

SOM-AMAF+3 and SOME+3 Consultation Meeting on Bioenergy

30 October 2012, Bangkok, Thailand

Opening Remarks by SOM-AMAF+3 Chairperson

*Mr. Lim Hong Hin, Deputy Secretary-General of the ASEAN Economic Community, ASEAN Secretariat,
Distinguished Colleagues and Senior Officials from SOM-AMAF Plus Three and SOME Plus Three,
Guests, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen... Good Morning!*

Four to five years ago today, the sharp increase in the prices of global food and fossil fuel has brought serious concerns on its long-term socio-economic impacts in the ASEAN Plus Three Countries, and prompted them to bond together to ensure food and energy security and development of sustainable bioenergy in the region.

As we now have come to realize, a number of attributable factors and drivers to this current state of the markets for food and energy products and the interplay of these factors led to the rapid growth of bioenergy over the last few years, particularly in liquid biofuels for transport.

Recognising the tremendous potentials and possible adverse impacts of bioenergy particularly to food security, the ASEAN Plus Three Countries emphasised the need for clear policy, legislative frameworks and supporting programmes be in place to ensure that bioenergy, particularly biofuel production, is sustainable and not giving adverse impacts to food security and farmers' livelihood.

Also providing justification and support to this goal are various high-level declarations/statements, major of which are the 2nd Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation and the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2007-2017) adopted at the 11th ASEAN Plus Three Summit in Singapore in November 2007 that called for wide-ranging areas of cooperation, including food and energy security, and the Cha-am Hua Hin Statement on ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation on Food Security and Bioenergy Development on 24 October 2009 for the development of a comprehensive strategy on sustainable and integrated biofuels production and consumption.

In progressing this mandate, our 9th Special SOM-AMAF Plus Three Meeting on on 4 August 2010 in Bandar Seri Begawan, supported in principle the concept note on the ASEAN Plus Three Comprehensive Strategy on Food Security and Bioenergy Development. During that Meeting, we agreed to the guiding principle that the Comprehensive Strategy should foster and coordinate existing initiatives such as the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework, the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve, the ASEAN Food Security Information System, the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation, the Asia Biomass Energy Principles, and the ASEAN Plan of Action on Science and Technology Flagship Programme on Biofuels, that are currently

promoted and advanced by relevant sectors of the ASEAN Plus Three countries, rather than develop a new initiative.

In this regard, the Strategy was crafted to foster multi-sectoral cooperation to clarify potentials, implications and interlinkages of biofuels to food and energy security; promote bio-energy development for sustainable agricultural development and farmers' livelihoods; and strengthen national policy on sustainable bio-energy development. The Strategy comprises of three Components, which are distinctive but inter-related in nature to facilitate cooperation in addressing food security and bio-energy development in the region.

SOM-AMAF Plus Three has been tasked to follow-up in implementing necessary actions and report progress in the advancement of this Strategy including seeking consultation and collaboration with other sectors, such as SOME Plus Three.

For being a cross-cutting issue, bioenergy development requires multisectoral dialogue and collaboration. It is therefore the intention of this first consultation meeting between our two sectors to clarify issues and concerns and find ways and means to strengthen our cooperation on this important area and development. I hope that through our open discussion and constructive ideas, we could better implement and advance the mandate set forth for us by our ASEAN Plus Three Leaders.

In closing, I would also like to recognize the significant contributions made by our development partners in the implementation of the Strategy. In particular, to FAO for providing a platform for consultation under the "Bioenergy and Food Security in ASEAN Project", a 2-year initiative with a budget of about half a million US dollars, that aims to encourage sustainable bioenergy development in the region. This Project will have its inception meeting tomorrow.

Finally, I wish you all a pleasant day and successful outcomes of our first consultation meeting.

Thank you!