



## SUMMARY RECORD

### ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES AND ATTRACTING YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

7 November 2016, Jakarta, Indonesia

The Roundtable Discussion (RTD) on Strengthening Farmers' Organisations/Agricultural Cooperatives and Attracting Youth in Agriculture took place on 7 November 2016 at the ASEAN Foundation, Jakarta, Indonesia. The Forum was a collaboration effort between the ASEAN Foundation (AF), EU Jakarta Office, AgriCord, Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires (CSA), AsiaDHRRA and the Consortium of Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) and La Via Campesina (LVC). The Roundtable Discussion was facilitated by Ms. Elaine Tan, the Executive Director of AF and it was attended by the representatives from farmers' organisations (FOs) from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam; participants from AFA, AsiaDHRRA, AgriCord, CSA and IFAD Jakarta Office; officers from the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and ASEAN Centre for the Development of Agricultural Cooperative (ACEDAC); and the European Union (EU) Delegation. The EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, H.E. Mr. Phil Hogan attended the high level session to deliver a keynote speech and to interact with FOs/CSOs representatives. The complete list of participants is in **Annex A**.

#### **Technical Dialogue (8:30 am – 09:40 am)**

The technical dialogue session began with a brief overview of the objectives, ground rules and working procedures of the roundtable discussion (RTD). It was then followed by a self-introduction by each participant. Afterwards, the representatives from FOs/CSOs were given the opportunity to share their existing work and initiatives on strengthening agricultural cooperative/FOs and engaging youth in Agriculture.

- Mr. Sophal from Farmer and Nature Net (FNN) Cambodia gave a brief overview of his organisation which was established in December 2003 by Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien/Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC). He highlighted FNN's main activities which include cooperative (rice mill, saving and loan), linkage farmer's products to market, and farmer network (advocacy). He pointed out that the challenges faced by FNN are the lack of capital for purchasing organic rice, the lack of market for selling cooperative products, no low interest loan support from the government and no dryer machine. He suggested that EU should pressure the government of

Cambodia to push the private sector to work with cooperative and that EU should support fund to FOs.

- Mr. Phimmachanh from Lao Farmer Network (LFN) shared information on his organisation and highlighted their initiatives on agricultural cooperative which include support business plan development for some FO members, support organisation strengthening of the members and co-fund some key activities for targeted members. In terms of engaging youth in agriculture, he pointed out the challenges faced by LFN particularly due to the poor image of agriculture among the young people. Nonetheless, LFN involves young farmers in research and planning process, in management of FOs such as in information technology and accounting.
- Mr. Nuruddin from Aliansi Petani Indonesia (API) explained that currently there are five national FOs of Indonesia under MTCP-2 platform, such as API, Serikat Petani Indonesia (SPI), Wahana Masyarakat Tani dan Nelayan Indonesia (WAMTI), Serikat Nelayan Indonesia (SNI) and Ikatan Petani Pengedali Hama Terpadu Indonesia (IPPHTI). These FOs represent 2,345,000 farmers and 1,080,000 fisher folks. He used their work with Sridonoretno Farmer Association in Malang district to showcase their initiative to develop an agricultural cooperative for coffee. With regard to their work in engaging youth in agriculture, their strategy is to involve them in economy and empowering activities at the village level. Activities that have been done include piloting natural farming, organising youth camp to promote awareness/education on how youth can contribute in rural areas development in Indonesia, and using social media to publish agricultural cooperative profiles.
- Ms. Ha from Viet Nam Farmers' Union (VNFU) provided a brief profile of her organisation. VNFU was established in 1930 and it currently has nearly 11 million members. She explained that VNFU is organised at 4 official levels: national, provincial, district and commune levels. At commune level, the members are further organised into farmers' branches and groups. She highlighted VNFU's three programme areas under MTCP-2 project, such as (1) protecting farmers through policy advocacy and social feedback. She explained that VNFU is actually in the political system that it receives strong policy support from the government of Viet Nam and that VNFU is one of the organisations to monitor policy implementation relevant to farmers in Viet Nam. The other programmes MTCP-2 are (2) providing services to farmers to set up demonstration models (agricultural cooperatives group development), vocational training, legal assistance, income generating, etc., and (3) farmers' union engagement at all level to implement government and authority programmes. In terms of VNFU's initiative on agri coop, she explained that because VNFU is a big organisation serving a wide-ranging sectors, its approach is currently focusing on setting up cooperatives based on commodity and its respective value chain.
- Mr. Banzuela from PAKISAMA Philippines shared the lessons learned from his organisation, which are:
  1. The importance of agricultural cooperatives to be able to provide full value chain services to their members starting with land ownership, inputs for production such as seeds and fertiliser, financing, processing, branding and marketing, packaging and distribution system. With full value chain services, he argued that farmers will get full benefits from their products.
  2. The importance of mainstreaming agro-ecology, gender and age. Based on PAKISAMA's experience, the model of organic rice business is possible as a poverty reduction programme. He indicated that the agri coops which are successful in mainstreaming agro-ecology are those managed by women. To attract young people in agriculture, PAKISAMA

has recruited and employed young farmers as part of its mainstreaming strategies, and has shown to young people through social media that it is possible to make a business from farming.

3. The importance of partnerships. He highlighted the benefits of PAKISAMA's partnership with agri agencies which has been essential not only in their policy advocacy work but also in their ground work to build capacity of their agri coop members in the past 30 years. He illustrated the benefits of PAKISAMA being a member of international organisations, such as AFA and Agricord which has allowed them to go around to learn from other countries such as Japan, Korea, Thailand as well as Europe. He indicated that currently PAKISAMA is also partnering with business institutions.
- Ms. Rebagay from AFA shared the information on AFOSP-MTCP2. She explained that AFOSP-MTCP2 is a product of a long lobby effort by ASEAN based FOs and CSOs, like AFA and AsiaDHRRA, working together with CSA to bring forward the concerns of ASEAN farmers to the EU office in Brussels. She highlighted the lessons learned so far from AFOSP-MTCP2 which include (1) the importance role of farmers' cooperatives to help farmers to capture a higher share of the value added in the food supply chain in all member states, (2) that the key functions of all marketing cooperatives are improving the bargaining power of their members and letting members benefit from economies of scale, and (3) that cooperatives help reduce market risks and transaction costs, provide access to resources, strengthen competitive position through product innovation, and guarantee food quality and safety. She indicated that for the remaining years of the programme, the focus of AFOSP-MTCP2 initiative at FO level will be on forming and/or strengthening commodity-based groups along priority crops in which the activities include transforming farmers' groups into genuine cooperative, providing technical assistance for small and emerging cooperatives and knowledge management. At the regional level, the focus will be on policy advocacy and other measures to support farmers' cooperatives to unleash their potential such as scoping study on agri coop and engagement with ASWGAC/ACEDAC. To engage youth and women, relevant workshops or activities will be also organised.
  - Ms. Ramirez from AsiaDHRRA highlighted their major programmes under the AFOSP/Farmers Fighting Poverty (FFP), the Regional Cooperation to Empower Rural Development Organisations (ReCoERDO) and Post Haiyan (Disaster) Fund Facility. She explained that FFP is the central programming of AgriCord, a global alliance of agri-agencies of which AsiaDHRRA is a member since 2012. FFP support is FO demand driven and is comprehensive. It covers different types of FOs work areas such as organisational strengthening and inclusiveness, institutional development, lobbying and advocacy, and most importantly, economic service delivery. She also stressed that FFP puts priority in peer to peer cooperation and exchanges (North-South and South-South). Under AFOSP/FFP, 14 RPOs in 6 ASEAN countries will be involved in the ongoing projects from 2015-2018. She pointed out that AsiaDHRRA has reached at least 33,000 farming families working in different value chains and has supported 30 FOs in ASEAN. On ReCoERDO, she mentioned that the 4-year programme has three components such as (1) capacity building of rural development NGOs, (2) regional CSO movement and policy advocacy, and (3) strengthening services to RPOs. This project is funded by the EU and will be implemented in eight ASEAN countries. There are two associate partners in the ReCoERDO, which are: AFA for CSO-RPO cooperation and CSA for North-South cooperation.
  - Mr. Poznanski from CSA Belgium briefly introduced himself and explained that a young French farmer was initially invited to come to the dialogue to share his initiative. But due to some circumstances, he could not make it. Nonetheless, a testimonial video message from the

young farmer would be shown in the afternoon. Mr. Poznanski pointed out that his organisation is supporting the effort to strengthen FOs and there is a big potential of learning exchange to support the regional programme in ASEAN. He mentioned that in Europe, everything is linked to regional integration and social dialogue with FOs. He reiterated the importance of lessons exchanges between farmers in Europe and ASEAN to reflect on the common challenges faced by them.

The Technical Dialogue was suspended at 09.40 am due to the early arrival of H.E. Mr. Phil Hogan, the EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development and his delegation.

### **High Level Dialogue (09:40 am – 11.00 am)**

H.E. Mr. Phil Hogan arrived at the venue with his delegation. After greeting each participant personally, and was welcomed by the Executive Director of the ASEAN Foundation (AF), Mr. Hogan delivered his keynote speech. He began by reiterating the purpose of the dialogue which was to talk about how EU and ASEAN can support the family farm. He then recalled the increasingly significant roles of farmers in modern society particularly due to the rapid increase of human population which will reach 10 billion people in 2056. He stated that an additional \$267 billion per year is required for investment in rural and urban areas in order to sustainably eradicate world hunger by 2030, and that a minimum of 60% increase in agricultural production by 2050 is necessary in order to secure global food security. To reach this figure as well as to combat climate change, he pointed out the need to find new and enhanced structures for farmers to cooperate. For that reason, he reiterated the importance of family farms because they hold the unique potential to move towards more productive and sustainable food systems if policy environments support them.

Mr. Hogan continued by stating that the EU shared Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has explicitly taken some concrete steps to recognise the challenges faced by small family farms like farming resources, the lack of young people entering farming, extreme climate events as well as stronger competition from a more globalised food system. To deal with these challenges, he indicated that there is a necessity to build stronger systems for cooperation between farmers both in EU and abroad. He further said that producer and farmer organisations serve as the legitimate and permanent cooperation structure among family farmers, and that the role of cooperatives has been recognised both in the EU and ASEAN as one of the key drivers of sustainable rural development. Through farmers' cooperatives, family farmers can increase their market power and have access to credit and input, facilitate access to technical assistance and other support services. Additionally, he pointed out that one of the major challenges faced by agricultural sector is the decreasing interest of young people to engage in farming. For that reason, he recommended EU and ASEAN to look into programme cooperation that will ensure innovative incentives made available to young farmers to attract them to work in agriculture as a viable livelihood. He also pointed out that out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 11 are linked to agriculture. As such, farmers will essentially have significant roles in the implementation and realisation of SDGs. To conclude, he encouraged the participants to continue working together and to liaise with the EU Ambassador to ASEAN to further deepen the EU-ASEAN Cooperation on farmer organisation development.

After the keynote speech, the participants exchanged views with Mr. Hogan. The following was the discussion between Mr. Hogan and the participants.

- Ms. Penunia (AFA) asked Mr. Hogan how EU can promote social dialogue in the current ASEAN-EU cooperation. This question was asked under the context that AFA is advocating for more institutionalised mechanism for farmers' participation at national and regional/ASEAN level.

Mr. Hogan stated that engagement with FOs is very important in EU and it is carried out in various ways. He emphasised that for such engagement, FOs need to be organised at the national or country level under their government mechanism so that they will have the opportunities to participate in a structured annual meeting in their respective ministries of agriculture. At the regional EU level, the representatives from national FOs can participate at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) meetings in Brussels. EESC which is an EU advisory body comprising representatives of workers' and employers' organisations and other (social) interest groups such as farmers, consumers, etc. It issues opinions on EU economic and social issues to the European Commission, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament, thus acting as a bridge between the EU's decision-making institutions and EU citizens. Mr. Hogan also mentioned that prior to the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting, FOs and farmer cooperatives' representatives have the opportunity to discuss their priorities with the president of the Council.

In addition, Mr. Hogan explained that as part of the EU structured social dialogue, under Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, there are also the so-called civil dialogue groups which are organised by themes. The roles of this civil dialogue groups are among others to assist the Commission and advice on policy, and help hold a regular dialogue on all matters relating to CAP, including rural development, and its implementation. The groups are composed of at least European-level non-governmental organisations, including representative associations, socio-economic interest groups, civil society organisations and trade unions that are registered in the joint Transparency Register.

Mr. Hogan promoted the above structured civil society/social dialogue as the EU good practices which ASEAN can replicate.

- Mr. Phimmachanh (LFN) asked Mr. Hogan to share about the programmes that EU has to support and attract youth in Agriculture and how EU strengthen its FOs.

Mr. Hogan acknowledged that farming is a hard work and high risk job sector which does not have income security due to its reliance on market situation. For that reason, EU has introduced income safety net for farmers which worths around 56 billion euro (38% of the EU budget). This is part of the EU efforts to incentivise young generation to participate in agriculture/farming and to promote rural development. He emphasised that to attract and retain youth in agriculture, there is a need to find the ways to create value-added activities in addition to primary production activities, such as the creation of SMEs attached to farms so that young people can contribute to their community, the development of agri business, provision of financial services to young farmers as well as the introduction of rural intellectual property such as the Geographical Indication (GI) which is a name or sign used on certain agricultural products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin. This rural area trademark is essentially help protect specific rural products and promote the work of local (young) farmers.

- Ms. Ha (VNFU) asked Mr. Hogan to share about the EU best practice in setting up and supporting agri coop. She explained that the agri coops in Viet Nam are predominantly set up based on the needs and priorities of an individual/owner.

Mr. Hogan stated that dialogue is the key to bring together FOs and farmers' cooperatives, and to unlock the potential of agricultural cooperation. In EU, he said that each member state has a dialogue mechanism where 200-300 farmers come together to discuss about their

priorities and pertaining issues. To help this dialogue process, the respective national government provides monetary support to finance advisory services to facilitate the discussion group meetings. In terms of supporting agri coops, Mr. Hogan stated that EU has provided support to smallholder farmers to strengthen their position in food value chain. These supports include finance, rules and regulations, and fair opportunity for smallholder farmers to participate in the food chain and access to trade and financial institutions.

- Mr. Nuruddin (API) asked Mr. Hogan about the support for small-scale farmers in the EU-ASEAN trade agreement. He also asked how small-scale farmers can be involved on the trade agreement and if their interests will be protected. Mr. Nuruddin was also curious about the approach taken by EU to achieve SDGs, particularly those goals on reducing poverty rural areas, achieving sustainable agricultural development and mitigating climate change.

Mr. Hogan stated that in EU, there are programmes to ensure farmers to benefit from the trade agreement. He indicated that EU would like to get more benefits from the trade agreement with Indonesia, especially in the palm oil trade. He further gave example of the incentives provided by EU to subsistence farmers in Romania. He stressed the importance of the alignment of agriculture growth with SDGs and of adopting a bottom-up approach in obtaining those goals as well as to address climate change issues.

- Mr. Banzuela (PAKISAMA) asked whether EU will extend its programme to advise the governments of ASEAN to pursue efforts to complete their agrarian reform. He also inquired if EU has any programmes and incentives to help speed up the process of land tenure security in ASEAN member states.

Mr. Hogan stated that EU will not get involved in a policy that does not have the support from ASEAN member states and that EU will not interfere in non-EU national land tenure policies. He mentioned that EU has contributed around 2 billion euro to help small-scale farmers to reduce rural poverty in ASEAN. He maintained that EU is promoting land tenure policy but it will not force it.

- Mr. Saragih (LVC) asked about the impact of oil palm on the EU farmers who grow olive oil. He also inquired the possibility to do experience exchange between EU and ASEAN on farmers' cooperatives, particularly on how to link the cooperatives directly to the European buyers.

Mr. Hogan reiterated the role of GI as a positive example to help rural area development. He pointed out that EU is importing 3.6 billion tonnes of palm oil from Indonesia and 50% of that is without tariff. As such, EU is a strong supporter of Indonesian palm oil products. Nonetheless, EU has to ensure that the palm oil production is sustainable and in accordance with SDGs.

- Ms. Ramirez (AsiaDHRRA) sought the advice from Mr. Hogan on how to make the ASEAN smallholder agriculture and rural development issues high in the agenda of EU that the other EU offices will consider another programme like AFOSP.

Mr. Hogan indicated that the already existing programmes must first achieve its targeted objectives and FOs must produce best practices that the invested EU fund contributes to the improvement of the livelihood of small-scale farmers and the attainment of sustainable rural development. He mentioned that small farmers have to be part of the solutions. He further pointed out that the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a good example of EU investment for farmers that they can have good water quality and good agricultural practices with

technology. He maintained that 'precision agriculture' can bring profitability to farmers and help achieve environmental sustainability.

The high level dialogue session concluded with souvenirs presentation from the FOs representatives to Mr. Hogan, followed by a group photo session and coffee break.

#### **Technical Dialogue – continued (12:00 pm – 1:00 pm)**

The afternoon session continued with the briefing from the ASEAN and EU officers on their existing initiatives and programmes relevant to the effort of strengthening agricultural cooperatives and attracting youth in agriculture.

- Ms. Sari from ACEDAC briefly shared the history and mandate of her organisation. She explained that the principal objective of ACEDAC is to foster and coordinate regional cooperation among agricultural cooperatives in ASEAN and to serve as a multi-functional central organisation that undertakes all spheres of agricultural cooperatives promotion and development. The functions of ACEDAC are:
  - To provide fora for exchange of information and improving agricultural cooperatives development;
  - To gather, analyse, compile and disseminate information through various media;
  - To promote, foster and encourage joint project activities related to agricultural and related cooperatives within the framework of supporting specific development policies and programmes promoting intra-ASEAN trade and enhancing cooperatives and ASEAN's competitive edge regionally as well as internationally.
  - To initiate joint efforts in human resource development and management, especially in education and training.
- Dr. Minh from Food, Agriculture and Forestry (AFA) division of ASEC gave a briefing on Vision and Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry, 2016-2025 by highlighting the relevant strategic action programmes on agricultural cooperatives, namely:
  1. Establish business linkages among the potential agricultural cooperatives within ASEAN
  2. Promote direct investment and strategic partnership with ASEAN agricultural cooperatives producers, consumers and traders, and
  3. Promote and strengthen cooperatives and farmers organizations so as to better integrate small producers in the value chains and to provide collective platforms to deal with production and market risks.

Under the SOM AMAF, five (5) working groups play important roles in the implementation of the above said programmes and actions, they are: (i) ASEAN Sectoral Working Groups (ASWG) on livestock, (ii) ASWG on crops, (iii) ASWG on fisheries, (iv) ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board (AFSRB), and (v) ASWG on Agricultural Cooperatives. In addition, there are some involvements from other related working groups such halal food, research and development, and agriculture training and extension.

- Ms. Turalde-Babaran from Human Development Directorate of ASEC shared the initiatives under the ASEAN Socio Cultural Community (ASCC) blueprint. She explained on how ASEAN operates which is based on consensus among the ASEAN Member States. She indicated that under SOMRDPE (Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication), there are the so-called GO-NGO forum, RDPE leadership award, and ASEAN Plus Three Village Leaders Exchange Programme. She continued by highlighting the key programme activities of

the recently adopted ASEAN Framework Action Plan on RDPE 2016-2020 which include woman and children development, social entrepreneurship to share good model to improve productivity and quality, rural community development in the context of climate change and disaster, and some initiatives on social protection. She further mentioned that the broad idea behind the development of the RDPE Action Plan 2016-2020 is the 4 Ps, i.e. People-Public-Private-Partnership which still needs an alignment with the aspiration of ASEAN. She concluded that there are a lot of things to be done in the next five years under RDPE, as well as under the action plans of the other sectoral bodies relevant to rural development. These efforts essentially need to be synergised with each other for better engagement and implementation.

- Ms. Mega Irena from Poverty Eradication and Gender Division of ASEC reiterated the statement from Mr. Hogan that farming is really a risky business. She informed that currently a regional study is being conducted under SOMRDPE to assess the responsiveness of ASEAN farmers to climate change. The study will look at issues such as rice price hike, promotion of crops insurance, and crop diversification programme. With regard to the quality of food production and nutrition, the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework led by SOM-AMAF is also being examined inter-sectorally. She argued that the matter should be addressed not only by SOM-AMAF but also by the other senior officials such RDPE, social welfare, health and etc. She suggested that the food security and nutrition issue could be a good entry point for collaboration. She continued by highlighting the annual GO-NGO forum whose content and context of discussion is more on rural development and livelihood issues than agricultural productivity. Ms. Mega argued that social dialogue is not a new thing in ASEAN because such practice has actually been embedded in the work of ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM) who has a regular social dialogue with workers, trade union, and labour ministries.
- Mr. Viault from the EU office in Jakarta reiterated the key message from Mr. Hogan during the high level session which called for FOs in ASEAN to be organised and structured at national level. The rationale behind this message is that when FOs speak in one voice at national level, they will have a stronger negotiation position with their respective government. With regard to the question on how to move the EU-ASEAN cooperation beyond AFOSP, Mr. Viault highlighted the new EU programmes which FOs and CSOs can tap into, such as:
  - 1) ARISE Plus (Enhanced ASEAN Regional Integration Support Programme) which is a 4-year programme (2017-2020) to continue supporting regional economic integration of ASEAN. In the Agriculture sector, the focus of this programme will be on food product safety and Geographical Indication (GI).
  - 2) E-READI (Enhanced Regional EU-ASEAN Dialogue Instrument) facility aims at supporting ASEAN regional integration processes with poverty reduction through inclusive and sustainable growth as underlying principles. He stated that E-READI facility is not limited to bureaucracy to bureaucracy dialogues.
  - 3) SWITCH-Asia which supports sustainable consumption and production.

Mr. Viault also reminded the participants that in terms of visibility, there is a need to initiate and develop activities to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Anniversary and 40<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-EU relation in 2017. He stated that there is an EU budget for such purpose and proposed activities on family farming, young farmers and climate change adaptation. He emphasised the need to capitalise the existing networks in the future implementation of activities.

After everyone shared their initiatives and programmes, the participants engaged in a substantive discussion, as follows.

- Mr. Paez (AFA consultant) inquired if there is a possibility for EU to support a study on agricultural cooperatives in the region. He pointed out that in 2012 the EU commissioned a study to support farmers' cooperatives in EU which not only looked at the legislative perspective but also aimed to improve the communication of those cooperatives. If there is such possibility, he further asked what the next step would be.
- Mr. Viault responded that it is possible for EU to support such study. One of the possible channels is through the E-READI facility funding mechanism. However, he put an emphasis that EU does not want another study report that will only end up on bookshelves. The results and recommendations of the study should be presented and put forward to the relevant ASEAN ministerial meeting. To move forward, Mr. Viault stated that there is a need for a concept paper and it should be discussed under the umbrella of AFOSP. Depending on the scope of the study and its required budget, it can be submitted to the E-READI PSC.
- Ms. Tan clarified that the proposed study is already being included and reflected in AF's Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) 2017 based on the request/recommendation of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Agricultural Cooperatives (ASWGAC) held in May 2016 in Surabaya, Indonesia. This activity has also been discussed during the AF-AFA Planning Meeting in mid-October 2017 in Manila, the Philippines. Currently, AF is waiting for AFA's agreement for the proposed budget allocation to conduct the study and related events.
- Dr. Minh explained the ASEAN procedure to endorse a project/study and gave an example of the recent Study on Mutual Recognition Models for the ASEAN Agricultural Best Practices, conducted under the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Programme (AADCP) Phase II. For a study to get off the ground, he pointed out that there is a need to consult the ASEAN Member States through the relevant working groups. With regard to the proposed study to support agricultural cooperatives in ASEAN, the concept note and project proposal needs to be submitted to ASWGAC for their consideration and approval. Afterwards, it will be put forward to SOM-AMAF for their endorsement. He mentioned that ASEC can help seek funding for the approved proposal but it will go through a project appraisal process of ASEAN.
- Mr. Poznanski highlighted CSA's experience in facilitating exchange visits between regions such as Africa and South America. Such visits, according to him, are not limited to inter-government institutions but can also be done between FOs/Agri Coops and be part of AFOSP activities. He explained that under ReCOERDO's programme activities, there is a component of North-South exchange programmes which can be used as a vehicle to further define and concretise the proposed scoping study in ASEAN region.
- Mr. Paez also asked if there is a possibility for AFA to participate in the meeting of ASWGAC. He thought it is important for the government officials to get a perspective from FOs in their meeting's deliberation.
- Ms. Tan explained to Mr. Paez that this is precisely the main role of AFOSP-AF component, which is to help promote/bridge policy dialogues and interactions between FOs and ASEAN institutions. She further pointed out that the leaflet of ASEAN 101 in the document kit serves to explain such processes in the simplest manner. She also explained that AF as an ASEAN organ is still required to send an official letter for AF's participation in the relevant ASEAN sectoral meetings.

- Dr. Minh stated that ASEAN welcomes inputs from FOs. In order to participate at relevant ASEAN meetings as an observer, he encouraged AFA to send an official request letter to Chairperson of ASWGAC for such purpose. Mr. Paez clarified that the request was not as an observer, but as a counterpart. On that note, Dr. Minh reiterated the key message of Mr. Hogan and advised that FOs first need to be organised and structured at the national level and work with their respective national government.
- Ms. Mega also echoed the statement from Dr. Minh. She maintained that the effectiveness at the national level will reflect the effectiveness at the regional level. For example, the social dialogue initiated by the trade union under the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (SLOM). She pointed out that the invitation letter of the dialogue is jointly issued by the trade union, the labour ministry of the host country and the Chairperson of SLOM. The programme agenda is drafted and issued by the trade union. She continued by stating that FOs and CSOs can create their own platform to engage with the government officials. But, in order to achieve an active and effective government participation, she reminded them to include the government officials in the process since beginning.
- Ms. Ramirez shared AsiaDHRRA's experience in engaging with SOMRDPE which did not take place overnight. She pointed out that as the outcome of effective engagement with SOMRDPE, AsiaDHRRA's programmes such as ReCoERDO and AFOSP/FFP have been included as activities to contribute to the implementation of the ASEAN RDPE Framework Action Plan 2016-2020. Nonetheless, with regard to the engagement with SOM-AMAF, she argued that there is a need to establish some institutionalised framework and sought guidance from ASEC on how it can be done. She maintained that there are lots of opportunities in the work of agricultural cooperatives. She pointed out that the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Cooperative Business Forum (ACBF) in Manila might recommend a study on agricultural cooperatives in ASEAN. She stated that there is no issue regarding the financial resources because it can be pooled from different existing programmes. The question is more how to get such study recognised and endorsed by ACEDAC and ASWGAC.
- Mr. Monteyne (AgriCord) also reiterated the statements of Mr. Hogan, Dr. Minh and Ms. Mega on the importance for FOs to work at the national level before going to regional level based on the EU practice. He stated that in the EU, national policies essentially influence the regional policies.

To conclude the RTD, AFA proposed some options of ways forward for consideration, they are:

1. Cooperation on Geographical Indications (GI):
  - Identify potential GI in AFOSP areas.
  - Promotion of GI products.
2. Promoting Social Dialogue Mechanism:
  - Learning exchange on ASEAN (government and FOs/CSOs) to EU on existing social dialogue model.
  - Continuing discussion between ASEAN (AMAF, AMRDPE) on how to institutionalise social dialogue mechanism similar to the EU social dialogue mechanism.

The presentation of AFA is in **Annex B**.

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