

Information note on the 6th ASEAN Public Private People Partnership Forum on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication

Background

The ASEAN Cooperation in Rural Development and Poverty Eradication began when the ASEAN Ministers on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication signed a Ministerial Understanding on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication in Subang Jaya, Malaysia on 23 October 1997.

The ASEAN Ministers on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication are committed towards eradicating poverty, with particular emphasis on promoting the development of progressive, prosperous, and self-reliant rural communities, and thus contribute towards creating a caring society in the ASEAN Member Countries.

This year, the ASEAN Ministers responsible for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication met on 6 October 2017 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for the Tenth ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Rural

Development and Poverty Eradication (10th AMRDPE). The AMRDPE fall under the ASEAN Socio Cultural Community (ASCC). ASCC is one of the three pillars of ASEAN Community. It is committed to lifting the quality of life of its people by putting their welfare and wellbeing at the heart of its activities, as well as to promote better quality of life for the peoples and their communities in ASEAN.

The meeting was preceded by

- The Fourteenth ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (14th SOMRDPE) on 23 October 2017;
- Tenth ASEAN Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (10th SOMRDPE+3) on 4 October 2017; and
- 6th ASEAN People Public Private Partnership (PPPP) Forum on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication.

The theme for this meeting is "Rural Transformation: Enhancing Human Capital towards a resilient Rural Community". The meeting discussed various efforts to promote rural development and poverty eradication in ASEAN in order to build

resilient rural communities in line with the vision of the ASEAN Socio Cultural Community for 2025. The meeting has discussed among others the progress of the Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication.

6th ASEAN Public Private People Forum on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication.

The ASEAN Foundation participated the 6th ASEAN Public Private People Forum on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication Forum, where the objective is to foster knowledge sharing and learning on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (RDPE) approaches being employed by various sectors in pursuit of building resilient communities.

Specifically, this forum aims to: Present, exchange and document best and/or good practices on RDPE within and outside the ASEAN region; Review the framing of rural development policies and practices in ASEAN in the context of rural transformation; and Recommend concrete convergence action points to improve and advance the RDPE Framework Action Plan.

The 6th PPP forum on RDPE was organised at JW Marriot hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 5-6 October 2017, and brought together around 146 participants comprised of CSOs such as AsiaDHRRA (AFOSP – Farmers Fighting Poverty Component) and its networks from 10 ASEAN Member States, Academic, Think Thank, and Government.

Problem Statement

During the 27th ASEAN Summit in 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, the ASEAN leaders adopted the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together document as the reference for the next chapter of ASEAN community building efforts. The document contains the blueprints of the ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC) 2025, ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2025, and ASEAN Social Cultural Community (ASCC) 2025 which essentially serve as the roadmap towards an ASEAN Community 2025. As envisioned in ASEAN 2025 at A Glance, the focus of the ASEAN community building in the next 10 years will be, among others:

- Greater emphasis on the peoples of ASEAN and their well-being;

- Enhance awareness of ASEAN and its Vision of a politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible Community;
- Engage all nationals of ASEAN Member States through effective and innovative platforms to promote commitment and identification with ASEAN policies and regional interests;
- Ensure fundamental freedoms, human rights and better lives for all ASEAN peoples.

The above goals are in principle shared and understood by ASEAN at the government level, but limited at the community and grassroots levels. It remains to be seen whether peoples of ASEAN know about them, really understand and share what is being envisioned and captured in the ASEAN 2025. As pointed out in ERIA report (2015), there are two distinctions of ASEAN identity, i.e. institutional identity and communal identity. The former is reflected by all ASEAN institutions, programmes and initiatives, and processes; while the latter is about peoples' participation in the initiatives and processes, and about the sentiments of the "we feeling", the "ours feeling" and "we are in this together". Nevertheless, as stated above, the disconnection between these two identities unfortunately remains a challenge.

Responding to such challenges, the ASEAN Foundation has been mandated to perform as a platform to forge more people-to-people engagement/connectivity outside the circles of the inter-governmental institutions.

To date, the ASEAN Foundation engage the farmer groups in ASEAN through its project ASEAN Farmer Organisation Support Programme (AFOSP), the specific objective of the programme is to bridge the coordination between the relevant sectoral ASEAN bodies in support of AFOSP, such as those under the ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) and ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (AMRDPE); and to facilitate the engagement and participation of the ASEAN farmers in the regional policy-making processes.

Also, the ASEAN Foundation has organised the series of S Rajaratnam Endowment – ASEAN Community Forum where the focus among others were to discuss the areas of rural development, sustainable development and environment protection, the forum has resulted in increasing and advance the CSOs participants' understanding of ASEAN Community Vision 2025, and awareness of the ASEAN and its development agenda. Also, the CSOs had been able to open their diverse knowledge exchange, and learnt more about the respective characteristics and element of the ASEAN Blue Prints and plans, and discussed solutions and modalities to realise these plans.



AFOSP-MTCP2

In this regard, participating the 6th ASEAN Public Private People Forum on Rural Development and poverty eradication forum has been relevant for the ASEAN Foundation, and this forum has allowed the Foundation to potentially engage SOMRDPE for the next year ASEAN Public Private People Forum on RDPE in Singapore.

Responses

Over the two-day of the forum, the ASEAN Foundation took note for the participation in the next ASEAN PPP forum on RDPE in Singapore in 2018, below is the recommendation and take away from the forum as follows:

Recommendation from the 6th ASEAN Public Private People Partnership Forum on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication

Rural Transformation: Enhancing Human Capital towards a Resilient Rural Community

(5 October 2017, Kuala Lumpur)

The ASEAN Public Private People Partnership Forum on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication was held on 5 October 2017 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The forum was chaired by H.E. Datuk Borhan Dolah, Secretary General Ministry of Rural and Regional Development of Malaysia, and Co-Chaired by Dr. Madeline Berma, Associate Professor, faculty of Economics and Management. The forum was attended by about 150 participants which includes SOMRDPE Focal Points from all ASEAN Member States, civil society organisations, rural people's organisation, representatives from AsiaDHRRA, IFAD, Private Sector, and academics, and the awardees of the 3rd ASEAN Leadership Award on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication in 2017.

Guided by the theme "Rural Transformation: Enhancing Human Capital towards a Resilient Rural Community". The forum reiterated the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships at different levels, and among different sectors – governments, private sector, and civil society – in light of the interdependence of the SDG Goals and multi-dimensional aspects of poverty. Partnership would contribute to the scaling up and sustainability of community development and poverty eradication initiatives.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION



Economic Resilience

1. Understand rural poverty from the perspective of rural communities, which listen and amplify the voices from the communities and defining development according to their view.
2. For ASEAN to develop clear policy guidelines on sustainable agricultural development in order to achieve ASEAN Goals on rural development. The national government can provide infrastructures to support farmer's initiatives on rural development and poverty eradication.

3. Ensure women's participation and the rural youth, and involve them as partners in the whole process (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) of RDPE through concrete policies and guidelines. Increase competitiveness of women in leadership roles in regional and national level.
4. Incentives the participation of the private sector in promoting rural development and accelerating the eradication of poverty
5. Ensure partnership and collaboration of different stakeholders at different levels of project implementation, which entails the involvement of farmer's organisation in the development of relevant policies and programmes. Private sector can broaden their CSR programmes other than education, for example, by providing microfinance, creating job opportunities by engaging rural poor.



Climate, Ecological and Environmental Resilience

1. ASEAN and ASEAN Member States need to affirm their high-level political commitment to strengthen and institutionalise the resilience of ASEAN. This is in line with the implementation of the Declaration on institutionalizing the Resilience of ASEAN and its Peoples and Communities, which was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders in 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Concretely, regional and national initiatives must be undertaken to understand emerging risks, reduce existing risks and vulnerabilities, build to respond risk, and build –back better, faster, smarter. ASEAN is in a position to foster a shared vision of building resilience to ensure prosperity in the region.
2. Initiatives on building climate, ecological and environmental resilience should respond to the ASEAN context, particularly the circumstances at the national and local levels, and utilize local wisdom and maximise the role of women

and the youth in building resilience. For governments, civil society organisations, the private sector and other stakeholders to maximise platforms of exchange to ensure policy coherence and facilitate effective institutional coordination in mitigating and combating the environmental problems.

3. The implementation of the Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication 2016 – 2020, and the design of the subsequent work plan in 2020, should be guided by ASEAN's vision of realising a people – centered, people oriented ASEAN Community. Also, the work plan's investments on developing human resources should lead to an increase in knowledge and access to, and capacity to build organisations. This would necessitate balancing economic development with inclusive growth, promoting responsible business, and addressing structural barriers such as lack of access to land and natural resources.
4. SOMRDPE can engage in more meaningful cross-sectoral cooperation with other ASEAN Sectoral bodies, including SOM-AMAF on climate change and food security, ACDM on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as well as disaster risk financing and insurance, and SOMED on education. Also, *SOMRDPE can deepen its partnerships, including with AsiaDHRRA and ASEAN Foundation, as facilitated by ASEAN Secretariat.*
5. For the next forum, more private sector companies and social enterprises could be invited and requested to present their programme that promote rural development and address poverty. In line with this, the format of the forum could be reviewed and expanded to provide more space for stakeholders to participate, including members of the media and academia.



Institutional Resiliency

1. Investment on developing human resources need to bring more mechanisms at the local level by empowering organisations of rural areas that play essential role in promoting resiliency to farmers/ fishers organisation, self-help groups, and local associations. They need an enabling environment from government where policies and programme are responsive to their needs and aspiration.
2. Rural transformation demands the participation of many development players; thus, it is important to reaffirm the strengthening PPPP in the ASEAN region, especially to bring in jointly resources and technical and technical expertise needed for the livelihood activities and social enterprises of rural people to succeed. ASEAN has to facilitate the exchanges in the region on the successful PPPPs and understand the institutional arrangements that made it work, especially on the role of rural people organisation.
3. In reaching out the marginalized sector, promote access to education and use of ICT. Education, both formal and informal, are key to building resiliency. There has to be a continuing effort to develop an education system that is responsive to the demands of rural transformation and the changing development context in our region. This includes the promotion of rural development approaches that are comprehensive, such as sustainable integrated area development as well as off-farm development measures.



ASEAN FOUNDATION

Jl. Sam Ratulangi No.2,
Menteng, Jakarta 10350
INDONESIA

Phone : +62 21 3192 4828
Fax : +62 21 3192 6078
E-mail : secretariat@aseanfoundation.org
: yacinta.jati@aseanfoundation.org

www.aseanfoundation.org

 : @ASEANFoundation