



# Approaches to Building Food Security Policy Analysis Capacity in Developing Countries: IFPRI and MSU

Presentation Transcript

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[Session 1]

*Zachary Baquet:*

Welcome everyone. My name is Zachary Baquet. I'm the knowledge management specialist for the Bureau for Food Security. I'd like to welcome you to today's special seminar brought to you by the Bureau for Food Security through our Knowledge Driven Microenterprise Development Project Partners.

Today's seminar is titled Approaches to Building Food Security Policy Analysis Capacity in Developing Countries. We'll have two speakers and then we'll have Q&A followed by a brief rest, seventh inning stretch. Then we will have a panel discussion followed by another round of Q&A and finally a wrap up statement.

With that, I will introduce our two speakers. Duncan Boughton is a co-director of the Food Security Group at Michigan State University. He trained at the University of Reading in the UK, the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines and worked in the Gambia for five years as an agricultural economist with the National Research Program before beginning graduate studies at MSU in 1988.

From 1998 to 2004, he led an MSU team in Mozambique helping to establish a policy analysis department in the economic directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture and a socio-economic studies unit in the National Agriculture Research Program.

He continues to work closely with local analysts in Mali and Mozambique on investment priorities to improve food and nutrition security.

Then our second speaker will be Paul Dorosh with the International Food Policy Research Institute. Paul is the division director of the Development Strategy and Governance Division. He was the deputy division director of IFPRI's Development Strategy and Governance Division from June of 2010 to April of 2011.

Dorosh worked at the World Bank from March 2003 to August 2008 as a senior economist with the spatial and local development team of the Finance, Economics and Urban Development Unit. Then as senior rural development economist of the South Asia Rural and Agricultural Development unit.

Prior to working for the World Bank, he worked for IFPRI as a research fellow and senior research fellow from '97 to 2003 serving as chief of party for the Food Management and Research Support Project in Dhaka, Bangladesh 1997 to 2001.

With that, I will hand it over to Duncan who will have the first talk.

*Duncan Boughton:* That was the first piece of capacity building as I learn how to – *[Laughter]*

This is a highly simplified schematic of food policy research sequence. When we're doing capacity building for anything, we really want to start with a results perspective.

The results that we're after here with capacity building for food security is accelerated reductions in hunger and poverty. The pathway by which we hope to achieve those accelerated reductions is by decision makers in the public and the private sector and, of course, this is a very simplified schematic.

There's a lot of other stakeholders including PBOs who then take actions in terms of adopting improved policies or increasing the amount and quality of public and private investment in food systems and that results in accelerated reductions in hunger and poverty.

You can think of this right hand half of the schematic as being the demand side for improved food policy. On this side, we have the supply side with its different components of data collection, analysis and outreach.

A really critical part that these food policy systems to work is these linkages. The important thing to remember about these linkages is they don't actually exist. They have to be created. The most important one of those linkages is the linkage between decision makers and the food policy research system.

Part of the reason that that linkage is very weak is that information about policy research demands can be very impacted because of organizational boundaries and it can be poorly articulated. Decision makers often don't usually come to a policy research unit with a policy research question. They come with a problem, like consumer food prices are too high. Often at the back of their mind is a solution to that problem. It could be an export ban to reduce domestic consumer prices, for example.

So, one of the key tasks in establishing this linkage is to create a dialogue between researchers and decision makers in order to translate those problems into researchable policy questions. In that sense, this outreach between policy researchers and decision makers is absolutely critical because that continuous interaction allows those kind of problems to be translated into questions such as why are costs in the food system so high and what options are there for bringing those costs down other than policy responses that might have unintended consequences.

Then that in turn provides questions and feedback to those undertaking analysis and, of course, those needs for analysis then drive the kind of data that's collected.

Another really critical feedback loop is that once actions are taken, then it's very important that the data collection and analysis system take account of what are the expected impacts so that they can see whether those impacts actually occur and whether there might be some unintended consequences that need to be addressed.

So, now we can bore down a little bit into the different components of the food policy research system. Data collection is really the foundation, having accurate, relevant, timely data. In our experience at MSU, we've done a lot of work with market information systems.

Those market information systems are absolutely critical to giving governments the confidence to move from state marketing to private sector marketing and they continue to be important today in terms of managing our food crises and dialogue between the government and the private sector NGOs about how to manage a food crisis. Information about food prices countrywide is very important.

Another area in which we've invested heavily in data is in terms of improving the accuracy of agricultural production statistics and also complementing agriculture production surveys with information about agricultural marketing by smallholder households, income composition by smallholder households and being able to disaggregate those kinds of information by different types and locations of households so that our government and private sector investment programs can be more effectively targeted.

We have two full time staff who work with national statistical agencies in the four countries that we focus on, Mali, Mozambique, Kenya and Zambia. They work full time on training in the area of survey questionnaire design, data management systems and continuously upgrading the technology that's used.

This picture here is actually the first ever agricultural rural livelihood survey that was done using field based data entry and cleaning. It was done in Mozambique just ten years after the end of the Civil War.

So once you have a strong data system, then you're in a position to do some helpful analysis. It's really critical to build ownership of the research agenda by the local institutions. We do that at MSU by working very closely in the development of joint work plans that belong to the host

country units and by placing a very strong emphasis on in-country training of analysts.

So we have a series of manuals for things like data cleaning, cross-section analysis, time series analysis. So they're very step-by-step manuals that trainees can use to learn how to do analysis even of quite complex data sets. This is combined with a regular in-service training using laptop computers so that people can become very familiar and confident in doing analysis.

We encourage cross-training between folks engaged in the data collection and folks engaged in the analysis so that people who are doing analysis understand what's involved in doing data collection and data cleaning, data management. Similarly, people involved in data collection understand the value of the information that they collect.

So, of course, all this is only useful if it gets to decision makers in a form that they can readily understand and digest. So, although we also do a lot of research reports, the main tools that we use in outreach are policy syntheses, just one or two pages that summarize the main findings of the research and how those are relevant to policy options for decision makers and make sure that that information also gets out through the local press so that a broader range of decision makers than just the immediate audience have access to those findings.

For the private sector, we find that market outlook conferences bring a lot of interest. Traders are very interested in knowing what the production looks like, what the expected marketing options are, whether there'll be imports and so on.

We also work closely with TV and radio programs in some of our countries so that there's regular bulletins about this. In some cases, we also do radio theater which reaches a broad range of stakeholders.

So now I want to talk a little bit more about how we actually engage decision makers to improve decisions. This group of gentlemen on the left hand photograph are public sector decision makers. They may not look like decision makers to you, but if you ask the driver of the truck, you'll find that they have quite a lot of decision making authority.

They will determine how long it takes for that truck to cross the border and they'll determine how much it costs for that truck to cross the border. If the price gets too high, then you may find a situation like the bottom right hand photograph where grain on trucks is being disassembled. It's being loaded one or two bags at a time onto bikes. It's finding its way across the border into Malawi and then being reassembled onto the trucks

on the other side, which could be part of the reason why food prices in Blantyre are so high and the Minister of Agriculture has a problem.

So what can you do about that kind of situation? Well, in Mali, the Chamber of Agriculture and the trades association of Mali asked us to organize a conference on that particular border where you saw the photograph.

This was a partnership that started out in the early 2000s when in Mali regional trade was very important to Mali to facilitate that US AID Mali financed Michigan State to organize a series of regional market out of the conference where traders from all over the region could come together with representatives of the market information systems in those countries, representatives of Ministry of Commerce and talk about the outlook for the production and marketing in the region, talk about the regulations in their different countries, form networks, make trade deals and as an output of that, they formed associations. Then they came to Michigan State project in Mali and said, “Well we have a problem with this particular border.”

So we organized a very simple border conference in which basically there were about 50 people. All those gentlemen who were at the barricade there and their bosses and their bosses in the region and from the capital and discussed what actually were the regulations for moving material across the border. What was the paperwork that was needed. Why was it needed. Why was trade a good thing.

After a lengthy discussion of the problems, some proposals to the solutions, there were 12 concrete action steps and they agreed on a monitoring plan and it greatly simplified the situation. Six months after, a new livestock market had been opened. The public sector civil servants were very pleased with the performance of the traders. They were much more compliant. They had the right paperwork. It made their life a lot easier and the traders were also happy because they found their costs had gone down a lot.

So now, this border conference model is being replicated by US AID on the Senegal Mali border.

So I’ve given an overview of the food policy research sequences and given an example of a trade policy action. Now I want to talk a little bit about a country example of building food security policy capacity over a period of two decades, which may sound like an enormously long time.

When Michigan State started working in Mozambique just at the end of the Civil War – what I want to illustrate in this sequence and the reason

why I want to go through 20 years in about 2 minutes is really about how capacity building evolved and how the research agenda evolves as the context changes, as national institutions are built up so that you get from a point where you're starting with virtually nothing in terms of the schematic to the point where MSU can exit and US AID sponsors are very happy that they can spend money on something else.

So, we started with this context of post-Civil War recovery and transitioned to a market economy. During the war, it was still a centrally planned economy in Mozambique and our project was housed in the Ministry of Agriculture, but its main clients were really the donor and NGO community in the post-conflict situation.

Hence, we had this primary focus on establishing a market and information system that was essential. Believe it or not, this was the period before cell phones and even land lines were very few and far between.

So if a trader is to be able to actually operate a market system, they needed to have access to information and so, too, did the donors and the NGOs because they were bringing in large quantities of food aid and they needed to make the transition of backing off from food aid without causing hunger, but also providing incentives for increased local production.

Applied research limit activities were fairly limited at that point to following the process of reestablish into the markets where there were problems, where there were infrastructure problems and how the smallholder sector was recovering as one million refugees came back into the country.

Basically, our in-service training at that stage was just confined to a project hired local analysts.

After a period of about five years, then obviously the economy had recovered. The government had recovered somewhat and now it was time for the government to take over public sector leadership. The project was fully integrated into the Ministry of Agriculture's economics director. All the project signs went home. You never saw MSU project anywhere.

We established a new policy analysis unit at the request of the ministry of agriculture and they hired local university graduates who we provided short-term in-service training for and later graduate training.

There was just huge demand from senior decision makers as they sought to integrate with the regional economy \_\_\_\_\_ and they tried to get to grips with smallholder household incomes, why they

were so low, why market surpluses were so low. They just had so many questions, but there was very little data with which to respond to those questions.

So that led us then to work with the National Agricultural Production Survey to improve the sampling for that and to add on a rural household income component to be able to understand the structure of rural household incomes, how they differ over space and so on.

By the end of this period, both the market information system and the policy analysis unit were completely under national leadership. Michigan State was purely in a technical assistance role. This week the national information system in Mali will produce its 871st consecutive weekly bulletin.

So moving onto Phase 3, together with data collected through the Ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ Finance and the Agricultural Production and Livelihood Survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture became increasingly clear though stagnant agricultural productivity was a barrier to further economic growth and particularly poverty reduction and hunger reduction in rural areas of Mozambique.

The National Agriculture Research Program had recently been reorganized under one roof. The head of that organization who had seen the policy analysis unit of the economics directorate in practice came and said, “I really need a unit like that within the National Agriculture Research System. We don’t have any economists. We don’t have any social scientists. There’s no financial analysis or profitability analysis technology. Could you put together a unit like that for the research system.”

So once again, they hired a group of young university graduates and they received specialized training in the role of agricultural economists in an agriculture research setting. Some parts of the training, of course, were common, like the data analysis, for example, but it was tailored very much to the roles of agricultural economists and a research system including out in the rural areas.

Because this was a new institute, it needed to make its case with the Ministry of Finance. Why is research useful. Why should you invest. Then we assisted them with carrying out a priority setting analysis to predict what would be the impact of investments in agriculture research on poverty reduction, what kind of investment the system needed, what the payoff would be and conducted some adoption studies to show that research is actually related to development and productivity and reduction

in hunger. Again, from the outset this studies unit is under national leadership.

So finally, in the current stage, the government is moving from a sector wide approach to the comprehensive African agriculture development plan. They've signed a compact. They're in the process of developing investment plans. There's considerable increased analytical capacity now.

University of Copenhagen's been working ministry of plan for many years. IFPRI established the ReSAKSS Program. You have Michigan State. So now there's a much more coordinated approach to facilitating \_\_\_\_\_ preparations and, for example, carrying out an agricultural public expenditure review and there's increased involvement of Mozambique and university analysts.

The next step really is to establish a university-led policy analysis unit can take over a lot of the kinds of functions that I've been describing.

This is just a very simple schematic of how this unit will work. You have the university center and then you have four major client ministries that it'll be relating to; agriculture, finance, trade and planning. All of these are crucial to public and private sector investment in the sector and we see this university unit is providing training and research services working collaboratively with those four ministries as well as with civil society.

The nice thing about that diagram is that MSU is not on it. University of Copenhagen's not, IFPRI's not on it, but they are actually all there in the background because they'll be supporting these linkages.

Finally, just a very quick word about the contribution of our lead award before I go into the conclusions. One of the things that our lead award enables us to do is to work with analysts across all the countries that we work with and do some cross country and regional analysis together with their analysts and particularly with graduate students from those countries.

So some of the topics that we've conducted cross-country analysis relate to access to agricultural technology and returns to investment, access by smallholders to markets and the impact of government interventions on markets, household income diversification.

We've looked at the effects of agricultural income on school retention as that's very, very important to facilitating the transition of smallholders out of agriculture as the economy diversifies and we've looked a lot at issues of regional trade and how regional trade can facilitate the management of food crisis. This is where our leader award can add value to the associate awards from different countries.

So just to wrap up now what are some of the key lessons that we've learned. Obviously policy ownership matters enormously to have a successful uptake of long-term capacity. That means trust. It's essential that there's trust on the part of policy \_\_\_\_\_. Most of their own analysts as well as those who are supporting them and that there is strong national leadership of the program.

You'll see that we've always tried to emphasize growing up, raising up national leaders who can take over the functions as soon as possible.

On the other hand, we have to acknowledge that in countries with very scarce manpower, there are frequent changes in local leadership. That's true obviously at the political level, but it's also true at the technical level because people rise very quickly through their systems because of a shortage of trained people.

So there's a need for a continuous training, continuous dialogue and we always encourage multiple rounds of local recruitment, local training so that when there are demands from other parts of the system, like planning, monitoring and evaluation, when there's demands from the PVOs for qualified people or from the private sector, there are still sufficient people who can stay in the public sector and will continue to network and collaborate with fellow peers who've now moved into other positions, responsibility in society.

We feel that the cooperative agreement has been a very effective tool for this kind of program because it has flexibility to design activities in relation to an agreed set of objectives. We can be very collaborative about the specific activities that we work on and we can be very collaborative and flexible about the implementation. It provides for continuity, which you can see is important with this multiple rounds of training before it's really integrated into the local organizational culture, but it also allows us to innovate.

Our country project officers, the CTOs in US AID missions are really helpful in encouraging and showing us when and how innovation should take place. Our teams on the ground and myself, we often get really deep into the forest. We can't see the wood from the trees, but our CTOs can say, ya' know, now it's time to hand over this and here's how we could go about it. So that kind of guidance is really crucial to the process.

Obviously policy analysis has to be relevant, it has to be timely. That's achieved through a collaborative design so that the analysts know what decision makers want. Then this frequent interaction with decision makers on intermediate results helps guide the process because usually

you can't map out the whole agenda all at once and interests and demands change as you go along.

A really tough challenge is finding the right balance between the short-term advisory work and longer term research on fundamental problems with the economy. That's a tough balance to find because very often there's just so many demands for short-term advice. Firefighting, if you will. It's important to address that need. You can't just ignore it because if decisions are taken unwisely because of a lack of policy advice, they can be very difficult to change and even if you can change them, the damage can persist for many years.

So for example, if an export ban is imposed, even if you can get that changed within a matter of months, it can be a matter of years before the private sector regains confidence to undertake trading activities.

We've talked a little bit about the importance of investment in data systems and the human and organizational resources to manage them as a foundation for analysis. It's absolutely the value of good, accurate agricultural data cannot be underestimated. If you look at countries that do not have robust data systems or even worse, where those data systems have been politicized in the sense that they are generating the results their politicians want to hear, then that can lead to some very poor decisions because of inaccurate estimates of agriculture production and deficits and surpluses that have serious consequences for vulnerable households.

The next frontier that we see beyond building capacity for the research system is increasing human capacity for use in other parts of the public and private sectors. This is because, particularly in Africa, but also in Asia, food systems are modernizing at a very, very rapid rate.

So growth in the off farm parts of the system is occurring three times as fast as growth in the farm level part of the system. That means that there's a very different demand for human capital for the private sector as they seek to expand the off farm part of the food system and respond to urbanization and rising incomes.

That means that universities really need to upgrade and adjust their curricular to meet these needs. So this as we see as being a major challenge in the coming years.

*[Session 2]*

*Zachary Baquet:* We've got things fixed and we'll continue. My apologies for the delay We'll just make sure that Paul gets the first three questions for the next part. With that, Paul, please.

*Paul Dorosh:*

Well good morning and thank you for this opportunity to come and talk with you about food policy capacity strengthening. I'm very pleased to be here because I consider the capacity strengthening to be so important and I also think that in general we are under-investing in capacity strengthening. That the investments that have taken place in the past, many of them have had huge payoffs and that there are ways to have bigger payoffs in the future as well.

It's been very good to follow Duncan and that excellent discussion of some of the work that MSU has done over the years in Mozambique and elsewhere. I think you're going to hear echoes of some of the things that Duncan said as I talk.

Then finally, I've chosen my examples basically from my own experience to a large extent. I spent four years in Bangladesh on an AID project, '97 to 2001 with IFPRI and then a couple years in Addis very recently. Again, on an AID project co-financed by some other donors. So you'll see some examples from that.

This is my next to last slide, but actually I'm going to show it twice so I'm kind of cheating, but I want to get my point across. What I want to argue is that long-term commitment is crucial.

You saw a little bit of that in the story of MSU in Mozambique, but if we have a long-term commitment to institutions, to governments, to people, we can have a coherent capacity strengthening program and we can help build institutions. Institutions need some kind of certainty. They can't be living with a lot of uncertainty. The people have a very difficult time with the uncertainty.

The other thing I wanted to emphasize is that we really need to support local research institutions. Governments, I'm going to talk a lot about supporting governments and government analytical units, but also for these institutions outside of governments, in either case incentives matter a huge amount, both for the institutions and their staff.

Again, this long-term commitment helps to stabilize incentives and I think we just wanted to touch on the issue that it's very difficult often to provide adequate incentives for government analysts. Why is that? 'Cause we don't control government pay scales. There are ways to get around this to some extent. Training is a very big perk for people over time, but I think we need to recognize that as well.

I'm going to talk about IFPRI's efforts in capacity strengthening. I'm going to focus mostly on what we're calling country strategy support

programs, CSSP's, but I did want to point out also that IFPRI's involved in other aspects, too.

In West Africa we have an office in Dakar, Senegal and there's a program supporting Cadap and the ReSAKSS effort, a program of building capacity in economy wide analysis as well under Agri-Dep. We have an office in Addis. Two offices, one for a project that I'll tell you about in a minute, but also the eastern southern African office and then also in New Delhi for South Asia, but these other little dots in Africa are country strategy support programs.

These are long-term efforts, preferably multi-donor with strong links with research and government institutions where we're trying to engage not just these institutions, but farmers, the private sector and others. Big focus on strengthening capacity in these long-term programs. Then encouraging dialogue and communication.

So what do these programs do? On the research side, Duncan mentioned the importance of the research being demand driven, policy relevant, empirical, rigorous and then part of capacity strengthening and in terms of having impact on the policy, collaborative research.

On the policy analysis on the far right, these programs produce policy notes, various kinds of other informal inputs into policy documents.

I wanted to focus on the bottom right hand side of this slide on capacity strengthening. We're involved in various kinds that I'll talk about in a minute, but hands-on training, analytical methods, joint research to some extent, support for master's and PhD. Programs.

So, Ethiopia. Ethiopia we have a program funded by four donors including USAID. There's various kinds of short-term training courses, but I'm about to show you my favorite slide and that gives an example of the importance of leadership, of local researchers, of institutional support by the government of sustained efforts with clear targets and then training the trainers.

Favorite slide. Upper left, your standard photo of a training course. I bet each of you have seen about 100 of these. There's everybody smiling happily after the course is completed and this is a course in GIS in Addis in 2009.

If you go down just below that, you have two people standing there, Alamyu and Emily and it turns out the teacher is Emily, Alamyu is the student. Alamyu was a fantastic example to everyone. Alamyu actually

has a Ph.D. from a small university somewhere in the UK. I think it's called Oxford.

But he wanted to take the GIS course. He took it with the others. He put in the big effort. Here he is giving a little speech at the end of the course. That was such an example to the other researchers in Ethiopia to have a senior person willing to learn, willing to take the course and put in the effort.

If you move to the right from that photo, the distinguished looking man in the suit is Atta Nuay. He's the chief economic advisor to the Prime Minister in Ethiopia. He's also the head of the Ethiopian Development Research Institute. He is a very busy person.

He bothered to come to our ceremony to hand out the certificates for the CGE course. We put it on at the end of a little seminar in Addis. Again, mid-2009. That was such an encouragement to those analysts that had been taking that course. This was a course that took place over time.

Actually that particular course was a two-week effort, but these people had been working with the team for quite some time and that signal by the government, by the head of the institute meant that they could see that it was important. That kind of support from the institutions in country from the leadership makes a huge difference.

Then if we come back up counterclockwise you see the photo. That's the Ethiopian flag, red, yellow, green in the background. These folks are people that had been part of this CGE, computable general equilibrium, economy wide modeling effort. We had the intensive course for a couple weeks, but then after that we met every two weeks or so to talk about how to apply this and how to do some research. The goal was for the teams to get a paper into the Ethiopian Economic Association conference. Five of the teams pulled it off and there they are all smiling.

Back to the original slide, the standard slide of everybody after a course. There's a fellow in the back, the tall fellow in the middle. He's standing there.

A year later, IFPRI's doing some support to GIS training in Mozambique. You see the map of Mozambique. You look carefully on the right hand side, one of the trainers is one of the analysts from Ethiopia. Excellent trainer. He was so useful to the effort, so good at training. We had done three or four courses in Ethiopia by this time. He participated in doing some of the training in Mobutu and the plan is that later this year he'll be going back again to train others.

A little bit about different types of training. You can count the number of people who got trained. Here's 2010. We made a big effort in training across these five countries, both men and women, but if you look at the bars on the right hand side for just a second. The first bar on the left is number of people. So we trained roughly 1,700 people in different courses. Some people took more than one course or whatever.

Then we have on the next bar to the right, the number of person days. So I don't want to just count the number of people, but how much time different events actually involve because there's a big difference between a three-hour seminar and a three-week course.

So, for example, if you look at the top blue bars at the top, the light blue, workshops and conferences, well we're looking at about say 600 people that took part in those workshops and conferences, but each of those workshops and conferences also took, well, roughly 600 person days. In other words, these workshops were about a day long type events.

If you look, you'll have a hard time seeing just below the 500 mark on the left here. That little green bar is hands-on training. That was a very intensive effort with analysts at the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia. GIS training, putting together an atlas.

If you look at the bar on the right you can see that that hands-on training involved an enormous amount of person hours.

So, that capacity strengthening, working with the Ethiopian government involved putting together a population in housing census atlas. Again, led by the Ethiopian government, those analysts, working with these people week after week producing the GIS database, cleaning the data, the maps, the whole thing. It was a major effort, but I think the point is that this involved a lot of capacity strengthening and it was country-owned.

Another aspect of the work in Ethiopia and this ties in a little bit more to the research is that there's been a long-term effort at the research together with Ethiopian institutions. The Ethiopian Development Research Institute, but also with Addis Ababa University.

So these bars, fascinating data from the Ethiopian Rural Household survey, which provides an independent look at what's happening in rural Ethiopia over time.

This is a panel data set. That means the same households visited each time and actually the same question. They kept the question exactly the same. They're asking people to evaluate their economic status. They

choose between saying that they're destitute, poor, they never have quite enough, they can get by, they're comfortable or they're rich or very rich.

Fascinating results if you look at the 1995, those bars at the left here, 8 percent are saying they're destitute, 33 percent poor and another 8 percent say they never have quite enough, 41, 49 percent, almost half the population is having a very difficult time in rural Ethiopia in those sites 1995.

Look what's happened in 2009. Those 3 categories are now down to 26 percent. It's cut in half. An independent source of information on what was happening in rural Ethiopia. It's not nationally representative, but it also provided a wonderful database that's enabling further research.

I'm very happy to say that IFPRI and Oxford and Addis Ababa University have gotten that panel data set up onto the web as of late last year. So that's available for other researchers to analyze these issues in Ethiopia.

The third author, Casa Woldehana, longtime professor in economics at Addis Ababa University.

Moving onto Bangladesh for just a moment. In Bangladesh, IFPRI has worked a lot with the government of Bangladesh initially with the Ministry of Food, the food planning and monitoring unit. It's too bad David Atwood isn't here today. He could pitch in with some stories and comments, but in the late 80s and early 90s, IFPRI under the Bangladesh food policy program provided training and analytical support to the food planning and monitoring unit, an analytical unit within the Ministry of Food.

A lot of work was done on a lot of policy issues, but one reform that happened at that time was the liberalization of private sector import trade for rice and wheat. That was a liberalization that was part of a larger liberalization of the economy in many ways and a lot of analysis went into supporting these various market liberalizations.

There was a lot of training of analysts within that food planning and monitoring unit in the early 90s. Then by 1997 when a second project came in, several key analysts were still there and they were continuing to work with the Ministry of Food, continuing to have input into food policy.

So, during 1998 there was a massive flood and the Bangladesh government at that time then, they took advantage of the fact that there had been that change in broad trade policy. That private imports had been liberalized and they made an active effort to promote private sector imports. That added two million tons of rice to domestic supplies and

made a huge difference in stabilizing prices. Two million tons at that time was roughly 20 percent of normal national rice supply for the main monsoon season; half the year.

IFPRI did some analysis subsequent to that and showed the implications of what would have happened if that trade hadn't been there and if there had to be perhaps government imports from Thailand and we showed that this policy of promoting the private sector trade, a policy advocated by those analysts, four to six percent increase in rice consumption relative to what otherwise could have happened and additional rice supplies of roughly a million tons.

What made that policy change possible was the fact that those analysts that had been part of that earlier project were in the government, they were taking part in those policy discussions. Those policy discussions aren't public. Internal policy discussions in the ministry. IFPRI was there in public presenting seminars and such, of course, but the fact that there were trained analysts in the government making the case for certain kinds of reforms and policies made a huge difference in Bangladesh.

Another one of my favorite graphs, but what this graph is showing is rice prices in Dhaka and also rice imports, the blue bars at the bottom. The basic story here is that this bright red line is the Dhaka wholesale price of rice. The blue line and the green line at the top are estimates of the import parity price, the price of rice coming from India in this case.

What happened at the time of the flood is that the price rose dramatically in this period. Bangladesh had a choice. Should it panic, rush in to try to control the rice market and try to have enormous public sector imports destroy the incentives for private sector or should it promote private sector imports while at the same time running their public food grain distribution system and conducting public tenders in a very open way.

So, government of Bangladesh had a very open policy, encouraged those private sector imports. Those blue bars, the right hand axis is showing imports in thousands of tons. Two hundred thousand tons per month for seven months in a row coming across the border from India adding to the supplies.

Again, a huge policy impact and what was absolutely crucial were that Bangladesh analysts who were working inside the Ministry of Food.

I told you this was my next to last slide and now we're really at the next to last slide. So what I want to, again, make the point, this capacity strengthening needs to be something that takes place over a longer term and a longer term commitment is crucial. It enables a coherent strategy. It

enables institutions to get built up and supporting the local research institutions then become crucial.

Then the last slide, it says Dorgel and in Bangla, well, you guessed it, it means “patience.” That means we can’t expect instant results from capacity strengthening, but if we do it right and if we build those local national analysts and those institutions, I think we can have huge payoffs for policy, for agricultural growth and for food security. Thank you.  
[Applause]

[Session 3]

*Zachary Baquet:* With that, being cognizant of time, we’re going to invite our panel to come up to the front to give their portion of the event. We’ll also come back to Q&A after that. We do have one member of the panel will be joining us from online. The Gates Foundation, Dr. Pingali will also be giving his comments from online. So with that, everybody can take a moment, stand up, stretch, reach for the ceiling. Do your favorite in place yoga pose.

*Julie Howard:* My name’s Julie Howard. I’m the chief scientist in Bureau of Food Security and senior advisor for agricultural research extension in education. First of all, I want to thank Paul and Duncan for their presentations and just to say to all of you here and to all of you online that it’s really impossible to overestimate the contributions that these two institutions make to our thinking at Feed the Future and the Bureau of Food Security and to the implementation of our programs over the years. I can scarcely think of other institutions. I think I don’t pass a day without leafing through some policy analysis, some document by both Michigan State and IFPRI. So thank you very much for that.

Now I think we’re a little bit behind schedule. What we’ll do this morning, I’m going to turn to Jeff first and ask him to give about five to seven minutes of comments. Then Daniel, ask you to do the same. Then we will wrap up with Prabhu, take some questions from all of you, additional observations and then I’ll close it out. So Jeff, over to you please.

*Jeff Hill:* Thank you, Julie and I really thank you, Phil Steffen for really taking the initiative in getting this event and others organized here. It actually is really very timely and this particular session is actually quite important for us in U.S. government, in US AID, in the Bureau for Food Security because we are very much in the process of raising the profile of the work on policy and increasing the engagement around and deepening the engagement on policy that has been missing for a number of years.

So that this discussion, which is really I think very helpful in being able to reflect on the lessons and the approaches that have been used over the last several decades and it does set the stage and help us as we look to the future of setting some of the new programs.

There's a host of different great lessons that I think that we've just heard about working to strengthen the capacity of policy analysis and it's extremely important role. I wouldn't want to actually restate those and I think that part of our issue and challenge is how are we actually looking to build on that and really taking some of the agenda into a next generation of effort.

In the FTF, Feed the Future, in and of itself creates a different context for being able to engage on policy. As we look at the approach that has been taken, it is built upon the idea that it is partnering with countries that they themselves are creating the foundations for being able to get on with a more productive and a more effective agriculture and food security agenda. It is asking that the countries themselves put in place the kinds of priorities, the agendas and the processes for coordination that will lead to impacting more stable and sustained engagement on this agenda.

That's a different environment than we had in the 1970s and the 1980s and the 1990s and literally the first part of the 2000s of talking about how do we actually engage in working on policy in this arena. So that against that context it does create a way of being able to fundamentally create a different partnership, a new partnership for policy on many of the lessons that we have actually heard and seen here today, which is policy is not – it is not a quick fix. There may be an idea that you can sign a piece of paper that changes a rule or a behavior, but being able to both shape it and to implement it is a sustained period of time to really make this work.

So looking at a new approach in being able to deal with policy and building the kind of multi-year policy partnerships is something that we're very much looking at and being able to do that in a way that we can see and measure the value of the policy work in terms of its value added to being able to achieve those different countries, strategies, their goals and their objectives.

So that as we begin to look forward in looking at what are the different policy efforts to be supported. That will be obviously greatly important.

One of the things that we also actually do see and is extremely important here is that we see the interlinkages between the country, the regional and the global policy context that is so important. We recognize that it's work, that it's going to be needed to engage on those levels that are there.

An important principle that we're moving towards is recognizing the need for really taking as we see here, an integrated approach for really building country systems for both shaping policy, but managing a policy process to really make the changes that are being sought by the country and the development partners on this.

Important in this is setting the priorities and how priorities are really being set. What we didn't quite hear in the earlier discussion and it might be useful to have a reflection on is, is that what is a useful set of tools for setting priorities in the policy arena and policy space.

We're deeply concerned and interested in being able to figure out how to concentrate efforts because we recognize that there are literally hundreds of topics that may qualify as an important policy issue, but which of those policy issues are going to actually generate the greatest value added to the goals and the targets that are being set by the countries and the development community working with them.

I had a whole bunch of questions and I realize I didn't get a chance to ask and will no doubt have to cover those later, but I think I want to just actually create some space for some discussion. So we'll leave it there.

*Julie Howard:*

Thanks, Jeff. I think I did want to note that we'll give time to you Duncan and Paul to come back and respond to the respondents as well as the questions from the audience.

So Jeff, you've highlighted that this is a rising issue for us at US AID. Maybe for Paul and Duncan to think about the prospect of multi-year policy agreements, how might that change or maybe it wouldn't change the way you carry out your work in both policy analysis and capacity building and then what about the idea of setting priorities.

So now I'd like to turn to Daniel I think for the civil society perspective and also the perspective of someone who's been the beneficiary of capacity strengthening and policy analysis in other areas. Daniel.

*Daniel Karanja:*

Thank you. The benefit of being invited late to a program is you get to say what you want. I thought Duncan and Paul gave a wonderful presentation, but I just wanted to step back from that from the forest, move about 15,000 feet and look at the issues that really end up \_\_\_\_\_ the importance of creating effective capacity on the ground.

I used to work with the \_\_\_\_\_ Agricultural Research and did a lot of data analysis and surveys and I just appreciate how much hard work it is to do that. Training, personnel, staying engaged, evaluating policies on the

ground is not easy. It's not a cheap process and it is really critical for Africa and for the future of Africa's agriculture and food security.

It is the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who said, "No nation that wants to shape informed policies and take effective action can be without its own independent capacity." I strongly believe and I've been a key advocate for strengthening capacity on the ground and making sure that that capacity is sustained and that it is effective in bringing change.

There's been a lot of progress made in Africa. I'll focus my comments on Africa, my area of interest. In the past ten years we've seen the economic trends unprecedented. Five to ten percent economic growth in both oil and non-oil producing economies. We've seen the donor community and national governance make a turnaround and pay more attention to investing in agriculture, which is an issue that the partnership to cut hunger and poverty in Africa's been working on for awhile.

If we recall and we tend to have very short memory, in the 80s and 90s when funding for African agriculture plummeted, we did funding for strengthening institutional and human capacities also declined. We've seen a crawling back of that and more resources being poured in and a lot of interest in actually filling back that capacity.

But we've also seen important political reforms in many countries and now we have more open governments that are willing to invest in their people, their opening space for the private sector and civil society and I think the kind of process, which Jeff is heavily involved in, is really a testimony to that. There's more willingness to dialogue and engage and create a path that creates development.

We've seen intense interest in the private sector to invest in Africa in the last few years and my hope is that we can find a way of capturing that interest and translating some of that into capacity assistance.

Of course the U.S. government and many foundations played a key role in developing the current capacity of African leaders in policy and research. We remember in the early 60s with the airlifting of some of the students to the U.S. and British universities for the great trainings, but I think now we need to think more innovatively how to engage them where they are at their work places and build capacity right there.

Some of these programs we saw in the past that were so successful, they actually achieved a lot because they were long-term engagement. We've heard from Paul and Duncan how important that is. There were forecast and priority problems in these countries. These were not just programs and projects to achieve certain results. They also built long-term

relationships. I think that was really critical in terms of developing strong collaborations.

The benefits of those programs was that basically capacity flowed both ways. People who went to these countries learned what the issue is there, but they were able to give better capacity strengthening once they understood the core issues. The focus was really to have that capacity remain on the ground and that's not just with the donors, not just within foreign institutions.

Now we realize that this cadre of leaders are quickly retiring and dying away and what we are seeing is a huge intergenerational gap of unfilled capacity. Part of this was really because of the investment that occurred in the 80s and 60s.

To overcome these challenges that are coming up and how to face off with persistent challenges of hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity in a dynamic, competitive and changing environment, we see that we'll have to actually do much more capacity building with much, much less resources. So we need to be smart in how we select our programming to be effective.

But here are some challenges that we need to overcome. One is a very high demand for training and education in capacity building while local institutions still are challenged with poor quality education, insufficient infrastructure and inadequate teaching staff. We see that most curriculum is still not geared towards solving problems on the ground and that is a big political challenge as well. Leaders are not willing to invest if these institutions are not useful.

\_\_\_\_\_ institutions \_\_\_\_\_ when you think about research extension and training organizations that don't work together, they don't collaborate. We need to find new means of institutional incentives that provide for better collaboration.

I think the area of institutional analysis and reform is deeply lacking. I think we need to do more work in that, but we see a leadership that is willing to invest again within the \_\_\_\_\_ framework. We are seeing more involvement there. Of course we have to involve the universities in that process as well, but with limited funding we've seen donor programs increase, but most of them are short-term projects. They are focused on quick gains and quick outcomes rather than those long-term commitments that build relationship, that build trust, that build stability.

We've seen quite a vast number of two to three day workshops and short-term conferences in capital cities. These are now going to make up for

lost capacities. We have to engage more deeply. We have to build the kind of long-term relationships that we had from Michigan State.

We need more smart collaboration. With ICT technology today, even online, if we're able to build infrastructure and capacities in some of these institutions, we can do it without having to go underground, but we have to build relationships so visits are important.

Let me end with some opportunities that I think are coming up and they are here that shouldn't be missed. One is really the \_\_\_\_\_ investments. African governments are willing to put more money into this. We have to try and guide them the best way to do that and work with them.

They should have innovative ways of strengthening African institutions so they develop the human resources that the countries need. I think that's really important.

We have to create interesting pathways for leveraging public and private sector investments in capacity building. There's still not much work, especially in Africa, on how the public and the private sectors can collaborate and still make room for NGOs who can voice concerns from the field.

We need to deepen training in new areas, ICT, nanotechnology, agri-business that are basically very weak in Africa. Like I said, we need to think about developing the missing middle. In Africa it's either you are going to college for higher degree or you're dropping out of the high school. We need to find ways of developing community colleges type of institutions that will capture really the managers and doers and workers in the field that we need in agriculture if agriculture is to progress.

Two last things. We have to harness the power of African professionals and businesses in the \_\_\_\_\_. Many, many countries that have made great progress and strides in development have reached out to \_\_\_\_\_ in very innovative ways and no chance to request or get their or tap into their remittances. It's really tap into their skills and their networks and bring those to bear on development at home.

Political leaders, when those who are better land and I think we are getting a lot, but it's very interesting that you go to these countries and some of these same leaders who are trained in those local institutions that are struggling with funding. I think that's why we need strong civil society that advocate and leverage some of these relationships of alumni's and I think in Africa they call them old boys and old girls and really provide more capital.

Let me just close with one observation. Until we really feel strongly and invest in developing the kinds of institutions that will anchor development in Africa, develop strong, sustainable human and institutional capital in Africa, 30 to 40 years from now we will be sitting here and talking about the same issues. I think it's time to change. There are a lot of opportunities and hopefully we can engage together and see how best to do that. Thank you.

*Julie Howard:*

Thanks, Daniel, for those really very, very good and insightful comments. So I just want to reflect on a couple of those.

I think you've correctly identified really from a broader capacity building \_\_\_\_\_ the big challenge that we face. With funding having fallen off really dramatically during the 90s and 2000s, we're facing a problem of having a huge, huge gap. So that I think the challenge that you're teeing up for us is this gap and big demand for training.

So possibly we need to think of a different way of doing the training to be able to get the scale, the quality and reach the numbers that we need. I think you hinted in a couple of your points that we could make better use of the Diaspora that's there, which would contribute a skill set, would also contribute to sustainability as the Diaspora also contributes not only skills but their networks.

You also talked about using ICT and beginning to harness some of the data networks. We talked in Paul's presentation about GIS. How do we bring this new generation of skills and also ways of transmitting to a new generation of folks.

I appreciated your use of the term airlifting. That we really have to turn the page and think of this is not now about airlifting students, massive quantities of students, but really building institutions on-site.

Then lastly what I took away from your comments is I think a hint at do we need to think again about who are the clients for policy analysis and capacity building. I think we heard from Duncan and Paul of a pretty hard focus on government as the main client, but as we get into more decentralized economies and Daniel was noting the private sector was beginning to pick up, the civil societies beginning to pick up, do we have other clients out there who need to understand the implications of the decisions that their governments are taking and understand the implications for them as taxpayers and investors et cetera. So I'd put that on the table for our respondents.

But first I want to thank you both again. I want to turn to Prabhu. Prabhu, are you with us?

*Prabhu Pingali:* Yes, Julie, can you hear me?

*Julie Howard:* We can. Yeah, you're like a disembodied voice. It's like God is giving comments now. Thank you, Prabhu.

*Prabhu Pingali:* Thank you. I really appreciate this opportunity to speak to you. Course I enjoyed listening to Duncan and Paul and then my fellow panelists Jeff and Daniel.

Let me start by saying that my role here at the Gates Foundation is to lead agriculture policy grant writing team. We started this work about five years ago and as most of you know, the Gates Foundation is very focused on smallholder agriculture development in Sub-Saharan Africa. We're very focused on looking at ways to sustainably improve productivity, especially for the basic staples in the region.

As we do that, we've been looking at various levers that are necessary for productivity growth. R&D and investments in better technology is obviously an important part of what's done and connecting farmers to input markets, output markets, et cetera.

But at the foundation we felt very strongly from the very early days of the agriculture program that it was crucial to have very good policy environment that enables smallholders to take the opportunities that are provided to have the incentives to invest in improving productivity.

So that was the genesis of why we decided to have a standalone agriculture policy grant making program, which was actually quite unique among foundations. As we started to work towards an agenda for the policy group, we identified five very broad constraints in the policy space. We tried to build a program in looking at ways to elevate those constraints.

Julie, you had asked me to talk a little bit about lessons learned. So, many of the constraints that we identified in the policy space are essentially the lessons that have come out of many years of work that others have done, including IFPRI, MSU and USAID, et cetera.

So let me give you very quickly what I think are the five biggest areas of concern that we have in terms of gaps in the policy space. The very first lesson we learned as we looked at this area was that there's really no integrated approach to building policy decision making capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

By integrated approach I mean having a program that cuts across the entire policy decision making value chain going from investments in better data, better data systems, investments in better analysis, better capacity for analysis and better advocacy and then the better advocacy then leading to a policy change process and eventually a policy change taking place.

So if you think across this value chain, every component of that value chain is broken. You don't have sustained, reliable data sets that cut across an entire country or cut across Sub-Saharan Africa that will give you a reliable idea on what's the state of African agriculture today, what are the changes taking place, what are the trends, et cetera.

Much of what we think about in terms of African agriculture is based on very spotty data sets in very small areas and not done over long enough periods of time. Similarly when you think about capacity building, there have been many, many efforts at capacity building, but many of these efforts have been very small efforts and they don't last long enough to build a major pool of players around there.

So, that's the second big lesson that we learned that much of the efforts that have been made up to now in capacity building have been very small efforts. Small in terms of numbers of countries. Small in terms of number of people, trained and small in terms of sustainably supporting these efforts over the long-term.

Therefore, when you think about a pool of people you can't really fall back on a significant pool that can make a difference in the region.

The third big constraints that we've noticed is similar to numbers of people. The number of institutions that have managed to become leaders in policy thinking and policy capacity building in the region have been very, very few. You can think of Atagamayu or you can think of Kipra in Kenya or you can think of the University of Pretoria Economics Department, et cetera, but you can count off these institutions on your hand. There are just so few of them. The few that are good have one or two people in them that are the leaders and those institutions tend to depend very much on the capacity of those one or two people that they have.

What we as donors do and when I say donors I include all of us, what we as donors do is then we go to the same institutions and we pile up more and more work on these individuals giving them contractual work, consultancies, giving them various projects, et cetera. So their ability to further their capacity, their ability to expand the pool of people that can do similar work becomes very, very limited.

The fourth point I wanted to make is that many, many organizations, many of them in the room there today are institutions like IFPRI, institutions like MSU, et cetera, have been doing really valuable policy analysis work in Sub-Saharan Africa, high quality work. Work that's published in leading journals, et cetera, but we find that the policy analysis work is quite disparate and it doesn't necessarily respond to any particular demand.

So today if you wanted to do a meta analysis of what do we know about any particular burning policy issue that African governments are struggling with, you don't have enough of a core set of analysis that you can pull together to say here's the best evidence we have on this particular problem.

So take for example, fertilizer subsidies. Now, everybody wants to talk about fertilizer subsidies and so many governments are asking for advice on what's the best evidence there is on the impact of fertilizer subsidies good or bad. What's \_\_\_\_\_.

It's really hard to pull together enough credible analysis on fertilizer subsidies and their impact on smallholder agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa and to be able to say here's the evidence we've got and based on this we recommend do it or we recommend don't do it. Similarly on line policy. Similarly on biotechnology or whatever subject you pick up./

So there is a real need to identify what are the priority demands for policy analysis and then build in not just analytical capacity, but also analysis to be able to address those demands. I think that's really lacking today.

The fifth \_\_\_\_\_ I think there's a big gap is linking policy analysis to advocacy that enables policy change. Very often there's really high quality analysis published in \_\_\_\_\_ journals. Some of that which does \_\_\_\_\_ to policy breach, et cetera, but I suspect after the briefs are done, then most people feel that the job is done, but for us that's the beginning of the policy change process.

What we need is a mechanism that goes from the policy briefs, the policy messages that have come out of analysis and goes into creating advocacy messages, which are not the policy briefs. The policy briefs is a starting point for an advocacy message and then go to a fairly proactive advocacy agenda to see a policy change happen.

I don't believe that there's enough attention paid to this last section, this last component of the policy value chain and that's missing.

So these are the five big broad areas where when we started to work on policy, we felt these are the areas that needed strengthening, that we need to invest significant amounts of money to start getting more sustainable policy chains across Sub-Saharan Africa.

So as a foundation we've made significant investment in better data. We've invested in across Sub-Saharan Africa \_\_\_\_\_ panel data set through the LSMS \_\_\_\_\_ World Bank and over the next few years we should be building up to a panel of about 25,000 households, \_\_\_\_\_ random sample households across the region that we will be supporting building a panel that is at least visited once every three years. In some cases much more frequently than that.

We are supporting building better data and infrastructure such as \_\_\_\_\_ base data platforms in 17 countries across Africa that pull together all of the aggregate national level and sub national level and household level data on agriculture and rural economy across these countries and each country having its own web-based platform.

We've been supporting \_\_\_\_\_ spatial data and household data together. So soil information, water climate information, et cetera, together with the household \_\_\_\_\_ data sets through IFPRI's \_\_\_\_\_ choice later platform.

Then we've been looking at ways in which to strengthen analytical capacity. There we've gone back to basics in a way. I really appreciated Daniel's phrase of airlifting people. What we've been trying to do is avoid that airlifting problem by trying to build – have the capacity building will take place in the region itself.

So we've got a major program with a dozen universities across Sub-Saharan Africa in helping strengthen agricultural economics capacity and through a program called the Collaborative Masters Program in Agricultural Economics and Policy that's spearheaded through University of Pretoria and University of Nairobi and linking all of the major universities in eastern and southern Africa.

This program will result over a six-year period in about 280 new master's degree holders in agricultural economics in eastern and southern Africa.

We're just embarking on \_\_\_\_\_ west African program which is very similar to this one. So between these two programs we are hoping that over the next six to ten year time period we can infuse a much stronger number of master's degree holders in this area. That's one part of the capacity building work.

At the same time, I think we need to strengthen institutions and institutional homes for encouraging long-term sustained analysis in this area. So the work of the think tank initiative that's supporting about 40 think tanks across Sub-Saharan Africa by providing them core support over a long-term period is one way in which we are trying to build institutional capacity.

AT the same time, we are helping create what we call in \_\_\_\_\_ the MSU model in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is to strengthen the university in Sub-Saharan Africa to be a center of policy analysis capacity, enriches the University of Pretoria and their economics program and to have them become a major center of learning in the region for policy analysis and for training in policy analysis. That's something that we've been supporting.

Then the last part is on policy \_\_\_\_\_ where we've been working with \_\_\_\_\_ and with IFPRI in creating a way in which at the country level there is a way in which the demand for policy analysis is expressed by the decision making community and that that demand has been used as a way of promoting country specific policy analysis.

So we are now helping build these policy hubs across half a dozen countries as an initial \_\_\_\_\_. What these policy hubs are trying to do is bring the ag ministry and the finance ministry together with the chair of the policy hubs being jointly chaired by the secretary of agriculture and the secretary of finance and then having a committee of decision makers that can ask for policy analysis around a set of major issues that they feel are priorities for them to be addressing.

Then from that commission the work that needs to be done within the countries. This can be in the area of \_\_\_\_\_ policy or technology policy or land policy, et cetera. So this commission \_\_\_\_\_ then directly contributes to addressing the demands that these decision makers have. Then that feeds straight back into the policy process.

*Julie Howard:*

Thank you very, very much, Prabhu. I think we are running out of time and we wanted to take just a few minutes to go back to Duncan and Paul for any last comments. Unfortunately some people are going to have to leave and we'll let them leave, but Prabhu thank you and thanks to all of the panelists, but I just want to turn quickly to Duncan and Paul and I think, Zachary, we're going to have to come back to this topic, right? Duncan?

*Duncan Boughton:*

Thank you very much indeed. Thanks to all the panelists for their comments. They resonate very deeply that what Daniel referred to as the generational gap. This is really a very deep gap and I think there is a realization and I think just the scope of the program that Prabhu just laid

out demonstrates what a strong response there has been by Gates Foundation to trying to fill these gaps.

US AID as well is working very, very hard to promote local leadership, but it probably is going to be a 10, 15, perhaps even 20 year process to really fill those gaps and build credible, sustainable local institutions. So that is a challenge I think for US AID especially in the current fiscal environment to be able to map out those programs.

Jeff asked the question about what are the priorities. I think some of the priorities are reasonably clear in terms of the analyses that have been done. For example, the challenge of what Prabhu referred to of sustainable productivity growth, which is also at the heart of the Feed the Future research strategy.

These are correctly identified priorities and issues of land and water constraints, issues of the food and nutrition transition as people move towards an urban and middle income diet and not moving from under nutrition to obesity, which is a very significant risk. In some countries they're fairly well down that transition. You can have the same level of obesity as stunting because the urban diets are not adequate.

The challenge really is to address these priorities I think at the national and regional level so that the national and regional level policy makers and decision makers have ownership over those priorities in their own areas of mandate so that they can make investments to deal with the issues that they have responsibility for.

Part of the challenge there is that elected leaders have a very different life cycle from the problems that have to be dealt with. So there is a negotiation that has to go on.

Julie asked the question about how do you frame the kind of agreements that can put this in place. I think there definitely is a trend, a correct trend towards having multiple donor collaboration in addressing these issues and in having multiple sources of assistance according to what is needed.

These are obviously slightly more complex agreements to structure, but so long as there are incentives for each party and so long as there is accountability for each party, I think it's very possible to structure those.

As I've said at the beginning, the cooperative agreement mechanism that has enabled MSU to perform this role for almost 30 years has been a very, very powerful mechanism. Not a perfect mechanism, but it has given local US AID missions a high degree of control, a high degree of input into the capacity building process and at the same time, allowed Michigan

State University to maintain its commitment to capacity building processes through the leader award.

That's been very effective. It needs to evolve obviously in this multi-donor, multi-agency framework, but I think it's been very beneficial in terms of the results that have been achieved. We're certainly very grateful to the agency for it. Thank you.

*Julie Howard:*

Thanks, Duncan. Paul, you want to take us out here?

*Paul Dorosh:*

Thank you. Our basic thrust of this seminar is approaches to building food security policy analysis capacity and in this last discussion of the panelists talking about what's the agenda for the policy research and to some extent what the policy analyst does. At IFPRI we often are using this phrase evidence-based policy analysis. That's what we're trying to build capacity in, but the analyst is bringing in hard empirical evidence so that whatever your political point of view in terms of who's reading the report, there are some facts that the policy maker has and then they make the policy.

I was thinking back when I lived and worked in Bangladesh and I would think of who am I working for by the way. I think oh, well I work for US AID. They're the donors. I think no, no, no, I work for the Ministry of Food. I go visit the secretary. Then in my saner moments I say, uh-oh, I work for IFPRI because they're writing my paycheck at least in the most direct link.

But then when you think about it, I really don't like results frameworks very much. That's a confession I'll make, but it's really nice at the end when we say what's our big objective and we say well, I want to increase food security, I want to reduce poverty.

When we think about that, then I think okay, now who am I working for. Then things I think come into focus a little bit. So I was thinking about how do we set these priorities. The Ethiopian government is very strong in setting agendas for the research. We have a national advisory committee for the project there, the program. The government doesn't let the donors sit on the committee. Can you believe this?

I think it actually works, but they set the agenda and then they talk with the donors afterwards, but this idea that ultimately policy is about the country that we're working in. It's not just about the government. It's about the people that we're trying to improve the lives of.

Just to conclude then, I think several people have mentioned I think we need a greater investment in this policy analytical capacity. It can have

huge impacts if it's done right. I very much like that phrase about building trust.

That means a long-term commitment on the part of the donor, on the part of the institutions working together and very much on the individual level building that trust and this means long-term relationships I think and then coming through with delivering the work that we're supposed to do, but also in terms of how we share the results of the analysis. There's a delicate balance that we all face in terms of advocacy because after all, for the most part, we are not citizens of the country in which we are often working.

So we're working together to try to achieve our ultimate objectives of reducing poverty, increasing food security, but our role in advocacy is a little delicate. Actually that's one big reason why I like working for IFPRI. I worked for the World Bank. To work for IFPRI and talk to the government, well, I don't come with any money. Well, maybe the hope of participating in a workshop, but this is nothing, but we're coming as a partner alongside doing the analysis and ultimately the choice of the policies belongs to the governments, but also to the wider community in those countries. Thanks.