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Background Paper
Enhancing Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture
in Response to Climate Change

Purpose: Consideration
Submitted by: Viet Nam



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BACKGROUND PAPER

ENHANCING FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

I. BACKGROUND

Food security plays a key role in achieving quality growth and prosperity, globally and in the Asia - Pacific region. The second of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals towards 2030 is to "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture".

Over the past years, APEC economies have attached increasing importance to the food security agenda at both domestic and regional levels, especially following the sharp rise in food prices in 2007 - 2008 and again in 2011. As its member economies are among the world's largest food producers and consumers as well as food exporters and importers, and given the political, economic and social sensitivity of food, APEC is well positioned to help enhance regional and global food security.

Food security has been on APEC agenda for many consecutive years. In 1999, APEC Leaders welcomed the APEC Food System proposed by the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC). Since then, four APEC Food Security Ministerial Meetings have been convened in Niigata, Japan (2010), Kazan, Russia (2012), Beijing, China (2014) and Piura, Peru (2016) alongside an APEC High Level Policy Dialogue on Food Security in Iloilo, Philippines (2015).

Food-related work in APEC is carried out through and across various sub-fora, including the Policy Partnership on Food Security (PPFS), the Agricultural Technical Cooperation Working Group (ACTWG), the Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG), the High Level Policy Dialogue on Agricultural Biotechnology (HLPDAB), the Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) and its Partnership Training Institute Network (PTIN). Member economies are committed to developing an enabling environment to leverage the role of multiple stakeholders, with particular emphasis on the private sector engagement in the PPFS process, to advance food security in APEC.

In addition to the Food Security Ministerial Declarations, APEC has adopted a number of key documents that provide the foundation and future directions for regional food security cooperation, most notably the APEC Food Security Roadmap Towards 2020, the APEC Food Security Business Plan (2014-2020), the APEC Action Plan for Reducing Food Loss and Waste, and the Action Plan to Enhance Connectivity of APEC Food Standards and Safety Assurance, etc.

In 2016, with "Enhancing the Regional Food Market" being a priority of Peru's host year, APEC made important new progress in promoting regional food security. Among other initiatives, APEC 2016 marked the establishment of the Framework for Multi-year APEC Program on Food Security and Climate Change and the APEC Strategic Framework on Rural-Urban Development to Strengthen Food Security and Quality Growth.

As noted in the Piura Declaration on Food Security, the APEC region has great potential to improve its food security through concerted cooperative efforts among member economies. Although the region's undernourished have been significantly reduced in the past decades, the Asia - Pacific is home to about a quarter of the world's hungry, and all APEC economies still experience some form of food insecurity to some degree or another¹. The challenges to food security are exacerbated by the region's exposure to extreme natural disasters and impacts of climate change, which may affect the regional food system in several ways ranging from direct effects on crop production to changes in markets, food prices and supply chain infrastructure. Consequently, food insecurity remains a threat to APEC's quality growth and prosperity.

Against such background, building on the work done over the past years in APEC on food security and the priority given to this area of cooperation by recent host economies, it is proposed that food security continue to be a priority of APEC in 2017.

II. KEY ISSUES

1. Addressing the food security – climate change relationship: Climate change is one of the major challenges for the primary sources of food security, including agricultural growth and fisheries production. The Asia-Pacific region is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and frequently exposed to extreme weather conditions which disrupt food supply, and hence price stability, displace people and reduce their access to food. APEC member economies, therefore, need to strengthen efforts to increase individual and collective capabilities on climate change adaptation and mitigation, consistent with international commitments, especially the 2015 Paris Agreement. Member economies also need to promote collaborative research and application of science and technology in agriculture, and sharing of experience on the implementation of public-private partnership in response to climate change.

2. Sustainable natural resources management: The region's natural resources are under stress by land degradation, fresh water scarcity, loss of biodiversity and increasing global fisheries pressure, etc. Accordingly, there is urgent need to APEC economies to strengthen policy and technical cooperation to improve governance and efficient use of natural resources while securing long-term food supply. Greater concerted efforts, including cross-border coordination, are needed to foster sustainable use and management of water resources. Likewise, the sustainable use of conservation of marine and forestry resources are essential to both food security and environmental protection.

3. Sustainable rural-urban development: Most of agricultural production takes place in rural areas, which are also home to a large proportion of the poor and undernourished population. Accordingly, rural development as well as rapid urbanization and the subsequent demographic and diet changes have significant implications for food security. Moreover, in a globalized world, the impacts of rural concerns such as labor migration, animal health and environmental hazards, illegal fishing and logging, etc. are not confined within the borders of a single economy. It is, therefore, essential for APEC member economies to further promote innovative, inclusive and resilient rural development, including empowering disadvantaged groups, smallholders and MSMEs in agriculture, to secure livelihoods, reduce poverty and improve food security for farming and fishing communities.

4. Facilitation of trade and investment in agriculture: Given that APEC members are among the world's largest food producers and traders, trade in food and agriculture is crucial to food security in the region and beyond. APEC, therefore, needs to further efforts in trade facilitation, enhancing food market integrity and supply chain connectivity to reduce costs of food trade. Likewise, it is essential facilitate cross-border investment in food production, thus turning the buyer into the investor and helping to protect both importing and exporting economies against food price volatility. Enabling policy environment is also needed for investment in rural transport, connectivity, logistics, agro-industry clusters and other services to improve farming, food processing and the linkage of retailing food markets.

5. Harmonization of food safety standards and food loss control: Food safety is a matter of primary concern from both health and trade perspectives in each APEC member economy and across the region. Given that approaches and requirements to food safety and quality standards control differ among economies, APEC needs to continue to seek and develop common ground to promote science-based food safety and quality to protect human and animal health while ensuring a predictable, fair, transparent and open trading environment, consistent with other international commitments. At the same time, reducing post-harvest food loss and waste remains a challenge that requires further actions, including infrastructure development as well as implementation and transfer of innovative technologies, among APEC member economies.

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND DELIVERABLES

Besides the meetings of the relevant APEC sub-fora, the highlight of events related to food security in APEC 2017 will be the APEC High Level Policy Dialogue on Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in Response to Climate Change within the framework of the third APEC Food Security Week to be held in the city of Can Tho in late August. Discussions and collaboration among APEC member economies as well as between APEC and relevant

International organizations in 2017 are expected to produce the following outcomes and deliverables:

1. Addressing the food security – climate change relationship

- Action Plan to implement the Framework for Multi-year APEC Program on Food Security and Climate Change.

- Workshops on: (i) food security and climate change (led by the United States); (ii) challenges for water and food security in the context of climate change in the APEC region (led by Peru); (iii) food price stability under climate change (led by Viet Nam).

- Exchange views and share experiences on agricultural carbon trading.

2. Sustainable resources management

- Workshops on: (i) marine science, technology in innovation towards science based management and sustainable use of oceans and marine resources (led by Japan); (ii) ecological risk assessment of impacts climate change on fisheries and aquaculture resources (led by Peru); (iii) needs assessment for sustainable agriculture in the APEC region and the food security – climate – resource nexus (led by China).

- Public-private dialogue with SMEs on promoting legal trade in harvested wood products and strengthening supply chain connectivity towards sustainable growth (led by Viet Nam).

- Exchange views on information sharing and joint management of shared water resources.

3. Sustainable rural-urban development

- Action Plan to implement the APEC Strategic Framework on Rural-Urban Development to Strengthen Food Security and Quality Growth.

- Workshops on: (i) enhancing rural disaster resilience through effective infrastructure investment (led by Japan and Viet Nam); (ii) promoting rural labor transformation (led by Viet Nam).

- Exchange views and experiences on promoting remote areas connectivity and addressing the impacts of urbanization on rural development and food security, including aging farmers, lack of young labor entering the agricultural sector and higher urban demand for safe, nutritious and varied food supply.

4. Facilitation of trade and investment in agriculture

- Action Plan for facilitate investment and quality infrastructure for food security.

- Workshop on facilitating trade through the strengthening of food safety emergency systems of APEC economies (led by Chile).

- Share best practices on promoting public-private partnerships to foster investment in agricultural production and rural infrastructure.

- Examine the results of ABAC's research initiative to facilitate trade and identify factors inhibiting trade.

5. Harmonization of food safety standards and food loss control

- Workshops on: (i) modernization of food safety control system (led by Australia, China and the United States); (ii) harmonization of MRL setting process in the Asian region through training on pesticide residue evaluation (led by Japan); (iii) advanced capacity building for mycotoxin prevention and control in food and feed commodities in Asia-Pacific.

- Strengthen communication and cooperation, and share best practices on minimizing food loss and waste.

¹ APEC Policy Support Unit (2012), *Challenges to Achieving Food Security in APEC*, Issues Paper No. 2, APEC Secretariat, Singapore.