

PROCEEDINGS OF THE DIALOGUE

Gearing up to Influence Government's Position on WTO Agricultural Trade

Day One: 1 March 2005

Disposition of Gratitude: Opening Activities

Day One of the five-day workshop began with an attitude of gratitude. Old friends were thankful to meet once again and new faces were welcomed into the circle of dialogue. Fifty-six NGO and CSO leaders gathered in Chonburi Province in Thailand for a five-day learning process.

The opening prayers by Mr. Sambito (API) and Dr. Boy Mercado (SEARSOLIN) were said in Bahasa and English respectively but both echoed the voices of gratitude for the opportunity to learn from each other once again.

The welcome remarks from Mr. Soetrisno Kusumohadi (AsiaDHRRRA Chairperson) commenced with words of gratitude too. Thanking all the participants for joining the dialogue, he explained how this particular workshop responds to the calls and challenges of the first ALD workshop in Cyberjaya in 2003. He explained the expressed need then for a mechanism that will sustain the dialogue on urgent leadership concerns such as globalization and world trade. This second dialogue is an effort towards such a sustained effort and there are expectations that it will further strengthen solidarity among Asian NGO leaders especially as they face the demand for stronger advocacy.

Echoing Soetrisno's message of thanks, Ms Sudaporn Sittisathapornkul (AFA Vice Chairperson) also welcomed the participants to Thailand. She shared So Kor Por's gratefulness for the opportunity to play host to an important network event and its good intentions to do its best to make the workshop a successful one.

The second ALD is divided into three major parts, each one dealing with specific leadership concerns of utmost importance. Ms. Marlene Ramirez (AsiaDHRRRA Secretary General) explained that the workshop would first dwell on agriculture in WTO. This serves as a response to one of the needs that surfaced during the first ALD – the need to bridge the gap between government trade negotiators and the people. In line with this, time would be devoted to learning about the latest developments in the WTO round of talks scheduled on December 2005. The participants will also hear updates from countries wherein the CSO and Farmers' groups engaged their own government trade negotiators in dialogue and consultation. From these inputs, the participants will try to come up with proposals that will be presented to trade negotiators coming from four countries.

The second part of the ALD focuses on the recent natural calamity that hit Asia in December 2004. Marlene explained how disasters such as the tsunami that devastated Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, etc. present overwhelming challenges to Asian NGO leaders. The poorest of the poor are usually the hardest hit by natural disasters and the tsunami clearly showed how poor struggling communities were almost completely wiped out. Because of this tragic loss of lives and properties, NGO leaders are asked how can they best respond to the challenges. It is expected that at the end of the second part of the workshop, the participants would be able to identify options and strategies on how civil society organizations can work in solidarity with disaster victims.

Finally, Marlene explained the third and last part of the workshop. According to her, our understanding and appreciation of the concept of leadership is largely shaped by events and trends unfolding around us. Whether this is global trade, tragic disasters or new and

emerging theories, there is a need to look into oneself and in colleagues' experiences to grapple with the concept and practice leadership today. For this workshop, each participant will have the chance to learn from each other's rich leadership experiences and use these as handles in defining NGO leadership.

Gears up: Influencing Government Positions on WTO Agricultural Trade

To properly put into context the whole day's activities, Ms. Esther Penunia (AsiaDHRRRA Program Officer) explained the session objectives and schedule. The whole day is basically devoted to preparing for the next day's dialogue with trade negotiators. According to her, there are three main session objectives:

1. to increase the awareness of Asian farmers and NGO leaders about the developments in the WTO round of talks leading to the next WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong;
2. to engage the government trade negotiators in firming up governmental positions in WTO; and
3. to link like-minded trade negotiators and civil society leaders at the regional level and strategize how best to approach trade talks so that small farmers can be better protected.

To start off the process, Esther shared that under the SEACA cooperation, country consultations and dialogue with government trade negotiators were conducted in Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines. The results of these would be presented and shared. South Korea and Vietnam reported they have on-going processes with their governments too and would also be sharing some of the highlights of the dialogue.

Country Reports

For the report on the consultation process in Cambodia, Mr. Sil Vineth (CNAC) shared the following highlights. According to their analysis of the sharing with trade negotiators, the Cambodian Government looks at its participation in WTO as an opportunity to push its trade with the outside world and bring in the much-needed capital especially in the food production industry. As the second least developed country (LDC) to be a member of the WTO, Cambodia is quite active in complying with the requirements such as policy reforms. While the government has a glowing perspective of the country's benefits from WTO, NGO leaders take note of the pervading abject poverty in the country. There is a strong belief that as a poor country, Cambodia is not in a position to compete with the better but less expensive quality goods pouring in from other countries. They have also noticed that farmers are selling their lands and migrating to the urban center which is already blighted. During their consultations, NGOs presented their own alternatives such as self-help groups involving themselves in rice banks, animal/poultry banks, model farms, and other community-based efforts to counteract the negative effects of the global trade. The Cambodian Government received their request to consider the negative effects of the WTO agricultural trade and explore means for farmers to receive relief from the bad situation they are in. The NGOs also encouraged AsiaDHRRRA to play a role in the negotiations with the concerned governments.

In the Philippines, PhilDHRRRA and PAKISAMA regularly engage the trade negotiators in formal and informal consultations. According to Mr. Rene Cerilla, they learned that there are negotiating blocks which the Philippines belong to. The chief agricultural negotiator is an Undersecretary from the Department of Agriculture and all of the negotiation points are cleared in the office of the President. Their group however came up with several criticisms of the Philippines Government's position. One of this refers to the prevalence of high agricultural subsidies in developed countries. They however encouraged the government to push for setting a clear deadline for the removal of all forms of export subsidies. Several action points were identified and these included the need to further study the impact of WTO

and popularize such information. They also share the question on whether they really want no agricultural subsidies at all.

Meanwhile, KAFF in South Korea shared that its dialogue with the trade negotiators from the Ministry of Agriculture is on a need-based basis. The past year alone witnessed four of such consultations taking place. Last November 2004, KAFF organized a nationwide farmers' meeting and censured the Korean Government's position on its rice trade. The government trade negotiators hardly attended their organized consultations because of the need to concentrate on finalizing the negotiation for rice trade with nine major exporters that include USA, China, and Thailand. Meanwhile, farmers still have difficulty understanding WTO and are poorly prepared for the trade negotiations.

As for Vietnam, representatives from VNFU shared that their country is not yet a member of WTO. However, given its ASEAN membership, Vietnam is implementing its commitments vis-à-vis AFTA. So far the farmers' union observed that the prices of agricultural products are increasing albeit very slowly. The price of agricultural inputs on the other hand increased quite high. Another observation is the lack of market for the farmers' products. The farmer's union however is facing these challenges. According to them, propaganda and communication are engaged in to increase members' awareness of the WTO and AoA. Furthermore, the capacity of the farmers' organizations are being developed along technology transfer and marketing. At present, VNFU has a 25 million dong fund dedicated to loan support for farmers.

Regional and International Developments on the WTO Agricultural Trade Talks

Before the holding of buzz groups and open forum, Esther shared some relevant updates related to the forthcoming WTO Ministerial Meeting scheduled on December 13 to 18, 2005 in Hong Kong. A few days before the ALD, the International Consultation Meeting on Civil Society Actions towards WTO was held in Hong Kong. The main objectives include coming up with a plan for common civil society mobilization activities before and during the ministerial meeting. Two important updates were also shared. First, in Geneva, the drafting of full agricultural modalities according to the July framework is going on. Second, negotiations are going on for civil society participation in the meeting.

Because of the diversity in positions and approaches, the common agreement is that there will be two key strategies. One is to engage from the inside – participating in the consultations and meetings – and the other is outside in the streets in the form of protests and mobilizations and media liaison.

Specific action points are posed to the group: Will the group participate or not? If yes, in what form? What does it intend to do during the open space scheduled?

Synthesis and Summary

From the country reports and the international updates presented, it was found out that:

Government positions on WTO generally include the following:

- the view that WTO membership and participation in global trade are crucial factors in attaining national development
- national commitments are being pursued actively on full scale (for non-members, preparation going on)
- there is openness to further negotiation and dialogue with civil society as negotiations within WTO also take place

Civil Society on the other hand has the following positions:

- WTO membership does not benefit the rural poor and many farming communities vanishing and resulting in massive urban migration
- there are no clear economic gains attributable to WTO accession
- government policy changes related to WTO commitments are not being communicated clearly to the affected sectors

There are three main bodies of specific national proposals:

- Civil society offers good viable on-ground alternative development models and governments are asked to recognize and learn from these in the context of their policy reviews and changes.
- The Government should engage civil society in dialogue, consultations, and negotiations before pursuing policy changes in trade.
- Government should support farmers in their efforts to prepare for WTO engagement.

Country Buzz Groups and Open Forum Highlights

Each country, using the information shared, was asked to discuss the summary proposals. They are asked to identify which reinforces the specific national proposals and which contradicts. If there are action points the group wants to suggest, they can include in their sharing.

- It was noted that imported Thai rice is very cheap in Indonesia and local farmers have a difficult time competing with it. However, in Thailand itself, the Thai rice is even cheaper. According to the Thai participants, because of heavy government subsidy for inputs, the price of rice is down. This does not mean though that Thai farmers are not suffering from the effects of WTO because they encounter the same concerns that farmers from Indonesia, the Philippines, etc. face.
- There is a need for a deeper study on rice given the complex issues affecting it. In Malaysia, the government allocated specific areas for rice farming and these are heavily subsidized. Meanwhile, other Malaysian farmers bear the brunt of the reduction of subsidies that the government did impose. People are aware that governments hide existing subsidies through the use of different and sometimes local terms.
- In Japan, the current challenges are not limited to protecting agriculture but also include how to promote farming. Very few now engage in farming and this population is also ageing. The question is how to increase the farming population. The country also faces the effect of the massive use of chemicals in farming to which the rise in cancer cases is being attributed. AinoKai is into organic farming to protect people's lives and is active in educating the public about farming and the need to preserve this.
- While it is important to affirm the process of engaging government trade negotiators in dialogue and consultation, there is also the challenge of facing the contradictions in our own positions. NGOs are often criticized for looking at the whole debate from a narrow or very sectoral perspective. For instance, in the Philippines, the debate on what products should be included in the sensitive list encounters multi-sector concerns that pit the interest of one sector with that of another (e.g. sugar farmers vs. sugar consumers). The government always claims it needs to balance the interest of both producers and consumers. There is a need to discuss food security issues in the country and clarify if people want to subject food to market forces or protect it in the interest of self-sufficiency.

- Government position on WTO seems too positive and this is alarming. Meanwhile, farmers are either uninformed or misinformed about WTO.
- In managing the challenging situation arising from global trade, good governance is important. The government should be encouraged to ensure distribution of resources and benefits while seeing to it that representatives from civil society and farmers' groups are participating in the consultations and decision-making.
- The exploitation of farmers is a problem found everywhere and is common in all countries. The issues of farmers need to be linked to other concerns such as gender and health. Later on it is possible, when the situation worsens, food scarcity and related problems brought about by WTO will lead to conflicts and war.

Preparation for the Dialogue with Trade Negotiators

In anticipation of the dialogue with trade negotiators the next day, a list of national and regional proposals will be presented. A small group with representatives from each country will review a draft by the secretariat. The final version will be ready for the next day.

A Fruitful Day

Calling it a day, Mr. Bui Quang Toan (AsiaDHRRA Vice Chairperson for Mekong) and Sudaporn shared their closing remarks on a common metaphor. Both mentioned how the sharing by different countries have given everybody wider perspective on the situation. The day was described as very fruitful and at the same time challenging given the questions that also arose. Thanking everybody for their contributions to making the day a very productive one, both called the session adjourned.

Civil Society-Government Dialogue: Possibilities of Working Together for Fairer Agricultural Trade for Asian Peasants

Day Two, Morning: 2 March 2005

Learning and Listening: The Other Side Speaks

After the brief welcome remarks from Mr. Chaiwat Suravichai (Sor Kor Por), the guests were welcomed and oriented on the day's objectives by Marlene. Four government trade negotiators attended the dialogue and they were given the task of presenting their governments' perspectives on the prospects and challenges for WTO to support fairer trade.

Highlights of the Report from Philippine Trade Negotiator

By Mr. Noel Padre, Department of Agriculture

The presentation started off by stating that the negotiations cannot be just participated in by government trade negotiators alone. In the case of the Philippines, a task force composed of experts and civil society representatives who give technical inputs and feedback supports the government. It was also mentioned that full trust of the political leadership and stakeholders is necessary in the process.

The government has its priorities in the negotiations and there is a well-defined agenda and objectives. During the negotiations, it is important that effective and working broad alliances are made with like-minded governments. It is a challenge to cope and prevail as a united front in a very detailed and technical discussion. Thus, civil society must play a significant role beyond parallel discussions to the negotiations. The united front of civil society must be able to define, in consultation with developing country blocs, a framework of engagement covering all the issues, inclusive of substantive and technical support.

Highlights of the Report from Cambodian Trade Negotiator

By Mr. Tuot Saravuth, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Cambodia is only the second least developed country to be accepted as a member of WTO. The country applied to membership in October 1994 and the signing of protocol of accession was done in September 2003.

The country too has clear negotiation objectives and agenda especially vis-à-vis its agricultural priorities. Targeting the development of its agro-industry, the government defined its action points given the WTO commitments. The strategies for the future include: export diversification basis; basis for upgrading production; develop Agro-Industry; improve and increase agricultural productivity; and promote and provide incentive to private sector for export.

Highlights of the Report from South Korean Trade Negotiator

By Mr. Han Young Jeon, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

South Korea is part of the G33. As such, it advocates for balance and equity during the negotiations. The government's positions include having rice, its staple food, included in the special product measure. It believes that special product is more flexible than sensitive product list. It also thinks that SSM is important but there are no details yet in the framework. It should be adapted to all special products. Among the government priorities is the protection of small farmers through subsidy under the green box.

Highlights of the Report from Thai Trade Negotiator

By Mr. Phadol Panthaworn, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

It is the view of the Thai Government that trade liberalization resulting from the WTO negotiations will benefit farmers in developing countries like Thailand. In particular, there will be the increase of prices on agricultural commodities under the fairer agriculture trade.

In line with the technical negotiations, the ministry is tasked to arrange meetings involving all line agencies under it, representatives from the private sector and stakeholders. It's objective is to inform them on what goes on in the current round of the negotiation. In addition, its also arranges the "single-commodity-approach" public hearing to get feedbacks/solutions from all stakeholders, including small-scale marginal farmers. With careful consideration of the advice and feedbacks received, the analysis and results are forwarded to the trade negotiators for further action.

Note: for the complete presentations, see attachments.

We Speak: Proposals put forward to Governments in Asia

After listening to the trade negotiators' presentations, the participants informed them of the earlier process that resulted in some proposals. Based the previous day's discussions, the group presented the following to the trade negotiators:

1. Civil society (farmers and fishers groups and NGOs working for rural development) offers viable on-ground alternative development models. We ask governments to recognize and learn from these in the context of policy reviews and changes.
 - ✓ promote agricultural projects supported by farmers' associations and self-help groups while providing support to the organizations themselves
 - ✓ support crop-based groups with capacity to negotiate with government
 - ✓ develop and promote models on sustainable development and mainstream community based agriculture
 - ✓ conduct studies on (1) policies and its implications on the lives of farming communities and (2) civil society on-ground rural development initiatives
 - ✓ be open to collaboration and cooperation with other countries
2. We urge governments to engage civil society in dialogue, consultations, and negotiations before pursuing policy changes in trade.
 - ✓ discuss food security issues and clarify priorities related to it
 - ✓ support the sensitive list to be protected after detailed discussion on what the main products to be included in the list
 - ✓ trade negotiators should hold meaningful, broad, and regular dialogue sessions with civil society and see through the implementation of the recommendations
 - ✓ need for more debate and discussion whether agricultural subsidies should be removed
 - ✓ activate membership of civil society in task forces and committees engaged by governments in trade policy formulation and reviews
 - ✓ increase access to timely and proper information by civil society
 - ✓ show transparency and trustworthiness in the preparations and negotiations and encourage CSO to participate in the negotiation process
3. We ask governments to support farmers in their efforts to face the effects of WTO engagement.
 - ✓ look into the negative effects of the AoA and related agreements on the lives of the poor farmers and identify means of relieving pressure and putting them in a competitive standing

- ✓ provide accurate, relevant, and timely information on AoA and related agreements so that farmers are fully informed of the effects of the policy changes
 - ✓ prioritize agrarian reform, protecting farmer's right to own land; and with adequate land tenure instruments such as communal land certification
 - ✓ set up agricultural policy and food policy including food market policy that protect farmers from the negative effects of the trade policies
 - ✓ provide capital and technology that would equip the farmers before facing the effects of the trade agreements
 - ✓ promote farming among the youth and encourage the increase in farming population
 - ✓ relate trade debate to other concerns such as gender, health, environment, and conflicts and peace
 - ✓ build support facilities, infrastructure and access to credit necessary in agricultural development
4. We urge governments to be cautious in approaching the issues of GATS while ensuring the appropriate consultations with stakeholders are adequately conducted.

Open Forum

- WTO is not a perfect system but it is the only one we have right now. The civil society is encouraged to engage their governments in dialogue so that the WTO's vision and roles can be changed. As for the forthcoming ministerial meeting, given all the diverse positions, there is a need to build alliances with like-minded nations without necessarily compromising country positions. It is also true that developed countries are not yet agreeable to the reduction of trade distorting subsidies; developing countries are pushing for quick action.
- Participation in the December Hong Kong ministerial meeting is important. CSOs should explore opportunities at the national level so that CSO representatives and farmers can be included in the dialogue and meetings prior to and during the meeting.
- The proposals presented are described as general and trade negotiators need specific ones. In spite of this, the trade negotiators were reminded that they need to take the on the "spirit" of the proposals and not be locked in by details. The main point is that the farmers' interests need to be protected during negotiations with countries, particularly the developed ones, who do protect their own.
- Promoting agriculture among the youth encounters not just the financial issue (low income) but it is also a matter of image and perception. Government and civil society need to work together in managing and transforming the image of farming.
- During ministerial meetings and national consultations related to WTO matters, large and sometimes violent protests are organized. The governments are asked to respond and yet the public often hears the citing of the need to balance the interests of the various stakeholders. Government trade negotiators are often left to consider the option with least negative impact. In the past, trade negotiators were unprepared and technically limited. Today, there are inputs coming in from various sectors of the society and are often reminded to keep in mind (and in their hearts) the interests of the farmers.

Summary

Given the exchanges, it is acknowledged that government representatives are asked to encourage CSOs to help in the negotiation process by providing concrete suggestions and proposals while CSOs request the negotiators to look into the perspectives proposed. Both CSO and governments are encouraged to be open for continuous dialogue with civil society being proactive in the process. Lastly, in the process of reforming WTO, we should always be clear on who benefits from globalization and safeguard the preferential option for the poor.

Sharing the Same Dream

Thanking everybody for their active participation, Soetrisno reminded the group that from the presentations and sharing of the trade negotiators, it seems we all share a common dream of a more prosperous and just society. He emphasized the importance of sustaining the dialogue and engaging each other in the interest of safeguarding the legacy of agriculture in Asia.

Leadership Challenges Amidst Disasters and Emergency Situations

Day Two, Afternoon: 2 March 2005

Taking over the facilitator reins, Ms. Angge Gregorio-Medel explained that Part Two of the ALD is devoted to looking into an area of concern that is near to our hearts and which seriously affected some of our partners in the DHRRRA family. Citing the devastating December 2004 earthquake and tsunami that hit several Indian Ocean countries and resulted in the death of more than 170,000 people, she spoke of the challenges disaster management poses to NGO leaders. As much as WTO and global trade affect our lives now and therefore need to be understood, natural disasters also demand such attention. In fact, Angge further explained, the history of NGOs is closely related to calamities because of the earlier work emphasis on relief and welfare.

In Remembrance: Of Flowers, Water and Light

Paul Sinnapan (DHRRRA Network Malaysia) started off by sharing how his son immediately packed his bags and left for Aceh after receiving a call from a distressed friend there. While helping out with the relief and recovery, his son took some footages of the situation and later on managed to convince more people to come and help. From then on, groups of volunteers take turn in going to Aceh to provide much-needed assistance.

Amidst silence, the footages of the devastation and emotional distress experienced by the Indonesian people were then showed.

As the participants silently grappled with the moving images of mothers crying over their dead children and of hundreds of dead bodies spread out in the streets, Paul guided the group in a ritual of remembrance and prayer. Each participant was asked to take a flower, remembering those who lost their lives in the tragedy. The flower is then put into a bowl of water which symbolizes the power of cleansing. When all have done so, Paul lit a candle and explained that it is believed that in death, the departed ones become part of the cosmos in which the sun (as represented by the candle) is the most powerful symbol. The participants were then asked to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of those who died.

The Life After: Challenges being Faced

As part of the situationer on the work being done in the affected areas, Paul, Bambang Ismawan (Binaswadaya), Soetrisno, and Vineth shared some of their experiences.

- While cameras around the world have shown how the tragedy affected people, being there personally and having direct on-hand view was a humbling experience. To witness completely wiped out communities struggling with its loss and of men who lost their loved ones scrounging for food can be overwhelming.
- In Malaysia, forty-five volunteers working in Aceh, India and Sri Lanka were gathered for a reflection and sharing session. People's hearts were moved by the tragedy and the massive response in terms of relief goods and services (e.g. medical aid) was phenomenal. There were several difficulties encountered during the relief work. One was where to send the donations and another was how to get these to those in need. Bad roads and political barriers seriously hampered relief work and it was exacerbated by terrible problems such as smuggling of children and corruption. To overcome some of the problems, NGOs and volunteer groups used the "adopt a village" approach and did people-to-people work. NGOs coordinated directly with a local NGO in helping people rebuild and re-establish their lives.
- The response to calls for emergency assistance was very good. In Indonesia, the pouring of aid and donations was massive. NGOs and church groups are working overtime in helping the affected communities. Medical teams were sent and the work continues as we speak. Livelihoods were destroyed and helping communities get up on their feet is going on. But as mentioned, problems do exist. With the massive donations came the challenge of coordination. Government had to ensure that aid is distributed well and in a clear transparent manner.

NGO Leaders' Response

Ange guided the group in a reflection and sharing session. Although guide questions were given, the participants were encouraged to share their thoughts.

- The ritual put us in a prayerful mode and using the flower that symbolizes the beauty of God's creation and the solidarity among people is a powerful one. Life like the water has to go on and the personal prayer we had is a source of strength. Through personal contacts, we can put people in need in contact with people who want to and can help.
- There is clear emotional distress having witnessed these things. Tragedies experienced in the past made people more sympathetic and supportive. The feeling of helplessness can overwhelm at first since there is the realization that there are really things beyond my personal capacity. There is a clear need for education on disaster management.
- The tsunami disaster reminded us of our helplessness amidst natural disasters. It was also an opportunity for solidarity building. In the past, our government had an experience related to disaster but since our government then was still young; the response capacity was not yet efficient. At the organizational level, assistance was made available to children affected by the disaster through scholarships. This is important because in losing their parents, they also lost the opportunity to be educated.

- A day after the tsunami, board meeting was held and there was an agreement to disseminate the information and mobilize member organizations to help. Government staff contributed one-month salary amounting to 100 million dong and some organizations like the VNFU donated 23 million dong. The people took the disaster as an opportunity to build community spirit and solidarity.
- After the tsunami there was a realization of unfamiliarity and lack of knowledge of one's immediate environment – the home, the community. There is lack of understanding of the characteristics of the area. The assumption is this is true too for the people who were affected by the disaster. Did they understand the cause of the earthquake and how it leads to deadly waves from the ocean? We can plan better if we are aware of the characteristics of our area. It will help if we educate our people and it should be included in the curriculum for students. City and area planning should consider the characteristics of the area and utilize local knowledge so that ignorance does not cause tragic consequences again.
- There is a need to go back to basic science and study nature (e.g. conduct inventory on what species were lost) while at the same time ensuring the relaying of information. The tragedy made us realized of the need to protect our environment and now with the Kyoto Protocol, many corporations are now signing to protect the environment. We need to raise consciousness on how to use this event to mobilize communities. We also need to collect survival stories for this uplift the spirits.
- In tragedies like this, it is the children who are severely affected. In Thailand one of the emerging issues is the property rights of children who lost their parents and therefore has lost documents too.
- Cooperatives in the Philippines have a system of advancing funds then later collecting the pledges of each member so that the response to disaster is immediate and efficient. Civil society usually does the rehabilitation work while government does relief work. The challenge is how to capitalize on our network advantage (NGO and Cooperative). Another option is to build up a Disaster Solidarity Fund we can tap for emergency situations.
- In Thailand, the credit union movement's efforts used all forms of communication to mobilize resources and donation. At present, rehabilitation work is going on especially in the area of housing. The importance of a tsunami warning system in the region is now in everybody's minds.
- Due to the challenging political situation, some countries experienced difficulties in assessing the extent of the damage in their areas. The government is instrumental in hindering relief efforts because of its fear of intervention. NGOs and church groups had to rely on its local network to learn about the effects of the tsunami and what assistance is needed. We need to pray together and be strengthened by faith. Moral support is important as well as letting victims know we are here for them.
- The massive inflow of resources has both with positive and negative sides to it. While the resources needed are present, the challenge is how to manage the deluge of funds and donated goods. The preparedness of NGOs is important and the current call is embodied in *musyawarah* with communities as starting point for the rehabilitation work.
- The news on the tsunami can be seen and heard everyday in Indonesia and around the world. We do our rehabilitation work based on our own organizational mandate and so far efforts included organizing volunteers, linking with big corporations for

food relief and establishing centers in Aceh to coordinate the relief and rehabilitation work. A suggestion to AsiaDHRRA is to set-up a website on tsunami updates. It can also track the work and efforts involved and share information, both material and moral support.

Thanking everybody for their heartfelt sharing and creative ideas, Angge noted the following major agreements and suggestions to the network:

1. AsiaDHRRA can add a section in its website and devote it to updates on the tsunami relief and rehabilitation efforts and how people can further help. Related to this is the sustained information dissemination and exchange on topics such disaster management and natural science. The website can also be the way to build and strengthen linkages and make people aware that there are individuals and communities ready to help.
2. The network can set up a solidarity fund that can be used for disasters such as the tsunami.

In the spirit of the second agreement, the participants ended the session by donating cash to start up the disaster solidarity fund.

Regional and National Proposals to be put forward to Governments in Asia

- 1. Civil society offers viable on-ground alternative development models. We ask governments to recognize and learn from these in the context of your policy reviews and changes.**
 - promote agricultural projects supported by farmers' associations and self-help groups
 - support crop-based groups with capacity to negotiate with government
 - develop models on sustainable development and mainstream community based agriculture
 - conduct studies on (1) policies and its implications on the lives of farming communities and (2) civil society on-ground rural development initiatives

- 2. We urge governments to engage civil society in dialogue, consultations, and negotiations before pursuing policy changes in trade**
 - discuss food security issues and clarify priorities related to it
 - support the sensitive list to be protected after detailed discussion on what the main products to be included in the list
 - trade negotiators should hold regular dialogue sessions with civil society
 - need for more debate and discussion whether agricultural subsidies should be removed
 - activate membership of civil society in task forces and committees engaged by governments in trade policy formulation and reviews
 - increase access to timely information by civil society
 - show transparency in the negotiations

- 3. We ask governments to support farmers in their efforts to prepare for WTO accession and engagement**
 - look into the negative effects of the AoA and related agreements on the lives of the poor farmers and identify means of relieving pressure and putting them in a competitive standing
 - hold information campaign on AoA and related agreements so that farmers are fully informed of the effects of the policy changes
 - set up agricultural policy and food policy that protect farmers from the negative effects of the trade policies
 - provide capital and technology that would equip the farmers before facing the effects of the trade agreements
 - promote farming and encourage the increase in farming population
 - relate trade debate to other concerns such as gender, health, and conflicts and peace
 - build support facilities and infrastructure necessary in agricultural development