Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee
Budget estimates 2008–2009; June 2009
Answers to questions on notice from
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research

Question 1

Topic: Food security strategy statement
Hansard, page 43

Senator Payne asked:

A. What are the costs of Dr Simon Hearn's participation in the joint ACIAR-AusAID Africa mission, including travel costs and staff hours?

Answer

A. Dr Simon Hearn, Senior Adviser, represented ACIAR on the joint (AusAID, ACIAR, CSIRO) Africa Food Security Scoping Mission (23 February to 14 March 2009) and he visited South Africa, Kenya and Senegal. As a result of the mission's discussions with a range of African regional, sub-regional and national organisations, multilateral research and aid agencies and representatives of donor countries, a mission report was provided to government. The report contained general mission findings and insights as well as a range of activities for further consideration.

Apart from Dr Hearn's salary costs, his travel costs (including airfares, accommodation and other allowances) were $24,440.20. Additional to these direct mission costs, it is estimated that he undertook 5 days mission preparatory work in Canberra, including interagency meetings and discussions; preparation and reading of background papers and briefing material.

Question 2

Topic: Africa food security scoping mission
Hansard, pages 44-45

Senator Payne asked:

A. Would you provide information on the official-to-official discussions that were part of the Africa mission and any discussions in addition to that that have taken place with officials from African nations?

B. Could you indicate which nations have been involved in those discussions and which of your officials have been involved in those discussions—whether they were part of the mission or in addition to the mission?

Answer

A. In the context of the Australian Government's current food security strategy initiative, ACIAR has worked in conjunction with a number of government departments and agencies to address the scope and options for Australia to contribute to food security in developing countries. ACIAR's role has been primarily focused on participation in discussions on agricultural research and development options as a component of a wider food security package.

In this context, an ACIAR staff member, Dr Simon Hearn, participated in the joint (AusAID, ACIAR and CSIRO) Africa Food Security Scoping Mission (23 February to 14 March 2009) which visited South Africa, Zambia, Kenya and Senegal. The ACIAR representative participated in a research sub-team (ACIAR and CSIRO) which visited South Africa, Kenya and Senegal and met with officials from African regional, sub-regional and national organisations. These meetings included senior managers from the:

- Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP)
- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
- Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA)
- West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD)
- Partnerships for African Development (NEPAD) Secretariat
- South African Agricultural Research Council (ARC)
- University of Pretoria
- Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI)
- Regional Centre for Studies on the Improvement of Plant Adaptation to Drought (CERAAS).

The ACIAR representative was not present for all meetings undertaken by the mission. Other meetings were held with the following African institutions:

- Common Market for Eastern and Southern African (COMESA) Secretariat
- African Centre for Food Security
- University of Kwazulu Natal.

The mission also met with a range of international organisations with offices in Africa. The ACIAR representative met with the following International Agricultural Research Centres:

- International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
- World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)
- International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)
- International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT).

Other mission meetings held with international organisations' representatives included officials from (those marked * included ACIAR):

- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)*
- Swiss Development Agency (SDC)*
- Millennium Development Goals Centre*
- Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)*
- International Labor Organisation (ILO)
- International Finance Corporation (IFC)
- World Bank
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations
- UK Department for International Development (DFID)
- Opportunity International
- Helpage International
- Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Program
- African Enterprise Challenge Fund
- UNICEF Social Protection Review Team

B. In addition to the above mission meetings with African agricultural research institutions in western, eastern, central and southern Africa, it should be stated that ACIAR does have ongoing bilateral and multilateral agricultural research partnerships with a number of government and non-government research institutes in South Africa. These are not directly relevant to date with the above mentioned food security mission.

Question 3

Topic: Food security
Hansard, page 47

Senator Payne asked:

A. What is the focus in Fiji in relation to research opportunities in high-value agriculture with respect to horticulture, forestry and fisheries?

B. What is the nature of the programs and the expected funding amounts for each of the six countries in the Pacific?

Answer

A. The potential focus in Fiji of the new integrated Pacific program of research and development to underpin development of targeted high-value agriculture, fisheries and forestry products, may include some aquaculture products (seaweed, pearls, freshwater cultured fish), taro and starchy crops, flowers and some fruits. ACIAR's primary engagement in Fiji is not with Fiji Government agencies but rather with regional Pacific island organisations such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the University of the South Pacific, which are based in Fiji, and with the private sector and some non-government and community-based organisations.

B. Two major new integrated regional programs are proposed in the Pacific island countries (Solomon Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga and Kiribati): the Pacific Agribusiness Research for Development Initiative (PARDI)—a program of research and development to underpin development of targeted high-value agriculture, fisheries and forestry products—valued at $10 million over four years (redirected plus additional funding); and a $2-3 million, four-year program for capacity building in agricultural research and extension.

PARDI will adopt a demand-driven value-chain approach which confirms/identifies the opportunity and comparative advantage for Pacific island high-value products; addresses researchable supply chain constraints and identifies value-adding opportunities; and develops capacity within research, farmer and agribusiness organisations for applied research and analysis in these areas.

Six priority products will be identified from a range of high-value products including: aquaculture products (seaweed, pearls and freshwater cultured fish), veneer timbers and other high-value forest products, taro and other starchy crops, indigenous nuts and flowers, vegetables and spices (vanilla and pepper) and cocoa. New products may be added in the second and fourth year under the flexibly designed program.

While a formal country-based split of program budget has not been determined at this stage, it is anticipated that in alignment with the rest of Australia's overseas assistance program, the relative investment in Melanesian countries will be higher, as well as Samoa, which have a number of agricultural entrepreneurs.

Question 4

Topic: Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
Hansard, page 47

Senator Payne asked:

A. Who are the 64 member nations on the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research?

Answer

A. The CGIAR partnership includes 25 developing and 22 industrialised countries, 4 private foundations, and 13 regional and international organisations that provide financing, technical support, and strategic direction:
Countries: Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom and the United States.

Foundations: Ford Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture.

International and regional organisations representatives: African Development Bank, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Asian Development Bank, European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, Gulf Cooperation Council of the Arab States, Inter-American Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), OPEC Fund for International Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank.