



For Immediate Release

World Food Day brings Launch of *ASEAN Food & Agriculture 'Road to COP28' Series*

Regional Alliance Calls for Climate Resiliency Acceleration in Driving ASEAN Food Security

Singapore, 16 October 2023 – With World Food Day being recognized globally today, an alliance of regional associations is marking the occasion by announcing the launch of a regional series leading up to the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) and with a call for acceleration on food security and climate resiliency efforts in Southeast Asia. While the current food system feeds the majority of the world's population and supports the livelihoods of over 1 billion people, there is still an estimated 691-783 million that face hunger, according to the United Nations (UN) 2023 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report. At the same time, the climate crisis is also putting increased pressure onto the food system.

In the lead-up to COP28 this year, the ASEAN Safe, Nutritious Food Alliance, comprised of CropLife Asia, Canada-ASEAN Business Council, EU-ASEAN Business Council and the US-ASEAN Business Council, will be convening a series of workshops in the capitals of Thailand, Philippines, and Vietnam this November to lead national dialogues with domestic stakeholders on the topic. The sessions, titled the *ASEAN Food & Agriculture 'Road to COP28' Series*, will specifically focus on the critical issue of climate change impact to food systems and livelihoods of millions of farmers residing in Asia as well as the technologies and tools that can help with mitigation and adaptation efforts.

"In response to the escalating impact of climate change on ASEAN, the Canada-ASEAN Business Council (CABC) is devoted to cultivating a collaborative alliance between Canada and ASEAN regarding sustainable agriculture and food security, facilitated through trade and investment, sharing insights on sustainable practices and climate-resilient agtech, and spearheading joint research initiatives. The CABC is keen to collaborate with entities across the public and private sectors, alongside a diverse array of stakeholders, to champion the sustainable progression of ASEAN's food system," said Greg Eidsness, Chair of the Canada-ASEAN Business Council Agriculture and Agri-Food Committee

"Climate-related extremes such as flooding and heatwaves negatively impacts agricultural productivity and farmer livelihoods – but agriculture is not only severely impacted by climate change, it is also a contributor through water usage and greenhouse gas emissions," said Dr. Siang Hee Tan, Executive Director of CropLife Asia. "To ensure food security resiliency in ASEAN and across Asia, now more than ever, we must collectively work together to harness the power of science and address these challenges."

Improving productivity is key to secure food production in the face of extreme weather events. This means, producing more with fewer resources. Gene editing is one example of how plant breeders can develop seed varieties that can better adapt to the impacts of climate change.¹ Continuing to provide farmers with access to plant science technologies such as crop protection products and biotech seeds will help them better adapt to the changing climate.

"The EU-ASEAN Business Council is acutely aware of the profound challenges to ASEAN's food security, especially in light of accelerated global warming and geopolitical developments that are fuelling anxieties over access to adequate, safe, and nutritious food. On this World Food Day, the Council acknowledges the pivotal role of innovation



and public-private cooperation in shaping the future of agriculture and food production in this region. The “Road to COP28” workshops will be a testament to our commitment to driving sustainable solutions that address the intricate nexus of food security, innovation, and climate change in ASEAN. This collaboration between the various ASEAN business councils and CropLife Asia will hopefully pave the way for a more resilient and sustainable food system in this part of the world,” added Chris Humphrey, Executive Director, EU-ASEAN Business Council.

According to this year’s SOFI Report, around 2.4 billion people or 29.6 percent of the global population were moderately or severely food insecure in 2022, with 1,144.9 million belonging in Asiaⁱⁱ. The cost of a healthy diet was also out of reach for 3.1 billion people in the world, roughly 42% of the global populationⁱⁱⁱ and that the number of undernourished people in Asia is the highest in the world at 401.6 million.

“Agriculture is particularly vulnerable to climate change but is also a major source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions,” said Ambassador Brian McFeeters, Senior Vice President & Regional Managing Director of the US-ASEAN Business Council. “According to the FAO, agriculture, forestry and other land use contribute 22% of global anthropogenic GHG emissions. Providing solutions to foster decarbonization is needed. The Council and its members stand ready to assist agriculture ministries across ASEAN on achieving their key priorities with the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Guidelines for Sustainable Agriculture in ASEAN, and we are excited to see the fruition of concrete partnerships and collaborations stemming from these series of engagements.”

In 2022, the ASEAN Safe, Nutritious Food Alliance convened a first-ever initiative and roadshow to seek stakeholder input on climate change mitigation and adaptation with Southeast Asia food production. Last year’s sessions were held in the capitals of Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam and collectively brought together over 100 government, civil society and private sector stakeholders.

###

About CropLife Asia

CropLife Asia is a non-profit society and the regional organization of CropLife International, the voice of the global plant science industry. We advocate a safe, secure food supply, and our vision is food security enabled by innovative agriculture. CropLife Asia supports the work of 15 member associations across the continent and is led by six member companies at the forefront of crop protection, seeds and/or biotechnology research and development. For more information, visit us at www.croplifeasia.org.

For more information please contact:

Duke Hipp

Director, Public Affairs & Strategic Partnerships

CropLife Asia

Tel: (65) 6221 1615

duke.hipp@croplifeasia.org

ⁱ <https://croplife.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Climate-Change-Contributions-from-Seed-and-Crop-Technologies.pdf>

ⁱⁱ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022. *In Brief to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. Urbanization, agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3017en>

ⁱⁱⁱ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022. *In Brief to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. Urbanization, agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3017en>