Localizing SDGs 2030 and ASEAN Vision 2025:
Understanding the Role of Rural Development Organizations and People’s Organization
CONTENTS
Localizing SDGs 2030 and ASEAN Vision 2025: Understanding the Role of Rural Development Organizations and Peoples’ Organization

Foreword 1
01 Introduction 3
02 Background and Description of the Study 5
03 Key Findings from the Scoping Study 9
04 Recommendations 31
05 Case Stories 33
  Laos 34
  Malaysia 49
  Myanmar 78
  Philippines 99
  Thailand 130
  Vietnam 158

Disclaimer: “This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of AsiaDHRRA and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union, and ASEAN.”
FOREWORD

The ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together, charts the path for ASEAN Community building over the next ten years; a forward looking roadmap that articulates ASEAN goals and aspirations to realize a Community that is “politically cohesive, economically integrated, and socially responsible”. It reaffirms ASEAN aspiration based on the three pillars: a) political-security community, b) economic community, and, c) socio-cultural community.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provides a shared blueprint of action for people, planet, prosperity, and, peace. It is composed of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets—an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership.

AsiaDHRRA recognizes that SDGs and ASEAN 2025 vison will be achieved hand-in-hand with strategies and on-ground activities that “reduce poverty and inequality, improve health and education, and spur economic growth – while tackling climate change and working to preserve our waters, lands, and, forests”, with the contribution of all the stakeholders of different sectors including private, government, CSO’s, especially, rural communities. The study shall
serve as a reference framework as AsiaDHRRA continue to invest in the localization of the SDGs, harnessing the on-going initiatives of DHRRA and RPO partners and the potentials for building stronger multi-sectoral partnerships that could deliver greater results for the rural poor. It also generates some recommendations as we advance our work, from understanding the basics to being able to respond, and respond quickly and effectively.

The study to converge our work in relation to global and regional development targets is a starting point. We continued with capacity building on the SDGs to create greater confidence among our frontliners, and to find innovative ways to translate aspirations into tangible results on ground.

We give thanks to our member-DHRRAs and partners in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and, Vietnam for the cooperation and contribution to this study. Our appreciation to various government agencies that shared their data and experiences that substantiate this paper. Lastly, we thank Riza Bernabe (lead writer), Ernie Lim, and, Mags Catindig for putting-up this publication together, and, Jet Hermida for the layout.

Marlene Ramirez
Secretary General, AsiaDHRRA
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) presents the world with a viable opportunity to eradicate hunger, eliminate all forms of poverty and discrimination, and, reduce inequality. Adopted in September 2015, the SDGs build on - and aim beyond- the progress of the Millennium Development Goals by setting targets that do not only address the symptoms of poverty but also its many drivers. The SDGs consist of 17 goals, expressed in 169 targets. These goals are encompassing, covering a broad range of interventions, from eliminating poverty, promoting zero hunger, upholding gender equality to undertaking actions on climate change, to name a few.

Delivering on these ambitious and comprehensive goals require the contribution of all stakeholders. Although governments are considered as the main duty bearers in ensuring that the 17 goals and the 169 targets are met, there is broad recognition that everyone has a stake, and more importantly, a role to play in ensuring sustainable development for all.

In Southeast Asia, initiatives to realize the SDG is taking place alongside the implementation of ASEAN’s Vision for 2025. ASEAN envisions a “region of lasting peace, security and stability, sustained
economic growth, shared prosperity and social progress.” As with the SDGs, the success and sustainability of ASEAN 2025 will depend to a large extent on its ability to harness the contribution of all stakeholders, including rural development organizations (RDOs; i.e. civil society organizations) and rural people’s organizations (RPOs; i.e. farmers organizations, etc.).

RDOs and RPOs, if adequately supported, can maximize the productive and development potential of millions of men and women in the agriculture sector, including small-scale farmers and fishers. In Southeast Asia, agriculture continues to play a critical role in the food security, livelihood and incomes of millions of people. Although the share of the sector in the GDP of most countries in the region had been declining, more than 60% of the region’s workforce is employed in the sector, bulk of which, is situated in rural areas. Tapping the power of this huge human resource is key to realizing both the SDGs and the vision of ASEAN 2025.

It is in this context that the AsiaDHRRA embarked on a study to look at the SDGs and the ASEAN 2025, and to scope the activities currently undertaken by RDOs and RPOs, particularly those within the AsiaDHRRA network, in line with these development blueprints.
02

Background and Description of the Study

ABOUT ASIADHRRA

The Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (AsiaDHRRA) traces its earliest roots to the 1974 Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia Workshop (DHRRAW) held in Swanganiwas, Thailand. About 120 rural development workers and practitioners gathered to engage in dialogues that focused on the challenges and responses to rural development. At the end of the eventful three-week workshop, a call for continuous dialogue and cooperation among the participants was made, thus creating CENDHRRA (Center for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas) to coordinate the process among country DHRRAs that evolved.

In 1994, the DHRRA network formally transitioned into its present state, a regional network of country DHRRAs known as AsiaDHRRA. The AsiaDHRRA secretariat was established in Jakarta from 1994-1998. In 1999, it was moved to Manila and obtained its Securities and Exchange Commission’s registration in 2002.
The regional membership-based partnership is composed of 11 social development networks and organizations in 11 Asian nations—Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan.

ABOUT THE RECOERDO-ASIA

In 2015, AsiaDHRRA has signed a five-year Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with European Union (EU) from 2016-2020. The FPA aims to:

- Develop the capacities of Rural Peoples Organizations (RPOs) and Rural Development non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through the empowerment and unleashing of human resource potentials of local people; and,
- Promote a stronger participation in policy-making processes through effective lobby and engagement with policy makers and the donor community at national, regional, and global levels.

In operationalizing the said FPA, AsiaDHRRA, with grant support from the EU, implements the Regional Cooperation to Empower Rural Development Organizations in Asia (ReCoERDO Asia) that aims to contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic well-being of members of rural people’s organization in Southeast Asia through strengthened capacity of CSOs in responding to rural development issues.

In the implementation of this program, AsiaDHRRA has also inked a framework partnership with the ASEAN Seniors Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) for localizing the SDGs and the ASEAN Vision 2025.

STUDY FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES

Both the implementation of the SDGs and the ASEAN Vision entails partaking of various stakeholders, not only state actors, at all levels. However, the efficacy of such means having these blueprints comprehensible and relatable by different stakeholders, especially by
the local communities who should be seen not only as beneficiaries, but also vehicles of sustainable development.

It is in this context that this study has been carried out to primarily popularize concrete local rural development and poverty eradication initiatives of non-state actors (e.g. RDOs, RPOs) that could contribute to achieving the SDGs 2030 and the ASEAN Vision 2025. Specifically, to look at:

- alignment and/or coherence between and among the SDGs and the ASEAN Vision vis-à-vis national development plans/policies and development initiatives of RDOs and RPOs;
- existing and/or potential attribution and accountability mechanisms; and,
- spaces for active, participatory, and, meaningful partnerships for the implementation of the said local initiatives.

**SCOPE, METHODOLOGY, AND, LIMITATIONS**

This regional study is a compilation of eight national scoping studies in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and, Vietnam. The initial results of the consolidated scoping studies have been presented for validation and consultation on October 2017 in Vientiane, Laos. The national scoping studies were
also presented for validation and consultation in their respective countries.

Scoping of the initiatives has been limited to members and working partners of AsiaDHRRAs. At the same time, mapping of existing national development plans, policies, and program has been limited to some specific agenda or thrusts of national DHRRAs.
The initial scoping of SDGs, ASEAN 2025 goals and the initiatives of RDOs—particularly AsiaDHRRA, its members, and, partners and RPOs - underscore four key findings. The first finding affirms the huge potential for synergy between SDGs and ASEAN 2025 initiatives. This can be gleaned from the similar and/or complementary goals in both the SDGs and the key result areas and strategic measures under the ASEAN 2025.

The second finding is that RDOs and RPOs are already undertaking initiatives that contribute to the SDGs and ASEAN 2025, though these initiatives are not formally recognized and counted as such. Peoples’ organizations undertake these initiatives, motivated primarily by members’ need and desire to improve their productivity and welfare. The third is an extension of the second finding: because the initiatives of RDOs and RPOs are not usually counted as contributions to the SDG and ASEAN 2025, these actions are not supported and their potential impact is not maximized. Although in some countries there is collaboration between governments and farmers groups, these are largely on a per project basis rather than being part of sustained and
systematic cooperation agreement or arrangement. This provides an opening for discussions on how governments and development institutions can further support RDOs and RPOs to become effective allies in delivering on the SDGs and ASEAN 2025.

The final finding is that many governments in the region have the basic policy structure to support the SDGs. Ensuring the effective implementation of existing policies, and identifying and filling in policy gaps are critical to realizing the SDGs.

**THERE ARE CLEAR SYNERGIES BETWEEN SDGS AND ASEAN 2025**

Although separate initiatives, there are many overlaps and potential synergies between SDGs and ASEAN 2025. Many of the goals and targets under the SDGs that are most relevant to agriculture, small scale men and women agricultural producers have very clear counterparts in the ASEAN 2025 vision.

In the SDGs, the specific goals and targets that can support rural development are those focusing on eradicating poverty and hunger. Other goals and targets connect and feed into these key goals, by addressing key issues that drive and/or exacerbate poverty and food insecurity, such as gender inequality, climate change, unsus-
tainable production and consumption, environmental degradation, among others. Figure 4 below lists the SDGs most critical to rural development and poverty because their realization contributes and translates to promoting rural development and eradicating poverty.

In the ASEAN 2025, the Key Result Areas and Strategic Measures/Actions that can support rural development and poverty eradication are mainly, but not exclusively, located in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint. The ASCC, in particular, focuses on a vision of a regional community that (i) engages and benefits people, and is (ii) inclusive, (iii) sustainable, and, (iv) resilient. These themes are expressed in concrete outcomes, which overlap many of the SDGs. For example, the ASEAN expects engaged stakeholders, empowered people and strengthened institutions as concrete outcomes resulting from actions implemented to create a regional community that engages and benefits people. This vision finds its complement in SDG 16 - on peace justice and strong institutions - and in SDG 17 – on partnership for the goals. Similarly, the ASEAN Socio Cultural Community’s (ASCC) goal of creating a resilient region is expressed in its proposed outcome of enhanced climate adaptation. Climate action, including climate adaptation is the focus of SDG 13. Table 1 below shows overlaps between the ASEAN 2025 – ASCC targets and the SDGs.
Table 1: Overlaps of ASEAN 2025 and SDGs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main themes of ASEAN 2025 under the ASEAN Socio-cultural Pillar</th>
<th>Proposed Outcomes under ASEAN 2025 under the ASCC</th>
<th>Overlaps with SDG 30s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engages and benefits people</td>
<td>• Engaged stakeholders</td>
<td>Goal 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Empowered people and strengthened institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>• Reducing barriers (social protection, access to opportunities)</td>
<td>Goals 1, 5, 10, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Equitable access for all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promotion and protection of human rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable</td>
<td>• Conservation and sustainable management of bio diversity and natural resources</td>
<td>Goal 2, 12, 13, 15, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Environmentally sustainable cities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sustainable climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sustainable consumption and production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilient</td>
<td>• Disaster resilient ASEAN</td>
<td>Goal 1, 5, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safer ASEAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Climate adaptive ASEAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengthened social protection for women, children, migrant workers and other vulnerable groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhanced and optimized access to resources and safety nets during times of crises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For governments, development institutions, and all stakeholders, exploring and maximizing the potential synergies between the SDGs and the ASEAN 2025 is important in order to promote efficient use of resources, and more importantly, more coherent and effective development interventions.

**CSOS AND RPOS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE SDGS AND ASEAN 2025**

AsiaDHRRA and its members in eight Asean countries mapped the activities and plans of its members in several countries in the region. This mapping exercise showed that many of the network’s initiatives and plans match with the SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2025 targets. In particular, AsiaDHRRA’s three strategic thrusts - (i) strengthening peoples’ organizations, (ii) ensuring that CSOs and RPOs effectively engage and benefit from public and private programs, and, (iii) providing services to its members - respond to various SDGs and ASEAN 2025 goals. Table 2, below, illustrate this.
Table 1: AsiaDHRRA’s Thrusts vis-a-vis the SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2025

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AsiaDHRRA Strategic Thrusts</th>
<th>SDG 30</th>
<th>ASEAN 2025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stronger rural people’s organizations (RPOs)</strong></td>
<td>Goals 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17</td>
<td>AEC: B, C, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small men and women farmers and food producers’ organisations engage profitably in production and business</td>
<td></td>
<td>ASCC: A, B, C, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• -they are effectively providing relevant services to their members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Members of RPOs are resilient to climate-related risks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CSOs and RPOs effectively engaged in and benefiting from public and private programs.</strong></td>
<td>Goals 1, 2, 8, 16</td>
<td>AEC: C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CSO platforms are established and/or strengthened</td>
<td></td>
<td>ASCC: A, B, C, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• RPO and CSO capacities to engage with public and private sectors are developed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A stronger AsiaDHRRA network providing services to RPOs</strong></td>
<td>Goal 1, 2, 8, 16, 17</td>
<td>AEC: C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resources are mobilized and effective advising services are provided to support the initiatives of rural people’s organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td>ASCC: A, B, C, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operational Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Goals 16, 17</td>
<td>ASCC: A, B, C, D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sustain strategic partnership with global and regional platforms or organizations; mobilize national DHRRAs to better carry-out agri-agency functions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stronger multi-stakeholder partnership and networking at national, regional, and global levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A closer look at the activities undertaken by AsiaDHRRA members shows the range of initiatives undertaken in line with these strategic thrusts. These initiatives can generally be classified into four: (i) capacity building, (ii) advocacy and research, (iii) livelihood projects, and (iv) support and services to members. Capacity building includes trainings and workshops on community organizing, enterprise development, leadership development, and awareness-raising on selected issues, to name a few. Advocacy and research focus on topics that are of critical importance to members, such as agrarian reform, rural development, and climate change. The establishment of livelihood projects, including the necessary economic and social preparations in order to ensure project viability, is also one of the key initiatives undertaken by RDOs and RPOs. These activities and roles contribute to the realization of SDGs and ASEAN 2025, although RDOs and RPOs may not be familiar or consciously aware of the linkage of their actions to these global and regional development goals.
CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIFIC GOALS

The country studies provide details of the various activities undertaken by AsiaDHRRA and its member and partner organizations, and how these support the SDGs and ASEAN 2020 goals. This section draws specific examples from these studies and indicates how these contribute to different regional and global objectives. However, it is important to point out that because the issues of poverty, food security, climate change, inequality, gender equality, decent work, among others are very closely interlinked, many of the activities undertaken by RPOs an RDOs under each goal actually contributes to multiple goals.

SDG 1: Zero Poverty

ASEAN 2025: AEC Key Result Area (KRA) - D; ASCC KRA- A, B and D

Many of the initiatives of AsiaDHRRA and partner organizations are rooted in the desire to address poverty especially in the rural areas where they operate and where their members are situated. Their range of activities vary, from programs aimed at increasing agricultural output and improving farmers’ incomes and livelihoods, to helping create a policy environment that support the interest of small agricultural producers.

In Myanmar, the Metta Foundation, a non-government organization helps reduce poverty by helping improve farmers’ incomes and productivity through training and extension services. Thus far, the foundation’s agriculture and forestry programs have benefitted 37,103 people in the three states of Kachin, Kayah and Shan, and the region of Ayeyarwaddy. The Foundation has conducted 351 Farmer Field Schools (FFS) engaging 6,445 farmers and directly benefitting more than 13,820 people. It facilitates farmer-led extension services, tapping farmers from 8 villages to help train and support others. It established community nurseries, growing nearly 800,000 plants in 134 community nurseries, and 36,390 seedlings in central nurseries. Noting the close links between forestry and agriculture, Metta Foundation initiated forestry projects involving 23,301 beneficiaries from the 134 villages where they operate.
In Vietnam, members of ViêtDHARRA, such as CAEV, VNFU, VACVINA, VCARD, VNWU, VNYU, NIAPP, IPSARD, SPERI and VCA have worked closely with rural communities in various projects, with positive impact. The country study notes that assisted communities usually start as extremely poor (with members only involved in shifting cultivation and nomadic herding) but interventions lead to annual increases in the members’ income. As a result, many of the communities that were supported through their interventions no longer have poor households. The remarkable role of RPOs in addressing poverty and food insecurity was recognized in 2013 when ASEAN awarded CAEV for its contribution to poverty alleviation and hunger eradication in Vietnam. The experience in Vietnam highlights two critical lessons. First, it demonstrates the potential of RPOs to play a critical role in meeting SDGs and ASEAN 2025 goals. Second, it emphasizes the value of government support in expanding RPOs reach, impact and contribution to anti-poverty objectives.

Meanwhile, CEDAC, FNN, FLIFLY, and IIRR in Cambodia provide technical training and other supports to smallholder farmers and rural poor in order improve agriculture production and income in a sustainable manner. CEDAC in collaboration with FNN supported and improved the production capacity of 160,000 rural farm households by optimizing market opportunities and improving agricultural value chains. The organizations are currently supporting more than 5000 organic rice and vegetable farmers. Their support include helping them increase production, linking them to markets and enabling them to access higher market prices for their products. The RPOs also set up rice mills for processing as well as market outlets to help them increase the value of their products. Additionally, they work with 1000 savings association as part of their efforts to help facilitate farmers’ access to credit.

In the Philippines, the PhilDHARRA National Secretariat is the current lead convener of the Agriculture and Fisheries Cluster of the CSO-led program “Zero-Extreme Poverty Philippines 2030 (ZEP PH 2030).” ZEP 2030 seeks to uplift at least one million households from extreme poverty, and has seven steering committees working
on Health, Livelihood, Environment, Agriculture & Fisheries, Housing and Shelter, and Peace and Human Security. PhilDHRRA advocates for pro-farmer and fishers policies in the context of ZEP, while also working for the development social enterprises, which are essential to promoting economic activity and providing livelihood opportunities to people in rural areas.

**SDG 2: ZERO Hunger**

**ASEAN 2025: AEC Key Result Area (KRA) - D; ASCC KRA- A, B and D**

For many RPOs and RDOs, there are clearly many overlaps between SDG 1 and SDG 2. Bulk of initiatives of RDOs and RPOs are geared towards improving food and agricultural productivity and production, and advocating for policies that support small farmers and increase their incomes. All these contribute to the elimination of hunger and the promotion of food security, and as such, are critical for SDGs 1 and 2.

In Laos, SAEDA, a network of non-government organizations that work with vulnerable communities to promote sustainable agriculture, is implementing the Sustainable Agriculture for Food Security and Nutrition (PoSAFSaN) project. This initiative works to improve the food and nutrition security of 3,055 people (1,390 women), 607 households in 10 villages in the Louangnamtha district, Louanamtha province. The project also covers ethnic minority communities such as the Tai Dam, Akha, Lueu, Hmong, Khamou, Lanten, Houay and Sida ethnic groups.

Promoting and campaigning to raise awareness on food security is a key activity for AsiaDHRRA’s member/partner in Thailand. Advocacies on food security are closely linked with initiatives to encourage safe food, and the need to produce food in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner.

PhilDHRRA members, which include 695 functional people’s organizations, (POs) have been working with communities on initiatives aimed at ending hunger for the past 10 to 30 years in the
Philippines. As of January 2016, 12% of these POs are based in Luzon, 58% in the Visayas and 30% in Mindanao. Most of these POs are, or have been, engaged in the promotion of sustainable agriculture for food security through capacity building and livelihood programs in agriculture.

**SDG 5: Gender Equality**

**ASEAN 2025: ASCC KRA B**

A large part of RPOs and RDOs work on SDG 5 focuses on raising women's awareness, voice and participation, and supporting their access to essential social and economic services. Most of these initiatives are rooted in the analysis that the interplay of various economic, social and cultural factors promote gender inequality, which limits women's and girls' ability to participate in and get their fair share in society and in the economy.

RDOs and RPOs in Thailand promote and strengthen women's organizations as an essential strategy to raise women's voices and their sense of agency. Encouraging and supporting women to organize themselves build their capacity to participate and influence decision making on policies and programs.

DHRRA Malaysia offers programs that empower women to strive for financial independence, and provides education and career guidance for young girls and women. Helping women attain education and achieve financial independence is a critical strategy to challenging and transforming power relations between men and women at the household level.

Bina Desa, a rural-based NGO and partner/member of AsiaDHRRA in Indonesia, understands that although there are opportunities to advance the role of women in villages in the country, the space to actually increase women's role is narrow and tends to be discriminatory. In many instance, the effort to involve women is perfunctory, undertaken only to meet formal procedures and administrative requirements and not as affirmative action. Bina Desa
asserts that giving women access to social and economic rights as well as services will help encourage social justice and strengthen political and economic democracy.

**SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**

**ASEAN 2025: AEC Key Result Area (KRA) - D; ASCC KRA- A, B and D**

Many RPOs and RDOs undertake trainings, introduce livelihood opportunities and promote social entrepreneurship as part of the menu of services they offer to members and beneficiaries. These initiatives help enhance peoples’ productive capacity and incomes, broaden opportunities for decent work, and encourage inclusive economic growth. As with other initiatives, interventions to promote decent work and inclusive economic growth directly feed into other goals as well, especially those on eliminating poverty and hunger.

For instance, DHRRA Malaysia provides skills development and income generation training for individuals. It also promotes social entrepreneurship by encouraging people to establish and/or engage in micro or small businesses. One of the projects it supports is establishment and operation of the Bold n Beautiful Saloon, which provides impoverished women access to sustainable livelihood opportunities.

VCARD, VCA, VNFU and VINATU have programs that teach occupational and handicraft skills to rural young labourers in Vietnam in order to help them generate more income. This program is one of the many technical work shops, inter-exchanges, and training courses that these organizations undertakes to create decent work and livelihood opportunities for people in the rural areas. Some of these initiatives are funded and/or undertaken with government.

**SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**

**ASEAN 2025: AEC Key Result Area (KRA) - D; ASCC KRA- A, B and D**

The desire to address poverty and inequality in its many forms - income, wealth and gender - underpin many of the interventions and
initiatives of RDOs and RPOs in Southeast Asia. In this context RDO and RPO activities and initiatives to meet other goals especially those aimed at ending poverty and hunger, promoting decent work and eliminating gender inequality, such as those discussed above, also contribute addressing inequality.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Ensuring the availability of safe and healthy agriculture and food products, cultivated and harvested in ways that do not undermine the environment, and sustains the viability of agricultural production for future generations is a key component of many of the programs of AsiaDHRRA members and partners.

In Laos, SAEDA implements a project on Commercial Organic Farming and Its Institutionalization (COFI) in 5 districts in Xiengkhouang province. The project aims to help farmers adopt organic farming practices which will benefit both consumers and producers. For consumers, the promotion of commercial organic means more access to agriculture and food produced that are safe and produced in a natural and chemical free method or farming. For producers, organic farming gives them the opportunity to severe their dependence on chemical inputs, reduce their cost of production, and increase income, apart from minimizing and/or eliminating their and their families’ exposure to chemical-based agricultural inputs. SAEDA’s expects to reach some 1,600 households in 72 villages in implementing this project.

In Myanmar, similar initiatives are taking place. Dear Myanmar, a local NGO that works with small farmers in central Myanmar, Rakhine state, Shan State and the Ayeyarwaddy division trains farmers on good agricultural practices including the use of organic fertilizers (manure and green manure), proper agricultural waste management, sustainable methods of soil preservation and natural pest control, among others. Dear Myanmar also assists farmers determining natural farming methods that are most appropriate and suitable to
their environment. They also engage/advocate with governments to provide assistance in market development for organic products and to link local organic farmers’ groups with international buyers and markets. Thus far, Dear Myanmar initiative has directly benefited 200 farmers from 13 townships, 37 village tracks and 100 villages.

**SDG 13: Climate Action**

Climate change poses serious threats to the region’s agricultural sector. Apart from increasing uncertainty in agricultural production, changing climate patterns bring about extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall and intense drought and typhoons, which ruin crops and undermine the livelihoods of millions of farmers. Moreover, climate induced slow onset events such as long term changes in temperature, desalinization and sea level rise, to name a few, pose permanent damage to agricultural systems, and consequently, exacerbates hunger and poverty. Many RPOs and RDOs in the region have incorporated building climate resilience – through climate adaption and disaster risk reduction - into their objectives and priorities.

Metta Foundation conducts capacity building on emergency responses for local groups in Myanmar. Its trainings are designed to help develop and activate emergency response mechanisms in communities, including among internally displaced persons (IDPs) to help them increase their preparedness to emergencies resulting from climate change or other disasters. Thus far, the foundation’s program has reached 93,748 direct beneficiaries in 85 villages. It has also worked with 25,587 IDPs in 33 camps from Kachin and Norther Shan states.

Metta likewise provides relief assistance, and has provided support to 2,600 people in the Bago region who were severely affected by flooding. It repaired a school building for 493 students after this damaged by typhoon in Thapay Khan A Thin village in the same region.

Metta Foundation also implemented Mangrove Reforestation, Environmental Education and Disaster Risk Reduction (RRD) projects
which reached 73 villages and directly benefitted 61,287 people. It helped construct a retaining wall, which benefitted 3,781 persons in in Kaing Thaung village in the Ayeyarwady region. All these initiatives contribute to the realization of SDG 8 on climate chain.

In Laos, SAEDA operates the Climate Resilience (NU-PCR) project in Phongsaly province in Laos PDR. The project promotes practices and technologies that enhance community resilience to the impacts of climate change. Bulk of SAEDA’s work under this project involves building economic resilience by helping communities increase, diversify and increase value addition to agricultural output. For instance, the organization helps communities produce and market non-timber forest products such as honey, broomgrass, benzoine (Styrax Tonkinensis), peuak meuak or nang nyao, forest lemongrass (Litsea Cucuba), cinnamon camphor, Sichuan pepper. It promotes the production of selected cash crops, such cardamom, galangal, coffee, tea, and black ginger. It also encourages the planting of upland rice varieties, which apart from increasing incomes, also helps sustain biodiversity and improve upland productivity and resilience. SAEDA also helps farmers’ organizations improve post harvest handling, encourages farmers to set up businesses and become entrepreneurs.

Parallel to these initiatives, SAEDA promote sustainable agriculture practices a strategy for both climate adaptation and mitigation. It encourages organic vegetable farming in homestead and upland plots for household consumption and sale. It promotes agriculture conservation techniques, and supports the adoption of integrated upland farming systems, including animal raising, particularly pigs, fish, poultry and goats.

SDG 15: Life on land

Many of the initiatives under this goal overlaps with initiatives related to SDG 12 and 13. Apart from undertaking projects aimed at preventing land degradation, a large part of RDOs and RPOs work that contributes to this goal involves raising people’s awareness on
land related issues, and lobbying for policies to protect land-based resources.

For instance, the AsiaDHRRA partner in Thailand conducts reforestation projects and awareness raising activities on the importance of the environment. In Laos, the Lao Biodiversity conservation works with government agencies in the conservation of natural resources, including forests, wildlife, land and water.

Upholding farmers’ and indigenous peoples’ land rights is also a critical component of the work of AsiaDHRRA members and partners. The Network of Orang Asli Villages in Kelantan (JKOAK) was organized in the northern state of Kelantan to defend Orang Asli traditional territories from deforestation, logging and government appropriation. JKOAK has systematically mapped out native customary borders in order to come up with estimates on the extent of land grabbing that has taken place in their areas. JKOAK has engaged the Kelantan state government in dialogues with the goal of protecting their villages from further dispossession of land. However, the engagement came to a violent end when, on September 2016, the blockade set-up by Orang Asli communities belonging to JKOAK in Gua Musang against logging trucks was dismantled by the Kelantan Forestry Department, and 16 Orang Aslis and 2 freelance journalists were detained (and eventually released).

JKOASM partnered with Sahabat Alam Malaysia in 2015 and 2016 to publish a report on land rights violations in Peninsular Malaysia. This report was based on 12 case studies from Kelantan, Perak, and Pahang. The report detailed the legislative and governance framework pertaining to indigenous peoples, land, forestry, and conservation areas and discussed the definition of “illegal logging,” analyzed the causes of encroachment on indigenous customary lands, and provided recommendations to the federal and state governments on how to stop the continued encroachment on indigenous lands.
The issue of stateless people and communities embodies one of the most critical challenges to peace and justice in Southeast Asia. Addressing this issue is one of the key priorities of DHRRA in Malaysia, which had been providing legal assistance to stateless communities in West Malaysia since 2003 through an initiative known as Projek Mendaftar Anak Malaysia. In 2014, DHRRA Malaysia significantly scaled-up its work on statelessness by carrying out a comprehensive mapping, registration, and community-based legal assistance project across the Peninsular region.

Using a community-based paralegal approach, DHRRA Malaysia has been able to empower community members into helping each other acquire or confirm their nationality. Community-based paralegals help link local communities with government institutions through flexible, accessible, and cost-effective means.

As of 1 September 2016, DHRRA Malaysia has assisted in the registration of a total of 12,341 individuals. Community paralegals have assisted 8,819 individuals to file their applications for nationality documentation with the NRD. As of today, 875 applications have been successfully filed.

DHRRA Malaysia, through its evidence-based advocacy and awareness campaigns, has encouraged the Malaysian government to be more open to addressing the issue of statelessness. The Prime Minister in coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs established the Special Implementation Task Force for Indian Committee to provide a venue where documentation issues and other statelessness-related issues can be discussed. DHRRA Malaysia was also able to the shortening of processing time for cases it refers to government agencies.
Often, stateless youth and children are asked to discontinue their studies or to pay much higher fees/levies (charges for foreigners) to continue their education. DHRRA Malaysia has assisted over a hundred stateless youth and children whose applications for the continuation of their education and skill/vocational training were pending before the NRD and other relevant government institutions. In October 2015, DHRRA Malaysia submitted a paper (blueprint) to the Prime Minister’s Office. Among the recommendations put forward was that individuals born in Malaya (Malaysia) before the date of independence be granted citizenship.

In Indonesia, AsiaDHRRA’s contribution to SDG 16 takes the form of helping strengthen democracy one village at a time. In 2014, Indonesia passed the Village Law which aims to support local democracy by giving local villages the power to develop their own development plan, and by allocating resources from the central government to the implementation of such plan. Bina Desa is monitoring the implementation of the law, with the goal of identifying the best way through which stakeholders groups can best participate and have a voice in village policy and decision making processes. Bina Desa hopes that by opening decision making process to stakeholders and promoting musyawarah or consensus decision-making, it can contribute to bringing about genuine democracy, promote effective public service and broad, and result to sustainable community development and empowerment.

**SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals**

The success of the SDGs depends to a large extent on how different stakeholders – governments, civil society groups, especially peoples’ organizations, and private sector - are able to work together to ensure its full implementation. Some of the projects undertaken by RPOs and RDOs are undertaken in close coordination with other NGOs, development organizations and development funders. The success of these initiatives lies in being able to pool together the different
resources – expertise, networks, funds – that these organizations are able to bring in to the table.

The experience in Vietnam and Lao indicate how positive collaboration between government and farmers’ groups can broaden the reach and enhance the impact of projects and initiatives aligned with the SDGs and ASEAN 2025. However in many countries in the region, RDOs and RPOs work with little collaboration and support from governments. In the same vein, for many RDOs and RPOs, engagement, much less cooperation with private sector is still very much new territory. This is clearly an area that AsiaDHRRA and members need to discuss and explore further.

The country studies indicate two important facts relevant to SDG 17. First, as stated earlier, there is substantial alignment between RDOs and RPOs goals and strategies and the SDGS and ASEAN 2025. This means that, insofar as RDOs and RPOs are concerned, there is a clear starting point and tremendous potential for partnership in the implementation of these goals. Second, the scoping of RPO and RDO initiatives from the case studies indicates that there is a great deal of openness among civil society to engage, and in some cases, cooperate other stakeholders to pursue common development objectives.

**RDOs AND RPOS INITIATIVES CAN BE BETTER SUPPORTED TO MAXIMIZE THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO SDGS AND ASEAN 2020**

In undertaking the aforementioned initiatives, the RDOs and RPOs play the crucial role of being (i) providers of support services to local communities, (ii) voices of the communities, and, (iii) mobilizers of resources. The initiatives by RDOs and RPOs are essentially geared to help small-scale men and women agricultural producers improve productivity, increase incomes, build climate and economic resilience, and, promote greater equality – the same goals that underpin the SDGs and the ASEAN 2025. However, many of the initiatives by RDOs and RPOs are undertaken without or with very limited support from governments. If government support is present, these are usually short-term and project-focused.
RDOs and RPOs underscored the need for more strategic interventions aimed at enhancing incomes and productivity in a sustainable manner. They also underscored the need for government support - in terms of policies and services – that government and development institutions should provide in order to scale up and sustain their projects, beyond the usual pilot and modelling initiatives.

One of the key things that emerged from the scoping is the high level of value that RDOs and RPOs accord to initiatives to promote people empowerment and peoples’ rights, especially land rights and human rights, including of displaced communities. They see these initiatives as fundamental and integral to over-all efforts to reduce poverty and promote rural development. This view is consistent with the way the current SDGs are framed. The SDGs do not only target poverty, hunger, and, inequality but also aims for inclusivity, participation and stronger institutions. This can only be possible if supported by strong peoples’ movements advocating for people empowerment and human rights.

**GOVERNMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA HAVE THE BASIC POLICY STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT MANY OF THE SDGS AND ASEAN 2025 OBJECTIVES HOWEVER THESE STRUCTURES AND SPACES NEED TO BE OPENED UP TO DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS IN ORDER TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION**

Governments in the region have the basic policy structure – in the form of national development plans, strategies, policies, laws and regulations - that can serve as starting points for the implementation and realization of different aspects of the SDGs and ASEAN 2025. Some of these policies were established before the adoption of global development goals, and while not perfect, can serve as the base upon which governments can build and undertake more ambitious plans and initiatives to achieve regional and global development goals.

Because poverty and food insecurity are critical issues for many countries in the region, most governments have strategic plans and policies to address these. Cambodia’s Rectangular Strategy for
2013-2018 has very clear targets to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development. Apart from aiming for an average annual economic growth at $\geq 7\%$ in GDP, the strategy is envisioned to create more jobs, achieve $\geq 1\%$ annual reduction in poverty rate (which in 2012 was at 18.9%), improve institutional capacity and governance and ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of public services to better serve the people.

Thailand’s adoption of the “Sufficient Economy Philosophy” provides a good starting point for realizing key regional and global sustainable development goals. This philosophy was adopted long before the creation of SDGs and ASEAN 2025, yet it echoes many of these goals and key result areas, such as reduction of the number of households living in poverty, the reduction of the use of chemical fertilizers, and the production of quality and safe food and agricultural products, to name a few. The “Sufficient Economy Philosophy” if properly implemented can contribute greatly to the realization of SDG goals to eliminate poverty and hunger (SDGs 1 and 2), undertake climate action (SDG 13), and safeguard life on land (SDG 15) to name a few.

Malaysia Eleventh Plan was adopted with the long-term goal of achieving the SDG agenda by 2030. It is currently being implemented by the Economic Planning Unit through different working committees. The country also have different programs that contributes to meeting SDG goals such as the One Malaysia People’s Aid (BR1M), a government program that provides support to low-income households to help them to meet the rising cost of living. Government also implements the One Malaysia People’s Housing Program (PR1MA), which was set up to help targeted groups cope with the cost of living in urban areas, and to improve their chances to own a house despite escalating property prices in Malaysia.

In Vietnam, the UNDP reports that there are 41 policies and projects that have been promulgated to support sustainable development and reduce poverty. Included among these is the Sustainable Poverty Reduction (SPR) program for the period 2011-2020, as well as accompanying initiatives to reduce poverty in 61 extremely poor districts.
Governments in Southeast Asia also have a host of policies on food security. Some of these are a reaction to the rice crises of 1995, when governments in the region were confronted with looming rice prices and were reminded of the social economic and political importance of achieving and safeguarding food security. A quick survey of food security policies in the region will show that many of these are not only focused on increasing food production, but also on raising farmers’ incomes and giving them access to productive resources. In the Philippines, Congress have enacted several laws that are aligned to food security goals, such as the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act, well before the adoption of the MDGs and the SDGs. Food security goals are also well articulated in its Medium Term Development Plan. However, ensuring the full and effective implementation of these laws remains a critical challenge for the Philippine government.

Cambodia has the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition for 2014-2018 and the National Action Plan for the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC), a collaboration initiated in 2016 between government and the United Nations to eradicate hunger in the country by 2025. These food security policies are complemented by national policies aimed at improving food production and agricultural incomes such as the Agricultural Sector Strategic Development Plan (ASDP) 2014-2018 which is envisioned to help raise crop output by 10% per year.

Beyond addressing poverty and food insecurity, many countries in Asia also have policies that have the potential to contribute to the different SDG and ASEAN 2025 goals. On gender equality, Myanmar adopted the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) based on provisions of its 2008 Constitution, the CEDAW and the 12 Priority Areas of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Cambodia has various legislations and policies to uphold women's rights, among them the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims and the related National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women, the Guidelines for Legal Protection of
Women’s and Children’s Rights, the Law on Suppression of Trafficking in Humans and Sexual Exploitation, among others. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) and the Cambodian National Council for Women (CNCW) are the national machinery for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment. The MOWA leads the development and implementation of the national gender strategic plan, which works on the following priority areas: women’s economic empowerment, enhancing women’s and girls’ access to education and health services, and encouraging women’s participation in decision-making. These policies, if properly supported and implemented in close coordination with stakeholders’ groups, will go a long way in helping the country meet SDG 3.

On climate change, Vietnam has a National Strategy on Climate Change adopted in 2011. The Vietnamese government allocated VND 2000 billion for climate change initiatives. The Philippines, apart from creating the Philippine Climate Change Commission, which oversees and coordinates climate related initiatives in the country, also passed a legislation to create the Philippine Survival Fund (PSF). The PSF, a special fund dedicated to supporting climate change adaptation projects in the country.

As mentioned earlier policies against poverty, hunger, gender inequality and climate change also intersects and overlaps with initiatives to address inequality, promote decent work and inclusive economic growth, safeguard the sustainability of life on land and water and uphold peace and justice.

This is not surprising because all these problems are interrelated, and delivering in one objective often also creates progress in another. For instance, most governments in the region have policies around decent work, usually in relation to basic ILO conventions. However, the challenge lies on the implementation of these policies.

This brings us to three critical points. The first relates to the ability of governments to ensure the effective implementation of existing development plans strategies, laws and policies that contribute
to the SDGs and ASEAN 2025. Good policies abound, but without implementation, they have very little value. Hence, a large part of government efforts to achieve SDGs must focus on enhancing its capability to implement policies and plans to achieve sustainable development.

The second focuses on the need to understand and address policy gaps in existing development plans and strategies. The SDGs and ASEAN 2025 encompass comprehensive and ambitious and existing policies, and business-as-usual practices will not be enough to deliver these. Governments must work together closely with other sectors to look at existing policies and identify what more needs to be in place to support the realization of regional and global development goals.

The third point is on the role and potential of RPOs and RDOs to contribute to the fulfillment of SDGs and ASEAN 2025. RDOs and RPOs work with and/or consist of people who are directly affected by poverty and its many manifestations. They can provide valuable information and insights on how governments can best address the needs of poor people, including the type of government programs and support that can help improve their economic viability. Apart from this, they can play a key role in monitoring implementing, evaluating and improving SDG related policies and projects.
Drawing from the key findings from the country studies, AsiaDHRRA identifies three concrete action points that can increase stakeholder participation in ensuring the fulfilment of SDGs and ASEAN 2025.

SUPPORT RDOS AND RPOS TO BECOME DRIVERS AND BENEFICIARIES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Realizing SDGs and ASEAN 2025 requires a major paradigm shift in the way governments and private sector relate with stakeholders organizations, especially RDOs and RPOs. It entails recognizing that the poor and marginalized are not just static beneficiaries of economic growth, but actual and potential drivers of sustainable development. Adopting this mind set entails giving farmers and fishers access to productive resources, and investing in their productive capacity.

At the national level, this requires adopting, and more importantly, implementing policies that:

1. Give men and women farmers access to land and water and upholding, and uphold, respect and safeguard their rights to these resources
2. Provide small scale agricultural producers with essential support services including access to credit, seeds, extension services, research and sustainable farming technology, market information and networks

3. Build farmers and fishers’ capacity to add value to their products by providing post-harvest facilities, trainings on the processing of commodities, and setting up of social enterprises.

4. Ensure that workers, including those who work on farms and rural enterprises are able to secure fair wages, work in decent conditions and have their rights respected

At the regional level ASEAN can play a key role in helping its Member States undertake and fulfil the recommendations above. It can leverage regional cooperation to secure resources and funding for said activities. More importantly it can benefit from a healthy exchange of information and knowledge on best practices in order to strengthen RDOs and RPOs contribution to SDGs and ASEAN 2025.

REPLICATE AND SCALE UP SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES THROUGH INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND PRIVATE SECTOR

The country studies demonstrate how - with support from government or development institutions and funders - RDOs and RPOs, can expand the impact and reach of their programs and initiatives. Scaling up and/or expanding the local communities’ actions on sustainable agriculture, climate change adaptation, livelihoods and enterprise development, amongst others, offer the highest potential to achieve regional and global sustainable development goals.

GIVE RDOs AND RPOs A SEAT IN THE SDG AND ASEAN 2025 TABLE

The ASEAN and governments must build mechanisms that will enable RDOs and RPOs to engage ASEAN and national bodies tasked with planning for and implementing the SDGs. Apart from creating opportunities to work together on delivering projects and initiatives in support of these complementary regional and global goals, these can also serve as a platform for monitoring and generating constructive feedback on SDG and ASEAN 2025 initiatives.
05
Country Cases

LAOS
MALAYSIA
MYANMAR
PHILIPPINES
THAILAND
VIETNAM
NATIONAL CONTEXT

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is classified as one the world’s least developed countries. In 2003, the GDP per capita of Laos was at $375 and around 31% of its population were living below the poverty line with a daily income of only $1.5 (Nanthavong, 2006).

Since the early 2000s, the Laos government has declared as a national goal its declassification as a least developed country (LDC) by 2020.

An industrialization and modernization strategy was formulated with emphasis on hydro-power, agricultural commercialization, tourism, mining and infrastructure development (Oraboune, 2011). At the same time, the “land-linked” strategy was also drafted as guide towards the completion of its national road system by 2020 (Oraboune, 2012).

Moreover, the following strategic plans were also drafted to guide the industrialization and modernization of Laos: the Seventh National Socioeconomic Development Plan 2011-2015; the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy 2020; the Northern Economic Development Master Plan, the Triangle Development Master Plan in the Southern Part of the Lao PDR, the Agriculture Development Strategy 2025 and Vision 2030 (2015), the 8th Five-year National Socioeconomic Development Plan 2016–2020 (2016), the Rural Development and Poverty Reduction Plan 2016-2020 (2016). Most of the said strategic plans are focused on rural development and poverty reduction.

As a result of the implementation of these policies, Laos has registered an average growth rate of 8.02% from 2006 to 2011 (Kyophilavong
& Lamphayphan, 2014). However, Laos still has the highest poverty rate among the other Mekong countries (Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia). As of 2012, 30% of the population are still earning less than $1.25 a day (SODA, 2015). According to the UN (2015b), poverty rate in the rural areas is 2.9 times higher than in urban areas. Also, the poverty rate in remote upland regions is higher than in lowland areas.

The most important factors identified as contributory to poverty reduction were road and infrastructure development, and the promotion of agricultural production of crops such as coffee, cardamom, sesame, sugarcane and watermelons for income generation and food security (Lyttleton, Cohen, Rattanavong, Thongkhamhane, & Sisaengrat, 2004). The integration of poverty reduction and food security was highlighted in the Agriculture Development Strategy 2025 and Vision 2030 that were approved in 2014 to ensure national food security through clean, safe and sustainable agriculture.

Domestic agricultural production is the main source of food for the rural population. According to LSB (2007), rural households consume 83% of their own agriculture production. However, according to the UN (2015b), Laos is nowhere near achieving the MDG target of reducing underweight and stunting. Around 44% of Laos children under five years of age are stunted and 27% are underweight. These issues are significantly associated with poverty and the level of education the mother who is the usually the one responsible for the preparation of the family’s meals including food nutrition management.

Gender and poverty are also linked as women are usually considered poorer than men in terms of working time and work burden (SODA, 2015). Education is a key gap in promoting gender equity as rural communities still prioritize male children for higher level education. However, poverty in female-headed households is significantly lower (17% in 2012/13) than in male-headed households (24%). Laos has the highest proportion of women parliamentarians with 25% in 2012 but proportion in terms of female leadership in decision-making institutions only at 5% (UN, 2015b).
AGRICULTURE AND THE SMALL FARMERS/FISHERS

Laos is primarily an agricultural country with the sector contributing 30.4% to its GDP. The agriculture and forestry sectors have been growing at a combined average of 4% in recent years. Crops and livestock productions have also grown at a combined average of 4.07%, while fisheries production has grown at 4.03%. Overall, agriculture production has improved and has sufficiently met domestic demand (CPI, 2011).

Commercial production has gradually expanded since 2006. Rice has been mainly exported to neighboring countries at an average of 400,000–500,000 tons per year. Productions of other cash crops have also increased. Production of maize for animal feeds has reached almost 1 million tons (an increase by 126%), coffee 87,330 tons, sugarcane 1,055,700 tons, cassava 1,060,880 tons, tea 3,980 tons, tobacco 75,560 tons, beans 60,200 tons, job’s tears 122,300 tons, and sesame 13,900 tons (MAF, 2015).

In 2012, commercial livestock and fishery productions also expanded. Large-scale hog farms grew from 13,910 breeders in 2011 to 20,220 breeders (of 775 farms) in 2012 with a production capacity of 385,000 pigs per year. The number of goat farms also expanded 43 farms in 2010 to 68 farms in 2012, with the number of goats increasing by more than 65%. In 2012, the total number of cattle farms stood at 285 farms with a total of 31,800 heads.

In 2012, there were 91 chicken farms with total 444,000 chickens, 252 chicken egg farms with almost 1.4 million breeders/hens, 82 duck egg farms with 176,800 breeders, 7 duck meat farms with 15,900 ducks, and 24 quail farms (MAF, 2015).

The main area for agricultural production, particularly rice production, is located in the central part of Laos, accounting for 55% of total planted area, and 57% of total production. The southern part accounts for 23% (of both planted area and production) while the northern part accounts for 22% of planted area and 20% of
production. Savannakhet Province accounts for the largest area of rice lands (22% of the total area used for growing rice) in the country, followed by Champassack Province (12%), Vientiane Capital (9%), Saravane Province (9%), and Vientiane Province (8%). The average farm size per household is approximately 1.6 hectares. (CPI, 2011).

**NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS, PLANS, AND INITIATIVES TOWARDS THE SDGS/ASEAN VISION**

Laos has pursued an economic transition from livelihood agriculture to commercialization as the country joined the Association of South-East Asia Nations (ASEAN) in 1997 and became an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 1998. Under the AFTA agreement, Laos has reduced the tariff rates between 0% to 5% in 2008, and exerted efforts to increase imports, at the same time, reduce the negative impacts of such on the domestic economy (Kyophilavong, 2008).

However, Laos’ agriculture sector may not have the key factors necessary for it to increase the volume and quality of its production to enable it to compete in the ASEAN market. Lao farmers currently do not have the appropriate farming knowledge and technology, required volume of arable land, and necessary labor force to compete. (Kyophilavong; Record; Takamatsu; Nghardsaysone; & Sayvaya, 2014).

The 23rd Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR last 26 July 2016. All ASEAN member-countries agreed to adopt the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 together with three ASEAN Community Blueprints, including the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint 2025. The Ministers also signed the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ACTIP), and noted the eight priorities for Lao PDR to implement the ASEAN Community Vision 2025: narrowing of the development gap, trade facilitation, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) development, tourism development, connectivity, decent work promotion, transition to formal economy in ASEAN, and enhancement of regional cooperation.
for the preservation, protection and promotion of ASEAN cultural heritage (Chairman’s Statement of the 23rd ASEAN Regional Forum, Vientiane, Lao PDR, 26 July 2016).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies (UN, 2015a). The Laos government has expanded the SDG into many of its development strategies, such as:

a. The Millennium Development Goal (MDG)
b. The National Poverty Eradication Program (NPEP)
c. The Rural Development and Poverty Reduction plan 2016-2020
d. The Agriculture Development Strategy 2025 and Vision 2030
e. The Participatory Gender Development Plan
f. The Vision 2030 and Strategic Plan 2025 for Education and Sport Development
g. The Strategy on Climate Change of Lao PDR
h. The Food Security and Nutrition Strategy of Lao PDR
i. The Nutrition Strategy 2025 and Plan for Action 2016-2020
k. The National Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and Action Plan 2010, and

Moreover, the Laos government has also developed and declared many laws and registrations, identified targets for the SDG and other strategic plans. The plans are being implemented in collaboration with the United Nations, the European Union, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, international non-government organizations (INGOs), Lao civil society organizations (CSOs), private companies and the Lao government.
However, in terms of implementation with ASEAN, Laos has developed regulations and policies to support the ASEAN development framework. There are very limited actions that contribute to ASEAN 2025.

**PLANS AND INITIATIVES OF DHRRA MEMBERS TOWARDS THE SDGS/ASEAN VISION**

The civil society organizations in Laos are relatively young as they were only allowed by the government to be legally established in 2009 primarily to assist INGOs and the Lao government in implementing development projects. Initially, only INGOs were allowed to participate in rural development initiatives when the Lao government in 1986 implemented the New Economic Mechanism called “Chitanakan Mai” to open the economy toward a market system. All CSOs are under the authority and oversight of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), and work closely with relevant ministries and local communities.

The following are selected non-government organizations that work in Laos towards the attainment of Lao MDGs and SDGs:

**Sustainable Agriculture & Environment Development Association (SAEDA)**

SAEDA is a Lao network of non-government organizations that has been promoting sustainable agriculture with CUSO Canada since 1991. In 2007, SAEDA registered as non-profit association and continued working with vulnerable communities to promote sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and chemical pesticide risk reduction.

SAEDA’s vision is to assist Lao communities in attaining sustainable livelihood, food security and nutrition security through environmentally sound agricultural development. Its strategic plan of SAEDA is focused on the attainment of the Lao government’s SDGs and MDGs.
Most of SAEDA’s projects support SDG1: End of poverty, SDG2: End hunger; SDG5: Gender equality; SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.

The following are SAEDA’s current projects:

1. **Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture for Food Security and Nutrition (PoSAFSaN) (COFI)** - This project aims to improve the food and nutrition security of 3,055 people (1,390 women), 607 households in 10 villages in Louangnamtha district, Louanamtha province. The project also covers ethnic minority communities such as the Tai Dam, Akha, Lueu, Hmong, Khamou, Lanten, Houay and Sida ethnic groups.

2. **Promote Commercial Organic Farming and Its Institutionalization (COFI)** - The project aims to promote and institutionalize commercial-scale organic farming in 5 districts in Xiengkhouang province. Some 1,600 households in 72 villages are expected to be reached by the project. The project also involves women groups and ethnic minorities in the districts of Paek, Khoun, Kham, Phoukoud and Phaxay in Xiengkhouang province.

3. **Promoting Climate Resilience (NU-PCR) project** - The project involves the promotion of practices and technologies that enhance community resilience to the impacts of climate change. The project, which is being implemented in Phongsaly province, includes the following activities:
   
i. Promotion of agriculture conservation techniques;
   
ii. Promotion of safe and proper use of pesticides;
   
iii. Promotion of integrated upland farming systems, including animal raising (pigs, fish, poultry and goats), growing of fodder and delivery of appropriate support services, such as community-based animal health workers;

iv. Promotion of selected cash crops, such cardamom, galangal, coffee, tea, and black ginger;
v. Promotion of improved upland rice varieties to sustain biodiversity and increase upland productivity and resilience;
vi. Promotion of organic vegetable farming in homestead and upland plots for household consumption and sale;
vii. Promotion of NTFPs, such as: honey, broomgrass, benzoine (Styrax Tonkinensis), peuak meuak or nang nyao, forest lemongrass (Litsea Cucuba), cinnamon camphor, Sichuan pepper;
viii. Promotion of improved post-harvest handling; and
ix. Promotion of farming as a business through farmer associations.

Moreover, SAEDA has also supported the convening of national and international conventions on:

• The FAO Code of Conduct on pesticide control;
• The ASEAN’s Organic Strategy, which involves the promotion of organic farming, and the exchange/trade among ASEAN members (SAEDA, through LOPA, promotes the production of organic rice for domestic and international trade); and
• The 2004 National Biodiversity and Action Plan (NBSAP) of Laos, which was linked biodiversity as a contributory factor in achieving poverty alleviation.

Community Development and Environment Association (CDEA)

CDEA is a first non-profit organization established in 2004 to assist poor communities in Lao PDR to effectively utilize environmental resources, improve the standards of living and increase household income. CDEA is currently working in Vientiane Capital, Oudomxay province, Xiengkuang province and Sekong province (Thateng district).

In response to the SDGs and MDGs of the Lao government for elimination of poverty by 2020, CDEA has implemented the following poverty reduction activities/projects in partnership with the Canada
Making waste work for the economy - This project aims to support the people in Vientiane Capital by providing training on how to turn market and household wastes into organic composts/fertilizers. Saving communities money that should have been spent to purchase commercial/chemical fertilizers;

Bio-gas activity - This project teaches local communities how to convert animal manure into methane that can be used for cooking. The remaining waste by-products are then used to produce organic compost/fertilizer that can be sold or used by the community members. This not only provides additional income for the community members but also saves them the time that would have been spent for collecting firewood; and

Water supply and sanitation - This project provides rural communities access to clean water supply, which in turn contributes to the improvement in the health, agriculture and fund management situation of the village. Under the project, CDEA first develops a sustainable infrastructure for clean water, and then provides basic hygiene and sanitation training to address related health issues. The project also integrates with other livelihood activities in the area, such as animal farming, house repair and toilet building, organic farming, and community development fund management.

**Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (ARMI)**

ARMI was founded in October 2006 by 15 former CIDSE staff members after CIDSE’s team leaders for Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos decided to start operating as local organizations. One group of former CIDSE staff members decided to establish the “Non-profit Association for Rural Mobilization and Improvement (NORMAI) that registered under the Lao Union of Science and Engineering Associations (LUSEA) in 10 October 2006. In 9 August 2012, another group composed of 15 former CIDSE staff members established ARMI and registered with the MoHA.
ARMI’s vision is to contribute to a society that offers a future of well-being for all ethnic groups, based on mutual respect, sharing resources and opportunities, and care for the environment. ARMI's mission is to improve the quality of life and self-reliance of the poor and vulnerable in rural areas, through increased agriculture production and other income generation, and to promote the use renewable energy. The main goals of ARMI are: 1) to improve food-security and nutrition of poor and vulnerable households in rural communities by improving production of and access to food; 2) to improve the livelihood of poor communities through the promotion of access to and sustainable use and management of natural resources; and 3) to contribute to poverty alleviation through the development of cleaner and more fuel efficient Improved Cook Stoves (ICS).

ARMI mainly operates in provinces of Vientiane, Khammouan, Savanakhet and Champasack.

**Lao Biodiversity Association (LBA)**

LBA was initially founded in 2003 in association with LUSEA, and was registered with the MoHA in 2011. The vision of LBA is the establishment of a sustainable society with rich biodiversity that exists in harmony with human beings. The mission of LBA is to collaborate with government agencies in the conservation of natural resources (i.e. forests, wildlife, land, water), and in the establishment in remote areas of local livelihood opportunities, school, water, hygiene & sanitation, and renewable energy systems.

LBA has been implementing the following projects in Laos:

1. **Surveying Northern White-Cheeked Gibbon in Phou Dendin National Protected Area** - The project is being implemented in Phongsaly Province, in northernmost Laos. The project aims to: train LBA and government staff members at the provincial and district levels on how to assess the status and threats to the gibbon population in the said area; document the current status of the gibbon population in the Phou Dendin NPA through targeted
field surveys; and identify priority conservation interventions for the Northern White-cheeked Gibbons.

2. **Clean water system and school equipment** - The project, which is being implemented in Phongsaly province, aims to improve the hygiene practices of residents towards better health, and to introduce water conservation practices.

3. **Scaling-up of the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) project** - This project, which is being implemented in Paksong District, Champasak Province, aims to improve basic hygiene practices of residents, and promote the conservation of use of clean water in the area.

4. **Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) in Sayabury Province** - The project aims to develop a feasible Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) mechanism for REDD in Lao PDR that have a strong emphasis on local communities and ethnic minorities.

5. **Improvement of livelihood of ethnic minorities in Phoutaxan Conservation Forest** - The project, which is being implemented in Phongsaly province, aims to improve the living conditions of poor families that inhabit the said protected forest. The expected results of this project are: 1) an increase in the availability of irrigated lands for rice planting; 2) creation of additional livelihood opportunities; 3) improved sanitation and hygiene in the target villages; and 4) improved management of the Phoutaxan Conservation Forest.

**Lao Farmers Network (LFN)**

The LFN is a new network that was setup in 2014 following a series of consultations with farmers that were conducted all over the country from 2012 to 2013. The farmers’ network has 6,851 members, mostly rice, vegetables, sugarcane, coffee, livestock, maize, handicrafts and rubber farmers. For the period of 2014 to 2018, the network plans to improve their organizational structure, expand membership, strengthen the capacity of its members, construct an exhibition and information center, gather and share lessons from other countries, and set up a website.
Green Community Association (GCA)

GCA was established in 2011 to create green environments for rural communities, preserve remaining good environments, enforce social safeguards and the legal rights of local communities on their lands and in protecting their forests, and improve the livelihood of local communities. GCA has worked with CARE International in Laos on the Good Land and Forest Governance Project (GO-FOGO). The overall goal of said project is to “Contribute to good forest governance in Lao PDR that respects the rights of ethnic groups and ensures the participation of relevant stakeholders”.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN UNDERTAKING THESE INITIATIVES

The SDGs and MDGs have very ambitious targets that require numerous global indicators. Implementation of programs and projects for the attainment of SDG and MDG targets also require the participation and coordination of numerous government ministries.

Aside from the challenging logistical and data (for indicators) requirements, financial support from international donors to fund SDG and MDG programs and activities would also be needed. Collaboration between government agencies and Lao CSOs in implementing the plans would be another challenge but also a good opportunity for non-profit organizations to show government the important role it can play as a partner in development work given that Lao CSOs are still not recognized by local authorities in some districts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lao PDR has developed SDG targets since 2000, and initially only focused on poverty alleviation/reduction and ending hunger. However, there was immediate realization within the government that said targets could not be attained and sustained without equally focusing on the commercialization and modernization of the agriculture sector and in investing on infrastructure development.
Since then, poverty and extreme hunger has declined while food and nutrition security have improved in terms of food availability and price stability.

Lao PDR has developed strategic plans and has drafted and enacted regulations towards the achievement of the SDG targets.

Non-profit organizations or Lao CSOs have important roles to play in the attainment of the SDG, MDG and ASEAN goals. However, collaboration between government bodies and Lao CSOs on SDG and MDG programs and activities have continued to be limited. The following are recommendations on how to enhance capacity of Lao CSOs for collaborations with state bodies on SDG and MDG activities:

a. Lao CSOs should identify specific sites where collaboration activities with farmers groups and local government officials will be undertaken;
b. Enhance the capacity (i.e. knowledge and roles) of local stakeholders, in particular women and youth groups and farmers’ associations, to allow them to effectively engage the market, the private sector and other CSOs;
c. Promote the roles, activities, and achievements of CSOs in implementing SDG and MDG related activities at the national and international levels.
d. There should be regular trainings and discussions among CSOs to facilitate exchanges in knowledge and experience in implementing SDG and MDG related activities;
e. Linkage between Lao CSO networks and INGOs/donor agencies should be established for resources sharing and funding support; and
f. Push for the establishment of linkages (other than those with the Ministry of National Defense) between Lao CSOs and the other relevant government agencies/Ministries implementing SDG and MDG related plans and activities.

26 June 2017
REFERENCES

MIC (Ministry of Industry and Commerce). 2008. The assessment of the implementation of New Economic Mechanism policies (NEMP) 1986-2006 in six sectors: Planning and investment, industry and commerce, agriculture and forestry, energy and mining, communication and posts, and transportation and construction., Vientiane, Lao PDR


NATIONAL CONTEXT

Socioeconomic Profile of Malaysia

Malaysia (population: 31.7 million), which was officially formed in 1963, is an upper-middle income country located in Southeast Asia that has experienced rapid, albeit uneven, development over the past four decades.

Since the mid-20th century, the Malaysia has been relatively successful in navigating the transition from being an economy mainly reliant on natural resource extraction (particularly rubber cultivation and tin mining) to becoming an economically diversified, industrialized nation. Poverty and infant mortality has decreased steadily, while life expectancy has increased (World Bank). Its annual growth rate has decreased to 4.7% in 2013 due to macroeconomic fluctuations and domestic political controversies, though it had maintained consistently high rates of growth of 9-10% on average during the 1990s (World Bank). Today, it is the third wealthiest country per capita in the ASEAN region, next to the small states of Singapore and Brunei (see Fig. 1, data from World Bank).

Demographically, Malaysia is composed of several racial groups, the most populous of which being the Malays (69%), Chinese (23%), and Indians (7%) (Department of Statistics, Malaysia). Since the 1970s, spurred on by the acceleration of Malaysia's industrial growth, rising immigration has contributed to new demographic shifts. Malaysia is a major migrant destination in the region, attracting foreign workers to its agricultural, construction, and service sectors. Top sending countries include neighboring Indonesia, Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Myanmar. Officially, there are an estimated 3
million non-citizens living in the country (of which 2.1 million were born outside of the country) making up almost 10% of the population. Over half of non-Malaysians live in the state of Sabah on the north-eastern part of the island of Borneo.

![Fig. 1 GDP Per Capita (USD), ASEAN Member States](image)

- Excluding Brunei Darussalam and Singapore

Development Policies and Programs

Development efforts in Malaysia have historically been centrally planned and formalized in national programs and policies. The 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP), a five-year plan that succeeds the 10th Malaysia Plan and the New Economic Model of 2010, is the government’s main developmental blueprint for 2015-2020. With the goal of transforming Malaysia into a fully developed nation by 2020, the 11MP’s guiding principle is to “anchor growth on people.” The 11MP is built upon the following pillars: 1) enhancing inclusiveness towards an equitable society; 2) improving well-being for all; 3) accelerating human capital development for an advanced nation; 4) pursuing green growth for sustainability and resilience; 5) strengthening infrastructure to support economic expansion; and 6) re-engineering economic growth for greater prosperity.

The following are the targets under the 11MP:

a. Increase and maintain GDP growth at 5-6% per annum
b. Increase labor productivity from 77,100RM in 2015 to 92,300RM by 2020
c. Increase GNI per capita to 54,100RM by 2020

d. Increase average monthly household income from 6141RM in 2014 to 10,540RM by 2020

e. Increase contribution of employees to GDP from 34.9% in 2015 to 40% in 2020

f. Increase the Malaysian Well-being Index (MWI) to 1.7% per annum

In addition, the Malaysian government implements the following programs and policies aimed at eliminating poverty:

a. The 1Malaysia People’s Aid (B1RM), established in 2012, offers financial assistance to low-income households and unmarried individuals living below the poverty line in order to cope with rising costs of living.

b. The 1Malaysia People’s Housing Program (PR1MA) was also launched in 2012 with the PR1MA Act to plan, develop, construct and maintain affordable, high quality housing for middle-income households in key urban centers.

c. The 1Malaysia Perwani Community (Perwani) was launched in 2013 by Prime Minister Najib Razak, and is a women-centered program aimed at promoting health care, family welfare, skills training, entrepreneurship, and education. Recognizing the crucial role that women play in development, Perwani envisions that women play an active role in working with local agencies and authorities to promote community resilience and security. As of 2015, there are 150,000 members from 10,000 Perwani groups across the country.

d. The 1Malaysia Family Care program was launched by Deputy Prime Minister YAB Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin in 2012 to provide financial, health, and emotional support to the elderly and single mothers. The program includes job opportunity creation for single mothers, as well as community-based health care for senior citizens. It partners with NGOs and volunteers to facilitate the provision of health services, including screening and preventive care.
Regarding issues related to gender equality and women empowerment, Malaysia has also taken concerted actions to increase women participation in politics, society, and the labor market. According to the Malaysian Election Commission, the number of women nominees/candidates during the 13th General Elections in Malaysia increased to 168 from the 120 during the previous election. Women candidates/nominees to parliament increased from 37 in 2008 to 56 in 2013.

The UNDP and the Malaysian government are working toward strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development by formulating an action plan to achieve at least 30% participation of women at decision-making levels in Malaysia, as first envisioned in the 9th Malaysian Plan. Prime Minister Najib Razak has confirmed that Malaysia is on track to meet this target in the corporate sector. Based on annual returns compiled by Bursa Malaysia across all publicly-listed companies in 2015, women held 26.3% of top management positions. The Minister of Women, Family, and Community Development YB Dato’ Sri Shahrizat Abdul Jailil is advocating for the Ministry of Science and Technology to establish a goal of having women make up 1/3 of the science and technology sector. To encourage mothers’ continued participation in the labor force, tax exemptions and incentives are offered by the government for employers who provide childcare services in their office buildings.

In the business sector, the Malaysian government is encouraging entrepreneurship by offering grants to citizens to establish their own small businesses, as part of their Financial Assistance and Business Support services. The Prime Minister, in collaboration with former US President Barack Obama, established the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Center (MaGIC) which works with over 500 entrepreneurs to advance their businesses and grow their capital.

TEKUN Nasional, established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, is a financial services agency for small entrepreneurs that contribute to environmental protection. In addition to financial
services, TEKUN also provides comprehensive entrepreneurship development support to its clients, and has launched a consolidated economic fund for small entrepreneurial business development. Furthermore, the fund aims to provide financial and wide-ranging business support services to low-income and vulnerable populations in Malaysia, including serving the needs of university-educated young entrepreneurs.

The Secretariat for Empowerment of Indian Entrepreneurs (SEED) was established in 2012 by the Indian Community ETP Unit of the Prime Minister's Department. A total of 1.61 million Ringgit of the 180 million Ringgit of aid promised by the Prime Minister for Indian businesses was disbursed through the SEED program in its first year of implementation. The bulk of this money was given out was in the form of micro-financing through TEKUN Nasional, which helped 5,389 small businesses obtain start-up capital. SEED also introduced other initiatives, including the Special Scheme for Indian Taxi drivers. In the first year of SEED, 350 taxi drivers received 3 million Ringgit in soft loans. It has also offered short courses to individuals who wanted to acquire business skills, including accounting.

**AGRICULTURE AND THE SMALL FARMERS**

**Role of agriculture in the economy**

Malaysia has undergone rapid development since the mid-20th century, and is now one of the most urbanized countries in East and Southeast Asia. It is ranked 4th in terms of the proportion of its population living in urban areas (53% of the total population), after Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. Rather than stagnating, urban population growth is increasing at 4% a year on average, the 4th fastest after Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Nevertheless, Malaysia’s economic growth remains very dependent on its wealth of natural resources. The agricultural sector grew to 8.9% of the GDP in 2015 compared to the previous year, which is considered to be high for a country at this stage of economic development. Palm oil production is the dominant contributor to
the agricultural sector's GDP share at 46.9% in 2015, followed by other agriculture products (17.7%), livestock (10.7%), fishing (10.7%), rubber (7.2%) as well as forestry & logging (6.9%). Malaysia is the second largest producer of palm oil in the world, with Indonesia being the largest. The shift to palm oil can be traced to the 1960s, during which the government implemented its agricultural diversification program in order to reduce the country’s economic dependence on rubber and tin—its major exports during colonial times.

Since the 1980s, Malaysia's agricultural sector has become increasingly reliant on foreign labor—particularly from Indonesia. Officially, 646,400 non-citizens were employed in the agricultural sector in 2015, a considerable 16.2% increase from the previous year. However, this figure does not include the large but unknown number of unauthorized migrant laborers in Malaysia.

**The Situation of Small Farmers/Fishers**

Small farmers continue to play a large role in the agriculture sector. For example, almost 40% of oil palms in the country are cultivated by some 300,000 small farmers, each holding plantations of between 4-40 hectares. According to the Malaysian Palm Oil Council, small palm oil farmers produce over 18 million tons of crops yearly. Since 2013, smallholders have been eligible to be independently certified under the Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) Certification System.

**STATELESSNESS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

**Situation of Stateless Rural People**

Statelessness is a longstanding and multifaceted issue in Malaysia, taking on many forms within the country’s diverse population. Malaysians of Tamil Indian descent, the majority of whom can trace their roots to colonial times, constitute one group that has been particularly affected. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, a large number of Indians were brought to Malaysia by the British colonial administration as indentured laborers on plantations. Root causes of statelessness within this group include administrative technicalities
as well as chronic socioeconomic marginalization. Many people of Tamil descent would have been eligible to claim Malaysian nationality during the transition to independence after 1957, but did not obtain the documentary evidence needed to substantiate their claims. Because the Malaysian government primarily abides by a jus sanguinis citizenship regime, the failure to acquire papers such as birth certificates and identity cards during this period has resulted in the perpetuation of statelessness across multiple generations. The risk of becoming stateless was further heightened by the displacement of Tamil Indians from plantations in the 1970s. While there was previously little practical need for civil documentation for families living in plantations, Malaysian Indians subsequently found it difficult to prove their existence in the country. This was exacerbated by the failure on the part of the government to provide this community with the necessary economic and social support to transition to an urban lifestyle, resulting in the creation of a new urban poor demographic. In addition, poverty, geographical segregation, racial discrimination, and social exclusion in the contemporary era place Malaysians of Tamil descent at a higher risk of not possessing vital documents—both in urban and rural areas.

In 2011, the Malaysian government initiated the MyDaftar campaign in order to identify Malaysian Indians who do not possess identification documents and to assist them in obtaining these documents. This initiative was left by the Special Implementation Task Force on the Indian Community, which was established in 2010 to promote access to public services, programs, and projects by Malaysian Indians.

**Impact of Statelessness in the Agro-Economy**

In the contemporary era, populations who are stateless or at risk of statelessness, and who are also connected to the agricultural sector, can be found in Sabah. Sabah is the second largest of Malaysia’s thirteen states, and is located on the north-eastern side of the island of Borneo. It is the country’s richest state in terms of natural resources—with an abundance of oil and gas, timber, and palm oil—and yet has the highest poverty rate in the country at 8.1%. The next
poorest state is Kelantan at 2.7%, and followed by Sarawak at 2.4%, the only other Malaysian state in Borneo (Economic Planning Unit—Prime Minister’s Department, 2014).

Strikingly, one out of three people in Sabah is a non-citizen (see Table 1). If one includes the uncounted and undocumented individuals living in Sabah, its ratio of non-citizens to citizens would be even higher. The majority of non-Malaysians are Indonesian and Filipino migrants and their descendants, with illegality being a pervasive experience among both communities (see Table 1). Cross-border movement is a dangerous but common fact of life for many migrants, who can enter Sabah with relative ease over the vast and poorly-patrolled land border with Kalimantan from Indonesia, or across the Sulu Sea from the Philippines.

**Table 1: Demographic Breakdown of Population in Sabah, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>2,153,900</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>303,600</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>12,200</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Citizens</td>
<td>1,086,100</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>114,100</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,669,900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2014)*

Sabah is the site of the majority of the country’s palm oil plantations. Sabah is the world’s third largest producer of palm oil, after Indonesia and Peninsular Malaysia, accounting for 12% of the world’s crude palm oil. Due to the geographical remoteness of work sites, high physical demands of manual labor, and low pay, employers have found it difficult to retain domestic nationals as workers. Thus, the industry relies largely on foreign labor, which is sourced predominantly from Indonesia.

While exact figures are not known, a significant proportion of migrant workers in Sabah lack proper legal status. The high prevalence of illegality can be attributed to Malaysia’s current migrant labor policies, which disincentivize hiring laborers through the formal
channels. Namely, the lengthy bureaucratic process and high costs of formally hiring migrant workers - which include a levy, visa fees, medical check-ups, transportation costs, and so on - drive employers and employees to see irregular means of entering into work contracts. The levy also deters migrant workers from going through formal means, because they are often burdened with some, if not all, of the responsibility of making this payment due to employers offloading this cost on to workers.

Statelessness affects the agro-economy in that children born to undocumented migrant workers become at risk of statelessness. Unable to claim citizenship in Malaysia due to its jus sanguinis policies, and often unable to access consular services of their home governments, children of Indonesian laborers on plantations often are unable to claim nationality of any state. This increases their risk of exclusion from mainstream institutions, including schools and hospitals. With their life chances curtailed by the lack of legal status, children growing up on palm oil plantations are more likely to start working alongside their parents during adolescence. Child labor exploitation has become a major criticism of palm oil corporations.

**NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS, PLANS, AND INITIATIVES TOWARDS THE SDGS/ASEAN VISION**

**Government Commitment, Plans and Initiatives Related to ASEAN**

Malaysia held the chairmanship of the ASEAN in 2015, and hosted the 27th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur on 22 November 2015, during which the Declaration on ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together was signed. This event marked the birth of the ASEAN Community, premised on three pillars of cooperation: the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Sociocultural Community. In conjunction with this event, the Malaysian government launched a series of related initiatives, including hosting the IASEAN Entrepreneurship Summit (a week-long assembly of 15,000 young entrepreneurs from the ASEAN region), launching GOASEAN TV (a new English-language travel channel to be used as a platform for ASEAN members to promote
tourism in the region), and establishing the ASEAN Micro and SME Growth Accelerator Exchange for SME finance. During his speech at the 2015 Summit, Prime Minister Najib Razak also called for the prioritization of the launch of the ASEAN Business Travel Card, the strengthening of ASEAN internship programs, the promotion of more ASEAN festivals and other mediums for cross-cultural ties to be forged, and to emphasize ASEAN history in education.

In June 2016, Malaysia hosted the World Economic Forum in Kuala Lumpur, during which Prime Minister Najib Razak affirmed Malaysia’s and ASEAN’s commitment to building the ASEAN Community and the Post-2025 Vision. By that point, considerable steps had been taken towards creating the ASEAN Economic Community, including the elimination of import tariffs, the improvement of transportation and other infrastructure networks to facilitate goods and services, and the simplification of cross-border trading processes. These are welcome developments for Malaysia, which conducts 27% of its trade within the ASEAN region. Malaysia furthermore has several firms and corporations with deep regional ties, including banks such as Maybank, RHB, Public Bank; telecommunication companies such as Digi, Maxis, and TM; and 1500 other companies including YTL, Airasia, and Malindo Air. The aforementioned Global Innovation and Creativity Center (MaGIC), launched with the help of former US President Barack Obama, was also created with greater regional integration in mind. Malaysia has also shared good practices from its National Transformation Programs with other governments in Africa, Central Asia, and South Asia.

During his speech at the plenary, Prime Minister Najib advocated for the strengthening of the ASEAN secretariat, which would involve the greater allocation of funding towards this body in order to better equip them to liaise with trading partners and drive ASEAN forward.

Government Commitment, Plans and Initiatives Related to the SDGs
The Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of the Prime Minister's Department has been tasked with overseeing Malaysia's commitment to the 2030 SDG agenda. In particular, the EPU is responsible for
adapting and incorporating SDG targets into national planning and policy formation.

**Structure of the SDG Working Committee Led by the EPU**

To date, the EPU has already made considerable progress in reorienting its organizational infrastructure to implementing the 11MP with the long-term goal of achieving the SDGs by 2030. The EPU has established and is taking the lead with 5 working committees as part of its cluster-based reporting model, each tasked with overseeing specific SDG goals. Each working committee will be made up not only of government representatives, but will also include members from the private sector, NGOs, and academia.

The following are 5 working committees/clusters and the corresponding SDGs assigned to them:

1. Working Committee on Inclusivity
   - SDG 1 - No Poverty
   - SDG 2 - Zero Hunger
   - SDG 5 - Gender Equality
   - SDG 10 - Reduced Inequality

2. Working Committee on Well-Being
   - SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being
   - SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

3. Working Committee on Human Capital
   - SDG 4 - Quality Education

4. Working Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
   - SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation
   - SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy
   - SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production
   - SDG 13 - Climate Action
   - SDG 14 - Life Below Water
   - SDG 15 - Life on Land

5. Working Committee on Economic Growth
   - SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth
   - SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
   - SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities
   - SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals
**SDG Achievement Timeline**

As the 11MP is meant to be completed by 2020, the EPU has envisioned three phases from 2016 until 2030:

Phase 1 (2016-2020): Prioritizing SDGs according to 11MP
   Currently in phase 1, the EPU is in the process of assessing the achievements and gaps in Malaysia’s commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), assessing its priorities; assessing the availability and accessibility of data (being led by the Department of Statistics), and mainstreaming the SDGs into the 11MP.

Phase 2 (2020-2025): Focus on post-2020 goals and targets

Phase 3 (2025-2030): Remaining goals and targets in line with Malaysia’s capacity and global role

**Assessment of Correspondence Between 11MP and the SDG Agenda**

A preliminary assessment of the extent to which SDG indicators are being addressed by Malaysia’s current development plans has revealed that a greater degree of mainstreaming of the SDGs is needed. So far, only 38% (91 of 230) of the SDG indicators are found within current national policies, 18% (44) are partially available, 30% (72) require further development, while 13% (32) are not available at all.

Upcoming developments include the preparation of a National Voluntary Report to be presented to the UN on July 2017. CSO inputs to said report have already been requested by the government. Most important is that the CSO-SDG Alliance is seeking participation in the formulation of the 12th Malaysia Plan.

**PLANS AND INITIATIVES OF DHRRA MEMBERS TOWARDS THE SDGS/ASEAN VISION**

**Actual and planned initiatives of rural development organizations that contribute to ASEAN 2025 and the SDGs**

While 70% of Malaysians now live in urban areas, rural development is still a major priority of both the government and civil society organizations working with rural populations. DHRRA Malaysia in
particular has continued to provide a range of programs and services to vulnerable and marginalized populations. Specifically, they contribute to points 8.2, 8.3, 10.4, and 12.2 of the Asean Community 2025 Vision; and to SDG #16.9 (to provide legal identity to all, including birth registration).

First, in terms of fostering equitable development and inclusive economic growth, DHRRA Malaysia provides skills training, as part of its income generation program, to help impoverished individuals become financially independent. DHRRA Malaysia also assists in the strengthening of networks of rural communities to facilitate access to information and to promote community resilience and resourcefulness.

Second, in terms of promoting gender equality, DHRRA Malaysia provides education and career guidance for young girls and women. It also organizes women’s development programs that seeks to empower women to be financially independent and self-sustaining. Furthermore, DHRRA Malaysia provides psychological counseling for women who are victims of domestic violence, separated from their husbands, and among other issues.

Third, in terms of supporting democracy, good governance and rule of law, DHRRA Malaysia promotes legal literacy by providing free legal advice and assistance through community call center, referrals and outreach programs. It also provides leadership training, para-counseling, and capacity-building programs for community leaders, political parties, and other social stakeholders.

Fourth, DHHRA Malaysia has been providing legal assistance to stateless communities in West Malaysia since 2003 through the initiative Projek Mendaftar Anak Malaysia. In 2014, DHRRA Malaysia scaled up work on statelessness by carrying out a comprehensive mapping, registration, and community-based legal assistance project across the Peninsular region. Harnessing innovative mobile app technologies and a centralized digital database, mobile registration teams (consisting of 11 volunteers in each district) conducted door-
to-door to surveys to identify stateless individuals and guide them through Malaysia’s civil registration system. Based on this mapping, a total of 12,341 individuals lacking birth certificates, identity cards and/or citizenship were identified.

DHRRA Malaysia recognizes the need for quality evidence for informed discussions at the federal level to compel government to provide legal identity to marginalized and hard-to-reach populations. In the past, the number of persons affected by statelessness has been highly contested with estimates varying from 9,000 to 300,000. Through the mapping and registration initiative of DHRRA Malaysia, which aimed to establish a more accurate estimate of the number of stateless people, among the Indian community in West Malaysia in particular, a customized database was established. This not only facilitated the work of paralegals and case workers to resolve people’s documentation issues with the National Registration Department (NRD) but also functioned as an important data-generating tool. The database, for example, was able to provide baseline data on births, deaths, marriages and related matters, and was also able to dis-aggregate key demographic characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, educational attainment, employment status, nationality status, nationality status of parents, documentation of parents, and residence/location. Data that has been collected through this initiative has been shared with policymakers and the public to raise awareness and understanding of the issue of statelessness.

Strategic litigation is an important pillar of DHRRA Malaysia’s initiatives. There are a number of provisions contained within the Malaysian Federal Constitution that, if implemented fully and consistently, could result in the resolution of many cases of statelessness in West Malaysia. Therefore, initiating legal actions with the aim of setting legal precedents and reform policies is one approach to reduce and eventually eradicate statelessness.

Cases that cannot be resolved at the bureaucratic or agency level by community-based paralegals are taken to court by pro-bono lawyers.
So far, DHRRA Malaysia has taken on 90 such cases that mainly fall under following categories:

1. Adoption - Malaysian parents who adopt children, either formally or informally, are unable to pass-on their citizenship to them. DHRRA Malaysia maintains that adopted children should be entitled to inherit the citizenship of their adoptive parents under Article 15 of the Federal Constitution. In cases concerning adopted children, DHRRA Malaysia’s pro-bono lawyers first seek the formalization of the adoption process, and then argue in favor of the right of the adopted child to inherit the citizenship of their adoptive parents.

2. Children born out of wedlock - According to Malaysia’s nationality law, children who are born in Malaysian territory out of wedlock inherit the citizenship of their mother only. DHRRA Malaysia has encountered many situations wherein a child was born out of wedlock to a Malaysian father and non-Malaysian mother - who can no longer be located (due to, for example, having returned to their country of origin), rendering the child with undetermined nationality. DHRRA Malaysia’s position is that in these circumstances, it is in the best interest of the child to acquire the citizenship of the father since the child is under the custody of the father.

3. Foundlings - The Constitution states that a child born in Malaysia who is not a citizen of another country and who cannot register to acquire the citizenship of another country within 12 months from birth is a Malaysian citizen. However, while this provision theoretically provides a powerful safeguard against statelessness, it has not been implemented in practice by the Malaysian government. The filing of legal cases in behalf of foundling children aim to test this provision.

4. MyPR/MyKas Holders: Article 14 of the Federal Constitution states that every person born on or before Malaysia Day is a citizen by operation of law. People who meet these qualifications but who are unable to produce the documentary evidence to prove their presence in the Federation prior to 1957 are often given temporary or permanent residence status. Due to their
inability to satisfy the administrative requirements set out by the NRD, they face certain rejection despite the fact that most have lived their entire lives in Malaysia. DHRRA Malaysia advocates for a reform in the NRD’s administrative procedures in the interest of establishing a more flexible approach to applying the nationality law. Another common scenario that falls under this category concerns foundlings who are raised in welfare homes. Because their parents cannot be located, they are only given temporary residence status (MyKas), renewable every five years.

Using a community-based paralegal approach, DHHRA Malaysia empowered community members to help one another acquire or confirm their nationality. Community-based paralegals help link local civil society organizations with government institutions through flexible, accessible and cost-effective ways. As of 1 September 2016, DHRRA Malaysia has registered a total of 12,341 individuals without legal documents proving their citizenship - Malaysian or of another country.

Community paralegals have also assisted 8,819 individuals in applying for citizenship/nationality documentation with the NRD. So far, 875 applications have been successfully granted.

DHRRA Malaysia’s evidence-based advocacy and awareness campaigns have encouraged the Malaysian government to be more open to addressing statelessness. Other achievements of DHRRA Malaysia’s campaigns include the shortening of the processing time of cases referred by DHRRA Malaysia, and the expediting of searches at the National Registration Department state offices. Another development is the establishment of the Special Implementation Task Force for Indian Committee to assist and engage in dialogue CSOs to address documentation issues and statelessness. The said task force was established by the Prime Minister’s Office in coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs.

On the issue of stateless youth and children being asked to discontinue their studies, or to pay a much higher fee/levy (charges
for foreigners) to continue their education, DHRRA Malaysia has assisted over a hundred stateless youth and children to apply before the National Registration Department for the continuation of their education and/or skill/vocational training with relevant government institutes.

DHRRA Malaysia has been confronted with numerous challenges throughout their campaigns and initiatives. Stateless populations are geographically dispersed across both urban and rural areas. Most of the stateless people in Kedah, for example, live in far flung palm oil plantations and cannot afford to travel to town. Volunteers have had to brave torrential rainstorms and other extreme weather conditions in order to reach and map these areas.

Furthermore, volunteers had to gradually work on gaining the trust of the communities they work with as these people have endured a lifetime of legal invisibility and have instilled a sense of skepticism and hopelessness towards the prospect of undergoing the registration process.

Lastly, the administrative procedures laid out by National Registration Department are costly, complicated and lengthy, and applicants are required to present high standards of proof in order to obtain vital documents. For example, retrieving proofs of birth from hospitals have been difficult as the dates of birth provided by applicants usually do not match with hospital records. People born in plantations also have difficulties in producing birth records as the clinics where they were born have mostly already been closed down. There are also instances when relatives of the applicant are uncooperative in providing necessary documents that would prove their biological relationship as they may be estranged or the relative is already deceased.

After going through the tedious procedure of completing the documentation for citizenship applications, there is the long wait for the decision on the application. The NRD’s initial procedure alone for looking through the database for duplicates before accepting an
application can take 4 to 8 weeks. The standard waiting period for a decision by the National Registration Department is 2 to 3 years on average.

DHRRA Malaysia’s evidence-based work with statistical output has always been advantageous to provide a necessary platform at various stages to discuss opportunities for strengthening administrative frameworks and operational policies towards case resolutions.

In October 2015, DHRRA Malaysia submitted a paper (blueprint) to the Prime Minister’s Office that recommended the grant of citizenship to individuals who were born in Malaya (Malaysia) before the date of independence.

In addition to the work by DHRRA Malaysia, rural development issues relevant to ASEAN 2025 and the SDGs are also being tackled by a number of organizations representing indigenous peoples in Malaysia, both in Peninsular and East Malaysia. In particular, their environmental conservation, anti-discrimination, and access to legal identity initiatives are relevant to the aforementioned ASEAN Community Vision goals #8.2, #10.4, and #12.2, and SDG #1 (no poverty), #3 (good health and well-being), #4 (quality education), #6 (clean water and sanitation), #10 (reduced inequalities), #11 (sustainable cities and communities), #13 (climate action), #14 (life below water, #15 (life on land) and #16 (peace and justice, strong institutions).

Peninsular Malaysia

Land rights issues have become a national concern mainly due to rampant dispossession and land grabbing of Orang Asli native customary lands for logging, mining, and farming.

Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia/The Indigenous Peoples Network of Malaysia (JOAS)

JOAS is an umbrella network for 21 community-based NGOs working on indigenous peoples’ issues with membership from West and East Malaysia. In 2016, JOAS organized a workshop in Perak where they
raised with the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (SUHAKAM) concerns about on the abuse and neglect of Orang Asli youth in the education system. JOAS is also involved in humanitarian aid, having set up the JOAS Flood Relief Fund.

Jaringan Kampung Orang Asli Kelantan/The Network of Orang Asli Villages in Kelantan (JKOAK)

JKOAK was organized in the northern state of Kelantan to defend orang asli traditional territories from deforestation, logging and government appropriation. JKOAK has systematically mapped out native customary borders in order to come up with estimates on the extent of land grabbing that has taken place in their areas. JKOAK has engaged the Kelantan state government in dialogues with the goal of stopping further dispossession. However, the engagement came to a violent end when, on September 2016, the blockade set-up by Orang Asli communities belonging to JKOAK in Gua Musang against logging trucks was dismantled by the Kelantan Forestry Department, and 16 orang aslis and 2 freelance journalists were detained (and eventually released).

Jaringan Kampung Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia/Network of Orang Asli Villages of Peninsular Malaysia (JKOASM)

JKOASM partnered with Sahabat Alam Malaysia in 2015 and 2016 to publish a report on land rights violations in Peninsular Malaysia. This report was based on 12 case studies from Kelantan, Perak, and Pahang. The report detailed the legislative and governance framework pertaining to indigenous peoples, land, forestry, and conservation areas and discussed the definition of “illegal logging,” analyzed the causes of encroachment on indigenous customary lands, and provided recommendations to the federal and state governments on how to stop the continued encroachment on indigenous lands.

Committee on Orang Asli Rights, the Malaysian Bar Council

The Bar Council Committee on Orang Asli Rights supports rural development issues by providing pro bono legal assistance to orang asli communities. They also organize public forums and fund-raising
events in support of the orang asli. Most recently, a panel of lawyers from the committee won a case at the Kota Baru High Court in behalf of three orang asli plaintiffs, who were defending their claims to their customary land at Pos Belatim, Gua Musang against attempted appropriation by the Kelantan State Government and the State Land and Mines Department.

East Malaysia

Partners of Community Organizations Trust (PACOS)

PACOS is Sabah’s largest network of community-based organizations with initiatives in over 200 villages. It is mainly involved in land rights issues and in the education for indigenous peoples. Since 2012, PACOS has partnered with the Asia Foundation, the UN Refugee Agency, and other organizations to address the issue of non-registration. This initiative is directly related to SDG #16.9.

After conducting a series of community dialogues and round table discussions in 2014, PACOS implemented 5 pilot campaigns in Sabah on birth registration awareness. The said campaigns reached a total of over 1,200 individuals in five areas: Banggi Island, Penampang, Lahad Datu, Sandakan and Kota Kinabalu. Participants to the dialogues and RTDs included indigenous communities, Filipinos, Indonesians, and Bajau Lauts. In October 2016, PACOS convened a practitioner round table discussion on community-based legal aid and case management systems for documentation of identity, citizenship, and statelessness. This was in preparation for the broadening of PACOS’ legal aid interventions related to CRVS access for indigenous and other marginalized communities. DHRRA Malaysia participated in the said RTD, and shared good practices from their community-based paralegal aid project for stateless communities in Peninsular Malaysia.

CSO-BASED EFFORTS TO MAINSTREAM THE SDGS IN MALAYSIA

Malaysian civil society organizations have been proactive in introducing the SDG agenda to the Malaysian political and economic
landscape. In October 2015, PROHAM-Society for the Promotion of Human Rights and the Global Movement of Moderates organized the first discussion on SDGS among CSO representatives, which took place shortly after the UN’s adoption of the SDG Agenda. The discussion was participated in by representatives from the local CSO sector and representatives from government representatives. The discussion involved the analysis of the compatibility of the SDG agenda with the 11MP. The said activity led to the publication of the document “Sustainable Development Goals and Malaysia Society: Civil Society Perspectives,” and the formation of the CSO-SDG Alliance. The CSO-SDG Alliance “an informal grouping of CSOs committed to the effective implementation of the SDGs in Malaysia” that came together “for networking, joint cooperation, action and liaison with the government.” The CSO-SDG Alliance is composed of 4 different types of CSOs:

1. Development and service-based CSOs that provide economic, social, and cultural services to the poor, women, and youth. This sub-sector includes the National Council of Women Organizations (a network of 120 women organizations from all over Malaysia) and the MBM-Malaysia Youth Council (with 39 member organizations);

2. Human rights-based CSOs working on the protection of civil and political rights, including transparency, accountability, and good governance;

3. Environment-based CSOs working on the conservation and sustainability of the environment; and

4. Think-tanks and academic institutions, including the Institute of Social and Strategic Strategies, the Institute of Ethnic Studies of the University Kebangsaan Malaysia, among others.

The said event also issued a joint statement addressed to the Ministerial Head of the EPU.

The CSO-SDG Alliance currently undertakes mapping exercises to identify relevant CSO stakeholders for the implementation of the SDGs. Carried out by 29 different organizations, the said exercise has mapped 200 CSOs in Malaysia.
The major organizations involved in the mapping process were: MENGO (Malaysian Environmental NGOs); Center for Environment, Technology and Development; Environmental Protection Society Malaysia; WWF Malaysia; and the Foundation for Community Studies and Development (YKPM).

In February 2016, the Malaysian government held a National Symposium on the SDGs where CSO representatives were well-represented, and were also able allowed to give a presentation. Following the said symposium, a multi-stakeholder conference was held in November 2016, which brought together representatives from various sectors of the government and civil society community.

A formal mechanism for the involvement of CSOs in the SDG implementation process was established in March 2017 where CSOs have been invited to be part of its cluster working groups and task forces for carrying out the SDGs in their respective areas, and are in continuous dialogue with the EPU.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN UNDERTAKING THESE INITIATIVES**

While Malaysia is well-positioned in terms of its human capital and natural resource endowments to experience upward economic growth in the next few years, there are also many barriers that may prevent the country from being able to achieve the targets set under the SDG 2030 agenda.

**Data limitations**

Accurate, complete, and up-to-date statistics are essential to guiding policy implementation efforts, measuring progress, and identifying gaps. However, the government currently does not collect, or does not make public, data that are relevant to the SDGs. Therefore, greater commitment to evidence-based policy-making and data transparency will significantly facilitate developmental progress.
For example, there are several data gaps that limits the formulation of effective strategies towards the attainment of SDG #1: “End poverty in all its forms everywhere.” For one, current estimates on the proportion of men, women, and children living in poverty (SDG #1.2.2) are inaccurate as these only consider data captured in government enumeration exercises (such as the census) or registration systems (such as birth and death registration). Such method fails to consider the existence and situation of groups such as the stateless, undocumented and illegal migrants.

Another example would be regarding SDG #1.4.2, which concerns improving the security of land tenure rights, wherein conflicts over land ownership are primarily caused by the lack of a comprehensive and reliable data base on land ownership. The CSO-SDG Alliance has called for the conduct of validation perimeter surveys of landholdings all over the country to settle land ownership and boundary disputes. Furthermore, a centralized land titling system that is recognized by both state and indigenous authorities should be developed.

Data is also lacking on prevalence of malnutrition, food insecurity, and obesity. Making it difficult to monitor progress with regard to indicators 1 and 2 of SDG #2: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.” Regarding SDG #2.3.1 and 2.3.2 (double agricultural production and incomes of small-holders), data on agricultural production has not been disaggregated by sex and indigenous status, meaning that it will be impossible to evaluate whether interventions are working for the vulnerable sub-groups of the population—specifically women and indigenous peoples.

**Coordination**

More coordination is needed between and among federal, state, and local agencies. While the SDGs lay out goals and targets that are meant to be universally applicable and desirable, the success of their implementation actually depends on whether such targets can be successfully adapted to local contexts. Similarly, despite the
economically, racially, religiously, and culturally diverse of Malaysia, the 11MP has been developed by the federal branch of the government and targets for implementation the nation as a whole. There is a need to align the 11MP and SDG agenda with local interests. This will involve greater devolution of responsibilities and tasks at different levels of government, and the active inclusion of local voices in the deliberations on budget allocations and other operational tasks.

In practice, information-sharing is essential for effective intra-governmental and government-civil society coordination. Currently, there is no central database on the relevant stakeholders, poverty reduction programs, and best practices. The CSO-SDG Alliance has suggested that the government create a central database of all poverty programs, and to make this database accessible to the public to create greater awareness on the availability of such programs and services. The Alliance has also called for a nationwide mapping of relevant development stakeholders and current best practices with regard to social services delivery in the areas of education, health, and social safety.

**Capacity Building**

In order to ensure that development is truly sustainable, government institutions, civil society organizations, and local communities need to strengthen their respective capabilities and capacities. This will involve strengthening the political, economic, and social institutions and infrastructures to ensure continuity of knowledge, information and systems as functions and tasks are turned-over to second-liners. Cross-sector networking, information-sharing and collaboration are other strategies for increasing the capacity of involved stakeholders. Sustainable capacity building shall also involve securing sufficient financial support to civil society organizations to ensure their continued and effective implementation of their tasks.

Lastly, the SDG and 11MP target of ensuring greater access to education is also a prerequisite for the attainment of other developmental goals. Thus, investments in human capital (such as education and health)
should be given priority over the government’s usual basic needs and monetary solutions approach (i.e. cash handouts as a poverty alleviation solution).

**Strong CSO and Government Engagement**

In spite of all such challenges and limitations, one major positive development in the struggle for sustainable development in Malaysia is the strong involvement of the civil society sector in SDG discussions with government from the very start of the process. Organized formally under the title, “Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance,” an active network of non-governmental organizations, academics, and lawyers have been working closely with the Economic Planning Unit to evaluate and contribute to SDG mainstreaming efforts. It is heartening to note that the EPU has been open and encouraging CSO involvement in implementing the SDG agenda.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The CSO-SDG Alliance has articulated the opportunities and challenges faced by Malaysian civil society in undertaking the above-mentioned initiatives in a pamphlet published by Dr. Jayasooria, Denison of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. The following are observations and recommendations:

**Funding support for CSOs**

CSOs call on the Federal Government to provide funding for the work of CSOs pertaining to SDGs especially in the areas of capacity building, coordination, mapping exercises for comprehensive data collection and outreach for more challenging circumstances of service delivery and SDG implementation. Some tasks and activities can be contracted out to CSOs to facilitate service delivery at the local level. This arrangement will be more cost effective for both government and private sector stakeholders.

Stronger compliance with human rights, ecological sustainability, and, good governance
CSOs call on government to also apply the full framework of the SDGs, namely those related to economic and social development, human rights, good governance and ecological sustainability. With the lack of emphasis that government has given to the human rights agenda CSOs urges the strengthening of access to justice, protection of the rights of citizens and state accountability to citizens.

Although the SDGs recognize the need for a people focused policy thrust, it is still observed that government priorities have tended to be placed on the interests of the business sector over concerns affecting the urban poor, women, youth, forest-based communities and the environment.

Adopting a strong commitment to a human rights & ecologically sustainable approach to development and local community empowerment is essential in this SDG approach. It is in this context that CSOs call for greater transparency and openness for dialogue and discussion through the establishment of formal mechanisms for mediation in cases of conflict between “political and big business interests” and those of grassroots communities. In this light, the role and capability of the Human Rights Commission and other independent mechanisms in facilitation, mediation and conflict resolution should be strengthened.

**Greater inter-agency integration at the grassroots**

CSOs call for greater integration of the delivery of services, especially to the bottom 40% of the population. Recognition should be given to the importance of a multidimensional approach in measuring poverty levels and in the overall improvement of the people’s quality of life. Income indicators should not be the sole basis for the determination of success. Participation and empowerment of communities at the grassroots should also be considered in the implementation of interventions and in the delivery of services.
Strengthening Agenda 21 at all levels – Federal, State and Local

CSOs call on the government to strengthen the implementation of Agenda 21 and of the Local Agenda 21 (Ch 28), which involves the active participation of local authorities and their communities in implementing Agenda 21. This program has been in existence since 2002 under the purview of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. The existing network of local authorities and communities under the said program can also be utilized to implement the 2030 SDGs.

The same recommendation is made for local authorities and communities in urban areas, specially for B40 communities residing in high-rise, low-cost flats who have access to very limited public facilities.

Potential of social & community-based enterprises

The potential of social enterprises and community-based social businesses as means for augmenting incomes of urban and rural B40 communities should also be considered.

Extend inclusive agenda to our neighbors- adopt a humanitarian approach

CSOs call for the extension of services and programs to the undocumented, refugees and migrant workers, specially children and women, under the SDG theme of “no one left behind.” CSOs are active on this issue at the advocacy level and in actual basic services delivery, such as community schools, health care and welfare services.

Engaging faith-based organizations

CSOs call on government to engage faith-based CSOs and community groups in the implementation of the SDGs. This is in recognition of the important role that faith or inner-beliefs play in fueling personal and community changes and development as it cultivates sustainability of interest, mind-set transformation and the spirit of endurance.

20 June 2017
REFERENCES


NATIONAL CONTEXT

Myanmar, as of 2014, has a population of 51.4 million. It is one of the most ethnically, religiously and culturally diverse country in the world with 135 officially recognized ethnic groups. Buddhism is the country’s main religion as 88% of the population practice said religion. Christians account for 6.2% of the population, Muslims 4.3%, Hindus 0.5%, while 0.8% practice some form of tribal religion.

Employment to population ratio is 64.4. The main destinations for overseas employment are Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, Japan and Singapore. (CSO, Statistical Yearbook 2015). Poverty rate in 2010 was at 26%.

Majority (70%) of the population live in rural areas with a labor force participation rate of 85% for males and 50% for females. (Central Statistic Organization, Statistical Yearbook 2015, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Department).

The highly skewed distribution of land and other productive assets, and the seasonality of agricultural employment and low wages are key reasons cited for high levels of rural inequality and poverty resulting in about one-fourth of the rural population living under the poverty line (IHLCA 2011). With lower incomes and fewer assets to cushion against seasonal and episodic health and weather shocks, the average rural household has adequate food supplies for about 10 months a year. Landless households have food security for only 9.6 months (LIFT 2012).

A national census conducted in 2014 indicated that almost 30% of the population did not have access to improved water sources
and 25% did not have access to improved toilets. In rural areas, 3.1 million households did not have access to improved water sources, 1.07 million households used unimproved toilets and another 1.5 million households did not have toilets. (Ref: Background paper for HLRT Myanmar).

According to the nationwide local governance mapping exercise conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) together with the General Administration Department, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, only 42 women were elected during the Ward and Village Tract Administrator Election in 2015. This constituted only 0.25% of the total 16,785 ward/village tract administrators elected. (High Level Round Table on Water Security and the Sustainable Development Goals. Background paper on May 12 in Myanmar).

According to the World Bank’s Myanmar Economic Monitor, economic growth in Myanmar in 2016 slowed down to 7% from an average of 8.5% in 2014-2015 mainly due to an “agriculture supply shock” caused by the heavy flooding that year, a slowdown in new investments during an election year, and a more challenging external environment brought about by the lowering of commodity prices that affected Myanmar’s main exports.

Myanmar is one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change, particularly to global warming and rise in sea levels. The rise in sea levels along with Myanmar’s flat and low-lying landscape makes its coastal areas highly vulnerable to floods and storms.

In 2015, the damage caused by floods on agriculture production contributed to a sharp rise in inflation (peaking at 16% in October of the same year) and decline in its exports by 12%.
AGRICULTURE AND THE SMALL FARMERS

Role of Agriculture in the Economy

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for nearly 70% of the population of Myanmar. Official statistics indicate that over 31% of Myanmar land area is arable and 19.7% is sown. Among the sectors of economic activity, agriculture represented only 28% of GDP in 2014-2015, lower than the 37% of GDP in 2010-2011. (Central Statistic Organization, Statistical Yearbook 2015, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Department).

Despite the country’s richness in resources and having a strategic location, agriculture has under performed in Myanmar over the past five decades especially in terms of productivity, equity and stability. Myanmar’s agriculture is characterized by low productivity, extreme inequality and high volatility.

The reasons for these vary across commodities but stem mainly from long-term chronic under investment in agricultural research, weak extension support and limited access to credit. Low paddy yield is due to lower levels of input use, particularly improved seeds and fertilizers, inefficient weed and pest control, and poor water management (Denning and others 2013).

In spite of these, the agriculture sector is still considered a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development objectives. Sustainable agriculture requires the integration of environmental considerations with agricultural policy analysis and planning. Myanmar has a favorable agrarian structure with high potential for development of small holder and large scale farming with average farm size of 2.5 hectares, the second largest in South East Asia after Thailand’s 3.1 hectares. Myanmar has a relatively high land to population ratio with half of its arable lands still uncultivated.

Government recognizes agricultural growth as critical for inclusive development and aims to ensure that food security is achieved throughout the country, and develops strategies that improve the
welfare and income of farmers, farm laborers and their dependent families. The government’s Framework for Economic and Social Reforms (FESR) fully recognizes both the urgency and historic scale of reforms required in Myanmar, involving the development of market mechanisms, changes in economic decision-making and the correction of policy distortions inherited from the previous period.

**Situation of Small Farmers / Fishers**

The majority of Myanmar’s farmers are engaged in rice production, which covers nearly 50% of the cultivated areas (USDA 2014). However, not all the rural farmers are landholders and a large percentage of the rural population remain landless (Haggblade et al. 2013). Nearly 75% of rural households in the Delta and coastal areas are landless, as are around 43% in the Dry Zone. Lower level of landlessness are inherent in the hilly areas, 26% as per the LIFT baseline assessment conducted in 2012. According to LIFT, the landless rely heavily on farm owners for income generation, and around 50% of the landless rural households are dependent on seasonal agricultural work.

Investment by small-holder farmers themselves and by domestic and international companies are the main sources of agricultural investments in the sector. Private investments by SMEs and larger agribusiness companies (ABCs) are critical to the realization of Myanmar’s agricultural potential (World Bank, 2007). The challenge for Myanmar is in accessing the assets of agribusiness companies such as technology, capital and markets to complement the assets of small and medium farmers in terms of their labor, land, entrepreneurship and local knowledge.

In the fisheries sector, the Myanmar Fisheries Federation predicts that the country’s fisheries industry will continue to deteriorate due to natural disasters, climate change, shortage of fish stocks, increase in illegal fish farming activities, continued use of inappropriate fishing methods and dwindling mangrove areas. The said federation advocates for sustainable management of fisheries resources and
biodiversity conservation. (High Level Round Table on Water Security and the Sustainable Development Goals. Background paper on May 24 in Myanmar)

**National Government Commitments, plans, and initiatives towards the SDGs/ASEAN Vision**

**SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

With regards to SDG1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere, the Planning Department of Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has specific programs for rural development and poverty reduction that focuses on increasing agricultural outputs, livestock and fisheries, rural production, micro-credit, rural cooperative societies, socioeconomic improvements (health, education, sports, social security, etc.), rural energy, and the environment.

For social protection, the following laws and measures are in place:

6. The Basic Education Law (1973)
7. The Public Health Law (1972)
8. The Vocational Education Law (1974)
10. The Worker's Compensation Act (1923)
12. The Early Childhood Care and Development Law (2014)

The 2014 Myanmar National Social Protection Strategic Plan includes the following programs:

1. Pregnancy/Early Childhood Program - provides free nutritional supplements, pre-schooling, establishment of day care centers,
residential care for 0-5 years old children, assistance to mothers with multiple births, etc.

2. School Age and Youth Program - provides for establishment of Youth Centers, training services for children with disabilities, school feeding programs, education stipend pilot, and compulsory primary education.

3. Adulthood/Working Age Program - provides for voluntary homes for women, vocational training and women development centers, social security for civil servants and formal workers, training centers for people with disabilities, skill development training centers, micro-capital loans, and cash-for-work programs.

4. Older Ages Program - provides for civil service pension, older person SHG, voluntary homes for the elderly, programs for PWDs, and home care programs.

5. Emergency Responses Program

6. Access to Basic Social Services Program - facilitates access of the poor to essential social services such as health and education.


8. Active Labor Market Program - assists job seekers in finding employment, trains workers to acquire needed skills, and supports occupational safety and health.

**SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture**

In line with SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, the Farm Land Law (2012), the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law (2012), Seeds Law (2011) and the Plant Pest Quarantine Law (1993) are in place for agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers (i.e. women, indigenous peoples, family farm cultivators) through secure and equal access to land.

The Farmland Law provides for formal state recognition of individual users’ rights through the issuance of Land Use Certificates by township-level authorities. These certificates provide the farmers the
authority to sell, transfer or mortgage their land. A departure from the previous user rights system (Hiebert and Nguyen 2012). Moreover, the said law provides for payment of government compensation to farmers whose lands are acquired by the government for other purposes. Under the said law, government retains the authority over land classification and maintains the focus on rice cultivation in line with the government’s concern over rice self-sufficiency.

The Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law (VFVLM) establishes usufruct rights over vacant, fallow and virgin lands. The law provides usufruct rights up to 30 years (with possibility of extension for up to an additional 30 years) to investors establishing farms for perennial and horticulture crops, livestock and aquaculture on vacant, fallow and virgin lands. Investors can access up to 5,000 acres per request for commercial crops, with a total limit of 50,000 acres. However, foreign firms/investors can access such farmlands only through joint ventures with Myanmar entities (JICA 2013).

For small farmers, the VFVLM law allows the acquisition of rights to use such types of land up to 50 acres only.

The Foreign Investment Law (2012) provides a new legal framework for foreign direct investments in agriculture and agribusiness (Haggblade et al. 2013). The law allows foreign firms to lease or use land for an initial period of up to 50 years with the possibility of two 10-year extensions. Land can be leased for the sole use of foreign investors or as joint ventures with Myanmar individuals, firms, cooperatives or state-owned enterprises (DICA 2014).

The Special Economic Zone Law (2014), which lays out the framework for developing Special Economic Zones, allows companies to lease land in the zones for an initial 50 years, with the possibility for a 25 year extension.

Recognizing the need for a coherent policy approach to these various laws, Myanmar is developing a national land use policy (President’s Office 2014). The proposed land use policy and the national land
law will provide the framework for coordination between different land use needs, for managing land statistics, and for effective land governance and taxation. (Ref: Promoting Agricultural Growth in Myanmar: A review of policies and an assessment of knowledge gaps, working paper 07, Nov, 2015 by MRDI-CESD and innovative lab for food security policy)

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

In the areas of gender equality and women empowerment, Myanmar has drafted the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) based on provisions of its 2008 Constitution, the CEDAW and the 12 Priority Areas of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The NSPAW aims to empower all women in Myanmar to enable them to fully enjoy their rights with the support of the Myanmar government. Enabling systems, structures and practices are created for the advancement of women, gender equality, and the realization of women’s rights. The following priority areas have been identified under the NSPAW: Women and Livelihood; Women, Education and Training; Women and Health; Violence Against Women; Women and Emergencies; Women and the Economy; Women and Decision-Making; Institutional Mechanism for advancement of Women; Women and Human Rights; Women and Media; Women and the Environment; and The Girl Child.

In addition, Myanmar is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1997), and is committed to international policy initiatives to improve the situation of women, including the SDGs, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (B Pf A), and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). Myanmar is an active member of both the ASEAN Commission on The Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), and the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW).
SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy

To address SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy, Myanmar has adopted an energy saving goal to reduce energy consumption by 12% by 2020, 16% by 2025 and 20% by 2030. The goal is aimed at promoting energy efficiency and energy conservation, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emission and contributing towards environmental conservation. Myanmar formed its National Energy Management Committee in January 2013 to promote energy efficiency through the implementation of short and long term plans.

An Energy Saving Department was also formed under the Ministry of Industry to boost the implementation process for meeting the target of reducing energy consumption annually in the country. Present electrification ratio is only 33%.

There is a plan to put up a Waste-to-Energy Plant that will reduce methane and carbon dioxide transmissions and generate 700 kilowatts of electricity from the processing of 60 tons of waste materials per day. (High Level Round Table on Water Security and the Sustainable Development Goals. Background paper on May 24 in Myanmar).


SDGs 14 & 15: The convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 13)

On SDG 14 & 15, the Myanmar government has committed to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, attain the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goals 14 and 15 on the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, and of terrestrial ecosystems, respectively.
PLANS AND INITIATIVES OF DHRRA MEMBERS TOWARDS THE SDGS/ASEAN VISION

This section shall highlight the initiatives of three major non-government organizations in Myanmar, namely Metta Development Foundation, Dear Myanmar, and GRET, who are working on the ASEAN 2025 Vision and the SDGs but with focus on targets.

Metta Development Foundation

Agriculture
In its initiatives in the agriculture sector, the Metta Development Foundation aims to:

a. Increase the available food supply in 430 village project sites by increasing rice yields, as well as growing vegetables and fruit trees using environmentally friendly methods;
b. Develop and disseminate appropriate technology among lowland and upland farmers and communities; and
c. Support the establishment of mini and community forests in 100 villages.

To achieve said objectives, Metta has undertaken the following:

a. Establishment of Research and Training Centers;
b. Establishment of Farmer Field Schools;
c. Delivery of Farmer-led Extension services;
d. Training on Rice Seed Production;
e. Conduct of Farmer Field Days;
f. Training on Upland Agriculture and Community Forestry; and
g. Establishment of Mini and Community Forests.

Accomplishments cited by Metta are the following:

a. Overall 37,103 persons directly benefited from the agriculture and forestry projects in 3 states (Kachin State, Kayah and Shan) and 1 region (Ayeyarwaddy);
b. Farmer Field Schools engaged 6,445 FFS farmers in 351 FFS activities with 13,820 direct beneficiaries;
c. 33 FFS field days had nearly 2,000 participants;
d. Farmer-led Extension services engaged 78 farmers from 8 villages;
e. Forestry projects had involved 23,301 beneficiaries from 134 villages;
f. 36,390 seedlings were grown at central nurseries;
g. Nearly 800,000 plants were grown at 134 community nurseries; and
h. 3,656 persons are directly benefited by the establishment of 31 community forests and 23 mini forests.

Education
In the education sector, Metta aimed to improve the access to and quality of education at the early childhood and primary school levels through the use of child-friendly philosophy. This also includes providing parents, teachers and communities awareness/training, ensuring that adequate school buildings, furniture and educational materials are available where possible, and organizing inter-school sport day.

Metta has cited the followings accomplishments for their interventions:
1. 71 village centers attended by 1,670 children;
   • Over 95% eligible children had access to high quality preschool education - equipped with toys, playground equipment and latrines + learning corners
   • Average attendance rate at 82%, student retention rate at 89%, program completion of 100%
2. 1,855 villagers participated in 50 EDDC activities;
3. More than 900 parent education sessions were conducted;
4. 8 new Responsive Education Partnership -CCA projects reached 616 students; and
5. Inter-School Sports Day with 490 students competing from 5 schools.

Health
For the health sector, the objectives are to improve early detection and prevention of endemic illnesses and promote personal hygiene
knowledge at the community level, and increase and improve the quality of drinking water supply and sanitation in at least 300 villages, benefiting an estimated 180,000 persons.

Among the interventions undertaken were the installation of new water systems, hygiene awareness campaigns, establishment of Positive Living Centers, conduct of home visits, referrals for HIV testing and support for children.

**Livelihood**

On livelihood interventions, the objectives were to improve food security, quality of life and increase income of people in 535 villages by supporting small scale livelihood projects and small scale community-based projects.

Under this initiative, 3 separate approaches (Community Managed Livelihood Project, Community Master Plan, Community Development Program) for implementing livelihood projects were used in 4 states, 2 regions and 1 area. With nearly 50,000 persons directly benefited from 315 new local village projects.

**Emergency and Development**

For emergency and development interventions, Metta aims to improve the effectiveness of emergency responses and the chances of survival by activating a response mechanism through capacity building of local groups, individuals, Metta staff members and volunteers.

Accomplishments cited were: 93,748 direct beneficiaries in 85 villages and 33 IDP camps were reached by all the emergency and development efforts; 25,587 IDPs in 33 camps from Kachin and Norther Shan states; 2,600 direct beneficiaries from 10 villages affected by flooding in the Bago region received relief assistance; Mangrove Reforestation, Environmental Education and Disaster Risk Reduction (RRD) projects reached 73 villages with 61,287 direct beneficiaries; repaired school building for 493 students damaged by typhoon in Thapay Khan A Thin village in the Bago region; and sea
retaining wall constructed benefiting 3,781 persons in Kaing Thaung village, Ayeyarwady region.

Dear Myanmar

Dear Myanmar mainly works with the agriculture sector in central Myanmar (Dry zone), Rakhine state, Shan State (Inlay lake area), and Ayeyarwaddy Division. Its initiatives has directly benefited 200 farmers from 13 townships, 37 village tracks and 100 villages. Their interventions include:

a. providing agricultural loans and aids (such as natural fertilizers);
b. assisting farmers in determining the most suitable natural farm models for them;
c. motivating farmers to use follow or unused lands, distribution of high-yield quality crops (for subsidiary crops, multiple crops, crop-rotation, and crops that allow for the growth of micro-organisms in the soil);
d. training farmers on hazard-free good agricultural practices (such as use of organic fertilizers/bio-fertilizers, manure and green manure);
e. promoting proper agricultural waste and by-products management, post-harvest strategies, and preservation of soil properties;
f. introducing natural pest control techniques; and
g. providing training on proper record keeping.

Dear Myanmar recommends that more organizations of farmers interested in natural and organic farming should be systematically formed. They also urged government to provide assistance in market development for organic products and in linking local organic farmer organizations with international organizations/markets.

GRET

GRET’s agriculture related interventions are in the areas of production and inputs, rural development, access to credit, land use rights, and livestock and fisheries. Interventions are usually in the form of trainings, research and policy advocacy, and awarding
of small grants. GRET projects have been implemented in 4 states (Chin, Kayah, Rakhine, Northern Shan, Southern Shan) and (7) divisions (Ayeyarwaddy, Magway, Sagaing, Tanintharyi, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon).

The following are the main learnings of GRET from their implementation of projects in Myanmar:

a. Family farmers are at a disadvantage when individually dealing with their economic partners - their input suppliers, credit suppliers and buyers. Collective actions and consolidation into organizations are the most effective ways to even out the relationship;

b. Small-scale farm production can be erratic. Buyers and industries require quality supplies in volume that can be delivered regularly and on time. These can only be achieved through collective and coordinated farming;

c. The recognition of the potential role of farmers organizations in the delivery of quality services to farmers is still very limited;

d. Farmers organizations provide services to farmers with limited transaction costs and better efficiency than other actors;

e. Farmers organizations should be included in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and programs on agriculture to ensure responsiveness to the needs of farmers;

f. There is a need to coordinate and consolidate the initiatives and organizations of farmers at the grassroots/village levels with those at the national level to promote efficiency in service delivery and harmony in advocacy positions;

g. Support to farmers organizations has been mainly in the area of awareness building on farmers’ rights. There is great need for more technical support to farmers organizations; and

h. The current trend in Myanmar is that the role of economic services provider (of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, credit and market) is mainly given to the private sector (i.e. big agribusiness companies) which places the smallholder farmers at risk of becoming dependent and controlled by large powerful stakeholders.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN UNDERTAKING THESE INITIATIVES

There is much room for improvement in terms of providing services to farmers since at present mechanisms for the delivery of agricultural extension services are weak, investments in agricultural research services are inadequate, and access to credit, markets, marketing information, trading skills and input supplies are limited.

Challenges of Township Agricultural Department

The main challenge identified at the Township Agricultural Department level is the insufficiency of personnel (due to lack of budget) that would implement at the local level agriculture programs.

Volatility of Agricultural Production and Prices

The high volatility of agricultural production and prices compounds risks for rural and agricultural households. Many farmers and traders talk explicitly about the increased unpredictability they face. The record flooding in 2008 was followed by both drought and floods. As a result, farmers are acutely aware of the increased risks to agricultural production. Most studies on climate change in Myanmar suggest that in the coming decades, average temperatures will increase along with aggregate rainfall (although rains may become more sporadic) leading to higher volatility and increased flooding and drought (RIMES 2011, World Bank 2012).

Unpredictable policies, particularly those related to trade, are also a concern for agribusiness. Unexpected export restrictions and, in some cases, land control measures have prevented exportation of some crops over the past decade. A reliance on single export markets also contributes to price volatility in many commodities. Myanmar is exporting about 70% of its pulses production to India and 90% of its watermelon harvest to China. The onion production is mostly for domestic consumption and about 75% of onion exports are sent to Thailand. Dislocations in the Indian, Thai or Chinese markets can generate large swings in Myanmar’s pulses, onion and watermelon prices. In November 2012, sluggish Chinese demand for watermelons
caused a noticeable price slump in Yangon and Mandalay as growers off-loaded production in local markets. The very low level of mobile phone connectivity in rural areas limits farmers’ access to regional price information (LIFT 2012). This is in sharp contrast to the rest of Southeast Asia where countrywide mobile phone connectivity is close to 100%. The marketing and logistics infrastructure, among the least efficient and with the highest costs in Southeast Asia (ADB 2012), also aggravates price swings.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Promoting Market Access

There is no doubt about Myanmar’s potential for increasing agricultural production and productivity with its rich natural resources such as vast land area, fresh bodies of water and work forces which provide conducive policy environment and favorable regulatory mechanism. More importantly, it also paves the way to access to the domestic and global markets. In relation to promoting market access of small holder farming systems, it needs to focus on stability, sustainability, diversification and commercialization considering that the majority of the farmers in Myanmar are small-scale farmers. It needs to further explore and develop sustainable agribusiness models.

One promising solution could be the introduction of the contract farming system in Myanmar. Proper implementation of a sustainable and progressive contract farming system that considers the whole value chain and complimented by “responsible investments” will enable small-scale farmers in Myanmar to participate in the market. Thus, investments in the form of contract farming systems by multinational companies is, indeed, being encouraged by the Myanmar Agriculture Sector Development.

Strengthening of Farm Advisory Service Extension Services

The system for the delivery of extension services needs to be reformed to increase the mobility of extension officers, improve
the connection between farmers, researchers and extension staff and the use of modern technologies for agricultural extension. New skills are needed for the new era of global agricultural engagement. This requires updating of curricula, building educational capacities, improving educational facilities and exploring new scientific frontiers and ways of imparting information.

**Rural financial systems**

Weak rural financial systems, high levels of indebtedness and heavy dependence on informal financing at high interest rates, are a constraint to agricultural production and marketing.

Building local savings instruments, credit systems and intermediary institutions between borrowers and lenders will require long-term institutional development. Although many micro-finance programs are not well-suited to agricultural lending, they do provide vehicles for savings as well as opportunities for rural households to manage debt by refinancing consumer loans at more manageable rates of interest.

**Promoting Farmers Organizations**

There is a need to strengthen farmers organizations such as producer associations, unions, and cooperatives as they play key roles in representing their members’ interests in lobbying and negotiations with government, donors and the private sector.

Farmers organizations are also crucial in the delivery of services to their members such as providing information, facilitating access to inputs and market, credit, support for storage, and processing and marketing services.

**Mobilize experiences from neighboring countries**

Agricultural development in South-East Asia has been largely driven by farmers’ organizations, with a diversity of forms, services and coverage that relates to the diversity of local contexts. International NGOs and research organizations should facilitate the sharing with Myanmar decision-makers and farmers organizations successful
experiences and initiatives of farmers’ organizations in neighboring countries. More initiatives similar to those conducted by NAPA (i.e. study tours) and AsiaDHRRA should be undertaken to put the concerns of farmers organizations on top of the policy agenda.

Keep flexibility when dealing with farmers’ organizations

Experiences worldwide have shown that imposing “one-size-fits-all” solutions or models to farmers organizations does not work. Needs and situations differ from one farmers group to another and evolve with time. So should the organizations that address these needs. The first point to consider when dealing with emerging farmers organizations is: “what is the problem that a particular group of farmers is addressing and is a collective action led by a farmers organization the most efficient way to address this problem?” Several initiatives of collective marketing or input supply, including in Myanmar, have failed because of inefficiency in the management of such services by the farmers organizations. Support to organizations should not impose preconceived ideas and models of what a farmers organization must be. Instead, interventions should look into existing initiatives and organizational structures of farmers organizations and try to see how to strengthen and improve its efficiency in addressing the needs of farmer members. Such flexibility requires an important level of facilitation from supporting organizations, which rely on skilled human resources and patience in understanding local context.

Work on services delivery and organizational development together

Although services provided by farmers organizations to its members are still limited, due to the lack funds and short experience, there has, however, been an increasing support and interventions from donors and the government for the delivery of services through farmers organizations.

These interventions should not only focus on the service delivery but should also consider the organizational development of the farmers organizations themselves not only to improve their efficiency in the delivery of services but to also ensure their sustained viability.
Focusing only on service delivery will lead to the establishment of purely service provision organizations (that are disconnected from their membership base) very similar to existing non-government organizations in Myanmar.

The founding characteristic and primary drivers of strategy of farmers organizations should be the interests and the needs of their members. If the organization’s strategy becomes driven in priority by the access to resources in order to deliver services. (i.e. access to donor funding) then power is no longer in the hands of the members. Thus, donors and support organizations working with farmers organizations should also systematically work on organizational development, particularly on governance and structure.

**Facilitate bottom-up structuring by stimulating grass-roots initiatives**

Most farmers organizations in Myanmar are national level organizations organized by initiatives at the national level with little foundation in grass-roots farmers groups/organizations. Many leaders of national farmers organizations have expressed that the ideal process would have been a bottom-up structuring approach that would ensure the proper involvement of local farmers in the organizations.

The recent rise in local initiatives is an opportunity to initiate a counter process that would allow genuine local groups progressively federating into upper level organizations. This structuring at higher geographical levels should be based on the decisions of local organizations/groups (rather than imposed by external stakeholders). These bottom-up organized farmer federations would truly be representative of local farmer organizations and their members.

**The need for consolidated arenas**

Experience in other countries has shown that the consolidation of farmers organizations by other stakeholders (i.e. local and national governments, donors, research organizations, etc.) can stimulate well prepared and legitimate discourse. The creation of arenas or venues
where farmers organizations can express their positions on specific and relevant topics give these organizations recognition in the public space and among farmer members.

For example, a farmers organizations in Rakhine was established during the preliminary discussions leading to a large consultation with the State Prime Minister. It was composed of more than 100 farmers who wanted the agenda and action plans formed during the preliminary discussions to be implemented by government.

However, the threat of having farmers organizations that only express the positions of the leaders that does not necessarily reflect the positions and sentiments of members at the grassroots should also be avoided. The push for the consolidation of farmers organizations into federations should carefully consider the allocation of time, structure and resources for consultation processes to ensure that the sentiments at the grassroots are considered and articulated by its leaders at the national level.

**Seed Industry Development Should Be Priority**

Seed is the basic input for increasing the productivity and value of crops. Quality seed production is an utmost priority for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI) to ensure food security and nutrition, increase in income of smallholder farmers, and promote the competitiveness of Myanmar agricultural products in the international market. Establishment of a vibrant seed industry can boost farm income through the adoption by farmers of better adapted varieties with improved and pure genetic make-up packed with modern technologies.

Myanmar’s seed industry has been mainly owned and controlled by government and, consequently, has been plagued with inefficiencies. Thus, MOALI has encouraged the local private sector to participate and play a greater part in the development of the local seed industry. However, local companies lacked the experience and technology to be significant players in the said industry. Also, current policies and
regulations are not conducive for private sector (i.e. multinational and national seed companies) investments.

Thus, the government has moved to change policies and regulations that will make the seed industry more attractive to direct foreign investments. This includes the protection of intellectual property rights of private seed companies. The MOALI has submitted to parliament for approval the draft bill on the proposed new Plant Variety Protection Law.

Another problem with the current local government-ran seed industry is its focus on the hybrid rice seed production. The said industry should also look into the development in collaboration with multinational and national seed companies of “improved rice seed varieties.”

20 June 2017

REFERENCES


NATIONAL CONTEXT

Poverty Situation in the Philippines

According to a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey conducted last December 2016, 44% of those surveyed considered themselves poor, 34% considered themselves to be “Food Poor Families,” and 13.9% said they have experienced hunger. The 2016 self-rated poverty is lowest in the last 29 years.

The SWS survey showed that in the last quarter of 2016, self-rated poverty was highest in the Visayas at 56% and lowest in Metro Manila at 31%. Self-rated poverty was at 47% in Mindanao and 42% in Luzon.

The 2016 food poverty rate was also a new record-low average, surpassing the previous record-low 35% tallied in 2015.

Meanwhile, the median self-rated poverty threshold -- the monthly budget families need in order not to be called “food-poor” -- was placed at P18,000 in Metro Manila, and P10,000 in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

Source: Clarete, Ramon. Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in the Philippines, unpublished manuscript
Lifted from the Philippine Development Plan of 2017 – 2022, “Poverty can also be eradicated by 2040, or sooner, with the right policies and programs”. The document stated that the speed with which this can be accomplished will depend both on the robustness of economic growth as well as on how it is distributed across income groups. If income grows only weakly and income disparity rises, poverty reduction will take longer. However, strong economic growth accompanied by reductions in inequality – aided by zero unmet need for modern family planning services – will drastically reduce poverty and virtually eradicate it before 2040. Economic growth must thus be sustained and inclusive.

“With the right policies, improvements in productivity and efficiency can more than triple the gross national income per capita of the country in 25 years. This will allow the majority of Filipinos to enjoy a middle-class standard of living. Without reforms, however, per capita income can only double over a period of 25 years”. Observed and simulated growth scenarios of Philippine per capita GDP, 1995-2040 (in pesos) is shown in the graph below.

**Trends in Population Growth**

The Philippines is the 13th most populated country in the world with a population of the around 103 million or 1.38% of the total world population.

The population of the Philippines continues to increase. Based on the 2015 census, the country’s population is 100,981,437. It is 8.64 million more than the population in 2010 and 24.47 million more than in 2000. Annual population growth rate, however, has been slowing down—from 1.90 percent in 2000-2010 to 1.72 percent in 2010-2015.

In terms of growth rates, six regions expanded faster than the 6.2 percent average GDP growth rate in the past six years. The Caraga region, coming from a low base, is the fastest with an average gross regional domestic product (GRDP) growth rate of 8.8 percent. It is followed by Central Visayas (Region 7) and Central Luzon at 8.2 percent and 7.2 percent, respectively.
CALABARZON has the largest population with 14.4 million, followed by NCR with 12.9 million, and Central Luzon with 11.2 million. The least populated regions are MIMAROPA with 3 million, Caraga with 2.6 million, and Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) with 1.7 million. Population censuses were conducted in 2000, 2010, and 2015.

By 2045, the population of the Philippines is projected to increase to 142,095,100. CALABARZON is projected to continue to have the highest population. Central Luzon and NCR will have almost equal population levels of 14.5 million. Western Visayas (Region 6) and Central Visayas, the next most populous regions, are each expected to have 9.7 million people by 2030. On the other hand, CAR will continue to be the least populated.

**Status of the Philippine Economy**

*AmBisyon Natin 2040* "The Philippines by 2040: “matatag, maginhawa, at panatag na buhay”. The country is a prosperous middle class society where no one is poor. People live long and healthy lives and are smart and innovative. The Philippines is a high-trust society where families thrive in vibrant, culturally diverse, and resilient communities. Since embarking on a program of inclusive growth and poverty reduction under the Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016, the Philippines has gradually transformed from being the economic laggard in Asia to one of the region’s best-performing economies.

“As one of Asia’s better-performing economies today, the Philippines is in a more favorable position than it has ever been in the last four decades. No longer weighed down by an unmanageable fiscal deficit and more secure in its political legitimacy, the government can now afford to think about national goals based on a longer time horizon. It is important to have a long-term perspective because securing the means for improving people’s lives, which ought to be the metric for gauging economic progress, is not a one-off event. Many of the problems requiring government action involve a combination of social, economic, and institutional processes that take years to produce the desired results. This endeavor requires sustained effort and persistence”.

101
Regional centers are growing much faster than other cities and municipalities. National Capital Region’s growth is much slower as its share of the population is getting smaller even if its contribution to (GDP) remains highest among the regions.

The Philippine economic and demographic trends particularly spatial distribution of population reflects the structure of the economy, characterized by varying concentrations of production and consumption in cities and municipalities, and in their respective regions such as, a) total population continues to increase following a long-term trend; b) overall growth rate, however, is decreasing, which is a global trend; c) regions with established and large cities (regional centers) are growing the fastest. d) regions with the largest populations also have the largest shares to GDP.

**Unemployment Rate**

The unemployment rate in the Philippines fell to 5.7 percent in the June quarter of 2017 from 6.1 percent a year ago. The number of unemployed persons went down by 182 thousand to 2,443 thousand while the number of employed fell by 393 thousand to 40,271. Meanwhile, the labor force participation rate decreased to 61.4 percent from a 63.5 percent. Among employed persons, workers in the services sector made up 55.4 percent of the total, followed by those in the agriculture sector (26.1 percent) and industry (18.5 percent). Unemployment Rate in Philippines averaged 8.58 percent from 1994 until 2017, reaching an all-time high of 13.90 percent in the

Source: [https://tradingeconomics.com/philippines/unemployment-rate](https://tradingeconomics.com/philippines/unemployment-rate)
first quarter of 2000 and a record low of 4.70 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016.

**Gender Issues**

Gender inequality in the labor market is evident in the Philippines despite increased Labor Force Participation Rates from 2000 to 2012. Substantial gender gaps in participation and employment outcomes among women did not uniformly decrease over the decade.

Agriculture, despite structural change remains an important sector for women’s employment at 22% in the Philippines. However, few farmers—and in particular women farmers— have limited access to high-quality inputs, credit, or information on farming techniques and markets. Other challenges for women in the labor market include the unpaid domestic work and care burden; their limited access to resources, including credit and financial services; inadequate education and lack of training programs; government services; disadvantages in social protection coverage; and pervading discrimination in most aspects of employment and work. Strategies to promote gender equality for inclusive growth in the labor market must reflect the Philippines’ specific historical and current conditions.

*The Philippines has a proud tradition of gender advancement and has many good practice policies and objectives and has passed gender-sensitive legislation; however, it continues to struggle to operationalize these.*

With respect to enhancing and improving women’s employment and work, the Philippines faces a number of challenges. First, it has an extensive rural population and relies on the agriculture sector for employment, economic growth, exports, and food security. The agriculture sector is a significant source of employment for women and is important for poverty reduction in rural areas.2

There is a strong gendered division of domestic labor ... Women are not only more likely to be in vulnerable employment, but they are
also more likely to be in the category of unpaid contributing family members, which offers the least opportunities for decent work.

Some progress has been made in reducing the gender gap between men and women in the labor force participation rate (LFPR), which now stands at 29 percentage points. The lower LFPR of women, compared to that of men, represents an underutilization of women’s labor in the paid labor market which arises from inferior employment and decent work opportunities, human capital differences, and unpaid domestic labor and care constraints.

Women in the Philippines have significantly lower employment rates than men, which in 2012 gave rise to a gender gap of 26.2 percentage points in the employment rate. A gender gap in human capital reflects gender segregation in the types of training and education available to women which may constrain their labor force participation. The Philippines has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education, but there are still qualitative differences due to gendered segregation in the types of training and tertiary education.

There is a strong gendered division of domestic labor with women having primary responsibility for household and care work and a higher total work burden relative to men. In the Philippines, women provide 84% of the total household time allocated to child care. Gendered social norms contribute to women having greater responsibility for, and time commitments to, domestic and unpaid care work, and this has been slow to change despite women’s increased participation in, and time allocated to, paid work. Relatively high fertility rates continue to raise the demand for women’s unpaid labor, especially given the low provision of child care services.

Vulnerable employment (being the sum of own-account and unpaid contributing family workers) is 6 percentage points in the Philippines. Women are not only more likely to be in vulnerable employment, but they are also more likely to be in the category of unpaid contributing family members, which offers the least opportunities for decent work. Decent work gender gap exists partly because women have
less access than men to wage employment. One major indicator of decent work is the level of remuneration.

Low-wage work is generally indicative of a lack of decent work and is more prevalent among women. Over the past decade, the average daily basic pay, in real terms, has declined for both women and men in the Philippines. Among employees, the gender wage gap based upon the daily wage rate shows a slight wage advantage for women in the Philippines. However, once human capital gender differences are taken into account, the gender wage gap is between 23% and 30%, demonstrative of the high level of gender inequality in the labor market. Social protection, particularly access to social insurance, exists largely because women have less access to formal wage employment.

**Addressing Challenges and Reducing Constraints on Women in the Labor Market**

In summary, despite a decline in the gender gap in labor force participation, the gender gap in productive and decent work persists in the Philippines. Women are subject to the deficits of less available work, more vulnerable work, and the unpaid work burden, and in many occupations and industries are paid at a lower rate than men even when they do find work.

*There is a strong gendered division of domestic labor. Women are not only more likely to be in vulnerable employment, but they are also more likely to be in the category of unpaid contributing family members, which offers the least opportunities for decent work.*

The main constraints on women in the labor market are domestic work and care burdens, and women’s more limited access to resources, including education, training, government services, credit, and financial services. Women also face pervasive discrimination, including lack of social protection in most aspects of their employment and work.
The Philippines faces the task of generating employment growth, reducing vulnerable employment, and improving decent work opportunities. This will require broad macroeconomic responses to expand employment opportunities, as well as policies and legislation to improve decent work, social protection and active labor market support.

**Gender Policies**

Gender equality is not recognized as a normative macroeconomic goal in the Philippines’ national development plan. The use of macroeconomic policies to directly expand employment has been limited and gendered impacts remain underexplored. By contrast, trade policies have been linked with employment, and the Philippines has identified employment targets or indicators. There is a need for country-specific analyses of the gendered impacts of fiscal and monetary policy, along with gender-sensitive and transformative program design and implementation. Reducing women’s unpaid domestic and care work is an important strategy to facilitate the participation of women on more equal terms with men in the labor market. This includes developing a child care services framework policy. Similarly, the promotion of the export of goods and services should be linked with an analysis of the gendered employment effects. Such an analysis should be complemented with an employment analysis of import policies (typically tariff reductions).

There are opportunities to build upon some existing positive elements. In the Philippines, an employment-led growth model is envisaged and employment targets are set, though they are not sex-disaggregated. It is recommended that increased employment be recognized as a macroeconomic goal and that gender-equitable targets are set and monitored.

**Active Labor Market Supports**

The Philippines should increase the engagement of women in relevant technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs, linking these to the labor market and ensuring that women have access to training in nontraditional fields. This requires increased
connection with industry and employer groups and the development of public–private partnerships, including links with public and private employment agencies. Each stage should involve women and should specifically target their needs before they take up TVET programs. Furthermore, young women frequently require specific encouragement to undertake nontraditional curriculum studies that will open up future employment opportunities on an equal basis with men. Such training programs need to be accompanied by measures to reduce discrimination against women being hired in nontraditional occupations and industries. Also, the government must address the fact that the informal sector (in which women are disproportionately employed) lacks social security coverage by developing a national social protection strategy for informal workers.

**Legislation and Mechanisms**

Although guarantees of equality and nondiscrimination are embedded in the Philippines’ constitution and labor legislation, further improvements are required. For example, legislation should be amended to properly enact the concept of “equal remuneration for work of equal value,” which is relevant to reducing the wage gap. It is recommended that steps be taken to develop and implement an independent minimum wage-setting process that is transparent, applies objective criteria, and includes the involvement of social partners. Additionally, limiting the use of multiple short-term contracts is good legislative practice to address one important aspect of precarious work.

**Industry and Manufacturing**

There is significant potential to promote and enhance employment opportunities for women in the industry and manufacturing sectors of the Philippines. In general, it is important that women have access to new employment opportunities in manufacturing and that as production processes change, for example through technological improvements, women are not displaced from manufacturing employment. Barriers to employment—such as those arising from a lack of training or from gender norms and discrimination that prevent
women from working in higher level occupations and certain types of manufacturing—need to be reduced.

Environment Situation

The Philippines is prone to both geological and hydrometeorological hazards. The frequency and severity of these hazards, climate change and its impact are expected to increase. Thus, the Philippines ranks third among the countries with the highest disaster risk in the world, after Vanuatu (1st) and Tonga (2nd), according to the World Risk Report 2016. The projected changes in seasonal rainfall in most parts of the country are expected to be within the range of its natural variability. These changes are strongly influenced by the El Niño Southern Oscillation, except for a highly likely drier future over the central sections of Mindanao. Projections further reveal, although with low confidence, that wetter conditions associated with extreme rainfall events could be experienced over most parts of Luzon and western sections of the Visayas. Sea level rise, faster than the global average, has been observed in some coastal areas in the country, and this condition is projected to continue.

Environmental Trends: Climate Change

The science of climate change may continue to be controversial and highly uncertain, though there is now wider consensus among professionals about the gradually rising average temperature and climate volatility.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says that the average global temperature increased by 0.85 degree Celsius (°C) between 1880 and 2012. As a result, major crops like maize and wheat have suffered significant yield reductions at the global level of 40 megatonnes (MT) per year between 1981 and 2002. Also, the global average sea level increased by 19 centimeters from 1901 to 2010, as oceans expanded due to warming and melting of ice.

The Arctic has been losing 1.07 million square kilometers of ice every decade since 1979. The increase in global temperature by the end of
this century will likely exceed 1.5°C compared to the levels from 1850 to 1900, considering the continuous emissions of greenhouse gases. In fact, 2016 was declared the hottest year on record, with the global average temperature about 1.1°C higher than the pre-industrial period. This condition led to widespread coral reef bleaching. If current trends continue, nearly all of the world’s coral reefs will suffer severe bleaching every year.

The world’s oceans will also continue to warm and the ice melt. Average sea level rise is predicted at 24-30 cm by 2065 and 40-63 cm by 2100. Most aspects of climate change will persist for many centuries even if emissions stop. To address climate change, countries adopted the Paris Agreement at the Conference of Parties on December 12, 2015. All signatories agreed to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C and to strive for 1.5°C. The Paris Agreement represents an important step in international efforts to combat climate change. However, potential changes in the direction of US policy could undermine the implementation of the agreement. Nevertheless, where the local impact of climate change and environmental degradation has become more evident, pressure from domestic stakeholders may encourage their governments to pursue the path of sustainable development. The next six years will be filled with great challenges for policymakers in emerging economies, such as the Philippines, which have little control over global and regional trends.

**AGRICULTURE AND THE SMALL FARMERS**

**Role of Agriculture in the Economy**

In the Philippines, agriculture plays a central role in the persistence of poverty. 70% of the country’s poor come from the rural areas, where agriculture is the dominant source of livelihood and employment, overemphasizing the sector’s role in country’s economy.
Expanding Economic Opportunities in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

The agriculture, fisheries, and forestry (AFF) sector is pivotal in generating employment for about a third of the country’s labor force, thereby reducing poverty and inequality for three-fourths of the poor who are in the rural areas.

AFF is also key to providing raw materials to the manufacturing and service sectors, resulting in forward linkages in terms of higher-paying and more stable job opportunities. Intensifying efforts to revitalize the AFF and harnessing its growth potentials are needed to promote more inclusive development. Given the sector’s links to agribusiness, interventions and investments will be channeled to expand existing opportunities and develop new ones, thus inducing greater participation of small farmers and fisherfolk.

The performance ofAFF in the past three years indicates that revitalization must be strengthened. The contribution of AFF to the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) continued to decline. It recorded an annual average GDP share of 10 percent from 2013 to 2015. This declining contribution is a stylized fact as economies progress and undergo a structural transformation. However, such transformation has been slow, and the growth of AFF weak. Its annual average gross value added (GVA) grew by only 1.0 percent from 2013 to 2015, and contracted by 1.3 percent in the first three quarters of 2016. Central Luzon, CALABARZON, Northern Mindanao, Central Visayas, and SOCCSKSARGEN have been the regions with better-than-average performance.

The modest output expansion accompanied by a drop in employment in AFF translated to an average annual labor productivity growth of 2.9 percent in the last three years. Compared with the industry and services sectors, AFF labor productivity has been the lowest.

GVA Growth Targets under the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016 versus Accomplishments (in percent)
**Brief Profile of Philippine Agriculture Land Use (2015)**

The Philippines has a total land area of 300,000 square kilometers, occupied by 100.7 million people (2015 population count). It is located in Southeastern Asia, an archipelago between the Philippine Sea and the West Philippine Sea, East of Vietnam. The total territory of the country is made up of 298,170 square kilometers of land and 1,830 square kilometers of water.

Land use\(^5\) of the Philippines show that the 41% of the total land area of the Philippines is currently used for agricultural purposes - with 18.2% being arable lands (land cultivated for crops like wheat, corn, and rice that are replanted after each harvest); 17.8% planted with permanent crops (land cultivated for crops like citrus, coffee, and rubber that are not replanted after each harvest); and 5% used for permanent pasture (land under flowering shrubs, fruit trees, nut trees, and vines, but excludes land under trees grown for wood or timber).

On the other hand, 25.9% of total land area is classified as forest lands, and 33.1% are devoted for “other uses” (any land not arable or

---

\(^5\) Source of basic data: Philippine Statistics Authority

\[\text{http://www.indexmundi.com/philippines/land_use.html}\]
under permanent crops; includes permanent meadows and pastures, forests and woodlands, built-on areas, roads, barren land, etc.).

**Brief Profile of Philippine Fisheries Industry (2015)**

The Philippine Archipelago has 7,107 islands with a coastline of more than 36,000 kilometers. It has more than 2.2 million square kilometers of ocean territory claimed as Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and 374 Marine Protected Areas (MPA).

In 2014, Philippine Fisheries ranked 8th among the top fish producing countries in the world with 4.7 million metric tons of fish, crustaceans, mollusks, and aquatic plants produced (including seaweeds). The production was 2.4% of the total world production of 195.7 million metric tons. The Philippines is the world’s 3rd largest producer of aquatic plants (including seaweeds) having produced a total of 1.55 million metric tons or nearly 5.67% of the total world production of 27.31 million metric tons.

In same year, the fishing industry accounted for 1.5% (P195.7 billion) of the Philippines’ Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of P13,285 billion. The industry also accounted for 14.3% of the Gross Value Added (GVA) in Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry and Fishing Group of P1,364 billion, the largest share next to agricultural crops.\(^6\)

The aquaculture fisheries sub-sector contributed the highest value with P93.34 billion or 39%. Followed by the municipal fisheries sub-sector with a total production of P81.49 billion. Total value of fish caught by marine fishermen was at P71.7 billion, while inland fisheries production was at P9.77 billion. The commercial sub-sector contributed P64.89 billion or 27% to the total output of the fisheries sector.\(^7\)

**Situation of small farmers/fishers**

**Assessment and Challenges**\(^6\)

Crops subsector – the primary driver of AFF – pulled down the overall growth. On the average, the GVA of crops grew only by 0.2 percent
during the period 2013 - 2015 (see Table 8.1). Its poor performance was due to: (a) typhoons and El Niño that adversely affected rice and corn production; (b) coconut scale infestation in CALABARZON; and (c) limited adoption of high-yielding varieties of commodities. On the other hand, production of high-value commodities such as banana, pineapple, and mango increased and gained better prices due to high market demand and improved crop management practices.

Fisheries maintained a weak performance. GVA of fisheries continued to slump, which can be attributed to reduced fishing activities due to typhoons and extreme weather condition and the implementation of the closed season policy in several areas. Closed season is part of the government’s effort to allow the recovery of fish population from overexploitation. Further affecting fisheries performance is the degraded fishery resources. To avert this, fishery management has shifted to protection and conservation through an ecosystems approach to fisheries management.

Livestock and poultry buffered the sluggish growth of crops and fisheries. The minimal effect of adverse weather coupled with favorable market conditions translated into the achievement of the PDP GVA targets in 2013 and even exceeding those of 2015.

Forestry sub-sector growth significantly declined. Forestry GVA dipped from 36.7 percent in 2013 to 4.9 percent in 2014 and further slipped to -26.7 percent in 2015. This is attributed to the issuance of Executive Order No. 23, s. 2011, which declared a moratorium on the cutting and harvesting of timber in natural and residual forests. However, EO 23, s. 2011 should be seen as an investment in ensuring the protection of forests and in preserving the various ecological services they provide to the people.

Despite the seemingly greater attention afforded to the agriculture sector in the past years, sustaining growth has continued to be elusive. This is due to the continued failure to address the challenges that have lingered over time and weakness to overcome the emerging ones.
Limited diversification prevented AFF from harnessing the potentials of the growing local and international markets. Over the years, area harvested for crops in the country has been highly concentrated to three dominant crops: rice, corn, and coconut. In contrast, the combined area harvested for high-value crops with greater prospects for market expansion (e.g., banana, sugarcane, and rubber) is much smaller than the combined area harvested of the three dominant crops. This limited crop production diversification suggests a failure in taking advantage of the growing export market.

Long-standing challenges in AFF continue to hamper productivity. This includes limited access to credit and agricultural insurance, and poor provision by the government of productivity-enhancing support services, infrastructure and facilities:

Limited access to credit and insurance. Insufficient working capital inhibits farmers and fisherfolk from using the appropriate type of inputs, farm equipment, and facilities that will expand production and spur entrepreneurial activities in the rural economy. In 2015, about 39 percent of small farmers and fisherfolk borrowers did not access formal credit due to: (a) lack of technical capacity to develop viable project proposals; (b) lack of or poor credit track record; (c) lack of acceptable collateral; and (d) limited information about available loan products. On the supply side, banks have low compliance to the loan quotas (15% agricultural, 10% agrarian) of the Agri-Agra Law or RA 10000.

Based on the 2014 Small Farmers and Fisherfolk Indebtedness Survey conducted by the Agricultural Credit Policy Center. Among small farmers and fisherfolk respondents, about 61 percent availed of loans from formal sources. Loans comprised 14 percent and agrarian loans only represented 1.1 percent of the banks’ total loanable funds.

Climate and disaster-related risks also amplify the need to address design and implementation issues in the country’s agricultural insurance programs. An initial assessment of the agricultural insurance programs of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation
(PCIC) recognized that the features of PCIC’s agricultural insurance products have been mainly intended to safeguard lenders from loan default. Notwithstanding, it is equally important to protect farmers and fisherfolk from production shocks brought about by calamities. Legal constraints that limit capitalization and human resources hinder PCIC’s capability to insure more farmers and fisherfolk.

Low farm mechanization and inadequate postharvest facilities. Despite the displacement of labor with greater mechanization, farm machinery and postharvest equipment and facilities are important to increase quantity and quality of produce, reduce losses, and lower labor costs.

Farm mechanization in the country improved considerably from 0.52 horsepower per hectare (hp/ha) in the 1990s to 1.23 hp/ha for all crops and 2.31 hp/ha for rice and corn in 2011. However, this improvement continues to lag behind the mechanization level in other Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and People’s Republic of China; but somehow at par with Vietnam, Pakistan, and India.

Studies of the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization and the University of the Philippines Los Baños show that inadequate postharvest facilities result in relatively high losses, reaching up to 16.5 percent of production in rice, 7.8 percent in corn, 15.5 percent in banana, 30.4 percent in mango and 45.1 percent in onion. For the fisheries sector, post-harvest losses range from 20 to 40 percent of the total outputs based on the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources data.

Inadequate irrigation. As of 2015, only 1.7 million hectares or 57 percent of the 3.0 million hectare potential irrigable area has been irrigated. Irrigation development has been slow due to the long and tedious process of designing and constructing large-scale irrigation systems. On the other hand, the construction of small-scale irrigation systems has been limited and many of the existing irrigation systems need rehabilitation or restoration to improve their efficiency.
Scant support for research and development. Despite the significance of R&D in developing technologies and identifying good farm and fishery management practices, share of R&D programs remains low in the total budget of the Department of Agriculture and Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development.

In 2015, the aggregate budget was at PHP3.8 billion or only 0.28 percent of the AFF GVA (in current prices), which is lower compared to the one percent level recommended for developing countries. The capacity for R&D is also adversely affected by the limited number of permanent positions for scientists and researchers in agriculture, thus leading to “contractualization” of research.

Weak extension service. Weak extension service slows down the diffusion and adoption of farm practices and technologies that are applicable to a specific area and responsive to the needs of farmers and fisherfolk. Inefficiencies in the delivery of extension services can be attributed to inadequate operational funds and lack of human resources of local government units (LGUs). Almost half of the agricultural extension workers are also ageing, ranging from 43 to 64 years old, based on the survey conducted by the Agricultural Training Institute.

The agrarian reform program has not been fully implemented. After decades of implementing the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), land acquisition and distribution (LAD) remains incomplete. The slow pace of LAD has been due to: (a) landowner’s resistance, particularly in the compulsory acquisition of private agriculture lands; (b) tedious processes and delays; (c) variability in the LAD targets; and (d) pending harmonization of rules to conform to Supreme Court decisions regarding the acquisition of lands under Operation Land Transfer. Moreover, the subdivision of the collective Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) was hampered by problems in identifying agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARB) and locating the landholdings, procedural delays in updating the names listed in the collective CLOAs, and tedious validation process to
determine whether collective CLOAs are within the alienable portion of the public domain.

Despite the enduring efforts to redistribute lands, there is insufficient data on the conditions of ARBs, and if lands remain in their hands. From the business standpoint, the unfinished land reform program has created uncertainties and discouraged investments in agricultural production and agribusiness. In addition, the limits imposed to ownership of agricultural land under CARP have been recognized to affect the land market.

Ageing farmers and fisherfolk. The average age of farm operators of palay, corn, bangus and tilapia ranges from 48 to 55 years old. While the sector's workforce gets older, the younger population finds more attractive employment opportunities outside the sector.

Limited connectivity between production areas and markets, and poor compliance with product standards resulted in low competitiveness of AFF products. An inefficient transport and logistics system makes AFF products less competitive in the market due to: (a) increase of travel time from the production area to markets; (b) reduction of quality during transport; and (c) increase of transport and handling costs. In 2015, only 6,549 kilometers of farm-to-market roads (FMR) were constructed out of the 13,999 km target of DA from 2011 to 2017.

Meanwhile, owing to poor compliance with quality standards along the supply chain, the Philippines experienced agri-food rejections at the border of the importing countries (e.g., European Union, United States, Japan and Australia). This was due to the presence of mycotoxins, additives, bacteria and other contaminants; labelling; and adulteration of or missing documentary requirements.

Weak institutions also fail to stimulate sector growth. Overlapping functions across several government agencies led to the inefficient delivery of support services and hampered agrarian reform implementation. Without close coordination of efforts, limited public investments will not be strategically directed to areas with
greater needs and potentials for development, thus resulting in duplication of activities. Premature and illegal conversion of prime agricultural lands, irrigated and irrigable lands also continue, despite safeguards against land conversion (e.g., Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Act, CARP, and Local Government Code). If existing laws are not strictly implemented, premature and illegal conversion may persist, and this will compromise food security and agrarian reform objectives.

Lifting of the quantitative restrictions (QR) on rice poses risks to AFF stakeholders who remain uncompetitive. The expiration of the QR on rice on June 30, 2017 will pose disadvantages to less competitive producers, particularly small farmers. However, it can help lower the price of rice, and this will benefit the general public including farmers who are net consumers of rice. The share of rice in the total food expenditure of the lowest quintile (poorest 20%) of Filipino households is quite substantial at 30.6 percent based on the 2012 Family Income and Expenditure Survey.

Growing population threatens existing agricultural land use. Growth in population will continue to pose pressure on the use of natural resources to respond to increases in the demand for AFF products. The increasing demand for housing, likewise, has already entailed huge conversion of existing agricultural lands to settlement lands. Competing use of these resources, land and water in particular, suggests the need to strike a balance in development objectives such as addressing housing needs, agro-industrialization and food security objectives, among others.
In the medium-term, AFF will seek to: (a) expand economic opportunities for those who are currently engaged in producing AFF products; and (b) increase access to economic opportunities for small farmers and fisherfolk who are typically subsistence producers and have limited market participation. These will be beneficial to existing producers and marginalized farmers and fisherfolk, including women, elderly and indigenous peoples.

The main target is to substantially increase GVA in AFF from the baseline value of 0.1 percent to within 2.5 to 3.5 percent in 2017, and maintain that growth rate over the next five years. A reversal of the negative growth of the value of fisheries production and exports is likewise aimed for. The table below presents the key indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republic Act</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year Enacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6657</td>
<td>Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Act</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7881</td>
<td>Amendments to CARP</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8435</td>
<td>Agriculture &amp; Fisheries Modernization Act</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8532</td>
<td>Amendments to CARP</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8976</td>
<td>Philippine Food Fortification Program</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9281</td>
<td>Amendments to AFMA</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9296</td>
<td>National Meat Inspection Service</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9700</td>
<td>CARPER</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9711</td>
<td>Food &amp; Drug Administration</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9803</td>
<td>Food Donation Act</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10611</td>
<td>Food Safety regulatory System</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategies to expand economic opportunities in AFF fall under Pagbabago or reducing inequality. The goal is to improve productivity and increase access. To achieve the sector and subsector outcomes and the targets, the following strategies will be implemented:

**Sector Outcome A: Economic opportunities in AFF expanded**

To expand economic opportunities for existing AFF producers: (a) productivity must be improved sustainably; and (b) the number and capacity of AFF-based enterprises must increase. Productivity enhancements will be attained within the ecological limit by striking a balance between utilization and regeneration of land and water resources to ensure sustained benefits. New AFF-based enterprises will be developed, while existing ones will be encouraged to increase production and to go beyond producing merely raw materials through increased value-adding of products with higher market value. The resulting rise in potential incomes will attract more people, including the youth, to venture into the sector.

**Sector Outcome B: Access to economic opportunities by small farmers and fisherfolk increased**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>BASELINE</th>
<th>END OF PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source: PDP Targets to Expand Economic Opportunities in Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry, PDP 2017-2022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of GVA in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Increased (year-on-year at constant 2000 prices, in percent)</td>
<td>2015: 0.1%</td>
<td>2022: 2.5%-3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Crops</td>
<td>2015: 1.8%</td>
<td>2022: 2.0%-3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Livestock</td>
<td>2015: 3.8%</td>
<td>2022: 3.0%-4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Poultry</td>
<td>2015: 5.7%</td>
<td>2022: 3.0%-4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Forestry</td>
<td>2015: 7%</td>
<td>2022: 2.0%-3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Value of Production of Fisheries Increased (year-on-year at constant 2000 prices, in percent)</td>
<td>2015: 21.6%</td>
<td>2022: 9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Commercial</td>
<td>2015: 3.3%</td>
<td>2022: 2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Municipal</td>
<td>2015: 2.2%</td>
<td>2022: 1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Aquaculture</td>
<td>2015: 0.8%</td>
<td>2022: 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in the Value of Agriculture and Fishery Exports Increased (year-on-year, FOB value, in percent)</td>
<td>2015: 21.6%</td>
<td>2022: 9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in Labor Productivity of Farmers and Fisherfolk Increased (year-on-year at constant 2000 prices, in percent)</td>
<td>2015: 4.6%</td>
<td>2022: 5.0-6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the lifting of quantitative restrictions on rice, the government will pay close attention to rice farmers and help them be more competitive and provide them with more and diversified livelihood and income opportunities.

**Subsector Outcome A.1: AFF productivity within ecological limit improved**

**Develop an integrated color-coded agricultural map to identify the comparative advantage of specific areas.** It will contain updated sub-national information on soil characteristics, water availability, climatic types, topography, and socioeconomic conditions. The map will inform production decisions about suitable crops and agricultural activities. It will also guide the identification and prioritization of programs, projects, and activities in the sector.

**Accelerate construction of disaster- and climate-resilient, small-scale irrigation systems and retrofit existing ones.** Irrigation systems must be disaster- and climate-resilient and compliant with construction standards. Priority will be given to small and communal irrigation systems, especially water harvesting technologies. Large-scale irrigation systems will be constructed if deemed hydrologically appropriate (i.e., water source is available and stable) and economically feasible.

The construction of these irrigation systems will be accelerated in areas with high irrigation development potential such as Central Luzon, Cagayan Valley (Region 2), SOCCSKSARGEN, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and Bicol Region. Periodic rehabilitation of damaged systems and restoration of non-functional ones may involve retrofitting to ensure disaster and climate resiliency.

**Facilitate the use of appropriate farm and fishery machinery and equipment.** Funding will be provided for the full implementation of the Agricultural and Fisheries Mechanization Law or RA 10601 to encourage local manufacturing and assembly of machinery and equipment for production, post-harvest, and processing activities. Government will intensify information, education and communication (IEC) activities on available local machinery (e.g., tractors, tillers, and harvesters), equipment, (e.g., mechanical dryers, threshers, and milling equipment) and fishing technologies (e.g., fiberglass hull and small engines in fishing boats).

For rice production to become more competitive, especially when the quantitative restrictions on the commodity are lifted, the government will encourage the adoption of farm machinery and equipment to reduce production costs. This will be undertaken especially in selected provinces of the Ilocos Region (Region 1), Central Luzon, and MIMAROPA—regions whose yields are above the national average (4 metric tons/hectare) but have relatively higher production costs.

The displaced labor from the promotion of mechanization will be linked to commodity diversification, value-adding, and AFF entrepreneurial activities. Proper training and certification for machine operation will also be provided, especially to low-skilled farm laborers and fishery workers. Custom hiring (e.g., renting of machinery and servicing of farm implements) and machine pooling will be encouraged to promote efficiency and provide alternative livelihood.

**Strengthen the AFF extension system.** The existing extension system will be strengthened through the engagement of a pool of professional extension workers that will provide technical and business advisory services. This should shorten the lag from R&D to adoption. Priority extension activities will include encouraging farmers and fisherfolk to use: (a) certified seeds and quality planting materials, especially high-yielding and stress-tolerant varieties (e.g., drought and flood); (b) quality semen of animals and eggs for poultry; and (c) quality fish fry and fingerlings. The government will recognize and advocate for the adoption of good practices (e.g., integrated pest management, integrated nutrient management, and sustainable fishing practices), and food safety and product standards (e.g., good agricultural practices, good aquaculture practices, good handling practices, code of practices for fresh fruits and vegetables, food hygiene practices, and packaging and transport practices). In addition, the government will continue to promote climate change adaptation measures, organic agriculture, urban agriculture, and halal food production. Timely and site-specific weather and climate advisories will be provided. Advanced information and communication technology (ICT) will be utilized to reach and serve a greater number of stakeholders.
The DA will continue to guide and coordinate extension units, and will also strengthen their links to R&D institutions and think tanks. The coordination and complementation between DA and LGUs will be strengthened for a more efficient delivery of extension services and feedback on farm-related problems. State universities and colleges (SUCs) will also be tapped to hasten the diffusion of good farm and fishery practices, indigenous and local knowledge, and appropriate technologies. To complement these, market-driven extension models such as nucleus estate model and multi-stakeholder partnerships led by the private sector will be supported.

Pursue an ecosystems approach to fisheries management. The government will undertake the following:

- conduct regular nationwide fish stock inventory and assessment
- implement appropriate fisheries management strategies such as scaling up of the Community-Based Coastal Resources Management, territorial use rights in fisheries, and closed season for selected species in some fishing areas
- strengthen measures against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing regulate fishery structures such as fish pens and cages in inland bodies of water; implement boat, vessel and gear registration and licensing, and monitoring of compliance with catch documentation requirements among municipal and commercial fishing boats conduct an aggressive information, education, and communication activities to increase awareness and appreciation of resource conservation measures, and to intensify compliance with fishery laws.

Subsector Outcome A.2: AFF-based enterprises increased

Diversify into commodities with high value-adding and market potential. Commodities that can be developed based on vulnerability, suitability, and value-chain analyses of DA include mango for Ilocos, coffee for the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), dairy cattle for CALABARZON, calamansi for MIMAROPA, abaca for the Bicol Region and Eastern Visayas, rubber for the Zamboanga Peninsula, banana for Northern Mindanao, and cacao for the Davao Region. The adoption of integrated farming systems such as intercropping, livestock-crops, crops-livestock-fish, and agro-forestry will be promoted to maximize the use of land. The integrated color-coded agricultural map can be utilized for this purpose

Expand AFF-based enterprises through new and innovative production and marketing schemes. New forms of linkages such as contract farming and corporate farming that will connect AFF enterprises to markets and other upstream services will be established. The government will lead in market facilitation through the conduct of domestic and international trade fairs and market-matching activities. It will also intensify enterprise-based capacity building and business advisory services for farmers and fisherfolk organizations, including ARB organizations. The capacity building and advisory will help the organizations manage profitable AFF-enterprises and effectively participate in the development of vibrant rural communities.

Strengthen community-based enterprises in upland areas. The government will continue to implement and monitor programs and projects that foster community-based enterprises in upland areas. At the same time, efforts will be undertaken to address issues of accessibility and connectivity, as well as vulnerability to climate and disaster risks.

Subsector Outcome B.1: Access to value-chains increased

Physically link production areas to markets through road and rail-based transport, inter- island water transport and logistics system. FMRs, bridges, tramlines, and railways will be constructed to connect small farmers and fisherfolk to the agricultural value chain. Inter-island water transport (e.g., roll on-roll off nautical highway) and port facilities such as fish ports, will be improved to foster greater inter-regional trade of agriculture and fishery produce. Climate and disaster risks will also be taken into account in the design of transport networks. See Chapter 19.

Sector Outcome B: Access to economic opportunities by small farmers and fisherfolk increased.

To increase the access of small farmers and fisherfolk to economic opportunities, the government will facilitate their access to value-chains, technology, and financing. At the same time, it will ensure that their rights and welfare are defended and asserted.
Organize small farmers and fisherfolk into formal groups and farms into clusters to create economies of scale. Social preparation such as organization building and management will be conducted among smallholder farmers and fisherfolk who are not yet organized into associations and cooperatives. Efforts to integrate them into larger agribusiness enterprises and institutional buyers will also be pursued.

Provide capacity building for small farmers and fisherfolk on value-adding activities. Professional agricultural extension workers will be tapped to provide trainings to small farmers and fisherfolk in the farmer field schools and demonstration farms that will be established. The trainings will include processing, packaging, marketing, and compliance with product standards and certification.

Provide non-farm livelihood options to seasonal farm and fishery workers whose incomes are irregular and who are vulnerable to shocks. The government will continue to implement community-based employment programs as alternative income sources during the off-season. Seasonal workers will also be trained on off-farm and non-farm activities to enable them to take advantage of alternative employment opportunities, including their involvement in the development of agri-tourism.

Subsector Outcome B.2: Access to innovative financing increased

Increase the number of small farmers and fisherfolk that are provided with agricultural insurance. This will be done by improving the awareness and appreciation of small farmers and fisherfolk of risk insurance. Innovative agricultural insurance schemes such as weather index-based and area-based yield index insurance will be promoted.

Provide small farmers and fisherfolk easy access to affordable formal credit. The government will develop and implement innovative loan products with responsive credit delivery mechanisms, and it will provide adequate information and assistance to borrowers on the available loans. It will also assess the credit demand of the agriculture sector. The Agri-Agra Law will be revisited to identify factors that limit its effectiveness and determine appropriate measures. The coverage of the Agricultural Guarantee Fund Pool Program will be expanded to include long-gestation crops.

Subsector Outcome B.3: Access to technology increased

Raise investments in R&D for production and post-harvest technologies. This aims to reduce losses, maintain quality and food safety, and increase the value of agricultural and fishery commodities (e.g., ice-making and storage technologies). Investments will be increased to cover the direct cost of R&D, build a critical mass of human resources, and improve infrastructure in support of the Harmonized National R&D Agenda for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources 2017-2022. This agenda espouses the use of advanced and emerging technologies such as biotechnology, genomics, bioinformatics, nanotechnology, and ICT as tools to find science and technology solutions to AFF problems and to develop new products with significant impact to the sector. See Chapter 14.

The following will continue to be priorities for the sector: (a) development of climate and disaster-responsive technologies and innovations; (b) development of fishery culture system for species with high market potential; and (c) improvement of fishery culture for traditional species.

Enhance capacity of small farmers and fisherfolk to adopt better and new technologies. This entails information dissemination and capacity building on the use of certified seeds as well as post-harvest, processing and packaging technologies.

Subsector Outcome 4: Access of small farmers and fisherfolk to land and water resources increased and protected

Ensure and protect the land tenure security of ARBs by completing the LAD and immediately install ARBs in awarded lands upon the issuance of emancipation patent or CLOAs. An inventory of lands and profiling of ARBs will be conducted to ensure an updated status of land distribution in the country and guide the delivery of support services in agrarian reform communities and clusters.

Fast track the resolution of agrarian-related cases involving large numbers of affected farmers. Timely and free legal assistance will be provided to ARBs, including counselling and representation in judicial and quasi-judicial bodies.

Revisit Section 20 of the Local Government Code (RA 7160), which authorizes LGUs to reclassify agricultural lands for other uses. This law does not include any provision for sanctions or penalties to LGUs that reclassify agricultural lands more than the allowable limit (i.e., 15% for highly urbanized cities, 10% for component cities, and 5% for 4th-6th class municipalities). Hence, it is critical that LGUs provide baseline information about the LGU’s land types, and this information will be the basis for implanting land classification.

Complete the delineation of municipal waters. Local ordinances must be issued to effect this. The Fisheries Code provision on fisherfolk settlement must also be implemented. Under the code, certain areas of the public domain, specifically near fishing grounds, will be reserved for the settlements of municipal fisherfolk.
PLANS AND INITIATIVES OF DHRRA MEMBERS TOWARDS THE SDGS/ASEAN VISION

A focused group discussion (FGD) conducted last November 14, 2016 with leaders of PhilDHRRA member-organizations revealed that majority of them had very little, or no knowledge at all, of the SDGs and the ASEAN Vision 2025. They, however, recognized that their current and past programs and initiatives were somehow related and contributed to the attainment of the SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2025.

PhilDHRRA member-NGOs also recognized the need for the 17 SDGs to be inclusive and interconnected into one goal towards the fulfillment of the ASEAN Vision 2025. PhilDHRRA has also raised the concern over manpower and resources needed for its initiatives towards the attainment of the SDGs and of ASEAN Vision 2025.

SDG 1: No Poverty

The PhilDHRRA National Secretariat is the current lead convener of the Agriculture and Fisheries Cluster of the CSO-led program “Zero-Extreme Poverty Philippines 2030 (ZEP PH 2030).” It is a collaborative call for action of development organizations for the eradication of extreme poverty in the Philippines. In this program, PhilDHRRA aims to pursue inclusive growth and shared prosperity through the development of social enterprises and the advocacy for pro-farmer and fishers policies. ZEP 2030 seeks to uplift at least one million households from extreme poverty.

ZEP PH 2030 has seven steering committees working on Health, Livelihood, Environment, Agriculture & Fisheries, Housing and

Complement strategic efforts with environmental and governance strategies. To strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the strategies, the government will: (a) expand the existing human resource base by increasing scholarship opportunities in AFF-related courses (see also Chapter 10); (b) continue to pursue the national convergence initiative using the ridge-to-reef approach; (c) strengthen resilience to climate and disaster risks; (d) regularly update the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture and Fisheries Registration, especially the information used in targeting for credit and agricultural insurance; (e) conduct a comprehensive market scoping to analyze competition issues in priority sectors, which may include land market (see also Chapter 16); (f) ensure the meaningful participation of all stakeholders (i.e., through organized groups) in planning, monitoring and implementation; (g) strengthen coordination and convergence of the efforts of national government agencies, LGUs, civil society organizations, and SUCs on AFF concerns and cross-cutting issues such as food security and nutrition; and (h) intensify public-private partnership especially in rural infrastructure and logistics facilities to support value-chain development.
SDG 2: Zero Hunger

PhilDHRRRA member-NGOs through 695 functional people’s organizations (POs) have been working with communities on initiatives aimed at ending hunger for the past 10 to 30 years. As of January 2016, 12% of these POs are based in Luzon, 58% in the Visayas and 30% in Mindanao.

Most of these POs have been engaged in the promotion of sustainable agriculture for food security through capacity building and livelihood programs in agriculture. PhilDHRRRA’s thematic thrusts even prior to the ASEAN Vision 2025 agenda are as follows: 1. asset reform; 2. transparency, anti-corruption & government accountability; 3. environment; 4. social services; 5. CSO’s good governance; 6. climate change, disaster risk reduction management; 7. Social Enterprise; 8. Gender and Development; and 9. Others (corporate development).

PhilDHRRRA members have participated in the Philippine Women Council which has been tasked to help in the development of “farmer women” organizations.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN UNDERTAKING THESE INITIATIVES

Opportunities

As a lead convener for the Agriculture and Fisheries Cluster of the ZEP PH 2030 movement, PhilDHRRA has an opportunity to widen and scale up its networking and linkaging with other organizations, government institutions and other stakeholders. ZEP PH 2030 follows the collective approach framework – a strategy that intends to solve this large-scale, systemic, complex societal problems, bringing together multiple stakeholders. In effect, CSOs as a specific sector or group need to identify what needs to be solved. In response to the call to action, the collective impact should have the following: (1) common agenda; (2) mutually reinforcing activities; (3) shared measurement systems; (4) continuous communication; and (5) backbone support organization. Different stakeholders will be treated as partners in the development process, building on their institutions and resources, facilitating access to information, and promoting an enabling environment. Experience demonstrates that by directly relying on people and/or organizations to drive development activities increases the potential to make poverty reduction efforts more demand responsive, more inclusive, more sustainable, and more cost effective.

Challenges

In converging with other different stakeholders, different organizational policies and programs are being observed thus making the convergence challenging. Another challenge that is being faced in achieving SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2025 is the capacities of the organization in terms of human and financial resource to mainstream SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2025 into their programs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The PhilDHRRA network has been actively pursuing initiatives towards rural development, particularly in the area of SIAD, for the last 10 to 30 years. Although PhilDHRRA has not consciously related
such initiatives to regional and global developmental targets such as the SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2025, it, however, claims to have been contributing towards the attainment of the targets of such agendas, particularly in the fields of food security and children education.

Today, PhilDHRRA is challenged to move forward, not to change its current plans and programs, but to intensify and hasten initiatives in leading rural communities towards ASEAN Vision 2025. However, funding constraints faced by most PhilDHRRA member-NGOs have remained a major obstacle.

For some members, there is an interest in understanding further the SDGs and the ASEAN Vision 2025 to be able to fine-tune their own and the network's development agenda.

**Recommendations**

In this light, PhilDHRRA needs to undertake the following activities:

- Study sessions with PhilDHRRA leaders on the SDGs and the ASEAN Vision 2025 to better understand the said agendas and their relationships with each other;
- Popularization of the SDGs and ASEAN Visions 2025 in rural communities; and
- Fund-raising activities to sustain financing of existing and planned activities related to the SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2025.

**ENDNOTES**


press-release/wmo-confirms-2016-hottest-year-recordabout-11°C-above-pre-industrial-era UN


4http://www.indexmundi.com/philippines/land_use.html

5http://www.bfar.da.gov.ph/publication

6http://www.fao.org (FAO website)

7Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022

8Programs & services of PhilDHRRRA members in the past 3 years (2012-2015)

REFERENCES

Nathaniel Candelaria, A primer on Food and Nutrition Security in the Philippines, March 2016;

PLCPD-WFP, Zero Extreme Poverty (ZEP), Promote Inclusive Growth & Shared Prosperity.


Policy Coherence and Integration to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, http://www.isdgs.org/


Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO Website) http://www.fao.org/home/en/


http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/philippines-population-pyramid


NATIONAL CONTEXT

Socio-economic Profile of Thailand

Co-existing in a quality society based on shared responsibilities require knowledge management and other mechanisms to conform with current situation of Thai society in terms of public administration policy focusing on social welfare and human security under the management of Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. In other words, community institutions should serve as a social protection network and provide social welfare for elderly persons; promote gender equality; eliminate violence against women, children and the disabled; protect and support the provision of proper welfare for impoverished persons, the disabled or handicapped and those who are otherwise dependent on others for assistance. Additionally, community institutions should increase the efficiency of addressing issues on security of life and property by updating the crime monitoring and surveillance system, developing warning information and data system, and organizing community volunteers in various areas to work with authorities in crime prevention.

The government still encourages local government organizations to follow good governance principles. As such, the efficiency of the current system should be improved, and it should serve the needs of the public. Government administrative work should be linked up with each other at –the central, regional and local levels by promoting the integrated provincial administration. This can be done through the formation of provincial and provincial cluster development plans that correspond with the government’s policies, national and regional strategies, and local government organizations’ and communities’ plans. Planning processes must involve all sectors, according to the 2008 Royal Decree on Integrated Provincial and Provincial Clusters Administration.
The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is the lead organization in charge of driving social development to attain security and dignity for the people. The Ministry also leads the prevention and solution of social of varying severity.

Thus, if social situations are assessed based on the characteristics of each local community, any social problem can be clearly analyzed while adjusting to changing situations. Information gained can be used as an important database in analyzing trends and forming social development policy as a key mechanism, effectively preventing and solving the existing social problems.

**Thailand's current economic situation**

Thailand has an open economy; that is, the country trades with neighboring countries. Thus, international trade plays a significant role in national development and prosperity. It has also contributed to the rapid expansion of the national economy since 1961, the first year of implementation of the first national economic and social development plan.

Thailand frequently suffers from balance of trade deficits, while balance of payments is in surplus. This is because Thailand’s exports are mostly agricultural products, such as rice, rubber, teakwood, tin, corn, tapioca products, fresh shrimp, durian, and mangosteen. Other important products are increasingly being exported, namely, cement, jewels, electronic components, and Thai silk. However, Thailand at the same time imports many products, which results in trade deficit. The imports can be classified as follows:

- Consumer goods, including food, dairy products, and beverages. Household appliances are declining as an import since they are being substituted by domestically manufactured products that are also being developed for export;
- Semi-manufactured goods and raw materials for domestic industries tend to be increasingly imported;
• Demand for capital goods, including machinery and equipment, labor-saving devices for tractors, and chemical fertilizer tends to increase; and
• Other goods, including, cars, fuels, and auto parts are increasingly being imported.

Over the past decade, Thailand's import rate has increased as the country's development has sped up. The nation's general consumption has also increased owing to consumption behavior imitation, wherein consumers tend to consume luxury goods and high-priced products. In addition, Thailand promotes free trade, under which only some goods are controlled, while most are imported freely. Consequently, Thailand is suffering from trade deficit.

Thailand's economy and trade expanded by a high rate. However, because of variable global situations, new measures have been adopted to establish a trade barrier. For example, anti-dumping measures, countervailing duties, and non-automatic import licensing have been imposed according to product standards or environmental reasons. In the midst of more intensive global trade competition, Thailand should not only seek to join economic groups that are pushing for an ASEAN Free Trade Area, it should also enhance the competitiveness of its exports. Moreover, Thailand must seek more investment opportunities in other regions and explore foreign partnerships by direct investment or joint venture to enable Thailand's exports to easily access international markets.

The Ministry of Interior's policies

The Ministry of Interior is responsible for supporting the government's operations. Its duties are described in the Re-organization of Ministry, Bureau and Department Act, B.E. 2535 (1992), Section 19. It acts as coordinator and supervisor of the provincial governor's performance specifically in putting government's policies into practice.

In order to support the implementation of the government's policy statements as declared by the council of ministers to the parliament
on February 26, 2001, the Ministry of Interior has formulated the following policies in the performance of its mandate:

**An Urgent Policy**

The Ministry of Interior will support the urgent policies of the cabinet concerning poverty eradication, drugs, and bureaucratic corruption and misconduct through the following:

a. The Ministry of Interior will support the policy of accelerated poverty eradication in rural and urban areas by:
   • Adopting and following the self-sufficiency economy philosophy of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej as a framework to solve the poverty problem by considering each individual community’s potentials;
   • Supporting the government’s establishment of the village and urban community fund;
   • Supporting the government’s One Tambon One Product (OTOP) project; and
   • Speeding up the development of infrastructure needed to support people’s livelihoods; addressing land shortage; and occupational promotion and development for farmers and the poor in order to reduce poverty, create jobs and generate income; and
   • Supporting the use of areas under expressways for job creation and income generation for the poor and low-income persons in urban areas.

b. The Ministry of Interior will support the policy of intensifying the campaign against illegal drugs:
   • Promoting the community’s roles in preventing and solving the proliferation of illicit drugs according to the principle of prevention before suppression; addicts shall receive therapy sessions;
   • Improving the efficiency of the central and regional operating systems in preventing and suppressing illegal drugs by improving the database, planning and budgeting systems; and
• Developing the Volunteer Defense Corps to partner with the administration and police officers in suppressing illegal drugs.

c. The Ministry of Interior will support the policy of prevention and suppression of corruption and misconduct in the bureaucracy by:
• Eliminating causes of corruption and misconduct in the government procurement process;
• Promoting public participation in the suppression of corruption and misconduct; and
• Developing the public's consciousness, and the subordinates' values and professional ethics. Corrupt officials must be resolutely punished to reduce corruption and misconduct.

Policies according to the mission of the Ministry of Interior
Apart from the urgent policies, the Ministry of Interior will also support all of the cabinet's policies, including, economic, social, political and administrative policies, by assembling them as the Ministry of Interior's policies.

Policies in rehabilitating and solving problems of the grassroots economy
The Ministry of Interior will rehabilitate and address the grassroots economies to create a favorable environment for eradicating poverty, creating more jobs, and generating public income by:

a. Strengthening the community’s potential to partner with the government sector in solving national economic problems and rehabilitating the economy;

b. Improving the communities’ products to increase their economic value;

c. Conserving, restoring and developing natural resources toward sustainable economic problem-solving and rehabilitation; and

d. Reinforcing an area's development potential according to the government policy of regional and Bangkok development to facilitate the economic development of the manufacturing sector in order to create more jobs, generate income for the residents of the area, and enhance the economic competitiveness of the areas.
Development policy for strong community and livable society

The Ministry of Interior will prevent and resolve social problems, strengthen communities and society, control and protect peace and security of the life and property of citizens, and reinforce social fairness by:

a. Reinforcing strong communities and building community capacity to participate in the government’s work in preventing and solving social problems;

b. Promoting the family as a fundamental unit of society to serve as immunity agents preventing family members from becoming involved in social problems; and

c. Supporting conflict prevention, alleviation, and resolution; strengthening security of life and property of citizens by developing a proactive working system on troubleshooting regarding natural disaster, occupations or others at the provincial level. Working system to be improved include news and report systems for anticipating possible problems, warning systems, and management systems. This aims at preventing and alleviating the problems, also reducing numbers of problems to be proposed for the government’s decision making at the central level, as well as decreasing public protests.

The Ministry of Interior will support the implementation of political reforms and reforms in the public administration system through decentralization to local government organizations according to the spirit and legislation of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, Buddhist Era 2540 (1997).

AGRICULTURE AND THE SMALL FARMERS

Role of agriculture in the economy

Agriculture is still the country’s most significant economic sector. Majority of the population is engaged in the agriculture sector. In the past, agricultural development improved the income and well-being of farmers in general. The agriculture sector now has made less impact than other economic sectors following the past economic crisis. This
is the result of many state policies that promote and support “The New Theory” and “Sufficient Economy Philosophy” in farming.

The disparity of income between the agricultural sector and other sectors is still huge. The degradation of natural resources for agricultural production, the speed of change in the globalization era, and the bilateral and multilateral economic integration, create impacts on the agricultural sectors and force farmers to make adjustments.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives made the Agricultural Development Plan to provide a framework and guide the operation of the agricultural sector. The Plan puts farmers at the center of the development following the “Sufficient Economy Philosophy”. Small scale farmers or farmers with less farmland will get support following the “New Theory” so that their production would be the foundation for the Sufficient Economy. Middle-sized farmers or advanced farmers will get support to create networks to synergize the power and support of one another in the form of community enterprises, farmer group enterprises or cooperatives. The plan stresses the importance of combining modern knowledge and technology with traditional technology and local wisdom. For large scale farmers or commercial agriculture, the plan focuses on facilitating trade and improving production to make quality products that meet consumers’ needs. The plan provides as follows:

**Taking care of farmers to live sufficient and happy lives**

Mission: Encouraging farmers to adopt “Sufficient Economic Philosophy” in every household, developing quality of life of farmers and making them happy as measured according to five aspects: economic, health, education, society and environment, promoting production of safe food and agricultural products for domestic and foreign consumers.

Goals:
1. Number of households living in poverty is reduced to 4% by 2011 (B.E. 2554);
2. Not less than 25% of farming households practice Sufficient Economic Philosophy;
3. Farming households reduce the use of chemicals in their farms;
4. Average 3% growth is achieved in the agriculture sector; and
5. Farms and factories produce quality food and agricultural products.

Development strategies: the four main strategies are:
1. Strengthening farmers and farmers’ institutions;
2. Developing agricultural products;
3. Managing agrarian resources; and
4. Improving the administration efficiency.

It should be noted, however, that the draft agricultural development plan is still under consideration.

**Situation of small farmers**

Thailand currently has 65 million people or 20.3 million households, with an average of 3.2 persons per household. Of this number, 16.7 million, or approximately 30% of the population, are in the agricultural sector. Income from the agricultural sector are less than 10% of the GDP. The number tends to decrease constantly. However, the agriculture sector remains an important part of the nation’s food security. About 13 million people or 3.7 million households are farmers. On average, 50.62% of their incomes are from farm activities. The average age of Thai farmers is 42. Farmers younger than 25 years old make up only 12% of the farmer population. The younger generation of farmers usually move to the city to find other work, or increasingly migrate to the non-agriculture sector due to the heavy physical requirements of farming, reliance in nature, low and unstable incomes, and insecure welfare.

Recently, incomes of farmers’ households have come not only from rice production but also from non-agricultural activities like wage-labor, enterprise, and government work. Normally, after the harvesting season, many small-scale farmers generate supplementary
income from activities such as selling lottery tickets and driving taxis. As such, the number of full-time farmers may be around 8 million. Farmers seem to be no longer the majority in Thai society. Moreover, farmers can possibly be divided into two groups. The first group consists of the genuine farmers or those who do the farm activities themselves. The second group are the farm managers, or those who may own or rent land then let other people do the farm work.

In the past two decades, the proportion of the poor and poverty gaps of farming households have dramatically shrunk. Farming households have increasingly relied on the non-agriculture sector for income. Even through small farmers’ incomes improved in the past, income from other activities is still 15 times higher than income from farming. Income from farming, compared with other agriculture activities, is the lowest at around 120,000 THB per household. The main reasons for the diminution of farmers’ incomes are the reduction of rice paddies due to drought, the inability of farmers to adapt to change and slow economic growth.

**Recent Policy on Farmers**

The military faction called The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) and the conservative group formed a government led by the coup leader as Prime minister. This government launched groups composed of forestry officers, military forces, police officers and paramilitary volunteers that cut down agricultural vegetation and displaced farmers. Those operations have been addressed by various sectors in Thai society. Many referenced reports showed that groups of farmers were being attacked and displaced. Approximately 1,013 of farmers have been arrested from April 2014 to February 2016.

The military government made the Thai Rice Strategy which is to be implemented from 2015 to 2019. According to the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the Thai rice and Thai farmer strategic plan was prepared in a meeting of public and private sector representatives and chaired by the NCPO. There are five strategies:
1st Strategy: Thai rice and Thai farmer development in accordance with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy;

2nd Strategy: Promote modern farming by grouping farmers into community enterprises, agriculture cooperatives or simple associations to strengthen their capacity;

3rd Strategy: Establish alternative crops zones or rice production zones with shifting 27 million rais of unsuitable paddy fields to grow cash crops that generate more income;

4th Strategy: Conduct research and development on rice varieties and promote technology and innovation toward modern production. This will improve the productivity of rice varieties that can help farmers adopt modern farm practices. Additionally, insurance systems for rice and other agriculture products should be created through a Rice Fund. A Rice Board, with representatives from farmers, millers, exporters and relevant government agencies, also needs to be established to craft a master plan for rice and farmers; and

5th Strategy: Promote free trade of rice without subsidy or price-interference.

Regarding farmers’ development and farm production policy, government line agencies like the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives promote a plan that minimizes rice production areas by planting only once a year in the off season and planting other crops instead. Reducing rice production leads to higher prices for rice.

There is also a policy to develop farmer’s knowledge so they become “smart farmers”. The number of smart farmers was expected to increase by 20% in 2016.

Situation of Small Fishing

Based on information of Office of National Statistic, there were 50,000 fishing boats in 2005. More than half of these were trawlers
and the rest were trawls with small and narrow nets that could catch even the smallest sea animals. This highly destructive practice depletes sea resources and leads to conflict between small-scale and commercial fishers. Moreover, aquatic resources have been directly and indirectly invaded by government development projects such as tourism development and urbanization.

Accordingly, the quality of water has been declining and has become unsuitable as a habitat for aquatic animals. Regarding fishery growth development, some goods are being used as raw materials for food processing. Even through aquatic resources are degraded, there is still a high demand for raw materials for export in the food processing industry. Thus, the government has promoted fishing beyond territorial waters and has also supported aquaculture development. Although coastal farms, particularly of black tiger prawns, have been successful, these face serious problems from disease, misused land, encroachment of mangrove forests, soil salinization, and seepage of seeds and chemicals into natural reservoirs. These factors endanger coastal ecology and demand a well-studied management system and quality control process.

On April 21, 2015, the European Union (EU) listed Thailand as a non-cooperative country in the campaign against Illegal Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU). In the past few years, the Thai government has constantly failed to combat illegal fishing and to stop the imposition of below-minimum wages. However, the government has implemented measures that protect commercial fishing rather than safeguard and sustain coastal resources. Despite various government efforts, as of July 2017, there are speculations that the EU will maintain Thailand's warning status.

**A strategic approach to reach resolutions**

Thailand has committed to follow universal organizations agreements. In April 21st, 2015, Thailand was given yellow card by the EU which means Thailand must completely adjust fishing standards within 6 months. Additionally, Thailand as country occupies both
local fishing by community based fishing organizations and deep-sea fishing national and international territorial water, owned by highly potential firms. In the past, fishing standards control is not taken into serious, causing extremely damaged sea-resources as well as international commitments violated. So, there are three key standards to be concerned 1) scale and size of fishing boat and misused fishing tools 2) personnel like entrepreneur, boat owner, captain, crew, labor and 3) administration and management of fishing industry which can be seen through recent supply chain continually values up to 300,000 million THB per year. In this case, the NCPO authorized the Ministry of Defense as a key player.

Eventually, final illegal fishing solutions that National Assembly has passed a resolution to be practical implementation as law through government gazette announcement in April 28, 2015. It accordingly, activated and was valid in June 27, 2015 with dismissing previous fishing act so-called Commercial Fishing Act B.E.2490. Newly, the recent fishing act contains of several core values and principles as seen below.

a. Fishing zones and national territorial water must be clearly decided and mapped into three main categories such as inland fisheries, sea-coastal fisheries and offshore fisheries. Accordingly, different territories should have various contextual management as well as benefit returns from using proper fisheries tools.

b. Measurements to control quality of safe and qualified aquatic farming for consumers must be taken into serious account.

c. Measurements to promote sanitation and to control quality of aquatic animal primary sanitation standards for firms who wish to standardize and certify healthy aquatic animal or aquatic products must be originated by responsible government agency.

d. People participation in fishery management and benefit returns must be seriously designed. As the results, government agency is capable to measure management process according to contextual areas, people needs and national constitution. Basically, representatives from registered community based fishing organizations from each province must engage in provincial
fishing committee. This mechanism will design measurements to manage sea-resources and will develop fishery areas base and resolve problems related regardless co-thinking, co-acting and co-responsible.

e. Fishing commission for international territorial water must be established in order to propose solutions, policy and strategy to develop international offshore fishing to National Fishing Policy Commission as same as to responsible government agencies one who legislates regulation and other relevant rules for especially reorganizing Thai national boats do fishing outside national territorial water. The mechanism also promote national fishing, protect and resolve international fishing problems systematically. So, this measurement will assist Thai fisheries doing international fishing in terms of morality, following international fishing agreements.

STATELESSNESS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Stateless people and rural communities in Thailand

There are about 443,862 stateless persons in Thailand, about 100,000 of whom lack opportunity for education. These are children between the ages of 5 to 15 who belong to ethnic minority groups from neighboring countries living in the mountains along Thai-Myanmar border. The Thai government’ has adopted several measures to assist and solve the problem of statelessness, and these have been praised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, the UNHCR’s Representative in Thailand, recognized the country’s efforts, saying “clear goals and specific time frame set for problem-solving is a good model for other countries in the region. This underlines Thailand is ahead of other countries in statelessness management.”

Since June 11, 2015, the Ministry of Interior has authorized the governor to give permission of nationalization to the stateless persons’ descendants who were born in the country. This helps the nationalization process run smoothly and more speedily. Three
years ago, Thailand granted nationality to more than 18,773 stateless persons, which is a higher number than in previous years.

On March 14, 2016, the Permanent Secretary of Interior Kritsada Boonrat announced that the Department of Provincial Administration ordered all district offices to speed up the inspection process and grant of Thai nationality to a group of stateless students, which was about 5% of the registered stateless persons (443,862 persons in total) as of late October 2015. More than 65,000 stateless students were seen to benefit from the action. The process translates to nationalizing 1% of the stateless persons within a six-month period. Provinces that have a number of target groups, such as Trad, Ratchaburi, Mae Hing Son, Tak, Kanchanaburi, Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai, are required to report the progress of their work every month.

Besides granting legal status, Thailand provides other support to stateless persons born in the country such as the right to free health care and basic education. This action entails the cooperation of government agencies, international non-government organizations and community leaders.

Thai nationals from the rural areas complain that stateless persons get better treatment, but so far there has been no active opposition to government actions, and the Thai people have been generally sympathetic to stateless persons.

**Background of the problem**

Stateless persons and their access to basic services may cause a social problem to Thailand in the long-run. The stateless people including hill-tribe people living in the border area at the north of Thailand, number approximately more than 100,000. One of the most emphasized concerns is the education of stateless children. Substantial educational services include learning centers and alternative learning systems.
Meanwhile, the entry of foreign labor has resulted in the decrease of employment rate of Thai nationals. Other concerns regarding the entry of foreign labor include negative impacts on safety and security in the country. The foreign work force will be an additional fiscal burden in terms of providing them a medical care service. This will be complicated by the provision of medical care to the children born in Thailand from non-Thai parents. The opening of the ASEAN community is also seen to create a boundless world, which will stimulate more labor mobility.

**Stateless people’s situation**

The current situation of stateless people in Thailand points to serious human rights problems.

The most problematic issue is putting the policies of eradicating statelessness into practice. The naturalization process for legal status of the immigrants of each policy is cumbersome and complicated, thus susceptible to corruption.

It was found that many government officers frustrate stateless persons by, for example, (1) refusing notification of birth or neglecting to issue birth certificates for children of stateless persons who are born in Thailand, even they have evidence and witnesses; (2) declining an offer of admission to schools for, or denying school certificates to stateless persons; or (3) delaying the processing of work permits.

**Recommendations on basic ideas of statelessness situations management**

a. Open the registration of stateless persons in Thailand;
b. Grant registered stateless persons the right to temporarily stay in Thailand while they undergo confirmation procedures;
c. Appoint a lead organization to push forward the policies and plans for eradicating statelessness in Thailand;
d. Issue personal status certificates to stateless people in Thailand;
e. Give stateless people in Thailand the right to work;
f. Prepare a registry of basic human rights problems faced by the stateless people.

**NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS, PLANS, AND INITIATIVES TOWARDS THE SDGS/ASEAN VISION**

Thailand values ASEAN and the United Nations (UN) as ASEAN has been moving toward an ASEAN community since 2015. Meanwhile, at the 70th Regular Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 70) in September 2015 held in Thailand, the ministers of Foreign Affairs of ASEAN countries paid tribute to the UN’s role in promoting peace, sustainability, development, and human rights, as well as the sustainable development agenda of the UN 2030.

Thailand has promoted the building of the conformity between ASEAN community vision and the 4P principles for sustainable development agenda. The reasons are provided below.

First, people are an important target and a center of economic development. So, it is important to build trust that economic development as a consequence of national aggregation in the region will be sustainable and will benefit people in all sectors in society. The Prime Minister stresses narrowing the development gap and eradicating poverty by leaving no one behind.

Second, regarding environmental conservation, climate change is recognized as a catastrophe whose severity is increasing. Thailand appreciated the UN Secretary General’s role in climate change mitigation specifically on the development of capabilities of regional personnel in disaster risk reduction, disaster management and mitigation. Thailand underlines building public awareness and strengthening community capacity to be ready to participate in disaster prevention and mitigation. Moreover, Thailand targets to reduce Green House Gas emission by 20-25% after the year 2030 under Thailand’s Intended Nationally Determined Contribution as a part of world’s actions.
Third, regarding peacekeeping, Thailand has promoted peacekeeping operations of the UN since the country became a UN member in 1946. Also, Thailand has valued the role of women in peacekeeping. Thailand has applied for temporary membership in the United Nations Security Council as ASEAN participant for the 2017–2018 period, emphasizing the country’s preparedness to help in promoting peace and international security.

Thailand also places importance in preventing and solving new security problems, including transnational crimes, illegal drugs, human trafficking, and illegal wildlife trade. Cooperative border management has been encouraged to prepare for any impacts from an ASEAN community and physical connectivity, such as a road network in the region. ASEAN countries also need to share responsibility for the irregular migration problem.

Building partnership at the global, regional and national levels is needed. Partnership and cooperation between ASEAN and the UN will be a major force in moving sustainable development forward to help promote peace to the general public.

Thailand also agreed with a draft five-year action plan shaped by the ASEAN Secretariat and UN Secretariat, which aims to strengthen cooperation in the future. Hopefully, both the ASEAN and UN Secretariats, and the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in Jakarta, Indonesia, will interact with each other closely and regularly. Thailand as the main site of several UN bodies such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, is willing to support and coordinate with all organizations involved to move forward the cooperation between the ASEAN and the UN for tangible results.
**Government commitment, plans and initiatives related to ASEAN**

After the endorsement of the ASIAN Vision 2025 and the 2016-2025 Community Action Plan of the ASEAN Three Pillars at end of 2015, Thailand expects that the ASEAN will quickly “make visions into concrete results” to ensure unity and security of the ASEAN Community. The implementation of visions should create equilibrium in three aspects:

**Economic aspect:** Thailand proposed that ASEAN should balance a strong economy with sustainable development. People must be taken care of and must benefit from the economic growth thoroughly and equally. Innovation must be used. Thailand is now encouraging “start-up” enterprises to enter the digital economy, to prioritize “new S-Curve” industries while continuing supports for the “First S-Curve” industries which are still productive. The country also pays attention to human security, food security, sustainable agriculture for increased income for farmers, fog problems and adaptation to climate crisis.

In the ASEAN Summit in September 2016, Thailand announced that it was ready to endorse the Initiative for ASEAN Integration Work Plan III and to function as the ASEAN Coordinator on ASEAN integration under the ASEAN Vision 2025 and the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 so as to enable ASEAN to implement the two plans together and complementarily.

**Human resources development aspect:** Thailand proposed the balanced capacity development for people of all ages including youth who are an important force to move ASEAN Community in the industrial era. They should get education and vocational training from the state. Meanwhile, Thailand is preparing for an aging society by promoting good quality of life and economic participation. In the summit, Thailand also proposed the ASEAN+3 Declaration on “Quality Aging” for the region to be better prepared for an aging society and for the elderly in the region to contribute to building an ASEAN Community.
**Integration aspect:** Thailand supports integration and economic growth in ASEAN that goes hand in hand with the regional security and stability. These will make the contact among people smoother. Thailand proposed that ASEAN should accelerate the integration the following areas: sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, rules and regulations, cross-border mobility of people. Thailand itself is in the process to develop border economic zones and promote the continuous investment of Thai investors in neighboring countries in the 1+1 format to integrate the production bases with the neighboring countries.

In addressing challenges and negative impacts from the integration, e.g., human trafficking, new forms of international crimes, drugs and activities that threatening security, ASEAN must tighten the cooperation on border administration, connect databases of all ASEAN countries, exchange intelligence, strict law enforcement to suppress the illegal activities. In border administration and addressing new and old forms of threats, Thailand proposed the feasibility study on developing electronic border pass to systematize the border crossing in the ASEAN Community to be more effective and beneficial in exchange of intelligence.

Additionally, Thailand signed on the ASEAN Declaration on ASEAN One Response for faster collective response to disasters in and outside the region, and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025.

**Government commitment, plans and initiatives related to the SDGs**

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) officially started in January 2016. They are the main goals in developing the well-being of people across the world, creating equality, eliminating poverty and responsibly using natural resources to build a sustainable society in 17 years. The goals cover 15 areas: 1) poverty 2) hunger 3) health 4) education 5) gender equality 6) water and sanitation 7) energy 8) economy and employment 9) infrastructure and industrialization 10) inequality 11) cities and human habitats 12) sustainable consumption and production 13) climate changes and impacts 14) marine resources
15) ecosystem and biodiversity 16) society and justice and 17) partnership for the goals. There are also secondary 169 targets. The SDGs are introduced to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that end last year.

The SDGs-preceeding the MDGs made Thailand consider issues such as the society, labor, environment and corruption-free business (a new standard requiring the business not only to make profit but leading to concept of social responsibility which is relevant to the UN policy to increase the role of the business sector).

The Thai government has announced that it is ready and determined to join hands with all countries in partnership at all levels to realize the SDGs. As the Chair of G77, Thailand set the “From Vision to Action: Inclusive Partnership for Sustainable Development” agenda for the group.

To achieve SDGs, the Thai government sees that it should quickly create and strengthen cooperation and partnership at the national, regional and global levels with all sectors. The development must be bottom-up and understand that everyone is connected with one another and living in one chain. The private sector in Thailand is extremely important in moving the country’s development. This is because the proportion of the private sector investment in GDP is high and the performance of the private sector creates direct impacts on the lives of people at many levels and in large circle. In 2011, Thailand experienced the most serious flood in 50 years that impacted millions of people and the supply chain. The private sector then should have important role in the sustainable development and achieving the global sustainable development. Their role are especially creating decent jobs, investment with consideration on environment and sustainability and opposing corruption, not only thinking about profit. The role of the public sector is also important in encouraging companies to invest for sustainable development and in creating supportive atmosphere and incentives for sustainable development.
Thailand also uses the “Sufficient Economy Philosophy” in the National Economic and Social Development Plan. The plan emphasizes on the human-centered development with balance and sustainable economic growth, immune to the internal and external change. The philosophy can be applied to the operation and decision making for business sector, both for the SME and large business. The philosophy could contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

The Thai government is confident that SEP will help achieve the SDGs. SEP is relevant to many goals. Thai leading companies use the SEP and are successful because the philosophy does not contradict the private sector's principle on profit making. The SEP does not reject debt or borrowing of the private sector. But it requires the risk management on the principle of balance, sufficiency, rationality and immune as well as consideration on environmental impacts, equality, promoting good life and uplifting quality of life and all the stakeholders.

**PLANS AND INITIATIVES OF DHRRA MEMBERS TOWARDS THE SDGS/ASEAN VISION**

**Rural development guidelines include:**

a. Human resources development in rural areas must provide specific vocation training focusing on particular persons, groups and relations of groups in the rural area. The aim is to improve quality of life;

b. Development of administration system for rural development. For rural development to be successful, it must be administered in “rural development administration” manner, emphasizing the cooperation and coordination among all units and levels, and set up the work system that strengthens self-help; and

c. Development of a communication system for rural development. The key principle of the communication development is to give correct information and to make it successful.
Sustainable development can be summarized as follows:

Setting appropriate development strategies, creating knowledge base for community for them to be aware of any change, fairly distributing development, creating equality among all groups in the society, strengthening local communities and reviving and conserving natural resources and quality of environment to be rich and become the sound base for development and for living for the community and the society, strengthening good governance in management at all levels.

The significant development strategies are:

1. Strategy to develop quality of people and Thai society to be society of wisdom and learning, emphasizing on:

   a. Developing people to have morality before knowledge and immunity. Promoting lifelong education, managing knowledge, local wisdom and modern knowledge from community level to national level;
   b. Promoting health, both physical and mental, of the Thai people, making them living in good environment, developing comprehensive health system, food security and safe food and reducing behaviors that are harmful to heath; and
   c. Promoting the co-existence in the society with peace, creating good relations of people based on rationality, create accessibility to sources of fund, promoting safe living with justice, strengthening the integrate justice process, raising awareness of civil rights and responsibility, raising awareness of human value and human dignity.

2. Strategies to strengthen communities and society as the sound foundation of the country, emphasizing on:

   a. Management of the strong community process by promoting grouping, expressing opinions, taking parts in activities in various forms, having process to manage knowledge and learning system of communities, making networks for learning both inside and outside the community;
b. Making strong community economy be integrating production process based on potentiality and strength of the community, encouraging communities to group as cooperatives and vocational group, supporting the use of local wisdom and culture; and

c. Strengthening capacity of the community to live with nature and environment peacefully and harmoniously by promoting community rights and community participatory process in conserve, revive, develop, utilize and increase the management efficiency and making mechanism to protect natural resources and environment in the locality.

3. Strategies to make community economy balance and sustainable, focusing on:

a. Changing production to increase productivity and quality of the products and services based on knowledge, natural resources and local wisdom; and

b. Promoting fair competition and fair distribution of benefits from development, promoting competition in business operation with freedom and righteousness and monopoly prevention, promoting development of community capacity and economy at the base by strengthening community financial organizations.

4. Strategy of development based on biodiversity and creating the security of the natural resources and environment bases, focusing on:

a. Protecting natural resources bases and ecosystem equilibrium, so as to keep balance between conservation and utilization by developing databases and making knowledge, promoting community rights and participation in natural resources management, developing co-management system for conservation and restoration of natural resources;

b. Creating good environment to uplift the quality of life and sustainable development by changing patterns of production and consumption behavior toward sustainable production and
consumption while reducing impacts on natural resources bases and environment; and

c. Develop the value of biodiversity and local wisdom, using the sustainable development approach. The strategy starts with management of knowledge, protecting biodiversity resources against external threats, especially international obligations, building a system to protect community rights and manage the fair distribution of benefits, and promoting biodiversity for economic security at the local and community levels.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN UNDERTAKING THESE INITIATIVES

On September 25, 2015, leaders of over 193 countries met in the UN General Assembly in New York to adopt the Global Goals for Sustainable Development with 17 goals, namely: 1) no poverty 2) zero hunger 3) good health and wellbeing 4) quality education 5) gender equality 6) clean water and sanitation 7) affordable and clean energy 8) decent work and economic growth 9) industry, innovation and infrastructure 10) reduced inequality 11) sustainable cities and communities 12) responsible consumption and production 13) climate action 14) life below water 15) life on land 16) peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17) partnership for the goals.

The 17 goals are based on the sustainable development framework which integrates the economic, social and environment concerns and comments and proposals from people from all countries in the world. They become our common goal for development for the next 15 years until 2030 and replace the 8-point Millennium Development Goals which ended in 2015. This is the first time that a goal to eliminate poverty among 836 million people of the world population by the year 2030 is set.

Some goals, for example the goal on education (including providing education to all children from early childhood to secondary education and enhancing education opportunity to people, lifelong education), are challenges for the underdeveloped and developing countries as
over 124 million people are lack of education opportunity which needs over US$39,000 million budget a year for 15 years to achieve this goal.

Consequently, the UN emphasizes the significance of the 17th goal which is partnership for goals. This point require collaboration of all sectors, both national and international, to mobilize funds and technology, to increase capacity of the state agencies and charity organizations and contribute together to reach the goals”. Global Partnership for Educations (GPE) then becomes one example of the collaboration to solve the problems. The fund will mobilize resources from the developed countries to provide supports to member countries that are in need of resources, knowledge and innovation so as to achieve the goal, as well as to support the work of UNESCO and UN member states. Ms. Alice Albright, the GPE Manager, took an opportunity of the 70th UN General Assembly to form a working committee of leaders from, for example, Chile, Indonesia, Malavi, Norway, and the General Director of UNESCO Commission on Financing Global Education. The aim is to raise US$39,000 million per year to help the underdeveloped and the developing countries.

Sustainable development is a discourse, a process to create, produce or define knowledge which will give power in identifying direction of the development in the current world. The discourse is made during the past two decades to explain and seek solutions for the failed development model of modernization. From the experience in Thailand, the 1st to the 8th Economic and Social Development Plans which follow mainstream development model focused on measuring economic growth while ignoring social and environmental costs. The results are good economy, social problems and unsustainable development. That is the imbalance between economic growth, social order and natural resources conservation. From the 9th Plan onward, the concept of sustainable development was introduced so as to develop the country and solve the problems from previous development.

While there are numerous attempts to define the concept of sustainable development, the most cited definition is from the report “Our Common Future”, saying that “Sustainable development is development that
meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

However, there are many more definitions of sustainable development. It might be because of differences in understanding of nature, political ideology and interpretation. In the ASEAN context, the sustainable development is defined by the social, economic, political and environmental conditions in ASEAN. It means the sustainability and equilibrium among economic, social and environment development to be sustainable for the next generation of ASEAN people. Resources are preserved not to completely destroy by a regional community that concerns only economic wealth.

In the action plans for establishment of ASEAN, it is announced that ASEAN will manage the regional environment and natural resources while conserving land, water, minerals, energy, biodiversity, forest, coastal and sea resources as well as climate. ASEAN will join global efforts to address the issue global climate change. ASEAN would develop environmental technology for sustainable development. Solutions to environmental problems must not obstruct the regional competitiveness, not impact justice, not cause trouble to economic and social development of ASEAN which is based on justice, freedom, flexibility and effectiveness, but share common position and standard while reflecting the differences in economic and social condition and limitation of each member country.

The commencement of AEC in 2015 therefore represents both opportunity and challenge. AEC should explore common means and measures to change challenge into opportunity for sustainable development.

The important question today is how to ensure that sustainable development does not become a mere discourse invented to maintain economic growth while creating environmental and social impacts. ASEAN competitiveness should not overshadow sustainable development goals such that economic growth comes at the cost of deterioration of natural resources.
The constant implementation of the plan would increase the country’s readiness to stand amid globalization with dignity. Meanwhile the awareness of local identity in terms of culture, lifestyle and economics and integration of these identities to globalization is also important, otherwise, sustainable development remains only declaration and discourse.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Poverty and social inequality are the impacts from the country’s economic development which is not comprehensive and inclusive. They are structural problems that would take decades to solve. The solutions require the readjustment of the economic structure for comprehensive and inclusive development, taxation to support the redistribution of development benefits, and fair distribution of returns between the owners of capital and owners of labor, as well as between the large corporations and small and medium businesses. Human development in all aspects for life quality improvements should be emphasized. The role of the community in, for example, providing the social safety net and social welfare for the elders, promoting gender equality, and eliminating violence against children, women and the disabled should be highlighted.

In terms of good governance, it is good that the state supports local administration operation based on a code of good governance and integrated with the central administration and regional administration. The national government can also provide integrated support to the provincial administration through the preparation of provincial development plans, national strategic plans and community action plans, all with full people participation.

In solving poverty and social inequality, and reducing the deterioration of poverty and inequality in the future, the following are recommended:
a. Develop databases with information on identification, potential and actual social and economic status;
b. Create opportunities for the poor and people with less opportunity to access tertiary education in the specializations that are needed in the labor market;
c. Ensure justice and reduce inequality in using land and natural resources; and
d. Reduce the vulnerability during the transition into an aging society, natural disasters, free trade and free flow of labors which can results in more exploitation.

Proposed actions:

1. Promote an occupation appropriate to the capacity of the elderly;
2. Create a network of elderly care for those who are poor and living alone;
3. Promote household savings;
4. Produce a workforce with quality skills appropriate to the needs of the labor market and arrange trainings to upgrade the unskilled labor to skilled labor; and
5. Introduce various, appropriate techniques of agriculture, to provide opportunity to develop products and occupation and to increase capacity to set the price for their products. As for fishers: conserve the aquatic animal resources through various measures to ensure sustainable development.

10 August 2017
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS & ASEAN 2025 VISION: SCOPING OF RELEVANT ACTIVITIES OF ASIADHRRA MEMBERS & PARTNERS IN VIETNAM

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Socio-economic profile of Vietnam

Although a socialist country, Vietnam’s economy is highly market-oriented and dependent on raw material exportation and direct foreign investments. Vietnam is ranked 6th in Asia and 48th in the world based on GDP. It is also ranked 128th in the world in GDP per capita.

Total GDP of Vietnam in 2015 was US$198.8 billion. In 2013, Vietnam had economic/trade relationships with 37 countries including Japan, South Korea, and Germany.

Vietnam as an economy is a member of the United Nations, WTO, IMF, WBG, ADB, and ASEAN.

According to the World Fact book in 2014, the economy of Vietnam grew by 5.5%, 7th among Asian countries.

Vietnam’s GDP per capita grew 3.5 times from 2005 to 2015, 16th in the world (after Myanmar, 14 times; Timor-Leste, 8.9 times; Ma Cao, 6.2 times; Mongolia, 5.7 times; China and Uzbekistan, both 4.8 times).

Vietnam is under a socialist/communist regime with the Vietnamese Communist Party its only ruling party. It has allowed the establishment of some public organizations such as the Viet Nam Trade Union (VNTU), Viet Nam Farmer’s Union (VNFU), Viet Nam Women’s Union (VNWU), and the Viet Nam Youth Union (VNYU).

The Constitution of Vietnam recognizes the freedom and democratic rights of its citizens.
In 2016, Vietnam’s population stood at 87.84 million with a per capita income of US$1,407.00 and poverty rate of 10.7%.

**Development policies and programs**

Vietnam has had several National Development Programs implemented such as the Program Number 135 on Poverty Alleviation and Hunger Eradication (which has been an on-going program for the last 20 years), the well-known Program Number 1696 on Gender Equality (which has also been on-going for the last 20 years), Program Number 1217 on Anti-Offenses, Program Number 21 on Anti-Corruption, and the newly-launched Program Number 158 on Climate Change.

Such National Programs are further “fleshed out” into Local and Branch Programs that include policies and action plans with details on resources required and timetable for implementing said programs. Required resources enumerated in said action plans are provided under the government’s budget and “Social Supporting” budget.

For the past 10 years VietDHRRA members, especially mass organizations such as the VNFU, VNWU and VNYU, have been able to access funds from the National Budget even for salaries of its staffs.

Up to 2017, members of VietDHRRA have been actively promoting with farmers and fishers the implementation of national and local laws, programs in 64 provinces and cities throughout the country.

**AGRICULTURE AND THE SMALL FARMERS**

**Role of agriculture in the economy**

Vietnam’s agriculture sector has not only provided for the food requirements of the country but has also supplied the needed raw materials for its processing industry. The agriculture sector has also significantly contributed in the expansion of the national economy through the labor force it generates, the raw materials it provides
the local industries, and in creating market/consumption for the products of said local processing industries.

In addition, the agriculture sector also provides the economy valuable foreign currencies through its exports of rice, coffee, rubber latex, black pepper, cashew nut, sea products, fruits, vegetables, and cut flowers. Major destinations of its agricultural exports are Japan, France, China, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

### Situation of small farmers / fishers

It is ironic that although Vietnam is one of the biggest exporters of agricultural products, rice in particular, and yet most of its farmers are poor subsistence farmers who live and farm in hilly and mountainous areas. Mostly indigenous peoples, these farmers practice family farming systems in usually non-irrigated farms.

On the other hand, access to large, fertile and irrigated tracts of lands located in deltaic plains, such as the Red River delta or Mekong River delta, and in low lands along the coastal line from North to South or in red soil plateaus of the Central Highlands are usually given to big agribusiness investors who can put in high capital and modern technical investments. It is estimated that around 50% of rice lands (around 2 million hectares) are under the control of such big agribusiness investors. It is the big agribusiness companies that are usually favored as they are usually the ones involved in the exportation of agricultural products and earns the “valuable” foreign currencies for the economy.
According to government statistics, around 60% of Vietnam’s 54.61 million work force are working in agriculture, and that only less than half of these agricultural workers have received any form of training. Also, 10-15% of agricultural workers are employed by commercial farms and commercial fishers. The government have enacted policies and programs that promotes commercial agriculture and fishing. However, development of the said sectors have been slow due to limited investments, technologies and trained labor force.

Vietnam’s “Renovation” (Đổi mới) movement in 1986 abolished the government’s highly centralized management system that was dependent on state subsidies and shifted to the establishment of a market driven economy where competition between the private sector and the state in non-strategic sectors would be allowed. In 1988, the Land Law was enacted which recognized private land use rights. Central Committee Resolution 10 allowed farmers long term use of land and sell their produce in the free market and not obliged to participate in cooperatives.

These changes led to increased productivity and efficiency that greatly contributed in the achievement of the country’s food security, and the creating of jobs and incomes for 70% of the population that depended on the agriculture sector. These factors that led to poverty alleviation, hunger eradication and overall development of the national economy greatly contributed in the social and political stabilization of the country.

However, the following issues affecting the agriculture and fishery sectors continue to persist:

For agriculture sector in general:
- Low quality of agriculture and fishery products
- Surplus of rural labor force
- Low prices of agriculture products but high cost agriculture inputs
- Unequal agricultural trade relations with other countries
- Fertility degradation of agricultural lands
• Debate on impact of bio-technology, climate change and hypo-
culture
• No clear solutions on issues of “narrow lands,” high population
and growth rate, low productivity due to small-scale operations
and unskilled labor force of farms.

For farmers:
• Sharing of innovations in agricultural production and
technologies is not promoted
• Unemployed farmers/workers are forced to work for low wages
• Poor farmers receive unequal treatment compared to big
agribusiness

In rural areas:
• Lack of a workable development model (similar to Indonesia’s
DESAKOTA)
• Lack of effective/workable structures of farmers and fishers
cooperatives
• Highly polluted rural environment mainly due to intensified use
of chemical inputs
• Lack of access to insurance.

STATELESSNESS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES
Stateless people and communities are mostly indigenous peoples,
such as the H’mong, Van Kieu, Ray, Racley, Bahna, Ede, H’Nhi, King,
Kherme, and Lao Lum, and are usually located along the borders with
China, Laos and Cambodia. There are thousands of such stateless
farmers and fishers. These people usually form loose groups and
move from place-to-place, and sometimes cross borders, looking for
livelihood.

An example would be the Van Kieu group, composed of 300 people
and are living at A Doi commune, Huong Hoa district, Quang Tri
province. The group established a small village at foot of a hill and
practiced shifting cultivation to grow upland rice, cassava, sweet
potatoes and vegetables for daily needs. Everyone in the group are
not registered with the government (household registration) and do
not have certificates of nationality, identification cards, passports,
etc. Children of stateless people cannot go to secondary school.
Almost all of stateless people are poor or extremely poor and seek
support from local the governments from both sides of the border.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS, PLANS, AND INITIATIVES
TOWARDS THE SDGS/ASEAN VISION

Government commitment, plans and initiatives related to ASEAN
Founded on December 31, 2015, the ASEAN Economic Community
(AEC) was built on political-security, economic and socio-cultural
pillars towards building a politically-connected and people-oriented
community with vibrant economic growth.

Since joining the ASEAN in 1995, Vietnam has been an active member
and has made significant contributions to the bloc, that will focus on
the following main areas of work:

Firstly, related to work of building the ASEAN Community, the
delegation will continue to coordinate with the Committee of
Permanent Representatives (CPR) to conclude the political decisions
of the High Level into work programs, concrete action plan for
ASEAN. Through the preparation of these documents, the integration
of Vietnam’s interest issues; CPR continues to coordinate and monitor
the process of community building, promptly recommend solutions
to solve problems arise.

Secondly, with the high priority of institution enhancement,
standardization of activities and reduction of meetings for ASEAN,
the delegation will work with the CPR and the ASEAN Secretariat
to propose comprehensive solutions, as well as concrete actions,
promoting the regional coordination role of the CPR and the new
organizational apparatus of the ASEAN Secretariat, etc.

Thirdly, in the ASEAN-Partnership relationship, the delegation will
coordinate with the CPR and the Permanent Mission Delegations of
the ASEAN countries/Dialogue Partners to promote this relationship strongly in terms of contextual relevance. And ASEAN's new linkage vision after 2015; Continue to encourage partners to increase support for ASEAN countries in such areas as trade, development cooperation, training and capacity building; Encourage partners to participate and contribute to peace and security cooperation in the region. At present, the delegation is actively working with ASEAN countries and partners to develop Action Plans for 2016-2020.

Fourthly, continue to implement Vietnam’s integration commitments, work closely with national agencies to promote the completion of Viet Nam's work towards the ASEAN Community by the end of 2015 and participate in The next stage of ASEAN development; Engage with local agencies in promoting the opportunities that the ASEAN Community brings to the people.

Fifthly, to ensure the information and forecast of the situation related to ASEAN’s activities, including the experience and integration of ASEAN countries; Regional developments and major bilateral relations, thereby contributing to lessons learned and providing information for policy formulation in Vietnam.

ASEAN integration opens a new era for Vietnam, creating a peaceful, stable and prosperous environment for our development goals. The activities of the delegation are also out of this priority, promoting ASEAN integration, and thereby promoting and protecting the interests of Vietnam.

With the birth of the AEC, ASEAN has become a common and united market that facilitates trade, services, investment, science-technology, labour, employment, innovation and institutional reform, pushing Vietnam's global economic integration.

However, the AEC also poses challenges to Vietnam, including big gaps in economic power, science-technology standards and workforce quality between Vietnam and ASEAN.
Government commitment, plans and initiatives related to the SDG

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, following an inclusive process of intergovernmental negotiations. The Document “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, mentions that this is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what they did not achieve. The Goals are integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, and will stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

In order to “localize” the SDGs, Viet Nam should take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development, whilst respecting national policies and priorities. Viet Nam will also decide how these inspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies.

On 25 September 2015, the UN Member States adopted a roadmap to sustainable development by 2030. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the accompanying Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), gender equality and women’s empowerment is recognized as a vital means to help accelerate sustainable development through a key stand-alone development goal (SDG5) and through gender mainstreamed in all other goals.

One should demonstrate the importance of gender equality and its links to sustainable development using global and Viet Nam specific data. It takes a critical look at how women, especially women and girls in Viet Nam are affected by each of the 17 SDGs, as well as how women and girls can — and will — be key to achieving each of these goals.

In response to the SDG’s recognition of gender equality and women’s empowerment, Vietnam has implemented the Convention
on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Though the Decision No.2351/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister on December 24, 2010 about the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020, Vietnam has also achieved major progress in advancing women’s rights in the past 10 years as following:

From 2010 up to now, there have been 40 gender mainstreaming laws and a series of subordinate legal documents that have been considered in gender mainstreaming, and the development and adoption, implementation of programs and policies on juggernauts. Equality for the sustainable development of the country is still considered as an effective solution to empower women in all fields.

In 2015, the new program on empowerment for women must include the National Program of Action on Gender Equality 2016-2020 with the objective of “Reducing gender gaps and empowering women in some sectors, sectors, regions and localities have gender inequalities or high risk of gender inequalities, contributing to the successful implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020”

In particular, in this program, Vietnam has the first “Month of Action for Gender Equality and Gender-based Violence Prevention and Control” from November 15th to December 15th.

In addition, in the past year, Viet Nam has also issued specific policies addressing the issues that women face such as the policy of supporting poor women who are ethnic minority people at birth Right population policy; Project “Reduction of Domestic Violence in Rural Vietnam, 2015-2020”; Scheme “Reduce the status of underage and near-blood marriage in ethnic minority areas 2015-2025”.

With this endeavor, Viet Nam’s achievements in empowering women have been increasingly encouraging. Most prominently, in politics, for the first time, Vietnam had three members of the Politburo being
women and making up 15.78%; More than 50% of ministries and central agencies have female cadres. Women actively participate in the country's political activities and hold many senior positions in leadership and management, promising to provide potential female cadres for the National Assembly and People’s Council elections, People’s term from 2016 to 2021 coming here.

In the area of labor-employment, female laborers remained high and reached 48.3% of the total labor force in the country, the proportion of women participating in management and management of enterprises reached 24.9%.

In the health sector, maternal mortality has fallen more than three times from 233 mothers per 100,000 children in 1990 to 59 mothers per 100,000 children by 2014 and 58.3 mothers / 100,000 children.

With these achievements, Vietnam has been noted for “achieving great achievements in gender equality, in which almost no gender difference in enrollment rates and gender gaps in wages have narrowed. In accordance with the norms that the world stipulates...”in the Vietnam report of 2035” Toward Prosperity, Creativity, Justice and Democracy “was announced by the World Bank in Vietnam in February past.

In order to maintain the successes and efforts in gender equality, the lessons of Vietnam’s experience are to understand the needs and aspirations of women in development; Develop and implement measures to promote the empowerment of women in all fields and to have timely interventions to address women's issues in practice.

However, like other member states of CSW, Vietnam still faces difficulties and challenges in this area. In particular, the violence against women and girls has not decreased and tends to be complicated. In some rural, mountainous, remote and isolated areas, women and girls are also constrained by backward customs; Sex ratio at birth still implies many social issues; Climate change is causing negative impacts on the lives of both men and women.
In addition, some public policies still hinder the participation of women in management, leadership and other areas of social life; Gender mainstreaming in the development of legal normative documents is difficult, embarrassing in practice.

In order to further strengthen the implementation of national targets for gender equality, empowerment of women and sustainable development goals, Viet Nam is committed to promoting the development and implementation of laws and policies. On gender equality; Put the priorities for empowering women and girls in the national sustainable development agenda; Economic development goes hand in hand with better protection of the rights of women and girls.

Vietnam hopes that there will be more opportunities to participate in sessions and seminars at this year’s Meeting to identify member states with appropriate solutions and priorities for women’s empowerment, the context in which countries begin to implement their commitment to sustainable development goals (SDGs).

**Plans and Initiatives of DHRRA Members Towards the SDGs/ASEAN Vision**

1. Trying to maintain enough regular members as they are now, especially those active member like VNFU, VACVINA, NVCARD, NIAPP, CAEV, SPERI...There are now some POs, NGOs, even some persons asking to join and become member of the network. We will one by one consider and get the agreement of members.

2. Keeping constantly well implementing the 4 main activity groups at any place which is influenced by ViệtDHRRRA and ViệtDHRRRA members:
   - Training for capacity building, especially for grassroots level.
   - Conducting all kinds of seminars, workshops, exposures, exchange visits...concerning human resource development for rural areas.
   - Building new rural areas (communities, villages, communes, districts...)
   - Networking inside and outside the country.
3. Answering to The Sustainable Developing Goals and The ASEAN 2025 Vision in all fields of work.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN UNDERTAKING THESE INITIATIVES EXISTING WORKING CONDITIONS:

Opportunities:

• Better political atmosphere of the country after National Congress of Party, the new government set up the ongoing national assembly election;

• Joining TPP will give many new opportunities and potentialities for people in all rural and urban areas;

• Asian Integration makes the new development situation; and

• Good results of economic renovation. Now Vietnam is placed among countries with medium level of economic incomes and living conditions.

Challenges:

• The gap between the rich and the poor is large

• Climatic changes which main victims are poor farmers, people in remote and undeveloped areas, tribal people especially women aged people and children

• Polluted environment is more and more serious with industrial waste, chemical toxic from insecticide and fertilizer, and insecurity fresh food,

• Lack of humanity at grassroots level especially local leaders like farmers, villager organizations and rural cooperatives

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

After two summits of the United Nations (UN) Summit Earth on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, Summit World on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa 2002, sustainable Development (SD) has become a common trend that all humanity is working towards and also the important strategic objectives that Vietnam determined to implement.
After nearly 25 years of sustainable development (MDG), first of all realizing the 8 United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and we have not yet achieved the desired sustainability outcomes. That development follows the “brown” economic model, causing environmental degradation and resource degradation. Recently, humanity has faced with new crises, most notably the climate crisis / climate change and resource degradation, especially water resources and Biological resources / biodiversity.

Nowadays, on a global scale, new crisis have occurred, in which climate change is thought to be the greatest challenge of mankind in the 21st century. The fight against climate change is very tough and stressful (especially after COP 13, 2007). In that context, in advanced countries, the industrial economy is gradually transforming into a post-industrial economy and gradually moving to the knowledge economy. Along with it, the world’s economic patterns are also trending from “brown” to “green” economy. Glossary, green economy, green growth have been acknowledged, and green economic development is becoming a development model advanced by many countries in the world, even spreading into both cope with sustainable climate change and creating social justice.

After 20 years of “Doi Moi” movement, Viet Nam has obtained certain achievements. However, this development is not stable because of the environment pollution problem, destruction and waste of natural sources and even the problem of human resources. To solve these challenges, the Government has promulgated Viet Nam National Green Growth Strategy (Sep, 2012) and a variety of other sustainable development strategies for the country. During this scene, at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015, the United Nations officially adopted an ambitious Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030, including a statement with 17 common objectives (SDGs) and 169 specific targets. This event has become an unprecedented historical opportunity to bring nations and citizens around the world together with new decisions and begin. This is also an improvement in people daily life to ending
poverty, promoting prosperity and prosperity for all, protecting the environment and addressing climate change.

The Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 and Paris Agreement on climate change (COP 21) are an opportunity for Viet Nam to develop and integrate. At the same time this also poses many challenges for us. For those reason, a National Action Plan to implement the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 is particularly importance. Currently, Viet Nam is focusing on developing a plan followed by the principles, approaches, procedures and methods recommended by the United Nations.

**Orientation for sustainable economic development in 2016-2020 period of Vietnam**

**About economic:** The average economic growth rate of 5 years is 6.5 - 7% / year. By 2020: Per capita GDP is about USD 3,200 - 3,500. The share of industry and services in GDP is over 85%. The total investment capital of the whole society in 5 years is about 32 - 34% of GDP. State budget overspending does not exceed 4% of GDP. Total factor productivity (TFP) contributes to growth of about 25 - 30%, average labor productivity increased by 4-5% per year. Energy consumption per GDP that is average of decreases by 1 - 1.5% per year, and the rate of urbanization to 2020 is 38-40%.

**Social:** The share of agricultural labor in total social work is about 35-40% (2020). The percentage of trained laborers is about 65-70%, of which 25-26% has diplomas and certificates. Unemployment rate in urban areas is below 4%. The target is 10 doctors and over 26 beds per 10 thousand people. The coverage rate for health insurance reaches over 80% of the population. The rate of poor households decreases by 1.3-1.5% / year on average. By 2020, there will be no more poor households with less than $ 2 a day.

**Environment:** To strive to achieve 95% of urban population by 2020, 90% of rural population will have access to clean water, hygienic water and 80 - 85% of hazardous waste, 95 - 100% of medical wastes Be processed. Forest coverage ratio is 44 - 45%.
Recommendations

For the National Action Plan to be effective results and contribution for United Nation Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 in Vietnam, this report will be have some recommendations as following:

The plans should be built base on a profound and overall of thinking innovation, especially leadership and management are at all levels (strategic thinking, national systems, creating and innovation etc);

The basis for developing the plan is not only based on existing strategies and policies, but also on the reality of development, especially the shortcomings, weaknesses, challenges and experiences in the past. Accordingly, there is a need for a thorough and objective assessment of the achievements, shortcomings, weaknesses, causes, challenges and experiences for sustainable development from nowadays. On the other hand, there should be having really participation of all parties (social sectors), especially of business and community (scientific community and people).

Assessment criteria should be done in parallel, synchronic and consistent with the new goals to ensure the feasibility and effectiveness of the plan.

The plan must be succeeded and a roadmap for effective implementation, accordingly, the approach must be interdisciplinary-regional, top-down (global trend-based-GSDGs) and bottom-up (actual of development, conditions, potentials and priorities of Vietnam). On the other hand, the Plan needs to be built in order to integrate into the country’s long-term and short-term plans, as well as ministries and localities, in the now and future.

In practice, it is necessary to clarify the coordination mechanism: vertically: i) space (local-region-national-international) and ii) time (past-present-future); horizontally (between ministries, sectors, regions, localities).
Among the groups of solutions, emphasis should be placed on: i) capacity building solutions (especially coordination capacity, monitoring and enforcement); ii) science and technology solutions (to improve creativity and breakthroughs), and iii) management / management solutions (results-based management, especially database and database Provision and sharing of information, and monitoring and evaluation systems ... are powerful tools for management).

Ha Noi 01 March 2017
ViêtDHRRA Office

REFERENCES


Nguyễn Quang Thái và Ngô Thắng Lợi (2007), Phát triển bền vững ở Việt Nam: Thành tựu, cơ hội, thách thức và triển vọng, NXB Lao động - xã hội, Hà Nội, 2007


Vũ Văn Hiển (2014), Phát triển bền vững ở Việt Nam, Tập chí cộng sản (Communist Review), số tháng 1-2014

http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/noidungchienluocphattrienkinhtexahoii

Danh mục các mục tiêu chung, mục tiêu cụ thể và các chỉ tiêu đánh giá trong Chương trình nghị sự 2030 vì sự phát triển bền vững của LHQ (21 trang).

Danh mục các chiến lược, chính sách quốc gia của Việt Nam được rà soát liên quan đến các mục tiêu trong Chương trình nghị sự 2030 vì sự phát triển bền vững của LHQ (10 trang).

Kết quả rà soát các chiến lược, chính sách quốc gia của Việt Nam so với các mục tiêu trong Chương trình nghị sự 2030 vì sự phát triển bền vững của LHQ (File excel Maping).
Đề xuất các mục tiêu, nhiệm vụ, giải pháp và phân công trách nhiệm thực hiện cho Việt Nam trong thực hiện Chương trình nghị sự 2030 vì sự phát triển bền vững của LHQ (135 trang).

Danh Sách các hội thảo tham vấn với các Bộ, Ngành về xây dựng các mục tiêu PTBV của LHQ và đề xuất cho Việt Nam.
Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsianHRRA)

AsiaHRRA traces its earliest roots to the 1974 Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia Workshop (DHRRAW) held in Thailand. It is a regional partnership of eleven (11) social development networks and organizations in eleven (11) Asian nations that envisions Asian rural communities that are just, free, prosperous, living in peace and working in solidarity towards self-reliance. To achieve this, the network’s mission is to be effective:

- Promoter and catalyst of partnership relations, creating opportunities for genuine people-to-people dialogue and exchange;
- Facilitator of human resource development processes in the rural areas; and
- Mobilizer of expertise & opportunities for the strengthening of solidarity and kinship among Asian rural communities.

AsiaHRRA works through DHRRA members, with farmers’ organisations, and other CSO partners in 11 countries specifically in Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam. It plays an important role in the Asian region as catalyst and co-convenor of CSO platforms and mechanisms for more effective engagement and cooperation with regional organisations such as ASEAN, FAO, ADB and relevant multi-lateral and bilateral agencies.

AsiaHRRA sees the importance of connecting national and regional grassroots voices with global policy making processes and vice versa recognizing that development issues are interconnected and that reform is most compelled if with a strong demand from those that are directly affected by public policies and programming.

**Asiadhrra**
Partnership Center 59 (Room 201)
C. Salvador St., Loyola Heights 1108, Quezon City, Philippines
Phone: (632) 436-4706  Telefax: (632) 436-4706
Email: asiadhrra@asiadhrra.org
Website: www.asiadhrra.org