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Around the World in 30 Minutes

BIFAD members report back from developing nations.

Story by Marcus Wilkins

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The Board for International Food and Agricultural Development kicked off its public meeting today, March 15, 2013, in the Reynolds Journalism Institute's Fred W. Smith Forum, with three members reporting back from recent outreach trips to developing nations.

BIFAD is a group of scholars and agricultural specialists appointed by President Barack Obama to develop solutions to worldwide food challenges. The theme of the public meeting is “Globalization of agriculture and food research, teaching and engagement at land-grant



Chancellor Brady J. Deaton, BIFAD chair, presents an Outstanding Leadership Award from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities to Bill DeLauder. Photo by Shane Epping.

universities.” MU Chancellor Brady J. Deaton was appointed by Obama as chair of BIFAD in April 2011.

Bill DeLauder, president emeritus at Delaware State University, visited Cambodia in October 2012; Catherine Bertini, professor at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in Syracuse, N.Y., attended the African Green Revolution Forum in Arusha, Tanzania; and Marty McVey, president of McVey & Co. Investments, recently returned from India.

Bertini’s unorthodox presentation shared tweets from forum attendees, including Melinda Gates, who urged international governments to recommit 10 percent of funding to agricultural development every year.

Bertini quoted Nigerian Agriculture Minister Akinwumi Adesina, who called for more action and less rhetoric, saying “nobody eats words.” Bertini also emphasized that a majority of farmers in Africa are women.

DeLauder, who earlier received an Outstanding Leadership Award from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, spent time with farmers in Cambodia where he witnessed an Integrated Pest Management program in action. Tomato farmers are using trichoderma, a fungus added to soil to stimulate plant growth. He also visited a tilapia farm and a rice seed operation.

DeLauder emphasized Cambodia's need for an improved agricultural extension system and the citizens' general distrust of government entities.

“We've got to find a way to build trust of the governments, hold them accountable and get them involved,” DeLauder says.

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