



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 22 February 2016

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee

Chair: The Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP
Deputy Chair: Senator Alex Gallacher

DFAT AND ACIAR TO APPEAR AT AGRICULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT INQUIRY

Issues of food and agriculture will be on the table for discussion today when experts and officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) give evidence on Australia's regional efforts in this important area.

The Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee of the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is conducting an inquiry into *the role of development partnerships in agriculture and agribusiness in promoting prosperity, reducing poverty and enhancing stability in the Indo-Pacific region*.

DFAT's submission to the inquiry highlights the scale of the challenge in addressing world hunger and malnutrition, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Department has advised that '[a]t present, enough food is produced to feed the world's population, yet 795 million people suffer hunger, nearly two thirds of these in the Asia-Pacific region.'

'Close to 500 million people in our region still suffer chronic hunger and many countries struggle with the "double burden" of both under and over nutrition,' DFAT points out. 'Gender inequality remains a significant barrier to realising full productive potential.'

The Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, Sub-Committee Chair, said, 'Agriculture, fisheries and water together represent one of the six priority areas under Australia's development policy, these sectors are key areas of employment and economic growth and they play an important role in reducing poverty in the region.'

Officers from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Australia's specialist agricultural research-for-development agency will provide insight into international research and capacity building.

DFAT notes, a projected 60 per cent rise in global demand for food by 2050 is expected to create significant economic and business opportunities, but also presents major challenges, including increasing pressure on finite resources.

'Along with the key role development partnerships are playing in promoting prosperity, meeting future food demands will require improvements in productivity, market systems, resource management and governance', Dr Stone said, 'while the transition to more efficient or profitable production must also translate into better nutrition for the poor.'

This inquiry is consider how governments, NGOs and business can work with locals to overcome the stunting or obesity and consequent non-communicable diseases which now beset some of our nearest neighbours.

Time: 5:10pm to 6:30pm
Venue: Committee Room 1R3
Parliament House, Canberra

A live audio broadcast will be available at http://www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament

Further details about the inquiry, including copies of submissions and how to contribute, can be obtained from the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/jfadt or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2313 or emailing jscfadt@aph.gov.au.

For media inquiries contact the Sub-Committee Chair, the Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP on (03) 5821 5371 (Electorate Office) or 02 6277 4477 (Parliament House).