

Report of the

**The ASEAN Stakeholders Meeting on the Implementation of
the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics**

and

**The 8th Meeting of Directors-General of Agricultural Statistics
and Information in ASEAN Plus Three Countries**



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Japan
Fund for
Poverty
Reduction

The ASEAN Stakeholders Meeting on the implementation of
The Global Strategy to improve agricultural and Rural Statistics
And

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraph</i>	<i>Page</i>
ACRONYMS		iii
INTRODUCTION	1-2	2
AGENDA ITEM 1 : OPENING SESSION	3-8	2-3
AGENDA ITEM 2 : ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL STATISTICS, RESULTS FROM THE ONGOING PROJECTS IN THE ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	9-48	3-10
AGENDA ITEM 3 : IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATION OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS INTO THE NATIONAL STATISTICS SYSTEM	49-86	10-16
AGENDA ITEM 4 : PLACE OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS IN THE SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATION	87-103	17-19
AGENDA ITEM 5 : DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION	104-119	19-22
AGENDA ITEM 6 : KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON ROLE OF FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION	120	22
AGENDA ITEM 7 : REMARKS ON VISION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERMANENT MECHANISM OF THE AFSIS FROM 2016 ONWARD	121	23
AGENDA ITEM 8: THE AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS AND INFORMATION RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT	122-124	23
AGENDA ITEM 9: THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION USING SATELLITE INFORMATION	125-127	23-24
AGENDA ITEM 10: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND RESILIENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS MEMBER STATES TO FOOD PRICE VOLATILITY (TA – 8693 REG) IN COLLABORATION WITH THE AFSIS	128-129	24
AGENDA ITEM 11: IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION IN AFRICA IN THE COLLABORATION WITH THE AFSIS	130-132	24
AGENDA ITEM 12 : THE FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN BEYOND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFSIS INTO THE PERMANENT MECHANISM	133-134	24-25

AGENDA ITEM 13 : THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFSIS INTO THE PERMANENT MECHANISM	135-136	25
AGENDA ITEM 14 : ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFSIS INTO THE PERMANENT MECHANISM	137	25
AGENDA ITEM 15 : OTHER MATTERS	138-139	25
AGENDA ITEM 16 : ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT	140	25-26
AGENDA ITEM 17 : CLOSING SESSION	141-143	26
APPENDICES		
A. LIST OF DELEGATES		27-31
B. AGENDA		32-34
C. WELCOME ADDRESS BY H.E. AMNUAY PATISE, DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATIVES, DELIVERED BY DR. APICHART PONGSRIHADULCHAI , VICE MINISTER, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATIVES, THAILAND		35-37
D. WELCOME ADDRESS BY HIROYUKI KONUMA, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND, FAO REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, DELIVERED BY VILI A. FUAVAO, DEPUTY REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, FAO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC		38-40

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIFS	ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework
AFSIS	ASEAN Food Security Information System
AFSRB	ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board
ALIS	Agricultural Land Information System
AMAF + 3	ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Plus Three (China, Japan and Republic of Korea)
AMIS	Agriculture Market Information System
APTERR	ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CARD	Coalition for African Rice Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBS	Food Balance Sheets
JAXA	Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NSO	National Statistics Office
NSS	National Statistical Systems
OAE	Office of Agricultural Economics
RESTEC	Remote Sensing Technology Center of Japan
RSC	Regional Steering Committee
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SIAP	United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
SPARS	Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SOM-AMAF	Senior Officials Meeting – ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry
SSC	South-South Cooperation
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
WFS	World Food Summit

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Government of Thailand hosted the ASEAN Stakeholders Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and the 8th Meeting of Directors-General of Agricultural Statistics and Information in ASEAN Plus Three Countries, convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), in Bangkok, Thailand from 15-17 June 2015. A total of 52 delegates from 11 AFSIS member countries and international organizations, and FAO staff participated in the session. The list of the participants is attached as *Appendix A*.

2. The main objectives of the Meeting were to enhance the understanding on the Global Strategy to improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, the relevant projects of ADB and the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), and to have a further discussion on issues related to the transformation of the AFSIS into a permanent mechanism. The Agenda of the Meeting appears in *Appendix B*.

OPENING SESSION

(Item 1 of the Agenda)

3. Dr. Apichart Pongsrihadulchai, Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives delivered the welcome address on behalf of H.E. Amnuay Patise, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), Thailand. He urge all participants that all comments and suggestions received during the Meeting will be useful for pushing forward the establishment of the permanent mechanism to provide timely and accurate food security information needed for policy planning and decision making.

4. He mentioned that in response to the global food price crisis in 2007-2009, the ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and the Strategic Plan of Action on the ASEAN Food Security (SPA-FS) which is now pursuing its second phase. A number of food security initiatives have been implemented under the AIFS framework. The establishment of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) is one of good examples. Currently, the

APTERR becomes a permanent mechanism to strengthen food security and reduce poverty within ASEAN Plus Three region.

5. He noted that the development of information system is also necessary for enhancing food security. In 2003, the ASEAN Plus Three countries agreed to establish the AFSIS Project which aim to provide timely and accurate information required for policy planning and implementation. Over a decade of its continued operation, the AFSIS is now in a period of transition to become a permanent mechanism followed a mandate of the Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry Plus Three (AMAF Plus Three), and he commended the AFSIS Secretariat for the hard work in preparing and in the development of the proposal for the establishment of the AFSIS as a permanent mechanism. He concluded his remarks by thanking the support from the FAO and the ADB for the financial support and the AFSIS Secretariat for convening this important meeting. The full text is attached as *Appendix C*.

6. The speech of Mr. Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director-General and FAO Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific was delivered by Mr. Vili A. Fuavao, Deputy Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. The ADG thanked the Thai Government, in particular the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) for hosting the session. He stressed that the meeting is of particular importance as it will provide a forum to share the information progress and challenges/good examples of the GS project with the ASEAN countries and the stakeholders in this region to date and discuss the appropriate sub-regional structure and a future strategy for mainstreaming the agricultural statistics in the ASEAN as a sub-regional institution. He also acknowledged the participation of country representatives from AFSIS member countries, as well as from key partners: ASEAN, SAARC, ADB and JAXA, and also other FAO colleagues.

7. He highlighted that besides eradication of hunger and malnutrition, FAO's new strategic objectives focused on sustainability of agriculture, reduction of rural poverty, and increasing resilience of livelihood to threats and crisis. Policies and regulatory frameworks prepared through inclusive approaches in the food systems will contribute to achieving these objectives at country level. The Global Strategy is a ground-breaking effort which has as one of the key recommendations that agriculture be integrated into national statistical systems. The Regional Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific defines the areas of support that the Asia Pacific region needs in terms of technical assistance, training and research to strengthen national capacities in a sustainable way.

8. He noted that the meeting is of particular importance as it will provide a forum to share the information/progress and challenges/good examples of the GS project with the ASEAN countries and the stakeholders in this region and discuss the appropriate sub-regional structure and a future strategy for mainstreaming the agricultural statistics in the ASEAN as a sub-regional institution. The full text is attached as *Appendix D*.

Issues and Challenges in Agricultural and Rural Statistics, Results from the ongoing Projects in the Asia and the Pacific
(Item 2 of the Agenda)

9. Mr. Romeo Recide, Chair of the Regional Steering Committee for the Global Strategy, chaired the Session. He began by asking the question on what is actually the problem, which is both the quantity and quality data, but there are limitations on the capacity, and technical skills. Fortunately there are bilateral and multilateral initiatives at global level, such as in ASEAN, FAO, ESCAP, Japan extended assistance. There are a number of institutions devoted to addressing the issues and challenges in agricultural statistics in the regions, such as the Global Strategy, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Office of Agricultural Economics and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

10. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava, Senior Statistician, FAORAP made a presentation on Issues and Challenges in Agricultural Statistics in the Region and FAO's interventions. His presentation covered FAO's mandate in statistics, scope of agricultural statistics, collaboration for capacity building, role of Global Strategy, FAO technical cooperation in ASEAN, and collaboration with ASEAN. He wanted to know how can FAO be more effective in delivering the technical advice through the ASEAN to its member countries.

11. The FAO's mandate in statistics is contained in Article I – Item 1 of FAO constitution and which states “The Organization shall collect, analyze, interpret and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture. In this Constitution, the term “agriculture” and its derivatives includes fisheries, marine products, forestry and primary forestry products.” Article IX of the constitution states that “all Member Nations and Associate Members shall also communicate regularly to the Director-General statistical, technical and other information published or otherwise issued by, or readily available to, the government.”

12. The scope of agricultural statistics covers data on crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry, environment, water, and social issues. The domain of agricultural statistics includes information (ad hoc or periodic, verbal or numeric), data (traditionally numeric, now digital also), reports (somewhat structured or routine), assessment (usually adhoc with some methodology), statistics (quality statements), and official statistics (quality/reliability, from independent source, established periodically and with assigned responsibility).

13. The declining quality of data was noticed around 2008 by large gaps in FAOSTAT and reliance on non-official data sources. On examination it was found that countries used outdated methodologies and had not adopted latest technology; subjective methods and administrative reporting systems were in vogue; inadequate financial and human resources, and diversity of administrative arrangements for statistical activities across countries were noted. Also, there was weak institutional infrastructure with overlapping roles and responsibilities, lack of coordination, absence of strategic planning to improve agricultural statistics on NSDS lines. Hence, there was a need for a big push to build country capacity to produce reliable statistics.

14. The Global Strategy is an initiative of the UNSC to be implemented in 90 countries in the world and 20 countries in Asia Pacific region for over 5 years. It was developed through extensive consultation with international organizations, national stakeholders and NGSs, with twin-track approach (NSO and MOA), and focused on strategic planning, capacity building and methodological research.

15. The Global Strategy has 3 pillars including establishing a minimum set of core data, integration of agriculture into national statistical system, and fostering sustainable agricultural statistical system. FAO has established collaboration for capacity building with ASEAN, SAARC, SPC, UN-ESCAP, UN-SIAP, ADB, with financial contribution from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Department for International Development, UK and etc.

16. FAO has a number of ongoing technical cooperation with ASEAN countries through its projects in the area of Food Security Information (Thailand, Philippines, and LaoPDR). FAO has supported agricultural census in Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia. The AMIS project in Thailand and the Philippines is supporting building of market information. Asian Regional Component of Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics is supporting Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam. FAO has participated in the recent ASEAN events namely: EU-ASEAN Capacity Building Project for Monitoring Integration Progress and Statistics (COMPASS), and ASEAN is invited to be a member of Regional Steering Committee for Global Strategy. There is a scope for greater engagement with ASEAN to improve agricultural statistics which is not adequately addressed in other sub-regional initiatives.

17. Mr. Allan Nicholls, Regional Project Coordinator, FAORAP presented the Progress of the Global Strategy in Asia and Pacific. The outline of his presentation covers 8 topics, including what is the global strategy, impact and outcome, three pillars of the global strategy, governance mechanisms, implementation process and output, summary of the main steps for technical assistance, progress in Asia Pacific and progress with in-country work in ASEAN countries.

18. The Global Strategy as an initiative of the United Nations Statistical Commission provides a conceptual framework for an integrated approach to data collection and the basis for a renewed initiative of capacity building in agricultural statistics fostering the mobilization of resources.

19. The impact is to improve evidence-based decision making for poverty reduction, increased food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development, and the outcome is to enable target countries to develop sustainable statistical system for production and dissemination of accurate and timely agricultural and rural statistics, comparable overtime and across countries.

20. For the governance mechanisms effective governing bodies set up and functioning at global level (Global Steering Committee, Global Office to support GSC at FAO Rome. At Regional level (Regional Steering Committee in each region, Regional Office to support RSC, Asia Pacific Regional Office at FAORAP Bangkok); and at National level wherein selected country identifies a Lead agency and nominates a senior official as National Strategy Coordinator and a Task Force to be constituted to oversee process.

21. Also mentioned on the implementation process and outputs, with the summary of the main steps such as the in-depth Country Assessment (IdCA) i.e. comprehensive assessment of a range of aspects of statistical capacity, identification of areas of weakness and output is an IdCA report endorsed by government. The Country proposal, based on IdCA information, is a prioritized list of short-term

activities needed to improve agricultural and rural statistics - for each activity, objectives, outcomes, tasks and costs are described, output is a country proposal paper endorsed by government. The GS can provide funding for some of these activities.

22. The Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS) is a 10 year strategy document with key output from the GS intended to be compatible with the national strategies for the development of statistics, and national development plans for agriculture. In terms of progress, the Regional Action Plan (RAP) has been developed and approved, the RSC is established, with initial country assessment questionnaire completed for most countries. Each year 4-6 countries are selected for intensive work, and training activities have begun. In 2015, a trial of a simplified Global Strategy implementation process will be conducted in cluster of Pacific Island Countries (yet to be determined). He also reported on the progress in the Asia Pacific countries namely Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Samoa, Bhutan, Fiji, Georgia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Maldives, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam. More detailed information was provided on progress with in-country work in the ASEAN countries namely Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Vietnam.

23. Mr. Lakashman Rao Nagraj, Statistician ADB, presented the ADB activities in support of Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics.

24. Updates of two ADB projects namely R-CDTA 8029 – Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics for Food Security (ending in August 2015), R-CDTA 8369 – Innovative Data Collection Methods for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (on-going activities).

25. R-CDTA 8029 – intended impact is to increase usage of agricultural and rural statistics in policy making for food security, and the expected outcome is to increase in agricultural and rural statistics that are of better quality and that are collected regularly.

26. Implementation arrangements December 2011- August 2015, close collaboration with SGAS, ESCAP and FAO, with countries covered are Bhutan, Lao PDR, Maldives, Philippines and Vietnam.

27. Accomplishments –supported the development of the regional action plan in collaboration with FAORAP, ESCAP and countries in the region, Country Action Plans – inputs gathered from stakeholders workshop and high level meetings, Lao PDR action plan endorsed by the government, draft completed for Bhutan, Vietnam, and Maldives, workshop materials are in the Community for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (CARS) website: <http://cars.adb.org>. The specific training programs offered are in basic statistics, sampling, national accounts, questionnaire design, survey operations and budgeting.

28. Methodological studies (six) including Bhutan Living Standards Survey, Examining the Available Data Sources for Agricultural Statistics in Bhutan, Examining the Existing Agriculture Data Sources in Lao PDR, Improving Agricultural Data Collection Systems in Lao PDR, Adoption of Agricultural Land Information System

(ALIS) for Agricultural Area Estimation in the Philippines and improving the design of livestock production probability surveys in Viet Nam.

29. Innovative Data Collection Methods for Agriculture and Rural Statistics with intended impact to have more evidence –based policies and programs for food security using innovative methods of data collection, with expected outcome to improve quality and timeliness of rice crop area and production estimates and forecasts. The outputs are customized software applications on analyzing satellite imagery and similar tools provided to pilot countries, selected staff in pilot countries are able to use output 1 as inputs in for rice crop estimation and forecasting methods and online training program on the use of satellite imagery and similar tools for agricultural and rural statistics provided for open access.

30. Implementation arrangements – source of funds from Japan Fund for poverty reduction, implementation period June 2013 – July 2016, countries covered, Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, technical advisor JAXA consulting firm is the Remote Sensing Technology Center of Japan in joint venture with the Asian Institute of Technology.

31. General Approach : International Asian Harvest Monitoring System for Rice (INAHOR) software developed by JAXA to be tailored to pilot countries specific needs, both optical and radar satellite imagery used. A series of four training programs will be undertaken to teach implementing agencies staff on the use of the modified INAHOR for estimating rice area and production.

32. What has been done so far, two trainings in each pilot country on basic remote sensing concepts and use of the INAHOR software with archived data along with subsequent updates to country specific INAHOR software. Technical and business requirements for modifying INAHOR determined in consultation with implementing agencies, JAXA and the ADB project team, and the training on QGIS software.

33. Remaining activities, phased software development, training and field validation for remote sensing application for agricultural statistics, until mid 2016, ground-truthing survey in Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam at the start of wet cropping season of 2015 (July 2015). Crop cutting exercises in Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam during harvest season of 2015 (October 2015), and on-line training program for remote sensing application in agricultural statistics. For more information: <http://cars.adb.org> (Community for Agricultural and Rural Statistics).

34. Mr. Kimihiko Eura, Project Coordinator, FAORAP, presented the Progress of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) Project in Thailand and the Philippines. The three point outline covers about AMIS, AMIS progress and activities 2014-2015 and the project funded by Japan.

35. AMIS is a G20 initiative to increase food market transparency and reduce the likelihood of food price volatility in crops i.e. wheat, maize, rice, and soybeans with focus on production, utilization, stocks and trade. The overall structure and governance includes the AMIS Secretariat, Global Food Market Information Group and Rapid Response Forum. The participants are G20 Members plus Spain and seven invited countries. The GEOGLAM, the Group on Earth Observations

developed the Global Agricultural Monitoring, launched at the same time. The GEOGLAM provides the monitoring data to AMIS.

36. The AMIS Results Framework: 2012-2017 comprise of five outputs namely : Information collection, research, capacity development, dissemination, and policy dialogue. Information collection includes monthly decomposition of S&D balances, market indicators, policy database, exchange programme, and S&D forecasts.

37. Research opportunities are on estimating feed utilization, price transmission from global benchmarks, stocks measurements. Also mentioned on capacity development initiatives with Japan invested 1.4M USD and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation totaled to 5.7MUSD for Thailand, Philippines, Bangladesh, India and Nigeria.

38. For dissemination on regular production of the AMIS Market Monitor plus its online version as of October 2014, user survey conducted in December 2014 confirming the usefulness and relevance of the Monitor, and extensive exchanges with GEOGLAM to develop innovative charts on growing condition in the Crop Monitor.

39. Policy dialogue such as the 3rd Session of the Rapid Response Forum hosted by ABARE in Australia (March 2014); 4th Session hosted by DEFRA in the United Kingdom (March 2015); 5th Session of the Global Food Market Information Group hosted by SIAP in Mexico (May 2014); 6th and 7th Session in FAO (October 2014; May 2015); and National Workshop on feed utilization and other workshops under the capacity development projects.

40. The projects funded by Japan with the objective to improve the capacity of Thailand and the Philippines to deliver accurate statistics, effectively monitor rice markets and produce relevant data on food security, with project duration from November 2012 to October 2015, with total budget of USD 1,417,770.

41. The outputs are existing data on rice supply and demand assessed, methodologies for estimating rice area, yield and production and stocks improved, guidelines prepared for the estimation of rice area, yield and production, and stocks, staff in National Statistical Offices and Ministries of Agriculture in Thailand and the Philippines are able to apply improved methodologies, improved methodologies disseminated to other stakeholders.

42. The project has made progress on its activities included the completion of status report on rice, organization of 1st joint workshop with both target countries to identify priority activities, developing crop cutting survey in the Philippines, study tour on rice data quality control system to the Philippines, trainings on data quality control for rice surveys in Thailand, organization of 2nd Joint Workshop with both target countries and relevant agencies, conducting pilot crop cutting surveys in the Philippines, and trainings on improved methodologies of data quality control of rice surveys in Thailand.

43. There will be two upcoming activities in Thailand namely : Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI); and Rice Utilization/On-farm rice stocks. Also two activities to be conducted in the Philippines that include in-depth analysis of rice

production/area survey data; and Supply Utilization Accounts (SUA), and one regional activities on Final Workshop with AFSIS : experience sharing.

Discussions:

44. The Chair opened the floor for discussion on the four papers presentation, by initiating questions for deliberations such as on what else can FAO, ADB or AMIS can do for the region?

45. Ms. Roziah Binti Abudin from the Malaysian delegation inquired on the criteria how the countries are selected for the projects. Mr. Allan Nicholls responded that the selection of countries for intensive capacity building programs was based on a range of factors including the statistical capacity of the country in terms of resources and infrastructures, willingness of the country to get involved, the role of agriculture and its contribution to GDP, and the importance of agriculture to employment generation. As the program is quite resource intensive, there is a need to have good distribution among the countries in the region. Other factors may include the agencies and ministries responsible for the statistics, whether they are centralized or decentralized systems. The Steering Committees consider the proposals and make recommendations. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava added that FAO is committed to all member countries to support capacity building to improve their agricultural statistics. Under the GS Regional Action Plan there is a financial and manpower resource constraint. However, there is scope to include additional countries using additional resources. Some innovative ways like secondment of national staff to FAO or establishing country funded projects can augment resources and enhance the country coverage. Any such proposals from countries will be encouraged.

46. Mr. Muhammad Tassim Billah from the Indonesian delegation informed the meeting that the proposal for in-depth country assessment of Indonesia was already submitted from the NSO for conducting survey on livestock, plantation, horticulture and food crops and inquired on the possibility of implementation particularly on budget allocation. Mr. Allan Nicholls responded that the World Bank also has a project in Indonesia which encompasses the whole statistical system. This project includes a review of the collection of horticulture and estate crops. The main GS activity is on the development of the SPARS for Indonesia, while improvements to livestock statistics are recognized as important. In terms of budget, GS will fund the SPARS development, but Indonesia is in a fortunate position of being able to fund some of the other activities, including development of a sample survey to produce accurate rice production estimates. The Chair also commented that the projects proposed should be in-line with the GS.

47. Mr. Sar Chetra from the Cambodian delegation thanked the FAO for support to the census project in Cambodia. In relation to the GS, census data do not provide information to cover study on the demand and supply which are important for development planning. Apart from this, only the Department of Planning works with this project, but should also include other related Departments like Livestock Department. Taking Indonesia and Philippines as an example where they have more health information, hence is it possible to also engage other Departments related to food security. For other data that needed to be collected, should work closely with the technical department with focus on food security aspect. However, Cambodia still use the old methodology on data gathering, hence there is a need for more modern

methods like GIS which is important for development planning. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava responded that GS is a comprehensive system, and the first step is to set up a Task Force wherein all important players have to be involved to make sure that all demands and needs of the data are taken into consideration. There would be a series of surveys to gather current data which will be mentioned in a comprehensive national survey calendar,

48. Mr. Romeo S. Recide from the Philippine delegation thanked FAO for the food security systems and the in-depth analysis, also for the ADB project and for the AMIS project, which all contributed to the data improvement.

Importance of Integration of Agricultural Statistics into the National Statistics System

(Item 3 of the Agenda)

49. Mr. Allan Nicholls, Regional Project Coordinator, FAORAP, chaired the Session.

50. Mr. Dalip Singh, Statistician, FAORAP, made a presentation on Integration into National Statistical Systems (NSS) and Process of Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS). He presented various aspects of integration as envisaged in the second pillar of the Global Strategy, SPARS as a tool for integrating agricultural and rural statistics, SPARS guidelines to assist countries with SPARS development and its implementation.. The presentation noted that data are produced by several line ministries and agencies which contributed to difficulties in coordinating, lack of standards, duplication of work, scarce awareness of data producers on users needs and policy initiatives, and little use of available data by the policy makers. In this regards, the GS recognized these issues, hence promotes the integrated data collection, processing and dissemination approach, coordination mechanisms to achieve a high level of cooperation and commitment by agencies, and adoption of newer methods and technologies emanating from research.

51. An integration is needed to enable the production of coherent and comparable data through the use of standards and an in-depth data analysis across sectors/collections, as well as integration will avoid duplication of efforts, prevent the release of conflicting statistics, ensure the best use of resources and reduce the burden of response.

52. The GS vision of integration considers ARS as part of the overall data collection process in the NSS to ensure, seamless flow of information across the processes for efficient functioning and includes provision of common governance structure for NSS, use of standard concepts, definitions and classifications across NSS. The components of the integration of the survey processes are the National Survey Calendar, Integration of the Population and Housing Census (PHC) and Agricultural Census, questionnaires, methods of data collection, analysis and estimation and use of a Master Sample Frame (MSF) for all ARS data collection. The integrated database needs to have data integration across censuses and surveys, use of latest technology to maintain database and ease of access to data for the stakeholders. The flow chart for an integrated survey framework was also presented.

53. GS research component has produced a number of publications on data integration which included the technical report on the integrated survey framework, the technical report on identifying the most appropriate sampling frame for specific landscape types, guidelines for integrated survey framework, and technical report on improving the use of GPS, GIS, and remote sensing in setting up MSF

54. FAO recommendations on integration are to use common concepts, definitions and classifications, sharing of field material, PHC to provide a frame for agricultural census, identifying farm households from PHC and other possible use as agricultural sample frame, collecting additional agricultural data in PHC to enable development of frames or compilation of tables, linking data from two censuses, and conducting two censuses as joint field operation.

55. Also presented was the Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS) which is a long-term strategy to improve ARS (5-10 years). The 10 essentials for SPARS are: backed by political support, nationally led and owned, designed through a sound methodological approach (including M&E mechanisms), mainstreamed into the NSDS national process, covering the whole agricultural and rural sector, policy and results based with a quality fit for purpose, taking into account what is in place and international commitments, drawing on international statistical standards, setting out an integrated and realistic statistical capacity building programme, funded as a priority by governments for its implementation, and serving as a coherent framework for external assistance.

56. SPARS is a tool for integration, with guidelines and objectives to support country staff with a coherent and logical structure to design and implement SPARS, with specific guidance as they implement the logical plans, with a reference document that provides recommendations in line with NSDS guidelines developed by Paris 21.

57. The salient features of SPARS are ownership (SPARS to be country owned, and NSO/Ministries/Coordinating body with roles identified); governance structure (approval of SPARS at what level, overall and sub-sector plans, its implementation as to who will coordinate and monitor the progress), integration of agriculture into NSS, and the need for technical committees/specialists for crops and livestock, forestry and environment, and fisheries and aquaculture.

58. The design process includes the launch phase or understanding, acknowledging, committing, preparing, integrating the SPARS in the NSDS and how to do it in practice. Second is the assessment phase and third is the planning phase to formulate the vision and mission, strategic goals and outputs : building a logframe, action planning and how to do it in practice.

59. Lessons learnt in developing NSDS are that only major statistical activities (survey, census) are covered, issues are raised regarding data quality, availability, capacity, gaps but often no specific strategy to address them on a sector level, funding for agriculture statistics is limited to Census of Agriculture, livestock census, national agricultural survey, and major crop surveys, administrative data sources rarely addressed, coordination and data sharing arrangement among data producing agencies still weak, and standardization, harmonization of data rarely addressed.

60. Priorities and expectations for GS work included the involvement of all stakeholders in achieving the GS objectives, making available comprehensive documentation of agricultural statistical system in the country, preparing SPARS and promoting improvement of ARS in all sub-sectors as per plan, promoting partnerships for implementing SPARS, and expectation of an active AFSIS role in implementing GS activities in ASEAN countries.

61. Mr. Romeo Recide, Interim Deputy National Statistician, Philippine Statistics Authority, Philippines, presented the Agricultural Statistics within National Statistics System in the Philippines. The outline of presentation includes an overview of the Philippine Statistical System, legislative provisions for AgStat data collection, mechanisms for AgStat data collection and dissemination, funding for AgStat activities, linkage between sectorial development plans and statistical development, experience of strategic planning and implementation of plans for statistical development, lessons learned/best practices on effective coordination, and future directions.

62. The Philippine Statistical System (PSS) is the government-wide system of providing statistical information and services to the public and aims to provide timely, accurate and useful statistics for the government and the public, especially for planning and decision-making. The major statistical agencies in the PSS were also presented. A National Statistical Coordination Board was established to serve as the policy making and coordinating body.

63. Also mentioned was the former Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, which was a staff bureau under the Department of Agriculture. The Highlights of transition in mandates from BAS to PSA by the Executive Order No. 116 in 1987 to additional mandates under the Republic Act 8435 Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) in 1997 to the Republic Act 10625 Philippine Statistical Act of 2013. Comparing the PSS to PSA the former has more decentralized set-up while the latter has more centralized set-up.

64. The Philippine Statistics Authority is attached to the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) for the purpose of policy coordination. It comprised of the PSA Board and offices on: sectoral statistics, censuses and technical coordination, civil registration and central support and field statistical services, and primarily responsible for all national censuses and surveys, sectoral statistics, consolidation of selected administrative recording systems and compilation of the national accounts. The PSA structure is headed by the National Statistician with three offices under its supervision namely the Sectoral Statistics Office, Censuses and Technical Coordination Office and the Civil Registration and Central Support Office. The roles and responsibilities of the PSA are to conduct agriculture and fisheries census, surveys of agriculture and fisheries, and survey of forests.

65. He also mentioned on the Philippine Statistical Development Program (2011-2017) which defines priority statistical programs and activities designed to provide vital information support for Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) as well as promote efficiency of statistical operation. Also it is a tool for integrating and coordinating the statistical activities of the government and enjoins compliance and cooperation among various agencies. Most importantly on the chapter on agriculture and agrarian reform, and chapter 7 on agriculture and fisheries statistics. Also, the

Agricultural Statistics Development Program (2010-2016) is a long-term program that sets the directions and strategies for the generation and dissemination of agricultural statistics, and accounts for the current programs, projects and activities and those that can address the emerging information needs of the various clients and stakeholders in the agriculture sector.

66. On Legislative provision as stated in the Mandates and Functions of the PSA under Republic Act 10625 articulated in the Rule 4 on Mandates, Rule 5 on Functions. The mechanism for AgStat data collection and dissemination is through membership to inter-agency committees and technical committees for technical working groups, user-producer dialogue/forum, and advocacy and dissemination activities. Funding for AgStat activities is integrated in the PSA budget starting 2015, and supplemental budget in the form of Trust Funds to fund special/developmental projects from the Department of Agriculture.

67. He highlighted that the National Economic and Development Authority should include statistical development in its Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) a step that would highlight the key role that statistics can play in smarter governance. Among the lessons learned/best practices on effective coordination is optimizing the services of Inter-Agency Technical Working Groups, Task Forces etc., creation of inter-agency statistical committees (IACs) to coordinate and resolve agency and sectoral concerns on statistical matters. The IACs serves as a forum for discussion of the issues raised by concerned producers, users and other stakeholders of sectoral and agency-specific statistics. Another is the formation of a system of designated statistics which is a mechanism that identifies and generates the most critical and essential statistics required for social and economic planning/analysis based on approved criteria, and statistical survey review and clearance system (SSRCS) which involves the process of evaluating the design and instruments of statistical surveys or censuses sponsored and/or to be conducted by government agencies including government corporations at the national and/or subnational level. For future statistical directions, Philippines would consolidate the recent reorganization, and update the Philippine Statistical Development Program (PSDP).

68. Mr. Mohammad Tassim Billah, Director, Center for Agricultural Data and Information Systems, Ministry of Agriculture Indonesia, presented the agricultural statistics system in Indonesia. The outline of his presentation included the organizational structure of the agricultural statistics system, data collection systems, main output, methodology, resources and dissemination of agricultural statistics.

69. The overview of the statistical system, the Statistics Law, Act No. 16, 1997 provides the legal basis for statistical activities in Indonesia and mentions the BPS – Statistics Indonesia (BPS) as the executing agency for statistical activities. The Act also mandates BPS to assist all ministries including Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, and Ministry of Environment and Forestry in conducting their sectoral statistics, and ministries are empowered to collect and compile their sectors for monitoring and evaluating their policies and programs. Based on Act No. 22, 1999, MoA could not directly manage its data collection from the district/municipality. Therefore, BPS and MoA and the autonomous local government authorities have made an agreement in providing sustainable agriculture data, especially food crops and horticulture crops.

70. The local government must continually collect data of planted and harvested areas for food crops and horticulture crops. Also the local government's staffs have to work together with BPS' staff in sub-district to collect a crop cutting survey for estimating productivity of food crops. Production and harvested areas of horticulture crops have to be collected by the local government. BPS is responsible to process and publish data of food crops and horticulture crops, conducts a press release every four months to disseminate the food crops estimates and every year for special horticulture crops, i.e. red chili and shallot, and collects data of estate crops from all establishments with legal entity by mailing systems.

71. The organizational structure of the NSO, the organizational structure of the Chief of Statistician, MOA, Center for Agricultural Data and Information System (CADIS), and agricultural statistics at Ministerial level were presented. The integration and coordination of agricultural statistics are done by NSO (census and surveys), Ministries (surveys and administrative reports), and Local Agricultural Service Offices (surveys and administrative reports).

72. The agricultural data classification includes the upstream/input data (machineries, fertilizer, pesticide, seed, natural resources and capital resources), on-farm/production data (food crops, horticulture, livestock, estate crops, forestry, fisheries), down-stream data (processing, trading, GNP, Farmer's Term of Trade, investment), and supporting data (human resources and technology resources). The methodology used in agricultural statistics are census, survey, and administrative reports. The international classification adopted are the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), Central Product Classification (CPS), and Harmonized System Classification (HS).

73. Resources of the agricultural statistics system are human resources, financial resources and physical resources. Dissemination of agricultural statistics are done through agricultural statistics publication, NSO agriculture statistics publications, MOA statistics publication, statistical publication and database for agricultural commodities (food crops, horticulture, estate crops, and livestock), statistical publications and databases for agricultural infrastructure and social-economics, publication of marine fisheries statistics, publication of aquaculture statistics, data dissemination through website : BPS-Statistics Indonesia Website : www.bps.go.id; Ministry of Agriculture's Web Site: www.pertanian.go.id; Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fishery : www.kkp.go.id; Ministry of Forestry : www.dephut.go.id.

74. Mr. Makoto Shimizu, Director, Statistics Planning Division, Statistics Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan, presented the agricultural statistical system in Japan.

75. He began by presenting the history related to official statistics in Japan way back in 1870 when the first modern product statistics by prefecture were compiled. He compared the characteristics of decentralized statistical system with its advantages of accuracy, usability, meticulousness and flexibility, however also with disadvantages of lack of impartiality, transparency, accessibility and comparability. The development of the statistical system in Japan relies on the vertical system taking advantage of decentralized system and the horizontal approach compensating for disadvantage of decentralization by coordination.

76. He also presented the Administrative Framework of Agricultural Statistics in Japan comprise on top by the MAFF Statistics Department, Regional Agricultural Administration Office Statistics Department, and the Local Offices Staff for Statistics. The methodologies of agricultural surveys, the role of agricultural statistics in policy making, and the methodologies to promote usability, accuracy and meticulousness were also presented. Bookkeeping by farmers sampled for survey on farm management and economy and the yield survey of rice for statistics on crops were set as examples.

77. The diagrams showing the principles of change of Statistics Act, the outline of coordination of Official Statistics in Japan, role of statistics commission and the system of the Master Plan concerning the development of official statistics for five years to ensure effective coordination were also presented.

78. He also presented the outline of the Second Term Master Plan (FY2014-FY2018) comprising of basic perspectives and policies in developing measures, development of official statistics, matters necessary for the development of official statistics, and the promotion of the second term Master Plan including the diagram on the construction and utilization of the business register to strengthen accuracies and efficiencies and e-Stat to enhance the accessibility and compatibility. The e-Stat provides a one-stop online service for obtaining statistical information published by ministries on the Internet, and enables users to view and download official statistics with convenient features such as retrieving data by prefecture and municipality, and drawing statistical maps. It could be accessed through <http://www.e-star.go.jp/SG1/estat/eStatTopPortalE.do>.

79. Ms. Nongnooch Deetae, Senior Expert for Agricultural Statistics System, Centre for Agricultural Information, Office of Agricultural Economics, MOAC, Thailand presented the Agricultural Statistics within National Statistics System in Thailand.

80. The National Agriculture Statistical System in Thailand is a decentralized system, with the agriculture data collected by two agencies namely the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies (MICT) by the National Statistical Office covering census (agriculture and marine fisheries) and intercensal survey (agriculture, marine fisheries), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) by the Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE) conducts agricultural and agricultural socio-economic surveys. The NSO is the central state agency in charge of the technical statistics work.

81. The role and responsibility of OAE, the collection and dissemination agricultural statistics by NSO, Enumeration Area (EA) of the Agricultural Census, collection and dissemination of agricultural statistics by OAE conducted through surveys, report, forecasting and remote sensing and GIS were also reported.

82. Vision and Strategy of Thailand Statistical Master Plan (2011-2015) with the vision as “Thailand has a statistical system that drives all the agencies together. Thailand will have the official statistics to develop the country” has three strategic plan namely: 1) Efficient management of the statistical system, 2) standardized statistical production, and 3) equal access to statistical data. Thailand’s Statistical Master Plan has the principal idea governed by the Statistical Committee with two

Sub-Committees on the Sectoral Statistics Sub-Committees (21 sub-committees) and the Provincial Statistics Sub-Committees (76 sub-committees).

83. The Implementation of Thailand Statistical Master Plan (2011-2015) or TSMP with cabinet approval on 3 May 2011, involving the Committee on National Statistical System Management (3 major statistics: social, economics and natural resources and environment) and the Academic Advisory Committee. Under the Committee on National Statistical System Management are two subsidiary bodies the Sectoral Statistical Sub-Committee (21 sectors) which is function base, and the Provincial Statistical Sub-committee (76 provinces) which is more area base. The way forward for implementing the TSMP among others, the Cabinet approval on 4 June 2013; merging statistical development plan with government agencies action plan, maintaining manpower related to statistical staff, flexibility in mobilizing budget of government NSO will conduct the assessment of OS. Also, the NSO will develop the centralized system for statistical service (including the development of the input, searching and presentation feature) such as Data Networking, for which the statistics is used worthwhile, and the NSO will provide the capacity building programs i.e. good practices for the production of statistics and the use of statistical service system.

Session Discussions:

84. The Chair opened the floor for discussion by commenting that integration should not be confused with decentralization and centralization.

85. Responding to a question from Mr. Mukesh Srivastava, Ms. Nongnooch Deetae informed different departments participate in preparation of national statistics master plan lead by the NSO but for its implementation the budget is provided by individual departments.

86. The Chair asked the Philippine delegation on how integration is happening under the reorganisation? Mr. Romeo Recide responded that a number of aspects of integration have improved as a result of the reorganisation. However, the main driver for the reorganisation was to improve efficiency, for example in the provinces there are more offices than one, and also in the operations, even if all the departments are doing their own operations by mandate. Also HIES, on food consumption surveys, so there is now impetus on integrating, however, integration is still happening there is still need to review. For example in the labor force survey, we are covering only agriculture while the other do the rest, but we hope it is going to happen with our initiatives. Also the role of the agencies, they have put up the inter-agencies committees. Further the Chair commented that the inter-agencies committees are the keys to integration. Mr. Romeo Recide further commented that the biggest arguments with the organization is the nimbleness of the agricultural sector, but today that flexibility will continue to be there with consolidated budget, we are getting funds from the MOA to continue the survey, so there are mechanisms like designating the agency to do the work.

Place of Agricultural Statistics in the Sub-Regional Organization (Item 4 of the Agenda)

87. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava, Senior Statistician, FAORAP chaired the Session. He outlined the importance of working with a sub-regional organization, as it is cost-

effective, leads to sustainable impact on countries and enhances collaboration within a group. Also sub-region has a degree of homogeneity in agriculture and administrative systems may face common challenges. Also it fosters greater harmonization and standardizing the data for making common policies..

88. Mr. Montol Jeamcharoen, AFSIS Manager, AFSIS Secretariat, presented the Establishment of ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) and Current Situation.

89. The ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) has the first phase during 2003-2007 with the second phase 2008-2012 as a subsidiary body under AMAF + 3 with MAFF, Japan as the funding agency. From 2013 onwards, AFSIS would be transformed into the permanent mechanism, with the objective to strengthen food security in the region through the systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of food security related information.

90. The status and organizational organization of AFSIS is governed by the ASEAN Sectoral Ministerial Bodies under the three ASEAN Community Pillars the ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). The AFSIS is under the purview of the AMAF together with the APTERR, AFSRB as a subsidiary body under AMAF and AMAF+3.

91. The AFSIS structure comprise of the AFSIS Board (Director-General of the Agricultural Statistics and information from APT countries, provide policy directions and give guidance for AFSIS implementation); the AFSIS Focal Points (Working Committee of the AFSIS eat APT Country to implement the AFSIS activities); and the AFSIS Secretariat (responsible for administrative coordination and facilitate necessary support to all activities). The AFSIS Secretariat Organization Structure comprise of AFSIS Manager, AFSIS Expert, Academic Affairs and General Administrator Section, Finance and Accounting Section and Technical Section.

92. The AFSIS offers four products and services including AFSIS Database (time series data, related to five major food crops i.e. rice, maize, soybean, sugarcane, cassava, planted and harvested areas, production and yields, crop calendar, wholesale/farmgate prices, value and quantity of imports and exports, food balance sheet, cost of production population, total labor force in agriculture, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), GDP in Agriculture, per capita income, land use, etc.

93. The statistical data are disseminated through the AFSIS Website (www.afsisnc.org) and the Integrated Food Security Information i.e. Early Warning Information (EWI), Agricultural Commodity Outlook (ACO), Food Security Forecasting Model (FSFM), Food Security Briefs, and the ASEAN Food Security Analysis Report (AFSAR).

94. A total of 34 training and capacity development coursed were conducted that builds the capacity of a total of 667 related stakeholders. Examples of course are the Training on Advanced Learning Programme for ASEAN Food Security Professionals and the Training on the Forecasting Model. Among the cross cutting and new areas of collaboration are the Agricultural Information Institute of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

(MAFRA), the Remote Sensing Technology Center of Japan (RESTEC), The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

95. The current functional implementation includes the database maintenance, dissemination of publication (ACO, EWI, AFSAR), FSI Training and Workshop (FSFM, Korea and China), and exploration of partnership and cooperation with FAO, ADB, JAXA, CAAS, etc.

96. The progress on the initiative for establishing the AFSIS into permanent mechanism are as follows: the four (4) main components in establishing the AFSIS into permanent mechanism have been finalized namely structure, products and services, financial modality, and rules and procedures. Also, the progress of the transformation of the AFSIS shall be submitted to the AMAF+3 Meeting in the Philippines in September 2015 for endorsement, hence it is expected that the endorsement shall be entered into force from September 2015 onwards.

97. The procedures of the transformation of the AFSIS are as follows: the 8th AFSIS DG Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand to be held during 15017 June 2015 will consider the final draft of the documents related to the transformation of the AFSIS. The 14th SSOM-AMAF + 3 Meeting in August 2015 in Myanmar will consider and agree on the documents before submission to the AMAF + 3, then the 15th AMAF + 3 Meeting in September 2015 in the Philippines will sign and endorse the MOU of the establishment of the AFSIS as a Permanent Mechanism.

98. Mr. MJH Jabed, Director (Agriculture and Rural Development), SAARC Secretariat presented the Future of Agricultural Statistics in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). He began his presentation by giving the relevance of SAARC as it accounts for a quarter of the global population (roughly 1.7 bn), agriculture is the source of livelihood for 51% of the South Asians, and 42% of South Asia's landmass is under agricultural operation.

99. The statistics situation in South Asia is subscription to GDDS/SDDS was 100%, CRVS coverage over 90%:25%, population census in the last 5 years was 75% (6 out of 8 countries), agriculture census in the last 5 years was 75% of the countries, industrial data no latest data in the last 5 years, trade data was 87.5% of countries with latest data in the last 5 years.

100. The SAARC Agriculture Centre produce statistical data book. The contents covers production : crops, livestock, poultry and fisheries with top twenty commodities by quantity and value, demographic data, general presentation of top-9 products such as cereals, pulses, oil seeds, fruits, vegetables etc. Unfortunately no own dataset, for data, the publication relies on FAO, World Bank, ADB, national statistical bureaus of Member States, no dedicated information on crop production in the rural areas, no analysis comparing timelines/crops, inconsistencies caused by variance in information received from different sources could not be addressed. He provided the country scenario of four (4) from the eight (8) member countries of the SAARC such as India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.

101. He also presented the SAARCSTAT accessible at <http://www.sarrcstat.org> which was launched on 24 April 2012. The agricultural statistics not yet incorporated

in SAARCSTAT, and they are contemplating a web-based, user friendly portal/database for agricultural statistics to be created and maintained by the SAARC Agriculture Center. Efforts would be to make the database as comprehensive as possible so that professionals and policy makers can use it for important policy decisions.

102. The future of SAARC would be towards the developing a comprehensive and user-friendly agri-statistics database high on the agenda of SAARC. SAARC Agriculture Center is now engaged in developing the SAARC Food Security Information System, as decided in the last meeting of the SAARC Food Bank Board (2014), and the SAARC Agriculture Centre to create and maintain the database. Data sharing and development of interface with similar database of other regional organizations such as BIMSTEC and ASEAN.

103. In the absence of Ms. Anna Fink, the Chair presented the briefing paper on the Pacific Strategic Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural. The paper provides a brief overview of ongoing discussions, regarding the creation of a sub-regional initiative for the inclusion of small Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) into the Asia Pacific Regional Action Plan on Agricultural and Rural Statistics (RAP). The overall objective is to support food security, sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation in the Pacific through the development of evidence based policy. This will be done by establishing a long-term comprehensive action plan for the Pacific on agricultural and rural statistics, called Pacific Strategic Plan for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (PSPAR). The strategy will be designed to meet the specific requirements of PICTs, small PICTs in particular, to enable them to partake in the wider global initiative on agricultural and rural statistics. It will provide a governance structure, source of funds, and be fully integrated with the regional Ten Year Pacific Statistics Strategy (TYPSS) and countries' own National Strategies for the Development of dissemination, as well as active promotion of, and technical support to improve data use, as well as research, training and general technical assistance. The ultimate outcome would be the creation of a PSPAR which provides the foundation for cross-governmental coordination and collaboration in the generation and use of vital agricultural and rural statistics for evidence based policy development.

Discussions and Conclusion

(Item 5 of the Agenda)

104. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava chaired the Session, and urged the delegates to comment or give ideas regarding all the presentations. initiated an issue for the meeting to deliberate

105. Mr. Ryuki Ikeda asked on GS especially on technical aspects on master sampling plan, as it was understood that the GS master sampling system seemed to be the list frame sampling as use of the sampling frame of population census, it might bring merit on the consistent results from many surveys using unified sampling frame, however it would become outdated as day by day passed and as countries could not organize census frequently, so how could the multiple frame sampling and/or the area frame sampling be introduced to GS. Mr. Dalip Singh responded that multiple frame sampling and the area frame sampling which might be introduced to suitable countries, also currently GIS were used by some

countries where they digitized the area maps. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava clarified that that the choice of sampling frame was also determined by the objectives of the survey and type of data to be collected.

106. Mr. Montol Jeamcharoen shared his opinion that the agricultural statistics is quite big so it may be difficult to combine with other statistical sector, hence decentralized is easier to manage. If we request on the center example the NSO it is quite difficult to provide data information to the MOAC. He also inquired on the GS initiative where he view might be centralization. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava clarified that GS is not promoting centralization but it is trying to do integration of data. The centralization and decentralization are two hypothetical things but the most important is on the coordination and integration. Mr. Montol Jeamcharoen further viewed that if member countries would like to implement the GS how this could be implemented, for Thailand there is no GS implementation yet.

107. Mr. Muhammad Tassim Billah shared the view that there is a need to define exactly what is decentralize and centralize. It should be put in the meeting notes so that it would be clear. With Mr. Mukesh presentation, for example in Indonesia, the harvested area collected by the agriculture while the yield was collected by the PBS, hence perceived as centralized, hence there should be clear definition on centralized and decentralized to have common perception. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava responded that some activities of the statistical system may be centralized and others maybe decentralized. What is important is to develop a system that is well coordinated wherein each agency is clear on its role and responsibility, and the inconsistent data are avoided. Classifying a country as centralization and de-centralization is not important but what is important is the best practices, such as in Thailand are adopted for building a strong sustainable system. Mr. Muhammad Tassim Billah responded that in summary the final product is one single data.

108. Mr. Montol Jaemcharoen commented that if the country sees that importance of the GS, how this could be implemented. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava responded due to limited resources, countries are selected for implementation of Global Strategy, but if there are more resources available, FAO could support specific project to some countries. Another four countries will be selected in November 2015.

109. Dr. Win Htut from Myanmar asked on how the national government get endorsement. In centralized system it is easier to implement, unlike Myanmar where very decentralized, we need to combine all the agencies. If there is already centralized system already established it would be very easy to implement. He inquired if there are any examples in getting approval from the government on GS. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava reiterated that that most suitable system for a country will be based on its administrative system for development. Dr. Win Htut shared his own opinion the GS is to make a centralized system, however Mr. Mukesh Srivastava responded that GS is to develop the capacity of the countries to develop a sound system for collection of agricultural statistics which is cost-effective. Moreover, Mr. Allan Nicholls added that the capacity on data collection and more coordination are important features of GS. The inter-agency committee would be important, identify the data collection activities, identify who should be responsible and there should be coordination in the related agencies. Mr. Dalip Singh added that there are two dimension i.e. law and dissemination of data, dissemination of data is done by one office irrespective of who collected the area that means it is centralized, and

mentioned his experience in Myanmar, when GS was introduced, two Bills and High Level Committee now formed on different agricultural sectors, so already a system has been established that improve the decentralized system, so it is the ultimate objectives. Mr. Kimihiko Eura also commented that it is important to strengthen the coordination system within Myanmar.

110. Mr. Xaypladeth Choulamany from Laos PDR commented that many of the concerns have been answered, and he thinks that the initiative is having good progress, but the challenge is how to implement. In Laos, they have completed the in-depth assessment and may be endorsed by the government by July and from that will develop the Strategic Plan of Action, and to integrate with the projects to ensure alignment of all the projects. Also, they will submit the SPARS with the agriculture working group, to align the projects and better coordinate the work, hence, if GS and SPARS could be submitted there could have a better coordination among the WGs, civil societies, government and development partners. By this approach there will be better integration, synergy, cooperation with ASEAN member countries as well so that there would be sharing of information at ASEAN level through the AFSIS.

111. Ms. Low Lai Kim from Singapore asked two questions on regional and FAO plans. First is as a member of AFSIS to establish a permanent mechanism to assist inquired on AFSIS dependence to FAO on financial support, and the second question is as FAO focus on crops, livestock, fisheries are there also for other commodities included. Mr. Allan Nicholls responded that crops includes horticulture, forage, forestry, livestock and fisheries. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava clarified that AFSIS is not depending on FAO for funding nor is under FAO management in any way. Nonetheless, FAO is collaborating with ASEAN through AFSIS.

112. Mr. Sar Chetra from Cambodia requested the ASEAN Secretariat on the clarification for commodities included in the food security including livestock and fisheries to be included in the AFSIS. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava responded that food security is comprehensive concept that brings together all sources of nutrition including crops, livestock, and fisheries, but for projects like AFSIS we need to narrow down the scope of the commodities. Mr. Montol Jaemcharoen mentioned that during the initial stage, it was identified only staple food so now AFSIS cover only five (5) staple food. However, in some AMAF meetings also mentioned to also cover the other commodity, but at present there is no exact definition on food security but only emphasized on staple foods.

113. The Chair asked the floor on how FAO could work together more effectively and how to shape permanent mechanism. Mr. Montol Jaemcharoen responded that FAO may have difficulty to work with country by country basis, and the data may be outdated, so if AFSIS could be a permanent mechanism, it could provide an opportunity to work with FAO, but FAO only provide technical assistance but not budget, most of the support from the Japan government. AFSIS is willing to collaborate with FAO to implement the GS and could be easier than working with country by country basis.

114. Mr. Sar Chetra from Cambodia responded that FAO support country by country and to his understanding, if FAO could strengthen all the 10 countries then could work with the FAO, but the methodology are old and outdated, hence in GS should contact the NSO, and he agrees with the Chair on some part could be

centralized some could be decentralized. So there should be national capacity building in all ten (10) countries. Mr. Mukesh Srivastava highlighted the importance of collaboration and partnership since the beginning of implementation of Global Strategy at country level.

115. Mr. Muhammad Tassim Billah from Indonesia shared his view that there should be clear definition on the agricultural and rural development data, by definition, it was focused only on food security data, and it is also necessary to include agricultural socio-economic data. In centralized and decentralized, he views that there is no fully centralized system, because data may be centralized but implementation should be decentralized.

116. Ms. Low Lai Kim from Singapore commented that in principle the mechanisms and systems are applicable to other sectors. How FAO could help is to organize an inter-agency and multisectoral consultations, to bring the agencies, and how to collect and implement is also crucial. FAO has a lot of technical expertise, that could contribute in the capacity building, so in limited resource could tap on other existing platforms in the ASEAN in order to help other member countries. Platform that has been existed in the past, Singapore may also send participants in the training at their own cost.

117. Mr. Dinh Pham Hien from Vietnam shared his view on centralized and decentralized system that the purpose of the GS is to provide accurate data and quality data and therefore we need to find a way on the decentralized and centralized system and how to get quality and accurate date and he agreed with Singapore to build the national capacity.

118. Ms. Roziah Binti Abudin from Malaysia agrees with the comment made by Mr. Montol Jaemcharoen and she has the view that FAO has to implement GS at regional level. Mr. Allan Nicholls responded that Malaysia could participate in the in-depth country assessment; this is how data is generated, and could include Malaysia in the next round.

119. The Chair concluded the Session by quoting Shakespeare's "What is in a name?" There is a need to identify the problems and to find solutions, and rural development has to be put as the core of development, the agricultural rural development has to be taken into consideration. He adjourned the Meeting by thanking all the participants for their active participation.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON ROLE OF FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION

(Item 6 of the Agenda)

120. Dr. Apichart Pongsrihadulchai, Vice Minister of the MOAC of Thailand delivered his Keynote Address on the role of food security information. He briefly provided the Meeting with an introduction on food security including a definition, indicators as well as the food security situation in regional and global levels. In the conclusion, he reiterated the importance of food security information in promoting the long-term food security in the region.

REMARKS ON VISION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERMANENT MECHANISM OF THE AFSIS FROM 2016 ONWARD

(Item 7 of the Agenda)

121. Mr. Lersak Rewtarkulpaiboon, Secretary General of the Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), the MOAC of Thailand, underlined a vision on the development of the AFSIS into the permanent mechanism with the aim to build the sustainable food security information system in the region. He highlighted that the integration of policy instruments in assessing and formulating food security in ASEAN Plus Three countries is a high priority to cope with new challenges and benefit from opportunity brought by ASEAN integration. The AFSIS, in his view, should increase the availability of food security information for evidence-base of policy making at all levels and support a human resource development in building a long-term learning program.

THE AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS AND INFORMATION RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

(Item 8 of the Agenda)

122. The AFSIS expert reported the AFSIS activities namely the Agricultural Land Information System, the Mid-long term Forecasting Model Information and the Rice Growing Outlook, on the development of agricultural statistics research supported by the MAFF Japan from 2011-2015. He also underlined future activity plans to be implemented of those activities.

123. The Meeting noted with appreciation regarding the significant contributions by the NTT Data group, the ADB, the JIRCAS, the FAO, the JAXA and the RESTEC to support the mentioned activities as corporative institutions.

124. The Meeting took note that the AFSIS's forecasting model is currently considered based on the demand and supply which shall be further developed to cover more variables e.g., environmental concerns such as climate change and other policy related.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL INFORMATION USING SATELLITE INFORMATION

(Item 9 of the Agenda)

125. The representative of the Asia rice crop in the Group on Earth Observation Global Agriculture Monitoring (GEOGLAM) initiative and a remote sensing expert from the JAXA reported the system development and operation of agricultural information using satellite information.

126. The Meeting noted an overview of rice crop area/production estimation and an outlook activity of the Asia rice crop team activity in GEOGLAM, a contribution of Rice Growing Outlook activity by four statisticians from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam under the AFSIS framework using agro-meteorological information derived from the satellite on the JAXA system named JAXA's satellite based Monitoring Network (JASMIN) and the current research and outreach activity of remote sensing data application for rice crop production estimation using satellite information.

127. The Meeting acknowledged the value of satellite information for AFSIS activities, and noted with appreciation the progress on mentioned activities under the AFSIS framework. The Meeting agreed to support these activities in order to expand target outlook countries to ASEAN Member States in cooperation with the ADB and other donors.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND RESILIENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS MEMBER STATES TO FOOD PRICE VOLATILITY (TA – 8693 REG) IN COLLABORATION WITH THE AFSIS
(Item 10 of the Agenda)

128. The representative of the ADB provided the Meeting with a brief introduction and update on the ADB's technical assistance for food and resilience of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states to food price volatility (TA-8693 REG) to support the implementation of the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and the second phase of the Strategic Plan of Action for Food Security (2015-2020). The TA 8693 REG consists of three outputs: (i) regional rice reserve system strengthened; (ii) policies that will increase ASEAN rice and food trade and investment developed; and (iii) market intelligence capacity of AFSIS developed. The key activities in collaboration with the AFSIS include support of the transformation of the AFSIS into the Permanent Mechanism, provision of the ASEAN Food Security Analysis Report (AFSAR), Development of short-term rice market model and incorporation of linking the ASEAN Member State to satellite-based drought monitoring system of GMS countries.

129. The Meeting acknowledged with appreciation the generous support from the ADB to the AFSIS in 2015-2016 on strengthening the food security information system.

IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION IN AFRICA IN THE COLLABORATION WITH THE AFSIS
(Item 11 of the Agenda)

130. The coordinator of the FAO project on rice statistics to support African countries in collaboration with the AFSIS updated its activities. The project aims to strengthen capacity of rice statistics and food security information in the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) member countries incorporated with the AFSIS and the African Rice Center through the South-South Cooperation scheme.

131. The Meeting noted the progress as well as the challenges of the project implementation. The Meeting was informed that well-developed methods and opportunities of capacity development for both officers and survey enumerator were needed in African countries.

132. The Meeting was encouraged to nominate the experts or statisticians from ASEAN Member States to transfer and share their knowledge on agricultural statistics to African countries through this project.

THE FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN BEYOND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFSIS INTO THE PERMANENT MECHANISM
(Item 12 of the Agenda)

133. The representative of the MAFF Japan presented the outline and work plan of a Japan's new funding project from 2016 to ASEAN Member States.

134. The Meeting took note with appreciation that the work plan of MAFF's new project on developing a food value chain in various regions. The MAFF Japan will cooperate with the AFSIS in the field of improving statistical data on food processing and distribution related to agricultural crops in ASEAN.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFSIS INTO THE PERMANENT MECHANISM (Item 13 of the Agenda)

135. The AFSIS Manager presented the Meeting with the progress on the transformation of the AFSIS into the permanent mechanism.

136. The agenda was held as a closed session.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFSIS INTO THE PERMANENT MECHANISM (Item 14 of the Agenda)

137. The agenda was held as a closed session.

OTHER MATTERS (Item 15 of the Agenda)

138. The AFSIS Manager wrapped up the outcomes of the Meeting.

a. The AFSIS Manager requested the ASEAN Member States to update on the database on time and informed the Meeting that the Database is now under construction for improvement.

b. The AFSIS urged the ASEAN Member States to submit the Early Warning Information (EWI) Report and Agricultural Commodities Outlook (ACO) Report on the assigned date.

c. The AFSIS will continue collaborate with the international agencies e.g., JAXA in implementing the rice crop production estimation using satellite information, the Sakura Exchange Program in Science for human resource development and the ADB in developing the Rice Market Model, the AFSAR and tentative Remote Sensing for Crop Monitoring.

139. The Meeting took note that the funding for AFSIS would be terminated at the end of the Establishment period in 2015. The AFSIS Secretariat will seek the SSOM-AMAF Plus Three advice on how to support the AFSIS on preparatory stage before becoming permanent mechanism.

ADOPTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT (Item 16 of the Agenda)

140. The Meeting adopted the summary report. The adopted summary report will be circulated to all member countries including China and the ROK who were not presented in the Meeting.

CLOSING SESSION

(Item 17 of the Agenda)

141. Mr. Surasak Pannop, Deputy Secretary General of the OAE expressed his sincere gratitude to all participants for their fruitful contributions to the three-day Meeting. Although the Meeting could not meet the expected outcome, the Meeting still came up with a direction to fulfill the mandate of the AMAF Plus Three. He emphasized that the strong support and cooperation among ASEAN Plus Three countries will be necessary for the transformation of the AFSIS into the sustainable food security information system in the region.

142. The Meeting expressed their appreciation to the FAO and the ADB for their continued support on the AFSIS activities. The Meeting thanked the AFSIS Secretariat for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

143. The Meeting was held in the spirit of ASEAN Plus Three cooperation and cordiality.

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AGENDA

Monday, 15 June 2015

Plenary Session

Agenda Item 1: Opening Session

Welcome address by H.E. Amnuay Patise, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoAC), Thailand

Opening Statement by Mr. Vili Fuavao, Deputy Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP)

Agenda Item 2: Issues and Challenges in Agricultural and Rural Statistics, Results from the ongoing Projects in the Asia and the Pacific

Chaired by Mr. Romeo Recide, Chair of the Regional Steering Committee for the Global Strategy for Asia and the Pacific

2.1 Presentation on Issues and Challenges in Agricultural Statistics in the Region and FAO's Interventions

by Mr. Mukesh Srivastava, Senior Statistician, FAORAP

2.2 Presentation on Progress of the Global Strategy in Asia and Pacific

by Mr. Allan Nicholls, Regional Coordinator, FAORAP

2.3 Presentation on ADB Activities in Support of Improving Agricultural and Rural Statistics

by Mr. Lakshman Rao Nagraj, Statistician, ADB

2.4 Presentation on Strengthening agricultural market information in Thailand and the Philippines

by Mr. Kimihiko Eura, Project Coordinator, FAORAP

Agenda Item 3: Importance of Integration of Agricultural Statistics into the National Statistics System

Chaired by Mr. Allan Nicholls, Regional Project Coordinator, FAORAP

3.1 Presentation on Integrating Agriculture into the National Statistical System (NSS) and process of preparing SPARS

by Mr. Dalip Singh, Statistician, FAORAP

3.2 Presentation on Agricultural Statistics within National Statistics System in the centralized system

by Mr. Romeo Recide, Interim Deputy National Statistician, Philippine Statistics Authority, Philippines

by Mr. Mohammad Tassim Billah, Director, Center for Agricultural Data and Information Systems, Ministry of Agriculture, Indonesia

3.3 Presentation on Agricultural Statistics within National Statistics System in the decentralized system

by Mr. Makoto Shimizu, Director, Statistics Planning Division, Statistics Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan

by Ms. Nongnooch Deetae, Senior Expert for Agricultural Statistics System, Centre for Agricultural Information, Office of Agricultural Economics, MoAC, Thailand

Agenda Item 4: Place of Agricultural Statistics in the Sub-Regional Organization

Chaired by Mr. Mukesh Srivastava, Senior Statistician, FAORAP

4.1 Presentation on the Establishment of ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) and Current Situations

by Mr. Montol Jeamchareon, AFSIS Manager, AFSIS Secretariat

4.2 Presentation on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Future of Agricultural Statistics

by Dr. MJH Javed, Director (Agriculture and Rural Development), SAARC Secretariat

4.3 Introduction on Pacific Strategic Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

by Ms. Anna Fink, Agricultural Statistician, SPC (introduced by the session chair)

Agenda Item 5: Discussions and Conclusion

Co-Chaired by Mr. Mukesh Srivastava, FAORAP, and Mr. Romeo Recide, Philippines

Tuesday, 16 June 2015

Plenary Session

Agenda Item 6: Keynote Address on Role of Food Security Information

by Dr. Apichart Pongsrihadulchai, Vice Minister of MoAC, Thailand

Agenda Item 7: Remarks on Vision on the Development of the AFSIS From 2016 onwards

by Mr. Lersak Rewtarkulpaiboon, Secretary General, Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), MoAC, Thailand

Agenda Item 8: Presentation on the Agricultural Statistics and Information Research Development

by Mr. Shoji Kimura, AFSIS Expert

Agenda Item 9: Presentation on the Development of Agricultural Information using Satellite Information

by Dr. Shinichi Sobue, General Manager, Remote Sensing Technology Center of Japan (RESTEC)

by Dr. Kei Oyoshi, Engineer of The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)

Agenda Item 10: Presentation on Technical Assistance for Food Security and Resilience of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Member States to Food Price Volatility (TA – 8693 REG) in Collaboration with the AFSIS

by Ms. Marzia Mongiorgi-Lorenzo, Unit Head, Project Administration, ADB

Agenda Item 11: Presentation on Improvement of Food Security Information in Africa with the Collaboration from the AFSIS

by Mr. Ryuki Ikeda, Project Coordinator, FAO Head Quarter

Agenda Item 12: Presentation on the Food Security Information Development Plan beyond the Transformation of the AFSIS into the Permanent Mechanism

by Mr. Yasuhiro Miyake, Deputy Director, Statistics Planning Division, Statistics Department, MAFF, Japan

Closed Session

Agenda Item 13: Presentation on the Transformation of the AFSIS into the Permanent Mechanism

by Mr. Montol Jeamchareon, AFSIS Manager

Wednesday, 17 June 2015

Closed Session

Agenda Item 14: Round Table Discussion on the Transformation of the AFSIS into the Permanent Mechanism

by Mr. Montol Jeamchareon, AFSIS Manager, Chairman

Agenda Item 15: Other matters

by Mr. Montol Jeamchareon, AFSIS Manager

Agenda Item 16: Adoption of the Summary Report

Agenda Item 17: Closing Session

by Mr., Lersak Rewtarkulpaiboon, Secretary General, Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), MoAC, Thailand

WELCOME ADDRESS

**BY
H.E. AMNUAY PATISE
DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATIVES**

**DELIVERED BY
DR. APICHART PONGSRIHADULCHAI ,
VICE MINISTER,
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATIVES, THAILAND**

AT

**THE ASEAN STAKEHOLDERS MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
GLOBAL STRATEGY TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL STATISTICS
AND**

**THE 8TH MEETING OF DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS AND INFORMATION IN ASEAN PLUS THREE COUNTRIES**

Anantara Bangkok Riverside Resort & Spa, Bangkok, Thailand
15-17 June 2015

**Mr. Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director General (ADG), FAO Regional Office
for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP)**

**Distinguished Directors-General of Agricultural Statistics and Information in
ASEAN Plus Three countries,**

Members of the AFSIS Focal Points,

**Representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Food Security Reserve
Board (AFSRB), the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR)
and the Asian Development Bank (ADB),**

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour and privilege for me to be here at the official opening of the ASEAN Stakeholders Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and the 8th Meeting of Directors-General of Agricultural Statistics and Information in ASEAN Plus Three Countries in Bangkok, Thailand. On behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Royal Thai Government, first of all, allow me to extend my warm welcome to all of you and express my deepest appreciation for your participation in this significant Meeting to advance the agricultural statistics in our region.

Let me also thank the FAORAP and the ADB for their financial support and the AFSIS Secretariat as well as everyone involved for their hard work over the past few months to make this important and timely Meeting possible. Indeed, it is not often that the high-level Directors-General from ASEAN Plus Three countries will have a

chance to participate in the Meeting together to discuss the crucial issues related to the improvement of the regional food security information system. Therefore, all comments and suggestions received during the Meeting will be useful for pushing forward the establishment of the permanent mechanism to provide timely and accurate food security information needed for policy planning and decision making.

Countdown to the end of December this year, the ASEAN Economic Community or the AEC will be officially launched. It will help improve the dynamism and competitiveness of the ASEAN member countries. Within this community, not only the economic issue has been highlighted, but food security also has been put in a list of priorities of the AEC. As you may recognise, ASEAN has long experience of promoting food security cooperation. Since the 1970s, the group established the ASEAN Food Security Reserve (AFSR) which was an agreement among members to set aside and share rice stocks. Later, in response to the global food price crisis in 2007-2009, ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and the Strategic Plan of Action on ASEAN Food Security (SPA-FS) which is now pursuing its second phase. A number of food security initiatives have been implemented under the AIFS framework. The establishment of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) is one of good examples. Currently, the APTERR becomes a permanent mechanism to strengthen food security and reduce poverty within ASEAN Plus Three region.

Notably, the development of information system is also necessary for enhancing food security. In 2003, the ASEAN Plus Three countries agreed to establish the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) Project with the aim to provide a timely and accurate information required for policy planning and implementation. Over a decade of its continued operation, the AFSIS is now in a period of transition to become a permanent mechanism followed a mandate of the Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry Plus Three (AMAF Plus Three). I know that the AFSIS Secretariat and its focal points have been working hard to prepare and develop the proposal for the establishment of the AFSIS as a permanent scheme. However, before submitting the proposal to the SOM-AMAF+3 and AMAF+3 Meetings for consideration and endorsement respectively, this document is needed to be considered by an executive level person, who has an authority at a certain area, in order to create a mutual understanding among the ASEAN Plus Three members and to collect suggestions and comments for a further development. Therefore, what we will discuss at this Meeting is very important for the future of the AFSIS.

**Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Apart from the establishment of the AFSIS as the permanent mechanism, the agricultural statistics will also be highlighted at this Meeting. The FAO has launched the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics since 2013. The objective of the Global Strategy is to improve the availability and uses of agricultural and rural data necessary for evidence-based decision making. This will become a blueprint for long-term sustainable agricultural Statistical systems.

Today, the Meeting will begin with the agenda related to the FAO's Global Strategy. Then, tomorrow and the day after, the Meeting will consider and discuss about the remaining agenda related to the AFSIS's transformation.

This three-day Meeting cannot be possible if it is without the generous fund support from the FAO and the ADB. I, therefore, would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and thanks to both organisations. I also would like to emphasise the needs of the discussion and exchange food security information among the member countries as well as relevant organisation. Due to this, I sincerely hope that the donor agencies will continue their supports to the AFSIS's activities and meetings in order to strengthen food security in the ASEAN Plus Three cooperative framework.

**Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

The meeting organiser has been realised that many member countries are very hectic during this period and for our friends from Muslim countries, the Ramadan will start on 18 June 2015. They, therefore, selected Bangkok as a venue of this meeting because its location is very convenient for all participants. I wish participants who first visit here will enjoy beautiful atmosphere of the city while for those who frequently visit Bangkok, please have a great time staying as your second home.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank all participants for your dedicated support to push forward the AFSIS to become a permanent scheme. I believe that the strong commitment and collective cooperation among us will create the long-term food security in our region.

I wish all of you a successful meeting and warmly welcome you again.

Thank you and Sawadee Krub

OPENING ADDRESS

BY

**HIROYUKI KONUMA
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND
FAO REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

DELIVERED BY

**VILI A. FUAVAO
DEPUTY REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE
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AT

**THE ASEAN STAKEHOLDERS MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
GLOBAL STRATEGY TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL STATISTICS
AND**

**THE 8TH MEETING OF DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS AND INFORMATION IN ASEAN PLUS THREE COUNTRIES**

Anantara Bangkok Riverside Resort & Spa, Bangkok, Thailand
15-17 June 2015

Distinguished Participants and Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure to extend, on behalf of the Director-General of FAO and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to the participants of the “The ASEAN Stakeholders Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and the 8th Meeting of Directors-Generals of Agricultural Statistics and Information in ASEAN Plus Three Countries”.

I am delighted to acknowledge the participation of country representatives from AFSIS member countries, as well as from key partners: ASEAN, SAARC, ADB, and JAXA, and also other FAO colleagues. I am thankful for the AFSIS secretariat for organization of this event in conjunction with your annual DG meeting, and your interest in supporting the Global Strategy and for travelling long distances to participate in this event despite your busy schedule. I do hope that your active involvement in guiding this global initiative will ensure the relevance and effectiveness of our activities at the regional and country level.

I am happy to note that many international organizations are working as a team to improve agricultural statistics. FAO is privileged to take a part in this joint effort and host the secretariat. I thank ADB, SPC, ASEAN, and SAARC for partnering with FAO for this global initiative. Working together based upon our comparative advantages

and pooling of knowledge and financial resources will indeed have a lasting impact on the agricultural statistics systems.

The implementation of the Global Strategy in Asia and the Pacific is a long-term plan for improving agricultural and rural statistics in the countries.

The Regional Steering Committee (RSC) for Global Strategy has selected 15 countries in the region as the priority countries as of January 2015 out of a larger number which volunteered to be selected. Regarding the ASEAN region, the RSC has selected 5 countries namely Indonesia (2013), Lao PDR, Myanmar (2014), Cambodia, and Vietnam (2015). Technical assistance and training activities have been implemented in these countries, according to the guidelines of the Regional Action Plan of the Global Strategy.

This meeting is of particular importance as it will provide a forum to share the information/progress and challenges/good examples of the GS project with the ASEAN countries and the stakeholders in this region to date, and discuss the appropriate sub-regional structure and a future strategy for mainstreaming the agricultural statistics in the ASEAN as a sub-regional institution. Also the meeting will provide an open forum for other sub-regional institutions and AFSIS member countries to share the ongoing activities for agricultural statistics in the region, and to outline opportunities for greater collaboration in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You are well aware, that FAO's main mandate is to combat hunger and malnutrition, and monitor the progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially MDG one, aiming to reduce hunger by half by 2015. The region has also achieved the largest reduction in the absolute number of undernourished people (236 million). However, this was not sufficient to meet the target set by the World Food Summit (WFS) of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015 . There still remains 12 percent of the region's total population who have been left behind and have not shared fully in the benefits of economic growth. Without supporting them, we cannot achieve 'Zero Hunger' in the region.

Besides eradication of hunger and malnutrition, FAO's new Strategic Objectives focus on sustainability of agriculture, reduction of rural poverty, and increasing resilience of livelihoods to threats and crisis. Policies and regulatory frameworks prepared through inclusive approaches in the food systems will contribute to achieving these objectives at county level.

Needless to say that monitoring progress towards these objectives places new demands on the data systems, besides many existing unmet data gaps. Some of the weaknesses in national agricultural statistics are underlined by the data requirements to deal with issue relating to food security in the wake of price volatility, diversion of agricultural land to production of biofuels, global warming and the environmental threats.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Global Strategy is a ground-breaking effort which has as one of the key recommendations that agriculture be integrated into national statistical systems. The Regional Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific defines the areas of support that the Asia Pacific region needs in terms of technical assistance, training and research to strengthen national capacities in a sustainable way. We need to ensure its success by contributing our best.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is a historical opportunity to enable countries to develop sustainable statistical systems which will produce accurate and reliable agricultural and rural data – comparable over time and across countries for use by decision-makers. However, a necessary condition for the Strategy to succeed is the political will and commitment of the governments to benefit from the initiative. Governments need to demonstrate ownership and commitment by funding regular statistical services to produce the minimum core set of data.

I am convinced that with our strong partnership with regional organization such as ASEAN, SAARC, and SPC, our member countries and other leading institutions present here, we together will improve the evidence base of policy making of the agricultural sector in the region.

Finally, let me acknowledge the hard work of the secretariat staff in AFSIS and FAO in the preparation and organization of this meeting. I would also like to thank our colleagues and partner organizations, for presentations they will make to assist understanding and discussion.

I wish you all success in your discussions and a pleasant stay in Thailand.

Thank you.