



## **Chair's Summary**

### **The ASEM High - Level Conference on Food Security**

**Chiang Mai, Thailand, 9-11 May 2011**

1. The ASEM High-Level Conference on Food Security was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on 9-11 May 2011. The Conference was guided by the announcement made by the Thai Prime Minister in the 8<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM-8) that Thailand, an Issue-Based Leader in food Security, would organize the Conference in 2011.
2. The Conference was hosted by Thailand's Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) in close collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOF). The Conference was attended by ASEM members comprising 20 countries and 2 organizations, namely Australia, Cambodia, China, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Myanmar, Netherlands, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Thailand, Vietnam, ASEAN secretariat and European Commission. Besides, four international organizations, namely Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), and World Food Programs (WFP), non-ASEM members, also participated in the Conference.
3. The Conference took note with appreciation the remark made by H.E. Mr. Theera Wongsamut, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand on how ASEAN could share experiences with ASEM in tackling the present threats on world food insecurity, through coordination of efforts to allow people to get access to food, and development of measures to sustain food security in the long-run.
4. The Conference was appraised of a large number of regional programs and projects on food security having been implemented and initiated under the ASEAN, the European Community and the UN-FAO.
  - Of these regional efforts, the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) was mentioned as a system that the European Commission would like to learn more of. More information on similar food reserves in the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was also called for.

- The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), market forces, high production standard, sustainable model of nutrient and carbon efficient, and producing more food with less inputs were among the key contributing factors to European food security.
  - A great number of FAO initiatives on global food security were highlighted with proposed priority actions, for instance, monitoring world food situation and prices, projections of food demand, supply and prices, building regional partnership against hunger, and implementing various field programs and projects directly or indirectly associated with food security.
5. The Conference shared experiences with the presenters of 16 country papers on the national food security situations prevailing in selected ASEM Members highlighting the following food security situations in the respective countries: Self sufficiency in food production, problems leading to food insecurity, current policies and programs toward improved food security situation, plans and measures for regional and global collaboration in food security.
  6. The Conference recognized the following recommendations for future cooperation in improving food security in the ASEM region as asserted in the 16 country papers: food production and trade; Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) throughout the supply chain; collaboration on food access and study mechanism for regional food reserves; fair and transparent trade; transfer of knowledge and technology in the field of farming and processing technology, food safety and environmental protection, data collection and processing; increased volatility in weather and crop yields; attainment of sustainable self sufficiency in staple foods; cooperation with global and regional food security programs; better income distribution to vulnerable groups; government policies to ensure food security; and the role of appropriate postharvest systems in food security.
  7. The Conference expressed its interest to pursue further the contribution of Trans–Eurasia Information Network 3 (TEIN-3) to increasing world food productivity, and that of postharvest system to improving world food security, as presented by the representatives from IRRI and University of the Philippines Diliman.
  8. The Conference agreed to recommend the following areas/groups of food security cooperation coming out of the general discussion and wrap up session, for ASEM Members to consider taking up on the regional and/or global basis:

## **Governance**

- Emergency Food Reserve Scheme
- Policy coordination and best practices on food security as well as quality policy for agricultural production (i.e., organic farming)/ rural development policy

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation towards food security
- Harmonization of Bio-energy development with food security policies and promotion of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation bio-fuel
- Harmonization/equivalency standards
- Mobilizing political will to promote agriculture and food security, and building up global awareness and solidarity
- Empowering small scale farmers and promotion of pro-poor policy
- Establishing sustainable targeted safety nets for the poor and vulnerable groups, and promote gender sensitive approach
- Strengthening farm and non-farm sector linkages, and non-farm employment
- Improved ability to respond to natural disasters, new pressures, uncertainties and shocks
- Promoting food diversification (consumption and production)
- Coordination of efforts with ASEM and other international organizations
- Trade policy review, and put an end to market distortions and restrictive trade/export practices, complete Doha Round negotiations
- Capacity building of policy makers and facilitate them with various policy and program options
- Reviewing food stock policies and promote emergency food reserve
- Promoting social safety nets, targeting approach to most vulnerable (children, etc), promotion of cash vouchers
- Promoting national/global level financial facility to help poor food importing nations
- More effective and regular and systematic form of coordination between Asia and Europe

### **Knowledge & Research**

- Database development and market information
- Increase food productivity and promote sustainable production through R&D, technology transfer e.g. reduction of postharvest losses, natural resources management and conservation , organic agriculture and water saving technologies
- Capacity building of policy makers and research institutes in ASEM Members
- Sharing experiences and lessons learnt from past experiences (learn from experiences of 2007/8 food price crisis) and promote collaboration and networking

## **Finance and Investment**

- Conducive Trade and Market Function
  - Increase public and private sector investment in agricultural R&D, inputs supply (seeds, fertilizer, etc.), infrastructure development (irrigation system, road, market, etc.) value chain development, etc.
  - Promote Responsible Agricultural Investment
  - Improving the reliability of food security and market information, and promote market transparency
  - Explore new measures to deal with speculations which exceed normal market mechanism.
9. The results of this Conference will be presented to the 10th ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting, to be held on 6-7 June 2011 in Hungary and ASEM 9, to be held on 5-6 November 2012 in Lao DPR, in order to be shared with ASEM partners for possible follow-ups and further actions.

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