



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing

Witness Biographies

Root Causes of Migration: Food Insecurity and the Right to Food in Central America

Panel I



Mileydi Guilarte serves as Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Before joining LAC, Ms. Guilarte was the Country Representative for a U.S.-based non-profit in El Salvador, where she implemented a human rights project and led strategic planning to strengthen the role of civil society and regional human rights systems. Before that, Ms. Guilarte held several positions in the Obama-Biden Administration, including Director at the National Security Council in the White House and as a senior policy advisor and International Cooperation Specialist at USAID. Ms. Guilarte also worked as Special Assistant for the Assistant to the Administrator in USAID's Bureau for Democracy Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. In 2014, Ms. Guilarte was nominated by President Obama as the United States Alternative Executive Director at the Inter-American Development Bank.



Daniel Friedman is the Managing Director for External and Government Affairs for the Inter-American Foundation (IAF). Mr. Friedman leads the team that manages the foundation's public affairs efforts, as well as the IAF's relations with Congress and other U.S. government agencies. He came to the IAF after nearly ten years with the U.S. Department of State where he helped manage efforts to promote peace in more than a dozen countries, including Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, and Colombia. Mr. Friedman has worked for non-governmental organizations based in Washington and Latin America and also served as a volunteer for a grassroots non-profit organization in Honduras.

Panel II



Valerie Newsom Guarnieri serves as the Assistant Executive Director at the World Food Programme (WFP), where she leads cutting-edge program and policy development towards ending hunger. She spearheads WFP's humanitarian and development efforts to ensure protection and inclusion, expand school meals and nutrition programmes, empower women, foster innovation, build resilient food systems and support cash transfers and social protection. Her prior appointments at WFP

include as Regional Director for East and Central Africa, Programme Director, and a variety of country office, regional and headquarter positions. Before WFP, she worked in the U.S. Government, at the National Security Council and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Panel III



Victoria Ward, Ph.D. is Save the Children International’s Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean and is based in Panama. She has over 25 years of experience designing and managing programs in the region, including humanitarian and public health programming, rights-based programming for children and youth, and programming for underserved and indigenous groups. Prior to joining Save the Children, Ms. Ward was a global health consultant, working on a variety of projects for clients such as Management Sciences for Health, UNFPA, Women Deliver, and Plan International. She served as Director of Programs and Director of Evaluation at the International Planned Parenthood Federation for the Western Hemisphere.



Colin Christensen is the Global Policy Director for One Acre Fund. He has spent his career with organizations committed to innovative, impact-focused approaches to international development. Since 2015, he has worked at One Acre Fund, a social enterprise that provides agricultural services to more than 1 million smallholder farmers. For four years he led the Government Relations department, based out of Kigali, Rwanda, ensuring close partnerships with governments in the seven countries where One Acre Fund works. Since 2019 he has been based in Washington, DC as One Acre Fund’s Global Policy Director, tasked with helping to ensure that the pressing needs of smallholder farmers around the world are addressed comprehensively in policy and funding conversations.



Robert Destro is the former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and a Professor of Law at the Catholic University of America. A human rights advocate and civil rights attorney with expertise in elections, employment, and constitutional law, Mr. Destro has served on the faculty at Catholic University’s Columbus School of Law since 1982 and served as its interim dean from 1999 to 2001. He was founding director of the Interdisciplinary Program in Law and Religion and served as the Director of the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies from June 2017 to September 2019.