

Opening Remarks by Dr. Elsa A. Murano for Second Panel
“A National Security Plan: Some Considerations”

- Good afternoon, y buenas tardes! My name is Dr. Elsa Murano, and I will be serving as moderator for this afternoon’s panel. I am currently a professor at Texas A&M University, and previously served as president and also as dean of its College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. I also previously served the Bush Administration as Undersecretary for Food Safety at the US Department of Agriculture. Today, I am wearing a different hat, that of member of the Board for International Food and Agriculture Development, also known as BIFAD.
- For those of you who may not know, BIFAD is the one and only external advisory board to the US Agency for International Development, or USAID. BIFAD was established under Title XII of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act back in 1961. Members are appointed by the President of the United States to offer advise to USAID regarding programs and activities in food security and agriculture.
- As we have heard from the presentations this morning, agriculture development is at the crux of food security. In fact, experts have come to agree in recent years that in spite of our best efforts at addressing world hunger through foreign assistance programs, we have somewhat neglected to focus on developing the agricultural systems that ultimately can best help people become self-sufficient, and thereby able to prosper.
- It has been exciting for us at BIFAD to hear of the continuing interest by the U.S. government to address this issue. Recent remarks by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton underscored the new administration’s commitment to agricultural development, which every member of BIFAD believes can best be achieved through strategic partnerships between U.S. land-grant universities, government, and private enterprise, and their counterparts around the world.
- The presentations and the speakers you will hear this afternoon have been carefully selected to help bring to the forefront the need to get organized in developing action plans that can be implemented within the next two years by every country in Latin America if we are to be serious in reducing hunger in the region.
- We have indeed assembled a distinguished panel of speakers for you, representing universities, government, and international organizations. First, you will hear from Dr. Alex McCalla, who is professor emeritus at the University of California at Davis. Dr. McCalla previously served as Director of

Rural Development at the World Bank and as Chairman of CYMMIT, and brings a wealth of expertise in food trade and economic development to this issue.

- Next, we will hear from another member of academia, Dr. Ed Price, Vice Chancellor and Director of the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture at Texas A&M University. I don't have to tell you how transcendental the work of Dr. Borlaug has been to agricultural development. In spite of his recent passing, Dr. Borlaug continues to be an inspiration for all of us who work in agriculture, and especially for those of us at Texas A&M, which he called his academic home for many years. Dr. Price leads the Borlaug Institute at A&M, following in the footsteps of its namesake by working all over the world, teaching farmers how to use new seed varieties and implement new technologies to improve agricultural production.
- After Dr. McCalla and Dr. Price, we will hear from two experts who will bring us lessons learned from the experiences of two countries that have led the way in addressing food security in this hemisphere. First, Daniel Gustafson, Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization's Liaison Office for North America, will present an overview of the Brazilian experience and the effectiveness of their "zero hunger" policy. Secondly, we will hear from Brian Bohunicky, Director General of International Markets Bureau of Agri Food Canada, who will tell us about lessons learned by that country regarding this issue.
- Last but certainly not least, we will hear from Dr. Manuel Peña, representative of the World Health Organization in Peru, who will put it all into context from the perspective of the toll that the lack of food security can have on human beings, not only through the obvious malnutrition problems, but also through social and environmental impacts on the population.
- Please help me welcome all the panelists with a round of applause. After all the presenters have finished, we will have time for questions and answers. Dr. McCalla, please come forward at this time for your presentation.