



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

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**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*

Helping developing nations to farm better and feed themselves

Australia has expertise in arid, tropical and temperate zone agriculture. Partnerships between Australians, the aid budget and others working in agriculture can reduce poverty and promote health in the Indo-Pacific region.

How well we are utilising these partnerships and opportunities will be the next inquiry by the Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee of the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

The Sub-Committee invites submissions addressing the terms of reference for the inquiry by 4 November 2015. Further details about the inquiry, including the full terms of reference, copies of submissions, and how to contribute can be obtained from the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/DevAg.

The Sub-Committee will review the Australian Government's [Strategy for Australia's aid investments in agriculture, fisheries and water](#) and look at how governments, NGOs and business can produce innovative solutions to the growing demand for higher quality, nutritious and sustainably produced food.

Sub-Committee Chair Dr Sharman Stone said chronic malnutrition and stunting not only affects the child's development, but impacts on the capacity of communities to be self-sufficient. Non-communicable disease, like diabetes and heart disease are also on the rise, often related to healthy food access.

"Countries with strong agriculture sectors, particularly related to the production of food, can have better health outcomes than when stores are filled with cheap, imported fast foods and snacks."

"Sustainable local production is not only good for people's health, it's good for the economy and the environment. The business of agriculture and aquaculture: breeding, sowing, farming, harvesting, processing and distributing food, also means more jobs and higher incomes."

"The Sub-Committee's last inquiry found that the best way to promote economic development and reduce poverty was through the combined efforts of governments, NGO's and private enterprise. This new inquiry will focus on how we can leverage Australia's world class agricultural and aquaculture expertise to help our regional partners prosper." Dr Stone said.

This inquiry will examine ways to better support agricultural development, greater gender equity, improved nutrition outcomes and economic growth in the Indo-Pacific region, including:

- our contributions and achievements to date;
- options for agricultural innovation;
- actions to improve health and promote greater gender equity and women's economic empowerment, given that women are traditionally the main food producers in the region;
- ways to include small developing-country entrepreneurs with larger Australian and international business, both in agriculture and food value chains.

MEDIA CONTACTS

For comment: Contact the Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee Chair, the Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP on (03) 5821 5371 (Electorate Office) or (02) 6277 4477 (Parliament House) or on Twitter @SharmanStone

For background: Contact the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Secretariat on (02) 6277 2313 or visit jscfadt@aph.gov.au