



CONCEPT NOTE

'ASEAN on Point' Public Forum

Ensuring the resilience and sustainability of the agriculture and food sector in ASEAN in the context of COVID-19

3 September 2020

BACKGROUND

In response to the global coronavirus pandemic, the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), will co-host a series of public forums – 'ASEAN on Point' – to address issues of importance to the advancement of ASEAN. The forums will provide a platform to bring together representatives of diverse stakeholders to share knowledge on the latest research and insights on relevant topics on post-pandemic recovery in order to inform the policy discourse. It is hoped that the insights and recommendations from the forums can contribute to different sectoral work in ASEAN towards recovery. The vision of these Forums is to 'Build Back Better' so that the region's recovery policies result in a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable region.

With over a hundred million hectares of agricultural land, ASEAN is a major producer, supplier, and exporter of various crops and grains, particularly rice. ASEAN is the world's largest producer of palm oil and natural rubber and raises a considerable amount of livestock. The COVID-19 pandemic, which is disrupting every economy-supporting sector in the ASEAN region, is expected to pose challenges to trade, investment and economic growth. The agriculture and food sector is one of the most vulnerable sectors affected by the pandemic as it is heavily linked with key economic factors such as global agricultural commodities trade in the region (trade and regional integration), and more importantly, food supply and food security (trade and sustainable development).

While the supply of food has held up well to date, in many countries, the measures put in place to contain the spread of the virus are starting to disrupt the supply of agro-food products to markets and consumers, both within and across borders. How damaging these impacts will be for food security, nutrition and the livelihoods of farmers and others working along the food supply chain will depend in large part on policy responses over the short, medium and long term.

On 14 April 2020, the *Statement of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) in Response to the Outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) to Ensure Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition in ASEAN* was issued to contribute to overcoming the challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak, and to ensure the sustainable supply of sufficient, affordable, safe and nutritious foods that meet the dietary requirements of the ASEAN populations. One of the commitments from the

AMAF is to further exchange views and collaboration in food, agriculture and forestry development with other sectors and partners to address the adverse impacts of COVID-19. The AMAF will strive to keep ASEAN food, agriculture and forestry strong during the COVID-19 outbreak by continuously maintaining production, supporting value chains and ensuring access to workforce.

The first Forum will focus on the opportunity to reset towards more sustainable growth, highlighting the challenges faced by the agriculture and food sector as well as discussing policy options for the agriculture and food sector in ASEAN to overcome the adverse impact of COVID-19.

DATE: SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

9:30am -11:00am Jakarta time

OBJECTIVES OF THE WEBINAR

- Assess the impact of COVID-19 on agriculture and food sector in ASEAN;
- Analyse previous, current, and future situation of agriculture and food production, trade and investment in ASEAN;
- Identify opportunities to enhance the resilience and sustainability as well as to promote investment in the agriculture and food sector;
- Provide recommendations and policy options in taking accelerated progressive actions in handling the disruptions of food and agricultural products trade; and
- Address various aspects of economic recovery in the agriculture and food sector in ASEAN.

OUTCOMES

The organisers will make a draft summery report of the Webinar, with a set of recommendations. It is expected that the recommendations will focus on the followings:

- keep international markets in agriculture and food products open, transparent and predictable;
- minimise the avoidable trade costs of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- facilitate the movement of agriculture and food products;
- promote investment in the agriculture and food sector;
- ensure health, food safety and food security throughout the food chain;
- apply the digital technology and innovation in the agriculture and food sector.
- promote cooperation between private and public sectors to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- address labour constraints in the food supply chain;

These recommendations may help ensure a resilient and sustainable growth in the agriculture and food sector as well as to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the region.

FORMAT

Hosted by ERIA and ASEC, the Webinar will last 1.5 hours via Zoom platform with a period of moderated discussion at the end. ERIA and the ASEAN Secretariat will be represented at the forum.

PANELISTS

- **Prof Dr Paul Teng**, Managing Director & Dean, NIE International Pte Ltd | National Institute of Education, Adjunct Senior Fellow, Centre for non-Traditional Security Studies, RSIS, Nanyang Technological University Singapore
- **Mr Grahame Dixie**, Executive Director of Grow Asia.
- **Prof Dr Sufian Jusoh**, Director, Institute for Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), UKM.

Moderator: **Dr Orachos Napasintuwong**, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Kasetsart University, Thailand.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants will come from the public and private sectors, academia, international organisations and civil society. The nature of these forums is public. The event will be recorded and posted online.

REGISTRATION LINK

<https://bit.ly/ASEANonPointPublicForum1>

TIME	AGENDA
9:30 – 9:35 AM	Welcoming Remarks ASEAN Secretariat
9:35 – 9:50 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Dr Paul Teng, Managing Director & Dean, NIE International Pte Ltd National Institute of Education, Adjunct Senior Fellow, Centre for non-Traditional Security Studies, RSIS, Nanyang Technological University Singapore
9:50 – 10:05AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Grahame Dixie, Executive Director of Grow Asia
10:05- 10:20 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Dr Sufian Jusoh, Director, Institute for Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), UKM.
10:20-10:40 AM	<p>Moderate Panel: Dr Orachos Napisintuwong, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Kasetsart University, Thailand.</p>
10:40 – 10:55 AM	Q & A
10:55 – 11:00 AM	Closing Remarks ERIA

PANELISTS AND MODERATOR

PROFESSOR PAUL TENG is Managing Director and Dean, NIE International Pte. Ltd., and Adjunct Senior Fellow, Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, both of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is also Senior Fellow, Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, Philippines. He specializes in food security, agritechnology innovations and sustainable bio-entrepreneurship. He previously held leadership positions in the International Rice Research Institute, the Worldfish Centre, and U.S. universities (Minnesota, Hawaii). Paul obtained his B.Agric.Sc. (Hons) and Ph.D. from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. He has published over 12 books and 250 papers and visited over 40 countries for work. Among his awards are an Honorary D.Sc. from Murdoch University, and election as a Fellow of several scientific bodies. Paul's private sector experience includes a stint with Monsanto, being Non-Executive Chair of Asia BioBusiness Pte. Ltd., and as a Director of GTT ECOFARM. He has started and divested three agri enterprises.

GRAHAME DIXIE is the executive director of Grow Asia, a multi-stakeholder partnership that catalyses inclusive agricultural development in five ASEAN countries: Cambodia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia, plus Papua New Guinea. The platform mobilises 520 partners into 46 working groups. Collectively they have some 50 projects under design piloting or implementation. They collectively solve pre-competitive issues in specific value chains, as well as at sectorial and policy levels. The key targets are focused on improving smallholder farmers' profitability and productivity as well as the environmental sustainability of agriculture. Grow Asia was recently accredited as an Entity Associated with the ASEAN. Mr Dixie has more than 35 years of professional experience as a practitioner in agricultural development. He has worked in over 78 countries, including an early career in the private sector. Prior to Grow Asia he served as the World Bank's agribusiness adviser.

PROFESSOR DR SUFIAN JUSOH is the Director and Professor of International Trade and Investment at the Institute of Malaysia and International Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Sufian is also the Co-Founder of the ASEAN Economic Integration Forum. He is also the FDI Advisor at the Artnet, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). Sufian is an External Fellow of the World Trade Institute, University of Bern, Switzerland and a Distinguished Fellow at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia. Sufian is a Barrister-at-Law (England and Wales) of Lincoln's Inn, London. Sufian holds an LL.B from Cardiff Law School, an LL.M (Merit), University College London and a Doctor in Law (summa Cum Laude) from University of Bern, Switzerland.

DR ORACHOS NAPASINTUWONG received her Ph.D. in Food and Resource Economics from University of Florida in 2004. She currently is Assistant Professor at Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Kasetsart University, Thailand. Her teaching and research areas are economics of biotechnology and agricultural innovation, agricultural production economics, and consumer preferences for agricultural and food products. Her researches focus on economic analysis of varietal adoption and dissemination, seed industry, economic impact analysis of agricultural technology, and rice economy in Southeast Asia.