



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 11 March 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*

Fighting poverty through improved agriculture, agribusiness and nutrition

The Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee of the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade will today hold a roundtable discussion in Sydney into the role of aid non-government organisations (NGOs) in supporting efforts to fight poverty in the Indo-Pacific region.

Sub-Committee Chair, the Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP said she looked forward to the opportunity to discuss what role NGOs can play across the Indo-Pacific to improve food and nutrition security for the region's growing populations, as part of the [*inquiry into role of Australia's aid partnerships in promoting agricultural development and improving nutrition to reduce poverty and enhance stability in the Indo-Pacific region*](#).

"In 2014-15, 11 per cent of Australia's overseas aid budget was allocated to NGOs to support development work in the agriculture sector, including focusing on women agricultural producers, promoting youth involvement in agriculture, sharing of profits through promoting pro-poor value chains," Dr Stone said. "As a key productive sector, agriculture is vital to efforts to reduce poverty and build prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region."

Dr Stone said the Sub-Committee will also hear from an interdisciplinary panel from the University of Sydney, comprising some leading Australian experts in sustainable development, agriculture, the environment and public health.

"Food and nutrition security is of particular interest to the Sub-Committee. Our region is, on the one hand, combating malnutrition and childhood stunting due to lack of nutritious foods, while at the same time coming to grips with the introduction of highly processed, cheap imported foods that increase obesity and cause long-term chronic health problems such as diabetes," she said.

"Meeting future food demand will require improvements in productivity, market systems, resource management and governance, however, the transition to more efficient or profitable production must also translate into better nutrition for the world's poor."

Public Hearing details:

Date: Friday, 11 March 2016

Time: 11:00 am to 2:30 pm

The Full program is available on the Committee website: [LINK](#)

Location: Corinthian Room, SMC Conference and Function Centre, 66 Goulburn Street, Sydney

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

For background: Contact the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Secretariat on (02) 6277 2313, email jscfadt@aph.gov.au or visit the [Committee website](#) for further details about the inquiry, including copies of submissions and how to contribute. **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).