

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### UNIQUE ROLE FOR AUSTRALIA TO ADVANCE FOOD SECURITY

**Food insecurity threatens regional peace and prosperity, and Australia has a unique geo-political opportunity to emerge as a regional leader in advancing food security. This will be the central message of the opening presentation at the Crawford Fund's annual conference - Australia's key food security event.**

Glenn Denning, Professor of Professional Practice, Columbia University is an agriculture and food policy specialist who has received international and Australian awards for his outstanding leadership and impact in international agriculture, food security and sustainable development, and has advised governments and international organizations in more than 50 countries.

He will keynote *Progress and Prospects for Climate-Resilient Agrifood Systems: Actionable Recommendations for Policymakers and Practitioner*, to be held in Parliament House, Canberra on 11-12 August, with over 300 experts, policymakers, researchers and students. Speakers from around the globe and Australia will offer their solutions for transforming agrifood systems in response to climate change, addressing the trade-offs between food production and net-zero targets, pursuing sustainable intensification, and promoting inclusivity and equity.

"The global food system is threatening regional peace and prosperity. National leaders of the Pacific, China, India, ASEAN and beyond have all raised the alarm and are looking for solutions, partnership, and support," said Professor Denning.

"Australia's research and farming communities have exceptional expertise, a well-proven track record at home and abroad, for improving agricultural productivity and the resilience of agriculture in adverse environments. Australia is also well connected in the Asia-Pacific region with tremendous goodwill from partners. This provides it with a unique geo-political opportunity to emerge as a regional leader in advancing food security - Australia has the know-how, we just need the do-how."

Professor Denning explained that achieving universal food security - healthy diets for all, from sustainable food systems - remains elusive. More than 670 million people -- 8.2 percent of the world population -- are undernourished, and 2.6 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet.

"Our food systems are vulnerable to climate change while contributing one third of greenhouse gas emissions. While we will hear a lot of success stories at the conference, conflict and trade disruptions further compound the challenge. We are incongruously underinvesting in agricultural improvement, beginning with woefully inadequate support for international agricultural research, despite the extraordinary positive findings of benefit-cost analyses in Australia and abroad."

Internationally, Australia's agricultural research and farming communities have envied reputations. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) provides a well-established partnership model that, if better supported, could not just further improve agricultural productivity and the resilience of food systems in adverse environments, but better serve our collective desire for regional peace and prosperity."

In his keynote address, Professor Denning will outline a set of practical actions that Australia could take to advance food security in the Indo-Pacific region.

"Achieving universal food security will require a comprehensive investment strategy that increases food supply, enhances distribution and access, reduces food losses and waste, and improves nutrition for all, while addressing and mitigating climate change and protecting the planet," he concluded.

