

FAO - PUSH Visiting Scientist Programme **Call for proposal**

Background

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been at the forefront of supporting and promoting sustainable agriculture toward fulfillment of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals - ensuring food security for all and eradicating hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. Additionally, FAO has long recognized the value of higher education institutions as the discoverers, curators, and disseminators of knowledge, research, and best practices in the areas of agriculture and nutrition.

In early 2014 Auburn's Hunger Solutions Institute (HSI), in partnership with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and FAO, hosted a Pre-summit at its annual Universities Fighting World Hunger (UFWH) Summit to discuss the collective role of universities in fighting hunger. This gathering led to a consensus statement called the *Presidents' Commitment to Food and Nutrition Security* that has now been signed by more than 100 university presidents and chancellors on five continents, establishing a framework for collaboration and a blueprint for an action agenda. The signatories of this statement are referred to as Presidents United to Solve Hunger (PUSH). For a list of PUSH institutions, go to: www.pushtosign.org.

The PUSH consortium of universities, committed to using its resources for teaching, research, outreach, and student engagement to promote local and global food and nutrition security, has much in common with FAO's stated strategic goal of "creating and sharing critical information about food, agriculture, and natural resources in the form of global public goods."

Recognizing the congruence of interest in promoting issues related to food and nutrition security, the FAO Liaison Office for North America (FAOLOW) and PUSH have signed a Letter of Understanding under which they are collaborating to sponsor the **FAO- PUSH Visiting Scientist Programme**. This unique opportunity will enable one PUSH institution scientist to pursue research of mutual interest with FAO related to food and nutrition security in **Fall 2018** (15 weeks starting 1 September 2018) or **Winter/Spring 2019** (starting 1 January 2019) on specific research topics from amongst those suggested by FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) and FAO Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean (RLC) as detailed in Annex I.

Proposal

Only proposals from scientists/faculty members who have a PhD and are working in Universities affiliated to PUSH will be considered.

Each applicant must submit a detailed research proposal, necessary support letters and other documentation as per guidance below:

1. Research Proposal

- a. Detailed research proposal on any of the topics identified by FAO Regional Offices at Bangkok or Santiago (see list at Annexure I)
 - b. Proposal should be maximum six (6) pages, double-spaced
2. **Abstract** of the research proposal, maximum one (1) page
 3. **Curriculum Vitae** of the applicant
 4. **Budget Support**
 - a. Letter of financial support from the parent University showing readiness of the University to bear all the associated costs, including travel, stay, medical insurance etc.
 - b. Letter from University indemnifying FAO from any liability whatsoever related to the attachment of the chosen scientist with FAO Regional Office at Bangkok or Santiago
 5. **Three letters of recommendation**, with one being from the University President or University PUSH point.
 6. **Terms of agreement**—applicant must agree in writing to a. obtaining concurrence of FAO-RAP or FAO-LAC, as applicable to the research findings and the final research paper, before its publication and /or dissemination; and b. make it available to FAO, without any cost to FAO (see research paper below).
 7. **Specification of start date** (*1st September 2018* or *1st January 2019*) in application.

Selection Process and Placement

- FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean will review the submissions, and select one scientist for the research and field study at Bangkok / Santiago. Selection will be announced by PUSH at least one month before the start of the attachment date.
- PUSH will promote the award and work with FAOLW and the scientist's home institution to publicize the program and the study results.

- FAOLOW will coordinate the placement of the chosen scientist with the Regional Offices.
 - a. By 15 August 2018 for the Fall 2018 attachment (15 weeks starting 1 September 2018.)
 - b. By 15 December 2018 for the Winter/Spring 2019 attachment (15 weeks starting 1 Jan 2019.)
- FAOLOW will provide office space to the chosen scientists, should he/she require it for any preparatory work out of Washington, DC.

Deadline

- All applications must be received by the respective FAO Regional Office by 31 May 2018 (for September attachment) and 30 September 2018 (for January 2019 attachment) with a copy to FAOLOW, Washington.
- To apply, please send application packets to FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific at FAO-RAP@fao.org or FAO Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean at FAO-LAC@fao.org with copy to FAOLOW - Edona.Dervisholli@fao.org & PUSH Secretariat – kara.newby@auburn.edu with subject line “Application for PUSH Visiting Scientist Programme”
- **FAO Regional Office(s) will review the application and announce the name of the chosen scientist within one month following application deadline.** The names will be conveyed to FAOLOW which will then coordinate with the chosen scientist and PUSH secretariat for further action.

Research Paper

- The research findings and the final research paper must have the concurrence of FAO-RAP or FAO-LAC as applicable before its publication and /or dissemination and would be available to FAO, without any cost to them for their use. An undertaking to this effect must be tendered by the chosen scientist along with their research proposal.

Questions

- Questions if any in this regard may be addressed to Edona.Dervisholli@fao.org

FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, BANGKOK, THAILAND

Main topics of Interest

- Examine the use of behavioral economics to influence food consumption choices in developing countries. Possible areas for research include analysis of the effectiveness of behavior communication strategies or “nudges,” analysis of innovative solutions that go beyond classic public education programs to include private sector initiatives, and how communication strategies might differ between urban and rural areas based on the nature of the different food environments in those locations.
- Identify points of interventions to improve urban malnutrition. Possible areas of research include end of supply chain issues such as consumer habits (where do people shop for what and why) and access to different types of food, leading to analysis of possible changes in the urban environment to make eating habits healthier (especially in middle-income countries where urbanization has been substantial). Innovative urban agriculture solutions are also of potential interest.
- Analyze the impacts of e-agriculture on smallholder farmers (both production and environmental outcomes). Possible research topics include analysis of constraints to adoption of e-agriculture, including linking of farmer decisions to agro-meteorological data and market information, by smallholder farmers. Other areas of interest are use of geospatial information systems and big data platforms by governments to design investments and policies.
- Identify linkages between production diversity and dietary diversity in smallholder farm households. Possible research topics include using household survey data from selected countries in the region to analyze the linkages between production and dietary diversity under different market access scenarios.
- Climate change and its impact on food security. Possible research topics include empirical studies on successful adaptation measures and addressing key knowledge gaps related to climate change impacts in the region such as understanding the impacts of climate change on sectors other than staple foods (e.g. livestock, fisheries, water availability).
- Other relevant topics in agriculture, food security and nutrition in the region will also be considered.

**FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN,
SANTIAGO, CHILE**

Background.

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries have made progress in the fight against poverty and hunger during the last 25 years. However, still 42.5 millions of people are classified as undernourished¹. On the other hand, the region presents an alarming rise in overweight and obesity prevalence in all age groups, both risk factors for non-communicable chronic diseases (NCD) and the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the Region. Changes in food pattern and physical inactivity have been identified as main causes and a consequence of the LAC food systems² that have undergone fast and profound changes since the 1980s.

Overweight and obesity rates also differ depending on family income levels. While the prevalence of children who are overweight is still greater in higher-income quintiles (FAO and PAHO, 2017³), it increases faster in the poorest population. Additionally, the share of income spent on food in the lower-income quintiles is greater than that of the richest population. The urgent actions required to change the food system include those aimed at ensuring the availability/supply of varied and healthy foods, which are the measures needed to promote production, the transformation, supply and distribution of varied and healthy foods. These actions involve influencing agriculture, diversifying production, improving food quality and safety across the entire value chain, as well as improving the market opportunities and supply of healthy and varied foods.

This area of interest urgently needs more analysis and evidence in order to facilitate the formulation and review of new policies for most poor and vulnerable groups. FAO in LAC proposes an alliance with PUSH on the next issue.

Main topics of Interest

- A comprehensive analysis on what are the reasons the *food industries* do not want, in general, to reformulate *food composition of their process products* to reduce sugar, salt or fats? It is the price the most important reason, isn't? Or the life span of products? What are the risks that the changes of flavors can reduce market share? Is true that high levels of sugar, salt or fats make more addictive the products for the present and future consumers?
- *Social and cultural determinants of food patterns* for the consumption of highly processed products in LAC, replacing the traditional diet patterns, including the analysis of the economy of time in the most vulnerable/poor groups? The research could be focused on the regional level or selecting a number of countries where FAO offices have analyze the phenomena at a deeper level.

¹ Undernourishment refers to the proportion of the population whose dietary energy consumption is less than a pre-determined threshold. SDG 2, Goal 2.1: prevalence of undernourishment (PoU)

² Regional Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets. San Salvador, El Salvador (Sept 2017). Available in: <http://www.fao.org/americas/eventos/ver/en/c/889369/>

³ FAO & PAHO. Panorama of Food and Nutrition Security in LAC 2017. Available in: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7914e.pdf>

