

# *Special* EVENT

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE USAID BUREAU FOR FOOD SECURITY

## POLICY RESPONSES TO FOOD PRICE VOLATILITY

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AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

FEBRUARY 2, 2015

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## PRESENTERS

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## PRESENTATION

*Julie MacCartee:*

Good morning everyone. And welcome to today's special seminar hosted by the USAID Bureau for Food Security and Feed the Future's Agrilinks platform. My name is Julie MacCartee and I'm a knowledge management specialist with the USAID Bureau for Food Security. And I'll be facilitating things today, just kind of keeping things moving along. We're very excited to be hosting Per Pinstруп-Andersen and Danielle Resnick for a discussion on the drivers of government food policy decision making.

We're excited to have this discussion today and hope that you will all keep some good questions in mind during the presentation. Before we get started with the presentations I always like to remind people to please silence your cell phones just so that we don't interrupt the speakers. This session is being recorded and we have an online audience of – at my last check – over 70 people.

It will probably keep climbing. And because it's being recorded and because of my online audience we ask that during the Q&A session after the presenters has spoken that you allow us to pass this microphone around so that everyone online can hear what you're saying and the questions you're asking. All right and just to let you all know we have one upcoming Agrilinks even that I just wanted to highlight.

On February 26 we will be doing a launch seminar for the second edition of the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards manual which is a very useful manual. And if you're on the Agrilinks.org mailing list you'll get an e-mail about this even and our Ag Sector Council series, all of our events in our series.

To kick things off I'd like to introduce Jeff Hill who is the head of the policy division here at the USAID Bureau for Food Security. He'll just be giving a brief introduction and introducing our speakers. So Jeff?

*Jeff Hill:*

Thank you Julie and thank KDAD for actually hosting this set of events here. It's actually a really helpful too I think many different people. I'm Jeff Hill with, as Julie noted, the policy team here in the Bureau for Food Security.

And I wanted to actually welcome Per and Danielle here and really introduce them as well as our commentator. Per, as I think you know, is a famous fellow. He is currently professor emeritus of food nutrition and public policy at Cornell, a former director general of IFPRI and a Nobel Laureate for the Food Prize there. And he is also currently the chair of the high level panel of experts on food security.

Danielle who is here with us is a research fellow at IFPRI and is going to actually look a little bit beyond the 2007/2008 issues that Per will be giving as a recent study from a recent look at how different countries have responded to the food

price crisis that occurred and some of the processes that they used and some of the decisions that they took in response to that.

But before they do that and before we actually get moving I wanted to put in context a little bit of this discussion. Here inside of Feed the Future where we are actually giving a significant level of attention to policy as an important part of achieving our food security goals that we've set out within FTF. And within the policy we are actually giving a lot of attention to what we're looking at as the institutional architecture, the part of the policy system that is helping to actually understand what is driving policy and where's the capacity, the systems, that are enabling countries to be able to deliver on their goals and move this agenda forward?

And within all of that we're trying to better understand how good and bad policies are made and where a donor can actually provide some assistance and make available some of the evidence that we're funding in support of these different issues. I wanted to actually – before handing over – just also introduce our commentator, Lisa Williams, who is a senior governance fellow in the Center for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance in the DCHA Bureau.

Lisa has been leading the efforts within USAID for greater attention to political economy analysis in our programs and policy work in USAID. So with that I think that we'll jump straight into it with Per and thank you very much. I think you are miced up.

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Thank you. Thank you very much Jeff for the kind words. No I do not have a Nobel Prize. I do have the World Food Prize and that is obviously as good or better. And that's a biased position. Thank you for inviting me to come back to AID. It is wonderful to see what Feed the Future and other AID activities have done to the world food agriculture environment situation during the last few years. I'm old enough to remember the time when agriculture development and food security did not receive a high priority at AID.

And I'm really pleased to see the tremendous change that has taken place and the very large number of highly qualified people who are now working at AID and in collaboration with AID to make the world a better place from the perspective of food security, nutrition, sustainability, and agriculture development. So thank you for inviting me to speak to you today. As I said in an earlier meeting this morning I should be listening to you from Feed the Future rather than telling you because you have so much to talk about.

In any case we know quite a bit about how governments respond to food price volatility. When the food price fluctuates we know roughly how a government would respond. And if we don't know we can find out. We know very little about why governments respond the way they do. And there is relatively little

research that helps us understand or better predict how government would respond to the next "food price crisis."

Because as you remember I'm sure in the second half of 2007 and the first half of 2008 there were dramatic increases in food prices in the world market. And some of those price increases were transmitted to developing country governments. And since then we've had dramatic food price fluctuations. We are currently on a downward trend. We have been on a downward trend insofar as cereal prices are concerned, at least for the last year. But it is I presume just a matter of time before we are going of another price spike.

Is that going to be next year or five years from now? Who knows? Much depends on weather – on extreme weather events. So Finn Tarp who is the director general of WIDER, the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research located in Helsinki – Finn and I got together and said, "Why don't we see if we can improve the understanding of why government responded the way they did to these food price fluctuations beginning on '07," and for that matter are still going on.

We approached the Gates Foundation and we got some funds from them. And we put in the rest of the money we needed from Cornell University, from WIDER and from other – I guess basically those were the funders that ended up paying for this research. And this has shown – if I can use this when I can. Here you see the 14 developing countries that we ended up working with. We had a research on each of those 14 developing countries – one in the EU and one in the US.

And that's the network that produced the output that I'm going to talk about today. So the first question was: so food prices are increasing or fluctuating in the world market, but are these fluctuations really transmitted to developing countries? That was kind of the first question we have to ask in order to begin to study how governments would respond and why. And the answer of course depends on the commodity you're looking at – the commodity as well as the country.

So I'm going to show you three illustrations. The first one has to do with wheat prices in South Africa and Bangladesh. The domestic prices in those two countries for wheat fluctuated roughly along with the world market price fluctuations. They are highly correlated. And the reason of course is that those two countries are closely integrated into the world market for wheat. Now the next illustration shows – if you like – the opposite, whether the domestic prices have really – They were really not influenced by world market price fluctuations.

And that's for rice in China and India. And the reason why those two countries basically kept their rice prices stable during a time when the world market rice prices fluctuated dramatically was that they wanted to protect the domestic

market prices and they did that by means of trade policy. In both cases basically by export bans or export restrictions. The third illustration is from two land-locked countries – and that's Malawi and Zambia in this case – which shows that the national factors causing price fluctuations in those domestic markets were much more important than the world market fluctuations.

So you see virtually no correlation between what happened in those two markets and what happened in the world market. You really have to explain which commodity, which country, which time period we're talking about before you can say something about price transmission. Now if you want to have an average – and people like to have averages – in this case it doesn't really mean much because there are large differences. But on the average roughly one-third of the fluctuations in the world market for food is transmitted to developing country food markets. But that's an average, as I said, that you can't really use for much.

We also wanted to see the extent to which the food prices in the European Union would be correlated with the food prices in the world market. And as you see on this slide there wasn't very much correlation. There are a number of reasons for that. One, being that the international food price index that's shown is weighted by the quantity of each food commodity that is traded internationally whereas the weights for the EU price indices of course are very different.

I want you to pay attention to what happened to consumer prices in the EU. I'm from the EU and we complained a lot about these dramatic increases in food prices. Well guess what? When they were the highest it was like a five percent increase as compared to two and one-half, three times increase in the international market, say for rice. And of course the reason there is that in the EU what the consumer pays is to a very small extent due to the food. It's due to all the other things we add to the food.

All the complaints about the large price increases for food in the EU basically came from the newspapers and the TV, and not really from the supermarket. I want to show you also another interesting finding. Let me see if I've got this one right. No I want to talk a couple of minutes about this one because if you now take a specific commodity or a set of commodities like cereals/grains in the EU the prices in the EU for those commodities fluctuate at roughly the same way as the world market because there was a strong integration.

So it depends again on which commodity in which country and with time period you're looking at. We also looked at the biofuel question because as you know there was another discussion about taking food and using it as a raw material for biofuel was a major factor in increasing food prices in '07/'08 and causing price fluctuation since then. This slide shows that there was virtually no correlation between the ethanol price which increased and fluctuated and the corn price or the maize price which stays roughly constant.

Now that was in 2006 or so. That changed dramatically into 2007 for two major reasons: government subsidies for ethanol and the payoff from large investments in refineries for ethanol production. So from that point – from about mid-2007 – you see a high correlation between the world market food prices and the prices for ethanol. And our estimates as to the importance of ethanol production or biofuel production in general because it includes both diesel and ethanol had an impact on food prices. And the estimates run from 10 percent to 30 percent of the fluctuation being caused by the ethanol situation.

So what were some of the policy responses? Well there are basically two things that governments can do if they don't like the outcome of these price fluctuations. They can either try to decouple the price fluctuations in the world market from the domestic market prices. Or they can let the international prices penetrate the domestic market and then compensate those groups that they don't want to see lose. Let me talk a little about the decoupling policies.

Trade policies: I already mentioned that for China and India. A number of other countries use trade policies to try to at least partially decouple the prices. Direct price control: some countries decreed that the food price shall be "this." And of course it didn't work. It never does. You cannot decree what the price should be unless you also adjust supply and demand to meet that new price. But a few countries try.

Some countries moved the value added tax on food when prices were going up in order to protect the consumers. There were some short term supply expansions. Governments would release grain from the stocks that they controlled with prices went up. And they would procure grain when prices went down. Some countries did the exact opposite so that when prices were going up they would procure more, which of course pushed the prices even higher. So be it.

Production expenses were not very important, because we're really looking at short term policies. And it's very difficult to expand production in the very short term unless you are a good friend of the weather gods. Looking now to compensation there were basically three things – three ways – I'm running behind on my slide for which I apologize. There are basically three ways that governments introduce compensation: targeted cash transfers, or untargeted food subsidies, or increasing public sector wages.

And I'm going to come back and talk about the targeting issues a little later. But I want to move now to the policy process and the consequences. Most of the policy interventions were ad hoc. They were frequently late. A couple of governments got ahead of themselves because they were told by the international news media that there was a problem with food prices. Even though they didn't feel it in their own country they sometimes took action that was not necessary. But in most cases it was kind of panic food policy interventions.

The high costs meant that most of those policies didn't last very long. The government lost revenues from export taxes, from removing import tariffs, from removing the value added taxes, and of course the compensation programs, the fertilizer subsidies, the food subsidies, and cash transfers were very expensive. So it didn't last for very long. The countries that interfered or intervened in the price signals of course didn't get the response that they were looking for.

When prices went up they would expect farmers to produce more. But if they stabilize prices of course that would not happen. I'm doing it again, and the reason I'm doing this is I'm looking at a paper and I am forgetting that you are not seeing my paper. So I'm going to come down here and see if I can do this right. Otherwise they will take my Nobel Prize away from me.

*[laughter]*

So the policy process consequences: poor targeting. Some of that was intentional. The targeting was really not for the ultra-poor. It was for the lower middle class in the urban areas and to some extent poor people in urban areas. Why? Because those were the groups that were threatening government legitimacy even though those were not the groups that were suffering the most because many of the rural poor were net buyers of food. And of course when prices would go up they would suffer as well.

Food and fertilizer subsidies: they were short term because they were very expensive. Malawi is an illustration of fertilizer subsidies that lasted for a long time. But even Malawi had to kind of give into the high costs. We didn't get very much in corruption because it's very sensitive. If you are a researcher in your own country and you're going to talk about the government's corruption you may have to come and work in Washington. And some of them wanted to stay in their countries. So we didn't gain very much on that. We do have some indications of corruption in various places.

The trade policies were less effective in some countries because of the informal cross-border trading. And the export bans were selectively enforced by some countries. We will export to our friends but we have an export ban for everybody else – that kind of thing. We saw some of that, particularly for India. I already mentioned untimely government procurement. Sometimes governments would procure when the prices were already going up. That's not a good idea if you want to stabilize prices.

Political economy issues or lessons: most of the countries had as their goal to improve or protect food security. But virtually all countries had a goal that superseded that goal, which was government legitimacy. So if there was a tradeoff between improving food security and protecting the government legitimacy the latter would win out in every country. That's no big surprise. We should expect that. But we have clear evidence of that.

The government policies paid very little attention to what would happen to the rest of the world. The Beggar-Thy-Neighbor kinds of policies were very common. And this goes back for example to the export bans. The export bans pushed the prices up for the rest of the world with all the negative consequences that came. So we really need some international action in order to assure some reasonable behavior by exporters. And I'm coming back to that in a minute.

Unitary government decision making is very unusual. There's a lot of conflict, a lot of contradictions, a lot of discussion as to what each unit within each government wanted to happen. And again if we go into a country thinking that somehow everybody agrees that they should pursue this policy we're missing something very important. There's a lot of interaction, a lot of conflict going on before the policies are finally made. In most cases there wasn't really any policy innovation. Countries pursued –

Whatever new policies they came up with were very similar to the ones they've been pursuing in the past when they had food price fluctuations. And the relative power stakeholder groups varied a great deal. Smallholder farmers had absolutely no impact on what policies were designed and implemented as far as we can tell in those 14 countries. In two countries the large farmers, through the associations did have quite a bit of impact. That was Brazil and South Africa.

Consumers of course had a great deal of impact because of the threat to the government – to the government legitimacy. A threat: we're going to go and riot. There are all kinds of reasons why you want to make your key supporters happy. Political economy lessons: more of those. Increasing urban bias: the policy interventions when these food prices fluctuated. The policy interventions were really focused in the urban area. No big surprise. We see urban bias in a lot of policies. But it was very clear in this set of studies.

Smallholders versus larger farms: as I mentioned there was a lot of talk about helping smallholder farmers but it was mostly rhetoric. There was a tremendous mistrust between government and the private sector. The government would hold back on a new decree or a new policy or a new law until the last minute. So the private sector wouldn't have opportunity for adjusting to it. And the public sector, its eye on the private sector of course, would not tell the government what it was doing in terms of hoarding food or whatever they were doing if they could avoid it.

One of the interesting things which I did not expect because I used to do research in a structural adjustment business that now is I guess still going on in a few places. There was a period of time when that's all we talked about, where the international agencies had a lot of impact on what national governments ended up doing for obvious reasons. There was money involved. In all of these 14 countries we saw virtually no impact by international agencies to do something different from what the governments were doing.

And I thought that was – I can't explain that. I don't know why that is. But it appears as though the international community was supporting whatever the governments wanted to do. Presumably that's a good thing. So what other lessons for policy assistance, say from outside, do not assume unitary government decision making processes because if you do you're missing something very important and you may end up with policy interventions that were unexpected.

Expect a strong urban bias. Yes I guess we do this already. Expect a strong bias in favor of large scale farmers. There is a huge different between the rhetoric and the action as I already mentioned. The evidence base for policy decisions is weak. This is one of the areas that if we really want the public sector in low income developing countries particularly. To make evidence based policy decisions they need to strengthen the evidence base and we can help them from outside.

That's different from telling them what to do. It's simply saying, "Here's a way by which you can make the decisions that you want based on the evidence that is available." I already talked about the mutual distrust between the public and the private sector. This is something we have to take into account as we talk about public/private partnerships. Let me finish with the recommendations.

Price signals are important. If prices go up you would hope that farmers would produce more. And you would hope consumers would consume less. If prices go down you hope the opposite would be the case. Governments that try to stabilize prices beyond one cropping season won't get those signals. And they will get themselves in trouble because the supply and demand won't adjust. Now this sounds like a new classical economics argument and it is.

But prices do have a role to play. If you're talking about one growing season, one agricultural season, yes price stabilization may make sense. And related to that it is more likely that governments would be successful if they focus on targeted compensation rather than price intervening in the price signal. And the two are closely related. We need risk management tools for all system agents. And that goes for the traders as well as the farmers and the consumer.

The risk management tools that are currently available in many countries are grossly insufficient. And that of course includes better weather forecasting. It includes access to credit. It includes a number of things that we can certainly talk about if you like. And related to my question and my comment on price signals, we need a higher level of price transmission so that in fact producers in one country can respond to what's happening in other countries and international levels.

And as part of that we need lower levels of trade restrictions. Now just to be absolutely clear I didn't dream this up before the study saying, "Whatever the

study shows that's what I'm going to recommend." It actually came out of the work. We need to increase the supply elasticity for food so farmers can respond to price changes. And that means investments in infrastructure, investment in local markets, investment in the supply chain in general so that in fact the system can work.

So the farmers can get access to reasonably priced input and can sell his or her output at reasonable prices as well. We need improved management of cereal stocks so that countries don't procure cereals when the cereal prices are skyrocketing because that would have the exact opposite effect. And that probably means taking the management of cereal stocks out of the political sphere which is something that may be extremely difficult.

The rules can be set by the politicians but the implementation it seems to me should be done by technicians. The blending requirements that we have in this country is price insensitive. You have to blend your gasoline with whatever it is – ten percent or whatever it may end up being – irrespective of what the price of corn and – if we're talking about diesel – soybeans and so on. That contributes to price fluctuations for food because you're taking a quantity out no matter what the price is.

If on the other hand we were to make the blending requirement price sensitive that would be one way of reducing the price fluctuations. Is that politically possible? I don't know. We need to strengthen the international agreement regarding exporter behavior. I already referred to the export bans. When the rice prices were about two and one-half to three times higher than they were eight months before, we had more rice in the world than we ever had.

It wasn't because there was a lack of supply of rice globally. It was because of the policies that were put in place. And some of those policies were put in place by traditional exporters – not just India. I didn't mean to just pick on one country. Vietnam, Myanmar – there were a number of countries – Egypt. They basically restricted export. And because of that the international rice price increased dramatically. WTO does have something written down that exporters should behave.

But they're not really binding so a lot more work is needed if we are to get the exporters to behave a little better next time we have a price spike. And then we need to improve the public/private collaboration. I have referred to that a couple of times. Here are some of the sources. There is a book just out on the WIDER series from Oxford University Press and then the WIDER website which you can see here has all of the information as well, free of charge, open access.

Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

*Danielle Resnick:*

Well thanks very much for the opportunity to speak with all of you this morning and especially to speak after such an interesting speaker and researcher as Per. I wanted to share with you this morning some ongoing research that the Internal Food Policy Research Institute is doing in conjunction with Michigan State University and the University of Pretoria with the support of USAID via Feed the Future and the Food Security Project.

And really through this tripartite effort what we're trying to do is provide a useful, practical, analytical tool for understanding what drives policy change, and particularly in policy arenas that are relevant for food security issues such as agriculture and nutrition. And we're hoping such a tool – which we're calling the kaleidoscope model – will be useful for both explaining past episodes of policy change like the food price crisis but also be a little bit predictive and help identify on when and how and how policy change might manifest in the future in the kind of design of that particular policy.

So the motivations for this work are really from the drive that we're seeing throughout the development community for the past couple of years on trying to have policy impact right? Everyone wants to have some type of impact whether it's donors wanting to have value of money or the research community wanting to have some uptake of research findings. But I think there's a real increasing awareness that you can't really have policy impact unless you really understand the underlying policy process.

And in our work we're just kind of focusing on the national government policy process. That's the scope condition of our work. And so understanding is a lack of a policy change due to a lack of political will or is it due to a lack of implementation capacity? We really need more fine-grained understandings of how policies are made to understand where we can best intervene. And I think we're seeing that awareness is becoming very clear in the research community.

Per's work and the work that UNU-WIDER have been doing on the food price crisis is a great example of that. Also the UK-based Future Agricultures Consortium has been doing a lot of work on policy process related to agriculture. And in the nutrition community a lot of initiatives such as Transform Nutrition – which is looking at the politics of nutrition policy. There's the scaling up nutrition work of the UN. In the land domain the World Bank's Land Governance Assessment Framework are trying to understand how policy process is made in that domain.

And the African Union has its only Land Policy Initiative. We're seeing across food security domains and increasing interests by both practitioners and researchers to better understand what are the processes underlying policy? And so we felt that USAID's food security project really offers a great opportunity to both build on a lot of this existing work, but to try to consolidate it in some way

and see what some of the main messages are that are coming out of this work and other episodes of policy change research.

So the objectives of this work were four-fold. One that I've already mentioned is that we want to have something that's practical but also that's rigorous and empirically-informed. And a tool that's flexible enough to be useful across different country settings, so whether you're talking about a democratic or authoritarian setting, a presidential or parliamentary regime, resource rich or resource poor context. Something that's not just limited to a particular set of country characteristics.

Secondly we want it to be a little bit more interdisciplinary. You know there's been a lot of work in the public administration field for decades on policy process. And some of those insights are still relevant to food security policy processes, but also linking more with the political science and economics work as well. We wanted the framework thoroughly to be testable so that we can have hypotheses and we can either validate or falsify our framework in a way that also looks at the different elements of the policy process.

Understanding why something gets on the agenda in the first place or why a particular policy design is adopted. I think the case we're most familiar with is why policies are adopted but then never implemented. And to also be able to investigate some of the implicit hypotheses that I think are out there in the development community about how you get policy change.

You know some believe that it's about getting high level commitment. If you get the G8, if you get the African Union to get on board with something then you can get this on the policy agenda. Researchers like to think if you have rigorous quality evidence then you can get an issue on the policy agenda. Others think if you're targeting policy champions then you can have select stakeholders who can push policy forward.

And fourthly we'd like to better integrate these diverse communities rather in nutrition, land, agriculture communities who are kind of working in parallel a little bit but I think are finding some similar findings from their work. So our approach was relatively straightforward. It involves being a bit inductive and actually drawing on a large number of case studies of policy change out there including a lot of the case studies from Per's work but also more broadly on social protection, health, education, agriculture.

Identifying consistent variables that are consistently coming across as being important for policy change and trying to narrow down to what we call macro-variables. Of course there are many things that contribute to policy change. But what are consistently the ones that seem to be the overarching factors across different cases that are important for policy change or the lack of policy change.

And in doing this we wanted to give a lot of attention to necessary and sufficient conditions.

What do you need, not just to get a policy issue on the agenda, but to actually get it pushed forward to the design stage or to adoption stage? So we've labeled our model the kaleidoscope model. There are a few reasons for this one. It's just kind of the image that we wound up coming up with to express this. The image has these three levels to it. On the outside we've taken the typical kind of public administration approach to policy process which talks about you have these various elements.

You have agenda setting. You have design. You have adoption. You have implementation and then evaluation and reform. And we realize this is not linear process. It's endogenous. It has lots of feedback linkages. But it's a useful tool to disaggregate where the most important variables at a particular element of the policy process. The middle level here – or I guess the innermost kind of circular level there – is the crux of the work that we're doing. These are the macro-variables that we're talking about.

Trying to come up with a parsimonious two or three main factors that seem to be necessary in sufficient conditions for getting something onto the agenda or getting it adopted, getting it implemented. And then this middle level out here is just really kind of a non-exhaustive list of the many secondary variables that influence these macro-variables. But our real concern is with these macro-variables which give us a more parsimonious approach to understanding policy change.

And so we're hoping that with this approach you can explain why small changes accumulate and lead to policy change in some countries or in some policy domains but not in others. And we're calling it the kaleidoscope model mostly because just like with a kaleidoscope when you shift it and light refracts it shows a different constellation of shapes and patterns. And similarly here when you're shifting what your research question or your policy question is you kind of see a different constellation of variables that seem to be more or less predominant.

It might just be useful to give an example of how this would apply. And I'm just going to do this very briefly in the interest of time: the thought about using Ghana's fertilizer subsidy program. You know Ghana's one of around ten African countries that adopted a fertilizer subsidy program. But even today I think IFPRI is presenting to the Ministry of Agriculture some policy prescriptions about what they can do to reform this program because the government realizes, as Per alluded to, to that this is fiscally unsustainable.

So if we were just taking kind of a slice of the kaleidoscope we can take this element of agenda setting. So we're trying to understand how did this issue even get on the agenda? A lot of countries were part of the Abuja Declaration. Only

about ten African countries actually have chosen fertilizer subsidies to increase fertilizer use. We have focused an agenda setting element of our model. It really distills three factors that seem to be necessary in sufficient conditions.

One is some type of focusing event. This can be a short term crisis like a food price crisis. But it could be something – It could be a high level declaration like the Abuja declaration. It could be a long term initiative in the policy community like the scaling up of nutrition in the nutrition domain. In the Ghanaian case the focusing event was the food price crisis in 2008 and specifically the timing of that crisis being so near the next presidential elections.

The ruling party at the time – the NPP – was really feeling that it could be a real liability if it wasn't seen to be acting quickly to react to the food price crisis. But you also need kind of a strong advocacy coalition right? You need policy champions who are out there pushing for some policy to go forward. In this case you had many different policy champions. But the most important was the president – President Kufor – who actually made a high level announcement in 2008 that they were going to proceed with this fertilizer program apparently without the Ministry of Finance being informed in advance that they were going to do this.

And then thirdly it needs to be a relevant problem. This might seem a little bit redundant but actually you need to have something that's not just a president's pet project for example. You need something that's resonating with the broader community. And so in the Ghanaian case Ghana is one of the lowest users of fertilizer; only about kilograms per hectare in Sub-Saharan African. It was seen that really doing something to increase soil fertility was key.

I'm not going to go through all the details on Ghana for the design element but will just highlight what the three elements are that we see as being important and understanding why a particular design is chosen. So if we take fertilizer subsidies across the ten or so countries they've all chosen a little bit of a different program – a little bit of a different design. And so to understand why we've seen three factors being key one is what type of problem brought the issue onto the agenda in the first place?

Was it a crisis, a pressing problem? Or was it kind of a chosen problem? So a lot of times in the nutrition domain it's hard to see the immediate damage from malnutrition. But you need to have sustained commitment over time to addressing malnutrition and that seemed to be more of a chosen problem. The reason this is important is because sometimes when you have a pressing problem or a crisis governments quickly need to react. And they choose something that's maybe off the shelf, something that's going to be highly visible and get them a big payoff.

Ideas and beliefs also play a key part: if it's coming from the research community, the donor community but giving some ideas about what would be the best design for a program given the country's circumstances. And then cost benefit calculation. It's not just financial cost but also maybe the political cost that someone – that a government gets for the design that it takes.

And then we just took one final slice of this – the evaluation and reform element of the policy process. In this element of the policy process we really felt two key macro-variables coming across which is changing beliefs of veto-players and policy champions. Veto-players are those individuals who have the ability to change things – the main decision makers whether it's parliamentarians, ministers, the president. And policy champions which might be veto-players but they might just be stakeholders in the community who are pushing the policy forward.

So we often see that the beliefs of these actors changes in whether they feel the approach is working or not. It starts the reform process going. In the Ghanaian case they started with a voucher program for fertilizer subsidies. They moved to a waybill program. But some of the more credible international and research organizations looking at the subsidy issue in Ghana have increasingly found that even this waybill system is administratively cumbersome. And the most vulnerable farmers are not benefiting from it.

And importantly the Ministry of Finance is believed to oppose the FSP. That's one of the most important veto-players that you need on your side. The second main macro-variable for understanding when you get evaluation and reform is basically a cost benefit analysis. A valuable resource is relative to the cost of the program. And with Ghana falling commodity prices, particularly for oil and cocoa plus a high public sector wage bill has really increased the public debt there. They're now negotiating with IMF. And fertilizer companies are owed about GHS 60 million Cedis in back payments which is about \$20 million US dollars. So of course they're not a huge fan of the program.

That was just talking about the Ghanaian subsidies just to give you an example of the empirical application. But what we're hoping in the next year or so to do is to look across three domains – three policy domains that link up nicely with some of the Feed the Future priorities. In addition to fertilizer subsidies, we're also looking at micro-nutrient interventions, and land tenure reforms. And we think this is kind of a nice set of policy issues because they have different levels of variation across them first in terms of the policy type.

What kind of fertilizer subsidies and micro-nutrient interventions are seen as distributive policies, kind of allocation of new resources –two distinct groups – stakeholder groups. Land tenure reform is seen a redistributive policy. Maybe reallocating existing resources or how to find land rights in a way that might have implications for reallocating investment and resources. They're a little bit

different in terms of the focusing events and whether they're seen as pressing or chosen problems.

The impetus for a lot of the fertilizer subsidies and land tenure reforms has come from food and fuel crises and issues around land grabs. But a lot of the micro-nutrient work that's going on: vitamin A fortification, iron fortification, has really been more of a chosen problem. And it's been pushed kind of over the long term through high level initiatives and key people in the public health community.

Thirdly as many of you might be aware fertilizer subsidies are kind of labeled as a wicked problem because there are so many different ways you can look at this issue. Maybe they're not reducing poverty but maybe they're increasing yields. Maybe they're increasing yields but they're crowding out the private sector. And so whether the donor community and the research community believe in supporting fertilizer subsidies really believes in which kind of normative outcome is thought to be best.

And so we see a lot more division I think in the research and policy community on those than we see on the importance of micro-nutrient interventions or having secure land tenure rights. And then if I just skip to the primary stakeholders the important thing to just note about this last column is that some of these domains involve a lot more inter-ministerial cooperation, particularly nutrition policy than ag-subsidies for example. We think that by looking at these three different policy domains we get more leverage on the utility of our framework if it can explain policy change despite all the differentiation in really different domains.

I'll just conclude with a few contributions. We think this model is quite useful for actually being operationalized. And if you go to – I should've put the site here – IFPRI's website, the Discussion Paper Series in our discussion paper where we present the model we go through how you can operationalize changing beliefs. Or who are the veto-players? And a lot of the other macro-variables are put in the model.

It has strong potential for controlled comparative analysis. Looking across for example different policy domains within the same country or looking across the same policy domain in different countries. And I think finally it's a way to start just thinking of political economy being about interest groups and material interests. Interest groups are important but we know ideas also play: belief normative ideas and beliefs in epistemic communities player roles. And then institutions are kind of political and economic institutions that limit the scope for reform.

We're hoping the model is able to integrate ideas and interest in institutions simultaneously and more so than existing public administration work and look at the relative weight of domestic and external actors including us in the

international research and donor community. I will leave it there and I welcome feedback. *[Applause]*

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Julie MacCartee:* Well thank you very much to Danielle and Per. We have about one-half hour for questions and comments. To kick things off I just want to introduce Lisa Williams again who is with the USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Affairs and is a senior governance fellow. Lisa will give our first comments and then we'll switch back and forth between our webinar audience and our in-person audience to take questions and comments.

*Lisa Williams:* Thank you very much. Just to say first of all thank you – It's really an honor to be here with you Per and with you Danielle. This is very exciting to us in USAID and in the Democracy Rights and Governance Office. Particularly last week we launched a new action plan that was signed by the administrator to integrate governance and rights and democracy issues more effectively across sectors. I think here we are discussing just that.

And one of the major levers for doing so we see as political economy analysis and really trying to give officers within the agency a way to more effectively analyze what's happening in terms of questions like political will, which both of you raised? I just wanted to raise a couple of things. I would say you know in our efforts we've realized that the success or failure of development programs is largely determined by the domestic politics within aid-recipient countries.

And there is a tendency today with the changing role of foreign assistance for there to be a larger reliance on what's happening in the WIDER community. Because as Per rightly pointed out it's important for us to realize that the AID agency isn't always the one that's making the largest change in a particular context. I think that one of the key things too that I heard Per say particularly as he went through the price fluctuations related to rice, maize, and wheat.

Each time he discussed those price changes he had to contextualize heavily and reinforce the notion that it's important to understand what exactly is happening in the context for each one of those types of fluctuations. So all the more coming back to this idea that development agencies need to be thinking about how it is that they fit within a WIDER context. Also in the spirit of Paris, Accra, Busan, and our commitments to support other countries to pursue their own development objectives.

The one thing that I found interesting in this is that at the root of political economy analysis which has been used in various forms by this development agency and many others are the drivers of change frame particularly that was developed at the Department for International Development of the UK. I think

that it's very nice that you've developed this kaleidoscope to bring together that type of approach. And it's very much a politically aware framing I think.

My major question I think to Per really is at one point during your presentation you made a very interesting comment that perhaps because of all of the fluctuations and the inability to always understand why governments respond the way they do and our inability to affect that maybe we should try to separate the technical from the political in some sense. And I just wanted to ask you, and I think others may ask similar questions: how do you see that kind of thing really playing?

Because we've worked a little bit also on connecting inclusive growth diagnostics in political economy questions and analysis. And we're not certain how it is that those things interact, at which time is most appropriate, and how you protect the politics from the technical. I think many agencies are now working in the direction of trying to bring the two together to address more effectively what's happening in terms of political will.

I think that's all for now. Just to say a little bit about what we are doing, there's been a framework developed to help officers within USAID to look at the country level, sector level, or problem level of political economy questions within their programming, and to try to think really principally about how their programs might be changed over time in an awareness of the political environment and the economic context like price fluctuations or other questions.

This kind of framework that we're developing is really more about making sure the programming is more context-sensitive and much more aware of what's happening in-country. And giving officers space to actually respond and change their programming, working to the context over time. This could be conflict-affected countries or in more stable middle income countries where we're looking for sustainability. But again back to integrating democracy rights and governance across sectors and working more effectively on questions like policy change. Thank you.

*Per Pinstруп-Andersen:* Sure. Very briefly since I took too much time in my first go around what I was referring to specifically was management of grain reserves. But you can use that example in so many other contexts. Politicians should set the rules and then get out of the way when the implementation is to take place because the technicians or those who are trained to do the implementation can probably do that in a less political environment.

Now is the policy maker likely to give up that power which is involved in changing the implementation after the design has been made? Probably not. But it came through loud and clear in the case of procurement or release of grain for the government controlled stocks. It was so political that it frequently ended up being done at the wrong time even to meet the goals of the politicians

themselves, because of what Danielle was talking about – the interplay within the government.

And we must not forget what I was trying to say that the government doesn't operate as a unitary decision making process. That process within government is extremely important and we need to understand it much better than we do. We may not have to say this is right and this is wrong. But we need to understand how it works? Can I say one other thing? Governments need more evidence about consequences of alternative policies.

This is something that we and Feed the Future and many others have been working on – WIDER and Cornell and so on. We need a lot more practical policy-relevant evidence for governments to understand the consequences for the various stakeholder groups as well as for the economy as a whole of various policies. And technicians can play a tremendous role – important role in it.

*Julie MacCartee:* We'll take a question from our online audience and then come back to in person.

*USAID Agrilinks:* Great. We have about 90 people still joining us online. There's been a lot of online discussion about export bans. And Christine Negra of EcoAgriculture Partners says: The export bans were widely criticized. It would be interesting to hear the speakers' assessment of this tactic. Also, what disincentives do exporting countries have to not implement an export ban in response to domestic pressures?

*Pem Pinstrup-Andersen:* Export balance did tremendous harm to the international, to the rural market for grain. It is very much a Beggar-Thy-Neighbor kind of approach where you're protecting your own at the expense of others. I believe the only – There's really no strong incentive for government not to do that unless the government enters into international agreements. And that is one of the reasons we have something called the World Trade Organization.

They just have not been able to get a handle on the export side of these issues. That's extremely important that much more negotiation takes place in WTO before the next crisis hits us.

*Julie MacCartee:* We come to our in-person audience. Please state your name and organization also.

*Tom Timberg:* Tom Timberg, consultant. Very interesting set of two presentations. But the context – I just happened to read this weekend Katherine Kelly on the club that controls the world – the commodity traders – international commodity traders. And certainly in this country as far as trade policy is concerned for agriculture commodities that role has been very important. And for USAID which has major involvements with a number of the commodities traders on a country by country basis the question is when you talk about public/private involvement,

international organizations, et cetera, whether it's some explicit involvement with the large commodities traders is perhaps not called for.

*Per Pinstруп-Andersen:* It's perhaps not called for?

*Tom Timberg:* Not called for. In other words should USAID, which is spending millions of dollars with Olam and so forth – the big traders – What about going to them in Singapore and sitting down with them and developing an international strategy that doesn't involved just supporting them in this country and supporting them in that country and supporting them in this country, but coordinating with them to deal with the overall problems of world food supply?

*Per Pinstруп-Andersen:* I think that would be wonderful. As long as you don't diminish the competition – because there is competition among these large commodity traders. And if what you're suggesting is that AID should go in and create a monopoly, no, I'm opposed to that. Presumably you're not saying that. But yes interaction with these large commodity traders, absolutely – very important.

*Danielle Resnick:* I would agree.

*Per Pinstруп-Andersen:* Do you want to add on that?

*Danielle Resnick:* No.

*Julie MacCartee:* We'll go back to our online audience.

*USAID Agrilinks:* David Soroko from Crown Agents asks: With countries like Saudi Arabia abandoning wheat production and building strategic reserves, and with countries such as China, India, South Korea and others buying LDC land to produce foods for export to their own consumers, how do we rationalize LDC governments not intervening in their food markets?

*Per Pinstруп-Andersen:* Well Saudi Arabia has stopped producing wheat as far as I know. It was a little too expensive even for Saudi Arabia. Do you want to add anything else on that? If it takes us into land grabbing and it gets into what does a country do to assure itself of the future food supplies that it needs without participating in the international trade. And one way of course is to try to buy or get control of land in other countries. But that wasn't the question you're asking. But I think it's part of that same question.

Self-sufficiency is important to those countries who do not trust the international trading community. And even Saudi Arabia at one point in time produced wheat at production costs that were extremely high. But as far as I know they don't do it anymore.

*Angie Steen:* Hi, can you hear me? Okay great. Hi I'm Angie Steen. I with The GRM Futures Group. Thanks so much for this really interesting conversation. This conversation has called for more evidence to allow policy makers to make more

informed decisions. And also that echoes what IFPRI – IFPRI had a lecture – a really good one – about a month ago where it was looking at the nutrition basin. And that too was calling for more evidence so that governments would know policy responses for key nutrition interventions.

And I'm just curious to know if you could talk a little bit more about the kind of evidence, and also if some of that work in costing. So for example in the health sector we cost different key nutrition interventions. But that's maybe a little easier to do because some of those are really isolated. We know how much vitamin A costs. We know how much iron folate supplementation costs, and calcium. But what about in the Ag space?

Are there any organizations? Does IFPRI, FAO – Do they cost different types of agricultural interventions or even crop insurance? Is that data available?

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Do you want to answer that?

*Danielle Resnick:* Yeah I could start out with that. I mean on your first point about what type of additional evidence I think in some regards, particularly on policy process issues I think there's a lot of evidence that's out there now. And then I think on top there are about 27 donor efforts to also have a political economy framework. I think we're maybe kind of all doing things in parallel. And one of our efforts here is to try to take stock of what's actually been done and start consolidating what some of these key findings are.

And so I think our nutrition people at IFPRI have done great stuff with the lancet special issue and what's driving the politics of nutrition policy. But a lot of those factors they identify are not very different from what you would find in social protection, which driven social protection policies or which drive agricultural policy decisions. I think on policy process I think we actually – There's a lot out there and it's more about consolidation.

In terms of what IFPRI has done on costing, yes there has been work on – We've had in the past a very strong kind of public investment research agenda on costing: where governments should be given limited resources, what should governments be prioritizing, and particularly our DG Shenggen Fan has looked at a lot of infrastructure investments and what type of rows you should be investing in.

And I know our markets group has been looking at different types of insurance: disaster insurance, crop insurance policies that are out there. So there have been attempts to do the costing. I don't think that it's a clear, accessible database. We do have a public expenditure database that you can look at. But a lot of it's kind of buried in discussion papers and reports.

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Can I just add to that? And I agree. Can I just add to that that we desperately need much more – a much better understanding of how to change the food

system for the benefit of nutrition and health. And this is an area that a lot of people talk about right now. Feed the Future is involved in work in this area. We need to strengthen that at the field level so that we really get an understanding of how can governments and the private sector change the food system for the benefit of what we all want, namely good health and good nutrition for all?

And there we are very short on evidence. We tell governments to change the food system for the benefit of health but we don't tell them how to do it.

*Julie MacCartee:* A question from our online audience.

*USAID Agrilinks:* Yes. Robert Navin who is an independent food and trade advisor to USAID says: West Africa has plans to coordinate a food reserve to stabilize prices. Any commentary on how this is going and what should be done?

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Want to do it?

*Danielle Resnick:* I don't know about it so if you know go ahead.

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* It's a very tricky question because food reserves in the sense of filling the warehouses with say grain for a rainy day kind of thing or for a day when it doesn't rain which is probably more relevant can be extremely expensive. And so some small food reserves – yes absolutely, particularly in landlocked countries. But depending on the international trading system it is much less expensive and probably as efficient.

India right now has – as far as I know – 80 million tons of grain in stock. And a lot of it is not under roof. It is rotting at a very rapid rate. It's very expensive to keep large reserves of food. So some reserve, particularly where trade isn't efficient, yes absolutely. But in most cases I would depend on international trade rather than large reserves.

*Ran:* My name is Ran from...Agricultural Marketing basically headquartered from India and we have an office in New York. The question here is the price and price fluctuations. The price will be fixed based on the cost of cultivation but not really market...That's because the farmer has to get into things. And the question of the exports: if I am importing some product from some other countries my own farmers are producing it but the price is fluctuating like a lower price.

And then I'm getting it at a higher price. What can I sell in my market? Or if I am getting it at a lower price from the imported product and then my farmer's price, comparatively a higher price, how can I save my farmer from the price fluctuations? That is part of the agribusiness concerns. The price is fixed based on the centralized policy and it should be implemented in a decentralized manner in the South Asian countries.

How can you address if it is centralized or decentralized in this? For both of you – thank you.

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Well I'm not sure if you're referring Beggar-Thy-Neighbor kinds of policies where a country is putting an export ban on its export which would push up international prices and how can you deal with that? Is that what you're asking? Or maybe I don't understand the question.

*Ran:* Yes. Suppose my farmer is producing a price –

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Sure.

*Ran:* which is \$3.00. Where I am importing from in other states it should be a \$2.00 by the time when I get it in my market. So how can I sell my farmer's price? Or the product – but how can I sell? Do you think that I have any compensation? Or do you think that I have to stop the subsidies of the fertilizers? Or do you think that I can afford that in such situations? Do you think that my policy should be decentralized or centralized? If I decentralize it as a political man – so what is my...of my party? And in this context can we take – Because the food is the major factor for the developing country or developed country.

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Now I understand the –

*Ran:* That's what I'm asking.

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* I understand the question and of course it is context-specific. It depends on the context within which the question is asked. But generally speaking there are two things that I would think such a government should look at. One is why is the production cost of your farmer so much higher than the product costs of other farmers in other countries? Is it because fertilizers cost five times as much as they do in another country? Is it because the infrastructure is just not developed?

Is it because the irrigation infrastructure isn't there – the roads aren't there – transportations costs are very high? Those are the things that need to be dealt with if in fact they are the constraining factors. The other part of it is the subsidies in other countries. This is not much of an issue right now but when food prices were low there were huge subsidies given by some exporting countries including this one, including the United States, which was exporting food at highly subsidized prices.

There was no way that a farmer in a developing country who didn't get subsidies could compete with that. So you've got those two things to look at at least. But it is very context specific. And I don't think we can sit in Washington to kind of design the solution.

*Danielle Resnick:* Yeah and just on the – I mean I think the decentralization/centralization element is again context-specific. I mean I think some of the implementation constraints

that you have at national levels for implementation are magnified when you get to the sub-national level for decentralization. And often trade policies in particular are not often decentralized. You know if you're talking about a federal country like India that has a stronger decentralized system that might be an option. But it's not an option in a lot of low income countries.

*Julie MacCartee:* We have about ten minutes left for questions but I just wanted to put in a request that everyone fill out the surveys on your seats if you have a chance and just either leave them on your seat or drop them on one of the entryway tables. They just help us keep track of these events and improve them for next time. Online will have a survey as well. So I'll throw it back to online and then come back here.

*USAID Agrilinks:* John Russell at Eco Food Systems in Oregon asks: Are there any ways the international community can facilitate smallholder farmer organizations and LDCs to build the kind of political clout they have in countries like South Africa and Brazil?

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Yes if the small farmers could find a way of getting together and mobilizing the power that they would have as a group. Do I know exactly how to do that? No I do not. But I think that's probably the only way they would ever have a major say in how policies are designed and implemented.

*Danielle Resnick:* I think there are some examples in West Africa where farmer's organizations have been able to gain some type of political voice. Particularly there's CNCR in Senegal which is – What they've basically done is created like trade unions in the industrial sector created confederations of trade unions; so kind of smallholders in different commodities sectors coming together in an umbrella organization. And then they have partners throughout much of West Africa.

So at the regional level you have ROPPA which has had a pretty good policy influence within ECOWAS. I think finding ways to facilitate different smallholders across commodities and across countries is one mechanism to get their voice heard.

*Karen Edwards:* My name is Karen Edwards. I'm a consultant to the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health. I appreciated both of your comments. I know a lot of work went into that. I wondered if both of you could comment on where to next with your work. Will you be building on it? Will you be presenting it to policy makers, including in the United States?

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Wonderful question.

*Danielle Resnick:* Yes, so this is kind of just ongoing work. Over the next year we want to take this model and be testing it in different sets of case studies. We've kind of inductively derived it and now we want to see if it's also valid – externally valid – on cases that we didn't derive it from. I presented at the end the kind of three

different policy domains that we're going to look at. Our aim is to look at three country cases across each of those three domains, so hopefully nine country cases studies in each of those domains.

For example in Ghana for fertilizer subsidies we're going to be looking at Ghana, Zambia, and Tanzania because they've all had fertilizer subsidies but they've chose very different design features. And some of them are reforming them entirely. Some are not. In three countries for micronutrient and land tenure as well.

*Per Pinstруп-Andersen:* Let me make just two points. First the researchers in the 14 developing countries that worked with us in this network are promoting the research from their work. We did have policy makers and past policy makers included in the teams in the various countries in order to facilitate transmissional results to the current policy makers. There's a lot going on in those 14 countries I believe. We are also – Finn and I are promoting the results in a number of fora.

We're going to India shortly. And WIDER I believe is going to continue to do much more work in order to get these results in the hands of policy advisors and researchers. And Finn did you want to add anything to your plans?

*Finn Tarp:* No. I think that's fine.

*Per Pinstруп-Andersen:* Okay.

*Jeff Hill:* Jeff Hill with USAID/BFS there. You know I think that you presented in fact a tremendous amount of different details and a lot of information about different options and the impacts of those options. You've taken on what really is a seminal issue with regard to the high food prices. There is a clear understanding that that did change the world in many different ways as we've been thinking about certainly from a development context.

And I think that you've made a bit of a case that in fact it's critically important for understanding the policy systems and some of those different options. And without that a next wave that might be coming along is going to face a considerable amount of both inconsistencies and inefficiencies. But looking forward – right – my real question is building upon this experience in the past – I mean putting it as an aside a little bit what are you actually –?

You looked at these different trends of the food prices. What should we be anticipating? What is actually going on with trends? Are we going to be actually seeing future challenges? What are some of those future challenges that we should be anticipating and worrying about building the policy systems to deal with it?

*Per Pinstруп-Andersen:* We're almost out of time unfortunately because that's the topic that we should be spending a lot more time talking about. Let me just mention a few things. In my

crystal ball the long term trend in real deflated food prices is down – not by much. But it's not up as most economists seem to be arguing. We're going to have huge fluctuations similar to those we had in the past. We don't know when they're coming. We don't know how big they're going to be. What we do know is that we've been unable to do much about climate change.

That is moving ahead. And right along with it comes extreme weather events. And right along with extreme weather events come large fluctuations in food production and food prices and frequently adverse policy interventions that cause even more price fluctuation. I think we're going to have to learn to live with price fluctuations. What worries me probably more than anything else right now is are we ready to deal with the impact of climate change – not just the fluctuations in weather patterns, but also the long term greenhouse gas increase and the global warming?

Do we have the research underway that would help us deal with the new pests, the new abiotic factors such as drought, salt water, flooding, and all of the things that come with climate change which we don't seem to be prepared to deal with? So we're going to have to adapt to that. That's one of the issues that I think we need to talk about. It is to a considerable extent linked to political economy – what we've been talking about today – because the various governments are going to respond in different ways.

And the various units within government will respond in different ways. And so there's need for a lot more debate about how to deal with that. We can continue to stick our heads in the sand but that won't stop climate change.

*Julie MacCartee:* All right we have exactly two minutes left. I thought I'd squeeze in one more question before lunch and I saw you with your hand raised.

*Joaquin Arias:* Okay very quickly, Joaquin Arias from IOCA. I wondered if you find in your countries, in your chosen studies, problems in the information systems. In so many developing countries the information systems are so poor. It takes so long to understand the problem and to see the implications of the problem. And also many of these countries; there's no system that integrates the whole process of policy development.

None of this: understanding the problem, designing the policy, following up on the policy and also that you are rating the policy. And they have told me that it took very long to understand what's going on with the food crisis.

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Well that's why we didn't do these country studies from Helsinki or Cornell University. These studies were done by people from the countries who lived in the countries. They were senior researchers. Presumably they know what was going on in the countries. There was a three year study. You're absolutely correct: this is not something you jump into and do in a couple of weeks. But by

having people who lived in the countries, who were nationals of the countries, who had studied these things before we thought that we were safe.

But we still needed three years to do it. You're absolutely correct. One of my regrets was that most of the participants were economists. We had very few political scientists. We simply could not find the highly qualified political scientists who had worked in this area. We only wanted to include people in the network who had worked in the areas before. On country selection we tried to select countries so that we could cover different typologies if you like.

We had major exports. We had exporters. We had major importers. We had landlocked countries and so on. It's all described in the material that's available. But having said all of that was the selection of countries totally scientific? No of course not. It's a matter of where you have your contacts and so on. So there was a bit of – how do I put this – unscientific approach to this. But we did try to cover the spectrum. Finn, is that fair?

*Finn Tarp:*

I think that – Sorry my dear. Yes I think that is fair. But I also think it's fair to say that we did discuss a lot different country typologies so that we have tried to address very different circumstances. If I may, just one last comment on the question add that there is a lot in the country starting to suggest that the export ban that Vietnam put on was purely due to lack of information of the sense of decision makers.

You will actually find a lot of those kinds of things that will help point to where is it that there is need for more work to do as we move forward. And I think that's part of it. At least as far as I'm concerned that's part of the attraction of the volume. Thank you.

*Per Pinstrup-Andersen:* Do you want to have the last word?

*Lisa Williams:*

Yes I would just add also – I think on information that's actually a nice area where you can have more kind of cross-sectoral work between democracy and governance and maybe Bureau for Food Security because one issue is just the media community within these countries. Not having the training to report on the complexity of some of these issues, or being attractive to the really quick, high profile issues, and sometimes influencing governments to respond quickly when a more thoughtful comprehensive reporting would've been more worthwhile.

And then secondly I think on policy making angle and particularly on adoption – A lot of these parliaments in a lot of the African countries that I work in only get the budgets for example two weeks before they need to make a decision. And they have maybe two people on a research team for parliament for committee – for food and agricultural committees. I think information is one of the areas where you can have a lot of cross-sectoral work between democracy and governance and some of the development agencies.

*Julie MacCartee:*

Great. Well let's give our speakers one more round of applause. *[Applause]*  
Thank you to the Feed the Future-KDAD Project for great support and thank you  
all for coming. We'll see you at future Agrilinks events.

*[End of Audio]*