

MEDIA RELEASE

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MORE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS THROUGH GLOBAL EFFORTS ON FOOD SECURITY

The impacts of international agricultural research over the past 50 years show significant benefits for the environment and for food security, as well as a cost benefit ratio providing 10 dollars in social benefit for every dollar invested in it. To 2030, with a greater focus on sustainability, impacts are expected to benefit over 200 million people in rural areas that face climate hazards and food and nutrition insecurity, raise farmers' productivity by more than 25%, reduce yield variability for at least 120 million people, and avoid ~0.6 GT of annual CO₂e emissions.

This is the positive message of Dr Jean Balié, CGIAR Regional Director for Southeast Asia and the Pacific and Director General of the International Rice Research Institute. Dr Balié will address the Crawford Fund's international conference *Celebrating Agriculture for Development – Outcomes, Impacts and the Way Ahead* being held on 15-16 August in Parliament House, Canberra. The conference will also be addressed by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon Murray Watt.

"Our food systems continue to face challenges in feeding a world of 8 billion people. In the past, research efforts concentrated on the quantity of outputs rather than the quality of food produced or the broader negative impacts involved. We know better now," said Dr Balié, who has over two decades of experience in leadership and expertise developing policies for agriculture, food, and rural development.

"In Australia's region of Southeast Asia and the Pacific, issues like rising temperatures and sea-level, weather variability, drought, flooding, decline in crop yields, biodiversity loss, food and nutrition insecurity and growing inequities require us to now adopt a food systems approach that provides concrete and more sustainable solutions, advanced with unified global efforts," he said.

Dr Balié explained some of the work of the CGIAR, a global research partnership for a food-secure future dedicated to reducing poverty, enhancing food and nutrition security and improving natural resources.

"We have welcomed Australian support and involvement in the CGIAR and its centers from the very beginning, including the important work of Sir John Crawford and the Crawford Fund."

"Over the past decades, we have worked with partners like the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and the Crawford Fund, as well as Australian organisations and researchers, to address the environmental challenges faced by farmers the world over, and known so well in Australia."

"These efforts include innovative tools and practices that reduce the use of agrochemicals and improve water use efficiency, promote and encourage diversification, optimize outputs and make agriculture more sustainable. We look forward to ongoing collaboration with Australia and Australians," he concluded.

Other speakers include international affairs specialist Allan Gyngell, climate change and security specialist Dr Robert Glasser and renowned global wheat scientist Dr Alison Bentley.

Other press releases are available [here](#).

