



Board for International Food and Agricultural Development 180th Public Meeting

Agriculture and Food Security in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts

**Tuesday, October 15th, 2019 | 8:30 am- 12:30 pm Central Time
Downtown Marriott | Des Moines, IA**

Background and Objectives:

The Board for International Food and Agricultural Development is a seven-member, presidentially appointed advisory board to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) established in 1975 under Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act, as amended. The provisions of Title XII mandate that USAID bring the assets of U.S. universities to bear on development challenges in agriculture and food security. At the request of USAID Administrator Mark Green, BIFAD is examining issues around agriculture and food security in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Today, addressing food insecurity means operating amidst conflict and fragility. Last year, every country in a protracted food crisis was also engaged in violent conflict (FAO 2018). There is an urgent need to understand the unique challenges of improving the agricultural sector and food security in conflict-affected and fragile contexts in order to strengthen investments in evidence-based, tailored food and agriculture programming. This BIFAD public meeting begins to address this need by bringing stakeholders together for a timely discussion on the subject.

The event will specifically address the following questions: What is the state of knowledge on the relationship between conflict, fragility and food systems? What are the implications of this relationship for food security? How can food security and agricultural investments be most effective in preventing conflict or accelerating recovery in post-conflict settings?

A desired outcome from the meeting is a clear statement on the importance of (1) understanding the relationship between food systems, conflict and fragility for food security goals, and (2) ensuring that food security programming is tailored to the unique needs of these contexts, with a special focus on how food security can prevent conflict and accelerate recovery from conflict.

This public meeting is open to all stakeholders but will particularly target development practitioners, donors, government stakeholders, and multilateral organizations working in agriculture, food security, and nutrition in conflict-affected and displaced population contexts. The event will be made available in livestream to a virtual audience and recorded audio and video will be made available in archive form.

Agriculture and Food Security in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts

AGENDA

- 8:00 a.m. **Registration**
- 8:30 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Remarks**
Mark Keenum, President, Mississippi State University and Chair of BIFAD
- 8:35 a.m. **Setting the Stage and Context**
- 9:00 a.m. **Panel 1: State of Knowledge: Fragility, Conflict, and Food Systems**
- The goal of the panel is to understand the state of knowledge on the relationship between conflict, fragility and food systems, the implications of this relationship for food security, and the evidence gaps in our understanding of these relationships.*
- This panel reviews the evidence on the relationship between conflict, fragility, and food systems. Why and how can conflict disrupt food systems, and why and how do food systems enable or mitigate conflict? The panel explores big picture impacts for entire countries and economies to micro-level impacts to consumers, smallholders, and rural communities in such places as the Sahel, northeast Nigeria, Somalia, Mali, Haiti, and Bangladesh.
- Food systems play an important role before, during, and after conflict. The link between food insecurity and conflict is prominent during price spikes or competition over natural resources. Land disputes, access to markets, and local corruption can promote food insecurity and conflict alike. During conflict, farmers can be targeted for their food assets while people broadly lose food access and adopt negative coping strategies that reduce nutrition. These impacts in turn can play a role in radicalization and rebel group recruitment. In light of this evidence, how can we avoid inadvertently doing harm? What do we need to know next?

Discussion

10:15 a.m.

Break

10:45 a.m.

Panel 2: Programming Implications: Tailoring and Innovation

The goal of this panel is to address how food security and agricultural investments can be tailored to fragile and conflict-affected contexts, and how practitioners can harness existing evidence and generate new ideas for promoting agriculture and food security amidst conflict and fragility.

This panel examines best practices on how to ensure food security and agricultural investments are context-driven: conflict-sensitive, flexible to the unique characteristics of conflict and fragility, and effectively integrating humanitarian and development assistance when necessary. Beyond tailoring investments, new ideas are crucial in these settings too. For instance, portable assets and skills and creative ways to build market access are all promising ideas that could increase food security and resilience amidst conflict. In fragile contexts, innovative solutions are needed that can address thorny issues such as corruption or illegitimate governance too.

Under what conditions can practitioners expand or support markets amidst fragility or even conflict? How can practitioners develop agriculture-led growth programming suited for these contexts? What other creative ideas can build the resilience of people experiencing conflict and fragility?

Discussion

12:00 p.m.

Public Comment Period

Mark Keenum, Mississippi State University, BIFAD

12:25 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Panel Moderators

12:30 p.m.

Adjourn

Mark Keenum, Mississippi State University, BIFAD