

The regional food equation has changed. With the sharp upturn of international food prices in 2007, large-scale natural disaster caused by climate change, increases in bio-fuel production caused by rising oil prices, and rapid population and economic growth in developing economies, the reality of food insecurity is an urgent impending problem.

One existing initiative is the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework (AIFS). Even AIFS is a comprehensive model; the approach is still too top-down. Thus, our suggestion is that we should put more effort in improving citizenship participation in pursuit of food security in the region. Citizenship participation in ensuring food security can be divided into three levels.

At the political level, the common goal of food security should be done collaboratively. Acknowledging the existing framework, our recommendations are to increase citizen's voice with regard to food security issues and to cooperate with government-funded R&D researchers.

At the economic level, agriculture-related MNCs (Multinational Corporation)/ SMEs, NGOs/ private donors and the impoverished community should continue to alleviate food insecurity by engaging in proper discourse with researchers and inculcating a healthy independence.

At the social level, for the short term, there are four main recommendations from our team: Provide education and skills-training (NGOs); Share knowledge and build awareness in rural population; Demand a certain quality and standard of food and Discourage food wastage attitudes and practices.

For the long term, we recommend forming and maximizing the role of Farmer Unions and intensifying R&D(production, technology and outputs). Also, we should establish and train citizens on Standard Operating Procedures for natural disasters and promote a new trend of climate-change friendly diet.

In conclusion, the vision of regional food equation can only be realized if the crucial factors of citizenship participation are solved. The AIFS framework outlines the solutions for governments and the private sectors, once being implemented in conjunction with our recommendations, could address food security in the short and long run.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AND INTEGRATION MOVING TOWARDS A SECURE COMMUNITY

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