**Question 1**

Topic: ACIAR–Food security funding to Africa

Written question, October 2009

**Senator Payne asked**

1 A At budget estimates, Peter Core said that no funds had yet been provided to ACIAR as part of the $464.3 million four-year Food Security Initiative, but that the appropriations would likely be made once the Minister had made decisions about the nature of ACIAR’s involvement with Africa. Can you provide an update on this?

1 B Has the Minister made a decision about which countries will receive funding under this initiative, and if so, which countries are involved and how much will each receive?

1 C If decisions have been made, is ACIAR aware whether these decisions have been communicated to the recipient countries in Africa?

**Answer**

1 A The Minister has agreed to indicative funding of $20 million over four years for ACIAR to progress a proposed significant research initiative on maize-based farming system in eastern and southern Africa. Of this total amount, $16.7 million will be sourced from the $464.3 million *Food Security through Rural Development* initiative, bringing to $88.0 million ACIAR’s total allocation from the food security initiative. The new Africa activity will be implemented by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre(CIMMYT) in close collaboration with a range of national agricultural research institutes in the region, together with Australian research providers (see below).

1 B This research program, focusing on maize-legume based farming systems for food security in eastern and southern Africa, is currently in the design phase and the specific primary partner countries are still under consideration and subject to endorsement by the relevant national governments including Australia. Regional collaboration will include the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA). The details of funding to individual countries have yet to be determined and will be dependent on finalisation of technical research details in the program.

1 C No formal notification on funding details, other than the total $20 million allocation, has been communicated to recipient countries in Africa. A regional formulation workshop was however undertaken in Malawi on 21 to 23 September 2009 attended by representatives from both regional and national level research institutes to address the main components of the research proposal.

**Question 2**

Topic: Food security funding–general

Written question, October 2009

**Senator Payne asked**

2 A In a media release from the Foreign Minister on 26 September 2009, he says that “additional funding will be provided to ACIAR for adaptive research on agricultural production techniques.” What amount of funding will be provided for this purpose, how will it be distributed and what programs will it fund?

2 B Is this funding that was already foreshadowed in the May Budget, or is it new funding?

**Answer**

2 A The funding to ACIAR, referred to in the media release of 26 September 2009 which outlined Australia’s international actions to improve global food security, is funding that was announced in the Federal Budget in May 2009 and provided through the International Development Assistance *Food Security through Rural Development* initiative of $464.3 million over four years from 2009-10. The funding for the whole-of-government initiative covers: international agricultural research; improving rural livelihoods by facilitating solutions to market failures in rural areas; and building resilience through targeted social safety nets. Under the international agricultural research component, ACIAR has been appropriated $69.0 million over four years (ACIAR has also been allocated additional funds for the program in Africa of $16.7 million).

The additional funds to ACIAR for *Food Security through Rural Development* initiative are being allocated to four central program thrusts:

* safeguarding food security and climate change adaptation and mitigation in the rice-based farming systems of South Asia (Bangladesh) and South-East Asia (Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao PDR) **(**Initiatives 1 and 2);
* exploiting opportunities for developing high-value agricultural, forestry and fisheries products in Pacific islands countries(Initiative 3); and
* increased financial support to the CGIAR (Initiative 4).

2 B This funding was foreshadowed in the May Budget.

**Question 3**

Topic: Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

Written question, October 2009

**Senator Payne asked**

3 A Can ACIAR confirm whether the Minister has made a final decision about increased funding to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research? If so, what is that decision?

3 B Has the Minister indicated he is happy with the progress of the CGIAR agenda?

**Answer**

3 A In the context of the Government’s *Food Security through Rural Development* initiative the Minister has agreed to substantially increase Australia’s financial support to a restructured Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) subject to continued good reform progress. The decision provides for a doubling of financial contributions over the next four years. This increased support (additional to existing allocations) will be as follows: 2009-10 $7.0 million; 2010-11 $10.0 million; 2011-12 $13.0 million; and 2012-13 $14.0 million.

3 B The CGIAR reform process is continuing but it is premature to assess the outcomes of current deliberations and institutional restructuring proposals.