



## **STATEMENT OF ASEAN MINISTERS ON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**

1. While ASEAN Member States have achieved significant economic growth and poverty reduction, the countries continue to face challenges of rapid population growth, urbanisation and industrialisation, increased number of obesity and overweight and widening disparities between the rich and the poor and also among the countries in different economic status. Nearly 65 million people in ASEAN countries are still undernourished with high stunting rate of children under age of five in some countries. Many countries also suffer significant micronutrient deficiencies. The region also faces many present and emerging threats to food security, arising from environmental and climate-related changes, declining natural resource base such as arable lands and water, degradation of ecosystems, frequent occurrence of trans-boundary animal diseases and plant pests, food safety problems, high and volatile food prices, long-term pressures on food production due to conversion of agricultural lands into other purposes and migration of labour from rural areas as well as the negative impacts of globalisation.

2. In 2014, the 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry endorsed the revised ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and Strategic Plan of Action – Food Security (SPA-FS) 2015-2020, which incorporates a new component on nutrition, to enable ASEAN to address new developments and challenges in the realisation of the common goal for sustainable food security and nutrition. At the 24<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN Leaders reaffirmed to promote a common and unified position to ensure sustainable food security and nutrition in ASEAN.

3. In order to overcome the challenges and ensure sustainable supply of sufficient, affordable, safe and nutritious foods that meet the dietary requirements of increasing populations, the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry identified the common position and commit to implement the following key strategies:

- a. Incorporate nutrition objectives, components, measurable indicators into the design of food and agricultural, trade, food security policies and programmes;
- b. Build institutional capacity through incorporating nutrition in food and nutrition data collection, management and communication and systematic training;
- c. Promote agro-biodiversity for improved nutrition and climate change adaptation, including support the conservation of, access to, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources that can diversify available nutritious foods for consumption and also to adapt to changing climate;
- d. Improve policy coherence supportive to nutrition with special focus on market expansion and improvement of market access for vulnerable groups through food price policies, trade policies, and agricultural land conversion;

- e. Implement food security and nutrition awareness and education for farmers, traders and food and agriculture policy-makers, programme planners, including integrating nutrition education in agriculture extension services;
  - f. Improve storage, preservation, transport and distribution technologies and infrastructure to reduce food insecurity, food nutrient loss and waste;
  - g. Establish risk management system and tools to identify social safety nets, especially during crises, build adequate emergency food reserves and relief systems as a buffer to natural and man-made disasters as well as mitigate effects of high food prices and price volatility; and
  - h. Undertake research on innovative agricultural technologies focusing on improved production and productivity of non-cereals (pulses, fruits, vegetables, and animal-source foods), reduction of post-harvest losses and food wastage along the entire value chain.
4. It is important that regional as well as global cooperation and partnerships be further strengthened in the implementation of the identified key strategies. In ASEAN, regional cooperation must strive to reduce excessive price volatility, ensure adequate emergency food and reserves and provide timely and accurate market information and trade liberalisation, through the following strategies:
- a. Strengthening and promoting better inter-sectoral collaboration and coordination mechanisms between ASEAN Sectoral Bodies related to agriculture, health, rural development, education environment, economic, labour, energy, social welfare and others; and
  - b. Forming multi-stakeholder partnerships for achieving food security and nutrition, particularly through engaging civil society and farmer organisations in policy dialogues, promoting the role of the private sector in the production of nutritionally enhanced foods and in generating resources or investments in agriculture, engaging training and research institutions in support of research, and human and institutional capacity-building.

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