system of learning, discovery and engaging, as we move forward toward long-term solutions? Long-term solutions require long-term investments.
- The window of opportunity will only stay open so long. While it is good that BIFAD has been moved to a higher level, that is not sufficient. I will challenge those of us in the room and the institutions that we represent to provide the leadership for this effort into the future. This leadership within the system has to go to the higher level. We need to be talking about all the agencies within the government. I am more optimistic today than I was two years ago, and part of this was because of the Conference of Deans.

Dr. Jeff Armstrong, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences at Michigan State University

2) What are the capacities and features of the brain trust that the U.S. university community offers that distinguishes it from other brain trusts? What can the U.S. university community uniquely offer as a brain trust on such issues as international agricultural development, global food security, economic growth, and natural resource management?

Dr. Armstrong expressed his appreciation to BIFAD for the opportunity to talk to the group, and to Bob Easter for the leadership of the Conference of Deans. He also emphasized that the capacity of the land-grant system is there, but it is underused and underfunded. In the last few years they have looked at how their partnership with USDA has worked, and they have worked across the system to try to improve capacity funding. He then highlighted the following distinguishing features of the university brain trust:

- The intellectual capacity of faculty in international agriculture
- The theme of partnerships (with multi-national corporations, NGOs and other stakeholders)
- The challenge to keep science in the mix to inform agriculture
- The demand for trans-disciplinary scholarship in addressing global agricultural issues, and the need to take a holistic view of sustainability in agriculture
- The need to think about leadership development
- The contributions of the university brain trust on global issues in terms of the expertise in bringing stakeholders together

- The expertise in Participatory Research
- The service to the Public Good
- The superior ability to build capacity

Dr. Freddie Richards, Interim Dean of College of Agriculture and Human Sciences, Prairie View A&M University

3) What are the mutual benefits to both the U.S. government and the U.S. universities on enhancing efforts in consultation and advising of the university brain trust on strategic program planning and policy formation relative to emerging global issues in agriculture, food security, environment, and natural resources?

Dr. Richards introduced his comments by discussing some of his own background and the places he has worked. His experience of USAID and of the university community is that both like models – looking what is the model to follow to get to the end result? In discussing that model, he noted the following:

- First, it is important to understand what USAID wants.
- In their work in Ghana, they applied appropriate technology to increase production for local farmers, something U.S. universities are still working to do.
- In Ethiopia, they are currently working themselves out of a job in a project that will result in Ethiopia going from having 2 goat centers to having 7.
- To see this through, the capability is what USAID wants.
- USAID is particularly interested in capabilities—they want the best faculty everywhere.
- There are growing numbers of universities in the developing world that are 10 or 15 years old, with faculty from all over the world; are US universities are capable of linking with these universities He emphasized that that capability is what is needed, and while it is a demanding environment, he believes that they can do it.

Dr. Jess Lowenberg-DeBoer, Associate Dean for International Programs, Perdue University

4) How might USAID and the Department of State systematize the use of a university brain trust in strategic program planning and policy formation in international agriculture development? How might the university brain trust be included in planning within USAID Washington, EGAT, regional bureaus, etc., and at the country Mission level?

Dr. Lowenberg defined a brain trust as a group of experts who serve, usually unofficially, as advisers, in strategic planning, and policy formulation. The term came into use during Roosevelt’s time when there was not time for a formal process, and there was a need for creative strategizing. In talking about systematizing what might be seen as a less formal process, he focused on implementation – how this could be done. He emphasized the following:

- Given the urgent problems faced and the rapid technical, economic and political change, USAID needs new ideas.

- An international agricultural brain trust would be an effective way to draw on university expertise to generate those new ideas.
- We need to avoid some of wrangling about funding and resource issues that have soured USAID-university relationships in the past. The key is to making this work is keeping the brain trust low-cost and flexible, with universities and USAID sharing in the costs in exchange for mutual access.
- He proposed the following: A brain trust responsibility that occupies only a small percentage of a faculty member's time (less than 10% is suggested), with mostly electronic communication and just occasional face-to-face meetings. The brain trust would be advisory but USAID would make a commitment to listening to brain trust advice. Universities would propose potential brain trusters to USAID as part of their engagement responsibility, but in exchange for access to USAID leadership. From among those proposed, the number chosen would be less than 10 people at any one time, who would serve one year terms renewable at the discretion of the Administrator. USAID would provide staff to coordinate brain trust activities and cover communication and travel costs.
- As to whether this could also be done for the Mission level as well, there could be multiple brain trusts developed along this model, where Missions could create their own brain trusts drawing on faculty from universities that have long experience with particular countries.
- The partnership ideas discussed in the Council of Deans were primarily USAID-funded programs, either current ones or ones that were funded in the past. These are more implementation mechanisms, not the places where the new ideas will be generated. The brain trust should focus on the new ideas.

Discussion

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- Considering the world today, in addition to the judicial, legislative and administrative branches of government, the US needs a fourth branch – education – to take over the global issues of education of the public. This branch is not easily added, though the US Department of Peace might contribute to that. The land-grant system is a good start.
- BIFAD's role in relationship with USAID in a brain trust is critical at the highest level, as an advocate for the global initiative, and as an advisor and conduit to USAID. The Conference of Deans was a good example of this role.
- We need to capitalize on the energy of the Conference of Deans, perhaps with multiple brain trusts.
- There is a need for integration and a need for sustainability to make the brain trust happen. This could be piloted by picking 5-6 people quietly, and just have a conversation with Karen Turner and the Administrator.
- A key issue is leadership: there needs to be one person designated to carry this further than just our meetings.
- Participation of all voices -- the farmer, the private sector, and the NGO community – is important; information from these groups needs to be included. In defining partnerships, leadership needs to invite the diverse community to the table in this. From a university standpoint, we must include our stakeholders, keeping them knowledgeable.

- Is there a way to make this a win-win situation both for USAID and for private agriculture? Inherently so, for the same reason that universities are invested in this.
- Incentives to participate are important. There are people who will step up, if there is a commitment of time, treasure and talent – the most precious resource may be time. Note that when BIFAD took leadership with the Conference of Deans, 44 of us dropped what we were doing and came. This could be thought of as a challenge issue – why not go and offer a \$50 million prize for things that change the Sahel. If you want that type of activity you need to think about people who could respond.
- The U.S. pulled together different sectors to address social issues through the land-grant colleges. We did not do this overseas, instead we created strands. The challenge is now to create that unity of purpose in those countries, and that our resources have to contribute to that. The world has changed, and a multi-polar world with true partnerships is needed for that to occur. We need to reverse engineer those separate strands to move toward a teaching partnership like the land-grant system. The deans are the gatekeepers here, and BIFAD can help not only working with USAID, but also to get those deans to go back to their boards and work with their institutions to get this to happen.
- It is an era of a sea change. Social science as well is more important today than otherwise. It is not the land-grant institution that is important but rather the land-grant philosophy. The question for BIFAD is how do we package that philosophy of integration?
- It has worked the best in India, where they went the farthest in building an extension service. It is more difficult in other places, such as Afghanistan; sensitivity is needed in trying to make those links to the social and political systems.

Several commented on the notable substance of the discussion just held, and on the mobilization from the Conference of Deans. Irv Widders expressed appreciation for the work of Deanna Behring in compiling the White Paper.

RE-CAP OF MORNING PROCEEDINGS (ROBERT EASTER, CHAIRMAN)

In re-capping the morning proceedings, after lunch Bob Easter commented on the exhilarating discussion from the morning, noting that this atmosphere was created in the Conference of Deans.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT 2030: PRIVATE INDUSTRY’S TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVES (JOHN HICKMAN, DIRECTOR, BIORENEWABLE ENERGY & LIFE SCIENCES, DEERE & COMPANY)

Presentation

Bob Easter introduced and welcomed John Hickman, an agronomist with Deere and Company, noting that BIFAD was deliberately reaching out to the private sector.

John Hickman reviewed the history of the John Deere Company and its mission to distinctly serve those linked to the land, and to be vastly global, intensely innovative, and vigilant

stewards, dedicated to company values, legacy, environment and safety of their employees. Within the agri-food value chain, Deere is coming from the farm equipment perspective. It is important to recognize that this is one of many elements of the value chain, and that there are many other participants in the value chain.

Their focus today is on greatly increasing agricultural productivity using sustainable production practices including conservation tillage, automatic guidance, and more fuel efficient equipment – with the largest R&D challenge being to reduce emissions and minimize negative costs. Expected future equipment innovation will be directed towards extending human capabilities through machine intelligence.

Deere's understanding of the 21st century agricultural opportunity was to greatly expand the global reach of increased productivity, with more sustainable agricultural practices. There is a tremendous need to accelerate agricultural productivity, to address increasing environmental issues and scarce resources, and to be aware of trade-offs and unintended consequences.

Deere has been expanding its global reach, with the results being increasing sales in emerging markets of BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China). Deere has also been focusing on water use efficiency, social responsibility and stewardship, and contemporary sustainability issues. After reviewing global yield trends, John Hickman looked at increasing crop yields, and described the agronomic toolbox needed to sustainably increase yields. He presented the personal theorem that most future crop technology will occur in, on, or near the seed, and that improving the water and nutrient use efficiency will receive much more attention.

Two examples were described and presented of how marker assisted breeding (MAB) is dramatically increasing the speed and efficiency of crop advancements (Bt hybrid cotton production in India, and U.S. Corn yield potential). Some of the reasons noted for lagging global productivity included were then noted.

Discussion

- In response to a question from Bob Easter, John Hickman stated that there is a problem finding people with the appropriate backgrounds to work in their company, as they move into these developing markets.
- John Hickman did not feel he was the right persons to respond to H.H. Barlow's question of whether Deere would be interested in partnering with other companies in a pilot project to show what can be done.
- When asked about consideration of technology for small scale farmers, John Hickman noted that that is what Deere is looking at now. Recently they have been making investments in much lower scale, and have study teams looking at the specific needs. He did note that sometimes it is the hard reality of business, where it may not be possible to be there, and that the value chain is important here too.

FY-2007 Title XII Report (George Wilson, USAID Office of Agriculture)

George Wilson presented the background and an outline of the required Title XII Report to Congress on the universities that conduct international Title XII activities funded by the USAID. He noted that much of the information in the report is fairly mechanical, and that where focus was needed was on the programs and activities to be carried out over the next 5 years, and the implications for BIFAD.

When asked if it was possible to do the 2008 report in January of 2009, Josette Lewis (Director, EGAT Office of Agriculture) explained that typically with these reports to Congress, they report on things that happen a year behind; they could potentially speed up reporting by a few months, but because they get Fiscal Year funds a year late, more that that may not be possible.

There was further discussion on the designation of universities as Title XII universities, and specifically on:

- whether there were Title XII officers at each university,
- whether information is coming from those Title XII officers of the respective universities,
- the establishment of a roster,
- the qualifications of being a Title XII university,
- how much input comes from universities, and
- how universities evaluate their efforts.

Bob Easter expressed appreciation that input was solicited from as many universities as possible. William DeLauder wondered if universities stopped designating Title XII officers when they stopped the strengthening grant program.

Status on BIFAD's Charter Revision and Renewal with USAID (Ronald Senykoff, USAID Office of Agriculture)

Ron Senykoff expressed deep and sincere appreciation to all those present for the morning's great discussion. In the last two and a half years, BIFAD has recognized the need to be able to react in an increasing rate of change, and has been doing a lot to focus and create the environment needed. There are strategic underpinnings in agricultural development that have national security underpinnings. During this dialogue, all have contributed, and there is a definite energy generated to be applied to solve this problem.

He then provided update on BIFAD's administrative activities. On October 8, Administrator Fore renewed BIFAD's Charter after a number of discussions. This has led to three things:

- 1) BIFAD has moved from the EGAT bureau to USAID's Office of Development Partners. The key element there is working across the Agency; this has strengthened the ability of the Board to speak across the sector (in which EGAT/AG is an important part) on a strategic level about where BIFAD needs to go.

- 2) BIFAD has increased staff time by one staff person.
- 3) The BIFAD budget has been increased.

He read some of the terminology in the charter regarding the primary mission of the board. He then yielded the floor to Josette Lewis.

Further Comments from Josette Lewis, Director, EGAT/Office of Agriculture, USAID

Josette Lewis provided the Board with an update on some things being done within the Agency.

This year the President requested and Congress provided \$200 million dollars for agriculture to respond to the food crisis. Of that, \$20 million is going to targeted research in development activities and near term opportunities in agriculture, some of which may engage universities. Of the rest, \$150 million will go towards improving food security with an emphasis on staple food production all the way through the food chain. Programs should be up and running by the coming spring. There should be some opportunities for universities in this.

Through conversations with Congress, Senators Lugar and Biden had invited the Administrator to share some longer-term thinking about what we could do about the global food security and the food crisis. That has prompted the Agency to take a step back and think critically about our current practices and how we would tackle a new strategy in food security. This has been drafted and USAID is now thinking about how to share this with some of its partners; this will be shared with BIFAD soon.

It is critical that we make it very clear what we need to do and why it is important. It is equally important in our new strategy to focus on setting targets, conducting the needed analysis and clearly defining what we can achieve and be held responsible for.

There are three parts to how USAID is looking at food security. It spans everything from emergency humanitarian assistance, to opportunities to increase efficiency through obvious things like regional procurement, and not relying on supplemental budgets. The most relevant part for this audience is the second piece which is trying to create vibrant rural economies, strengthening the whole sequence in the value chains, and really trying to bring the pieces together more explicitly. In this area, it is notable that the private sector is investing more in agriculture and that needs to be brought out more. Is there a way to bring together the private sector, universities and USAID to build a longer term sustainable focus to those partnerships? The last piece of the current thinking is in drawing in the chronically vulnerable into the process. This is a chronic development problem, not an emergency humanitarian problem.

The Luger-Casey Bill that is out there is a new authorization for foreign affairs, and is setting out some new thinking that affects us all. This bill includes a major emphasis around building the human and organizational capacity around agricultural research and extension; however, it does not reference Title XII, and it creates a parallel structure to do what BIFAD does. This can be seen as a wake up call to ensure these pieces are brought together in a meaningful way.

The Office of Agriculture is now tackling how to provide support to SPARE to look at some of these issues in more depth, particularly in the areas of human and organizational capacity building, going beyond just long-term training to looking at institutional strengthening.

Discussion

- Regarding the CG system, it was noted that USAID appears to have decided to cut back its contribution to CG system. Josette Lewis stated that this was not a decision that they wanted to make, but it was forced on them by the extraordinary amount of earmarking put on by Congress. USAID did this year fully restore funding to the CGIAR but in a different structure. A total of \$15 million of the \$ 20 million will go to the CG – there was a very conscious decision at higher levels to try to find these resources. This is new money.
- USAID is involved in the CG reform process through Rob Bertram.
- In response to whether OMB was on board for recommendation for more agricultural funding, Josette Lewis noted that the 2009 budget was already sent up before the food crisis came along. The Secretary of State did sign off on this, and it will be up to the new Administration to decide on that. It is likely to be an uphill battle to educate people on the fundamental role that agriculture plays in poverty reduction beyond the food crisis.
- Allen Christensen emphasized the importance the question of how to draw the poorest of the poor into the development process, and, in determining success, the importance for us to measure a family's progress compared to the starting point. For a child of a physician to become a physician is good, but it is not the same as the child of an illiterate farmer becoming an agronomist.
- Tim Rabon welcomed Josette Lewis on behalf of the Board, and thanked Ron for his work and vision on the Charter, finally making headway in achieving what has been accomplished in the last few years.

In the interest of clarifying and becoming consistent with the other USAID committees, Tim Rabon **introduced a motion to formally name the BIFAD staff member as Executive Director of the Board. This was seconded by H.H. Barlow, and passed unanimously by the four Board members present.**

SPARE Committee Support to BIFAD—Update on SPARE Actions (Sandra Russo, Chairperson, SPARE)

Sandra Russo thanked Josette Lewis for joining the committee, and updated the Board on SPARE activities. At the last meeting, SPARE received updates from USAID on its response to the food crisis and on the Development Leadership Initiative with the new incoming junior officers. Other discussions or actions taken included the following:

- Regarding the Conference of Deans' White Paper, SPARE offered to more fully flesh out the White Paper's three topics by making the case and articulating the needs, providing data to support, and giving options for implementation incorporating country level variations.
- SPARE decided to develop a draft document "The CRSP Philosophy" that will serve as an overview of principles, and less on practices. This document will be relevant to both

USAID and universities. SPARE will pull together people to write and ask the CRSP Council to provide input.

- On Title XII programs, SPARE passed a motion to recommend that BIFAD ask USAID to present an overview of Title XII programs at the BIFAD February meeting.
- Motions were passed to revise the SPARE Charter to have a two year chair term (with a query about the length of time and BIFAD's preferences), and a two year membership; both can be extended for an additional two years. Resignation will be requested after two consecutive missed meetings. The charter may be amended after review by BIFAD
- Sandra Russo reviewed SPARE's upcoming work plan/task plan and noted the following questions addressed to BIFAD regarding CRSPs:
 - Is there a role for SPARE in the CRSPs renewal process?
 - How, who and when to address the issue of trust between USAID and CRSP directors?
 - Why are there limited CRSP bids, why do only CRSP directors come to BIFAD meetings, how to engage other universities?
- Other questions for BIFAD related to BIFAD's new charter and communication with all Title XII universities: How to maintain an open discussion with other universities? And what can we do to create a dialogue between USAID and all Title XII universities? SPARE also requested input from BIFAD related to Chair and member term limits, Chair appointment/transitions, and EGAT/AG's offer of an AAAS fellow to serve as SPARE secretary.
- Upcoming SPARE meetings are scheduled for December 11 and 12, 2008; early to mid-January, 2009; mid-March – early April, 2009; and June, 2009.

Bob Easter congratulated Sandra Russo on getting this information down to this format. Because there was no longer a quorum of Board members, he proposed having a conference call with other Board members to address SPARE issues, preferably for Friday before the trip to Africa. There are important issues, some of which could be put off, but some need to be addressed sooner.

Bob Easter expressed his appreciation to those who put together presentations, and then adjourned the meeting.