

national
consultation
on
**Food Security
in Malaysia**



July 25 - 26, 1998

Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia



Organised by

ERA
CONSUMER
MALAYSIA

ERA CONSUMER MALAYSIA
*[Education And Research Association
for Consumers, Malaysia]*

National Consultation on Food Security in Malaysia

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ERA CONSUMER MALAYSIA

(Education and Research Association for Consumers, Malaysia)

ERA CONSUMER is a voluntary, non-political and non-profit organisation. ERA focuses on issues ranging from food security, human rights, environment, consumer rights to women's rights for a socially just and equitable society.

Reprinted 2002

Foreword

Food security is an issue that needs serious attention, especially in a developing country such as Malaysia. Food security determines the availability of food for the population in the country. This is becoming an issue of late as food prices are increasing, food import bills are rising and a lot of agriculture land is being left idle.

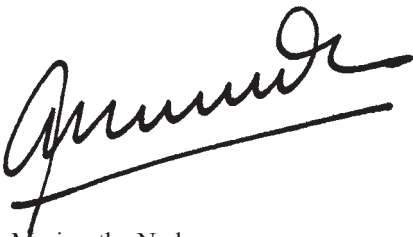
The emphasis in the country on industrialisation is decreasing the role played by the agriculture sector. Development plans are introduced to help boost the industrial sector. This has caused the decline in food crop output and an increase in food imports. The Agriculture Sector contributed 22.9% of the GDP in 1980 but it declined to 14.9% in 1994. In early 1997, the food import increased to 1.85 billion tonnes. The increase was also due to low self-sufficiency levels. Malaysia is dependent on imports of food, especially vegetables such as tomatoes, chillies, onions, ginger and potatoes.

The increase in food imports will cause an outflow of funds, and this is unhealthy during the economic crisis. During a Food and Agriculture Organisation Conference in Canada in 1996, it was predicted that a number of countries, especially parts of Africa and Asia, will face a food crisis in the near future. If serious attention is not given to these issues from the beginning, Malaysia will also be a victim of this crisis.

Food security should be given top priority in the national development planning. The agriculture sector should be revived to ensure the availability of sufficient and safe food. Emphasis should be given to reducing imports, increasing self-sufficiency levels, optimising the use of land, diversifying food production, safe farming methods and the control of food prices.

With these issues in mind, ERA Consumer decided to play a role in ensuring food security in Malaysia. Research is being carried out in many aspects of food security. In relation to this, ERA Consumer organised the National Conference on Food Security on July 25 and 26, 1998 in Kuala Lumpur. This conference was well attended by participants from diversified backgrounds, which included farmers, breeders, NGOs and government agencies. ERA Consumer will continue to organise annual conferences pertaining to food security on a national level in efforts to collate a database and provide policy prescription based on grassroots feedback.

It is ERA's sincere hope that the Government and the people of Malaysia will take a serious view towards the issue of food security in the country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marimuthu Nadason', written over a horizontal line.

Marimuthu Nadason
President

PROGRAMME

24th July 1998

- 5.00pm - 7.00pm Registration of Participants
 7.00pm - 8.30pm Dinner
8. 30pm Introduction / participants / expectations
En. Marimuthu Nadason,
President of ERA Consumer

25th July 1998

- 8.00am - 9.00am Breakfast
- 9.00am - 9.45am Food Security in Southeast Asia
Sarojeni Rengam,
Executive Director of Pesticides Action Network
- Asia and the Pacific Region
- 9.45am - 10.30am Food Security and Consumers: An Overview of the Issues
Josie Fernandez,
Regional Director of Consumers International
- Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
- 10.30am - 10.45am Tea Break
- 10.45am - 1 1.30am Issues related to food and agriculture in the Malaysia Plans
Rachel Samuel,
Secretary of ERA Consumer
- 11.30am - 1.00pm Sharing experience by
- Farmers
 - Livestock Breeders
 - Fisheries Association
 - Wholesalers Association
- 1.00pm - 2.30pm Lunch
 2.30pm - 4.00pm Workshop
Chairperson: Sarojeni Rengam

4.00pm - 4.15pm	Tea Break
4.15pm - 5.15pm	Workshop Report
5.15pm - 6.30pm	Discussion <i>Chairperson: Dr. Sanusi Osman</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strategies to ensure adequate food production2. Strategies for effective food distribution channels3. Strategies to overcome the idle land situation4. Strategies to ensure sufficient finance5. Strategies for trade mechanisms
8.00pm	Dinner

26th July 1998

8.00am - 9.00am	Breakfast
9.00am - 10.30am	Sharing of Experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Vietnam: Mr. Tran Hong Truong (VACVINA)</i>● <i>India: Mr. Govindan (First Secretary, Indian High Commission)</i>● <i>Cuba: Pan-AP</i> Question and Answer Session <i>Chairperson: Prof. Mohd.Hamdan, President of FOMCA</i>
10.30am - 10.45am	Tea Break
10.45am - 11.00am	Summary and introduction of plan of action <i>Chairperson: Sarojeni Rengam</i>
11.00am - 1.00pm	Workshop - Plan of Action <i>Chairperson: Sarojeni Rengam</i>
1.00pm - 2.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm - 3.00pm	Report
3.00pm - 3.30pm	Tea Break
3.30pm - 4.30pm	Conclusion: Suggestions and Comments <i>Chairperson: Marimuthu Nadason & Sarojeni Rengam</i>

Day One

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this conference was to discuss the issue of food in Malaysia and to share experiences and ideas from all participants. Malaysia needs to seriously look into this issue after the food crisis in Indonesia. Safe food is another issue of concern. A conference of this nature will give an opportunity to all participants to discuss this issue. The participants included those from the farming community, the breeders, government agencies such as FAMA, MARDI, FELDA, Fisheries Department, Health Department, BERNAS and NGOs involved in activities related to food and agriculture issues. (Please see annex for list of participants).

FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

By Sarojeni Rengam

The Rome Declaration of World Food Security adopted by the Heads of State and government in 1996 “reaffirmed the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger”¹. Lofty dreams or possible reality?

In the face of 800 million people suffering from chronic hunger, with more than 500 million of them in Asia Pacific, it seems more a dream than a possible future scenario. The reality is that there is enough food produced today to feed the world. Then, why are so many people going hungry every day?

At the World Food Summit, Fidel Castro succinctly responded to this question, “Hunger is the offspring of injustice and the unequal distribution of wealth of this world”². Indeed the history of hunger has always been a history of unjust social and economic systems, which have marginalised the poor and deprived them of food, one of the most basic necessities of man.

The solution as suggested at the Rome World Food Summit summarizes the new policy environment: “We will strive to ensure food, agricultural trade and overall trade policies are conducive to food security for all through a fair and market-oriented world trade system”³.

¹ World Food Summit, Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action, 1996

² Food Insecurity: Who gets to eat? The Ecologist, Vol. 26 No 8, 1998

There are two problems with this statement. First, “market oriented systems of production and distribution” do not have a good track record in feeding people, nor in tackling the underlying structures of poverty which has made a quarter of the world’s population go hungry every day. Second, while such systems are endorsed by Northern governments in theory and



recommended for Southern governments, in practice these principles are not used to design agricultural policy. The industrial agriculture of the North is highly subsidized. For example, the US and EU spent over US\$15.7 billion in 1995, subsidising wheat and maize production and this far outstrips financial support available to farmers in Asia. The average subsidy for a US farmer producing wheat is 25 times more than the total average per capita income in the 42 countries classified as low income.

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade – World Trade Organisation (GATT/WTO) agreements will not change this subsidy system because these were written by the US and European Union to continue to subsidise and to dump surpluses in the world market, thus depressing prices.

For example, the largest category of agriculture trade is in the cereal market. It generates US\$20 billion annually. Between the US and Europe, cereals account for half of all exports of wheat and wheat flour and the US alone accounts for three-quarters of the all maize exports. Because production in the US and EU dominate world cereal prices, these are the prices against which producers in importing countries have to compete. At the same time these agreements require countries to liberalise their food systems, notably by reducing restrictions on imports. Allowing cheap food and products (from a highly subsidized and industrially produced system) to flood the market will force Third World farmers to invariably lose out in the competition. In addition, through SAP and the recent restructuring exercise of World Bank / International Monetary Fund (IMF) for East Asia, our countries have been told not to subsidize our farmers. So how do our farmers with one or two acres of land compete with highly industrialized, highly subsidized corporate farming? The reality is that we cannot. This a recipe for social, economic and environmental disaster.

In fact, it is expected that in Mexico, 3 million farmer families will be forced off their lands because of the effects of a trade agreement that was signed between the US, Canada and Mexico called NAFTA or North American Free Trade Agreement.

³ World Food Summit, Rome Declaration on World Food Security, 1996

In the Philippines, annually 15,000 farm families in rice cultivation are expected to lose their land.

Corporate Farming

What is corporate farming? Today large corporations have come into agriculture in several countries and others are seeking to corporatise their agriculture. Consequently, the world's food trade has got concentrated in the hand of a few multinational corporations. Cargill, a US based company, controls 77% of the total cereal trade. About 5 transnational corporations control between them about 90% of the export trade for each of wheat, corn, coffee, tea, pineapple, cotton, tobacco, jute and forest products.

Cargill and Monsanto recently announced that they would form a worldwide 50/50 joint venture to create and market new grain processing and animal feed products. On June 1, 1998 Monsanto had merged with another company, American Home Products. These mergers will make Monsanto the largest producer of agrottoxins, with combined sales of RM5.24 billion and will surpass even Novartis, which is Ciba Geigy merging with Sandoz. The recent merger of Monsanto and Cargill will give them a tremendous control of the global seeds business and in the transportation facilities.

Another recent technology that is creating much debate and concern is the Terminator technology which was created to prevent farmers from saving non-hybrid, open pollinated or genetically altered seed sold by seed companies. The technology will create sterile seeds by programming a plant's DNA to kill its own embryo. Open pollinated varieties of crops like wheat and rice are staples for most of the world's population. A seed company wants to ensure profits from its investments, we may say. However, many of their proprietary seeds are no more than genetically modified versions of older, reliable conventionally bred strains that have been in the public domain for many years. This technology will ensure that farmers and communities cannot save their seeds for the next season but continue to purchase seeds for every season and thus will be completely dependent on the company for its seeds. There is another potential risk to Terminator. Some molecular biologists reviewing the technology are concerned about the possibility of the Terminator functions escaping the genome of the crops into which it has not been intentionally incorporated and moving into surrounding open-pollinated crops or wild related plants in fields nearby. This means that the "infection" may spread to surrounding food crops or to the natural environment and will cause a catastrophe. The gradual spread of sterility in seeding plants has the potential to eventually wipe out higher life forms, including humans.

Monsanto has just acquired 85 percent of the Terminator technology!

Why I am focussing on Monsanto and Cargill and the Terminator technology is that this is

one major example of how corporations control our food systems, from production to delivery, and all this is done for profit only. Profit for any company is important and I am not against it but what is serious in recent developments is the monopoly and control by a few corporations over our food systems – and in that, the very essence of our survival.

In addition, there have been cases of transnational corporations and Northern governments stealing our genetic resources. For example, the Basmati rice of India and Pakistan and the Thai fragrant rice have both been stolen from their countries. A corporation in the US called Rice Tec has applied for a patent on these varieties that have been slightly modified and in the process the company will control the markets. Another example is the story of cow peas from India that two Australian companies attempted to patent. And the famous neem, the use of which is centuries old, has also been patented. All these patents are being challenged by NGOs and governments. So we in Asia are fighting these acts of biopiracy.

Food insecurity and hunger are important topics for today.

The current economic crisis in East Asia is causing major hardship. The Malaysian Ringgit dropped in value by 40% and is fluctuating badly. In fact, last year our country's food import bill was in a deficit of RM4.71 billion. Cereals contributed 40% to the deficit; sugar contributed 16% and dairy and livestock products and vegetables, the rest. Last year food exports amounted to RM5.3 billion compared with RM10 billion in imports while another RM1.42 billion worth of agriculture inputs were imported. Most of the food imports were from Australia, Thailand, the US and New Zealand. The 1990-1997 import trend showed that imports from the US recorded the highest annual growth rate at 21.1 percent due to the rise in the use of and demand for livestock products.

Because of the fall in the value of the Ringgit, our food prices this year are spiraling by 40-60% and we were told to start home gardening. For example, chicken now costs much more not because we import poultry meat but because the price of chicken feed has increased tremendously. We import most of our chicken feed from the US which is the world's major supplier of animal feed, and it has utilised its cheap and heavily subsidised exports to create demand. With the increase in poultry costs, poultry farmers are being forced out of business. The price increase means that chicken, which is now an important part of Malaysian diet, is exceedingly out of reach for the nation's poor.

A lesson from the economic crisis is that we cannot depend on imports for our food needs. Another lesson we are learning about the hard way is that the industrialisation of agriculture does not work. First of all, the dosages of pesticides have increased as pests build resistance and pesticides kill off natural predators. Second, with the economic crisis the costs of inputs including pesticides and fertilisers have increased from 50% to 100%. Third, these poisons harm the environment and most of all, the health and well-being of our farmers and workers.

Food security should be the fundamental priority of every nation. We cannot gamble our means of existence on market speculation. Food security requires that we back away from trade liberalisation in agriculture and food production in order to construct national policies that promote sustainable agriculture, that ensure a high level of public control over agricultural production and distribution and that guarantee food to all Malaysians.

We started with Fidel Castro's speech at the World Food Summit and I would like to end here with Fidel's Cuba so as to understand what is happening in that small country.

Cuba is a remarkable country. Cuba is in the midst of the most comprehensive conversion from conventional agriculture to organic or semi-organic farming ever attempted by a national government. Following the dissolution of the socialist trading bloc in the early 1990s, imports of pesticides, fertilizers, petroleum and animal feed to Cuba dropped by well over 50%; food imports fell dramatically as well. Cuba, a country with the highest caloric consumption in Latin America, in early 1990s faced hunger and starvation. Suddenly an agriculture system, highly industrialised, was faced with a dual challenge. The need was to essentially double food production while more than having inputs at the same time maintaining export production so as not to further erode the country's desperate foreign exchange needs. Cuban researchers and farmers are now working to replace their former heavy dependence on imported farm machinery, chemical inputs and food and are instead building on their long experience with biocontrol. They are increasing yields through use of animal traction, crop and pasture rotations, polyculture, soil conservation, organic soil amendments, biological pest control and a rapidly expanding organic urban agricultural sector.

The country is recovering from the crisis. Cuba has been able to move towards country-wide organic agriculture during this period through: the massive redirection of resources to food production and agriculture as a priority; the government's ability to implement long-term plans to build human capital and scientific capability; and the high degree of organisation exhibited by Cuban society in mobilising scarce resources to counter the sudden drop in food imports.

As one administrator, who had come out of retirement to become a farmer said, "We had to feed ourselves, our families and our neighbours. We had to rise to meet the challenge during this crisis". The Cubans have shown that they have indeed risen to this challenge. They have still a long way to go in terms of facing the continuous shortage of food, worsened by the US embargo on Cuba. But what they have achieved so far is truly remarkable. Our Prime Minister last year visited Cuba and in a way we have much to learn from their example. They have shown that sustainable agriculture is possible nationwide and that the fundamental right to food can be achieved through a national policy and support for food security.

FOOD SECURITY AND CONSUMERS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUES

By Josie Fernandez

FOOD SECURITY AND CONSUMERS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUES

- The world produces more than enough food to feed everyone, but millions go hungry every day. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that 800 million people worldwide are chronically undernourished. So what is the problem? Experts call it a problem of food security. Food security is achieved when everyone has access to enough safe and nutritious food to be able to lead a healthy and active life. The problem these days is not that people physically cannot get the food they need, but that they cannot afford to buy the food that is available.
- In 1990, 37 % of the population in Africa, 20% in Asia and the Pacific, and 13% in Latin America and the Caribbean were undernourished Most were in Asia.

FINANCIAL CRISIS AND POVERTY

- In 1997, the financial crisis in the East Asian region resulted in a net capital outflow of US\$109 billion (RM446.9 billion) equivalent to 11% of the region's GDP. The poor had been hit the most. Decades of rising incomes have been reversed and unemployment, underemployment and poverty are rising to alarming levels.
- The proportion of the Indonesian population living below the official poverty line this year was expected to be 50% greater than in 1996. According to the World Bank, absolute poverty could rise to 20%. Recently in Indonesia, the President called for the public to fast twice a week, to save 3 million tonnes of rice, the equivalent of this year's rice import.
- Similarly, we expect absolute poverty in Thailand to increase by one-third. The World Bank estimates 1.8 million to be unemployed in 1998.
- In the Philippines, absolute poverty is expected to rise to 8.9% in 1998.
- In Malaysia, official figures show that 35,000 workers have lost their jobs since July 1997, and another 42,000 will be jobless by year end. The Rural Development

Minister, Datuk Annuar Musa, said recently that the number of families living below the poverty line (earning less than US\$100/month) is expected to increase from 100,000 to 400,000 by year end, while the number of hardcore poor families (earning below US\$50/month) was expected to increase by 17,000 to 70,000 by year's end. He added that the Ministry was expecting a cut of 14% in the allocation by the Finance Ministry in the coming budget.

- Poverty has been exacerbated by the rapid increase in inflation, especially a disproportionate rise in the price of food and other essential goods.
- The rise in unemployment, underemployment and poverty means a sharp increase in the numbers in need of social protection. Yet social protection systems are relatively underdeveloped in the countries affected by the crisis. Healthcare is particularly affected by the crisis leading to an increased demand for subsidised public healthcare services, and a reduction in the use of expensive treatments and medicine.
- There are eight fundamental consumer rights. The first is the right to satisfaction of basic needs, including food.
- Starvation and chronic undernutrition are assaults on human dignity: they can permanently maim young victims and they have a debilitating impact on everyone, denying them their rightful place and full participation in the community. A recent analysis of country data involving 42 developing countries showed a close correlation between socio-economic variables and the prevalence of undernourished children.
- The vulnerable, notably pregnant women, infants and children, will be most affected by inadequacy of food and healthcare. The rate of infant, child and maternal mortality is expected to increase. In every country it is the poor – and, more often than not, the women and children – who suffer the most. (The government may want to examine the possibility of introducing a school food programme in poor rural and urban areas where one full and nutritious meal is provided each day). The long-term impact of the crisis will negatively affect the development of future human resources needed to maintain economic growth.

- **WILL HUNGER BE ERADICATED?**

It is estimated that the world population will increase by 45% by 2025 and will continue to grow for decades thereafter.

To ensure universal security, food production will have to go up by more than 75% by end of the first quarter of the next century. Therefore, intensive planning is needed to put in place the requisite research, investment and human energy. A look at the state of farming in developing countries shows that land reform measures have not been fully implemented, and that there is an urgent need to re-organise farming.

There appears to be a widespread belief in the international community that food security can be achieved through economic policies and activities which allow consumers in the developing world to purchase, rather than grow, the bulk of their food. But such cases are not even remotely sustainable.

The case for people-centred development, not profit-centred alone, must be strongly and consistently stated. This can be achieved through various policies such as a comprehensive national food policy which could cover some of the areas discussed below.

- **Sustainable production and consumption leads to cost-savings in monetary and environmental terms**

Because of the negative impacts of intensive, high-input agriculture, many organisations have begun to pay more attention to a sustainable alternative. This type of farming fosters social justice and takes a bottom-up approach to development.

At the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, hundreds of non-government organisations (NGOs) drafted and signed the NGO Sustainable Agriculture Treaty which states that: “Sustainable agriculture is a model of social and economic organisation based on an equitable and participatory vision of development ... agriculture is sustainable when it is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, culturally appropriate and based on a holistic scientific approach”.

Sustainable agriculture practices include organic agriculture, low-input farming, agroforestry systems (which conserve the ecosystem as well as produce food), integrated aquaculture and water-land management systems.

HOW GOVERNMENTS CAN SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION

GOVERNMENTS:

1. Should adopt, or encourage the adoption of policies that meet the needs of all citizens, while minimising pollution and the use of resources such as fossil fuels, minerals, land and fresh water. This can be done through a mix of policies including regulations, economic and social instruments, sectoral policies such as land use, transport and housing and the removal of subsidies that promote unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.
2. Should intensify efforts to reduce the energy and material intensities of production and consumption, pollution and waste through promoting energy conservation and efficiency; promote environmentally sound and sustainable use of renewable resources; increased water recovery; reuse and recycling of products and materials; and technological dissemination and innovation. Local research and development into technologies appropriate to the cultural and economic conditions of the country should be encouraged.
3. Should promote the development and the demand for products that have high-performance, are durable, recyclable, repairable and reusable and are neither toxic nor unsafe. Governments should introduce waste prevention programmes and encourage the provision of facilities for the repair and recycling of used products.
4. Should undertake and promote research and analysis on consumer behaviour and environmental damage with the purpose of identifying ways of reducing the environmental impact of consumption and meeting basic human needs.
5. Should promote sustainable consumption by acting in partnership with all citizens. Women have a particularly powerful role in sustainable consumption because of their central role in providing for family needs. Governments should also actively involve, and support, consumer and other citizens' organisations engaged in the promotion of sustainable production and consumption.

Sustainable production and consumption translate into real savings and a tremendous reduction in the use of expensive imported pesticides; efficient use of energy and resources, including water and fuel; overall reduction in imports; and the protection of our environment, biological diversity and the health of our economy and people.

- **LAND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS;
LAND REFORMS AND CREDIT**

Adequate national food supply has to be coupled with appropriate marketing and distribution systems, equitable rural development policies and most important, adequate means of production or income-generating opportunities for the poor.

Land distribution alone will not guarantee food security in rural areas. It must be coupled with improved access by the rural poor to credit and technical assistance. Schemes such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh show that if credit is targeted at poor women, not only is food security improved – as women are more likely than men to take on responsibility for ensuring the well-being of their families – and repayment rates by women are also high.

Agricultural extension services are needed to provide small farmers with information, education and equipment. Market information is particularly important for small farmers who must sell their food on the free market for the first time. A special effort is needed to target women in this regard – in Africa and Asia, they make up more than half the agricultural workforce. To reach as many women as possible, extension workers should try to work with them at slack times in the agricultural calendar.

- **EXPORTING MORE, EATING LESS**

Many developing countries have encouraged the production of export crops which to earn foreign exchange to pay off mounting debts. This threatens local food security in a number of ways. Growing crops for export diverts farmers from growing food for local needs: And income from cash crops is unreliable. A bumper world coffee harvest, for example, causes an international surplus and tumbling prices. And coffee farmers, who only produce coffee rather than a mixture of crops, suffer.

Africa has learned the hard way the cost of relying too heavily on export crops. Between 1980 and 1990, the international prices for Africa's two major export crops, cocoa and coffee, fell by 70%.

Countries that continue to depend on export crops are likely to suffer even more in the future. Synthetic substitutes are being developed for many export crops, which could lead to dramatic price falls. For example, laboratories in developed countries have manufactured vanilla, which could undercut Madagascar's main export crop.

Prices also fluctuate for another, more worrying reason. Trade in cash crops is dominated by powerful transnational corporations (TNCs). Just 20 TNCs are able to control most of the world's agricultural trade. They manipulate the markets that many cash croppers depend on.

As more land is given over to cash crops, the amount available to grow food for local consumption is reduced. Governments should increase local food production and aim to achieve self-sufficiency.

MYTHS AND REALITY ABOUT FREE TRADE

- The 1994 agreement hammered out in the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) will undermine developing countries' efforts to preserve self-sufficiency. By including agriculture in GATT for the first time, the Uruguay Round will force them to open their agricultural markets.
- In the Philippines, trade liberalisation has led not to more food being exported, but to more being imported. Agricultural exports have plummeted from around 40% of total exports in 1984 to 20% in 1993. Agricultural and food imports, meanwhile, have risen from 6 to 10%.

Malaysia's food import bill for 1997 was a whopping RM11 billion. Many of the Southeast Asian countries have seen an accelerated increase in their food import bills in recent years.

- Dependency on imported food brings with it a tremendous threat to food security, as has been brought to light recently.
- Many of the big corporations such as Cargill see the move away from self-sufficient agriculture to increased trade as a way of making the most of what is known as "comparative advantage". Whitney MacMillan, Cargill chairman, has said: "There is a mistaken belief that the greatest agricultural need in the developing world is to develop the capacity to grow food for local consumption. That is misguided. Countries should produce what they produce best – and trade" (Brewster Kneen, *Invisible*

Giant, 1995). But for comparative advantage to work, a free and undistorted market must operate.

However, in the agricultural trade, the playing field is far from level. Many of the big TNCs have benefited from government subsidies and export programmes. Under one such programme – “US Public Law 480” – commodity loans and grants to developing countries are used to subsidise American agricultural producers who want to sell to foreign markets.

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS — IN THE CONSUMER INTEREST?

Our food is increasingly controlled by an international body that most of us have never heard of.

Codex Alimentarius, a United Nations agency under the Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO), has an impact on consumers everywhere, everyday, since it regulates the food we eat, those traded internationally and even foods we are not allowed to eat or trade. Yet few people have ever heard of Codex, let alone understand what it is – and how it purports to protect their interests. Its aim is to agree and harmonise standards, which can be used confidently throughout the world to promote trade and protect consumers.

Since the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1993, Codex has become the basis of international food standards for trade between member countries. This means that food conforming to Codex standards can be traded between member countries without recourse to existing national legislation. Some countries, which have not developed their own national standards, rely on Codex standards. Other members are finding that their national legislation can be superseded by Codex standards, for example, in the trade dispute between the USA and the European Union (EU) over the use of growth hormones in meat. But its committees remain dominated by industry and its lengthy procedures delay essential decision-making. The commitment it has made to increase consumer involvement needs to be realised; and consumer concerns must be acknowledged within its principles.

When the Africa Codex Alimentarius Commission, as part of the international food standards setting body, met in Abuja, Nigeria in 1995 to set standards on couscous that would have excluded local cereals, such as millet and maize, the leaders of the African consumer organisations, representing Consumers International stepped in.

They explained the effect such a standard would have on the rural economy, on research and

development and on consumption of such cereals, which are commonly used in sub-Saharan Africa.

The proposed Codex standards would have a negative impact on farmers, displacing their produce from the market; and exacerbating the problem of rural exodus. There would also be little incentive for research institutes to seek ways to improve crops like millet and maize that are of local importance but for which there are no international standards – and therefore no market.

As for consumers, the poorest of them will continue buying local goods that have no standards on hygiene, packaging or labelling – exposing them to a variety of dangers – while the rich will turn to foreign and expensive modes of consumption.

The consumer representatives swayed the Codex delegates and were invited to propose a more comprehensive standard. Their approach was simple – a standard should be defined which links financial accessibility of the product to consumer safety and protection as well as job creation in a Third World environment dominated by an informal trade sector.

Consumers International and other NGOs are campaigning for greater consumer representation at national, regional and international levels to protect and consider consumer interests, issues and to improve transparency in the decision-making process.

WHAT CONSUMERS CAN DO

Consumers can help by following the “Five Rs”:

- Reduce consumption – especially meat and other expensive imported products; save energy
- Redirect consumption – towards locally-produced organic food and produce that is in season;
- Recycle food and other waste – by way of organic farming;
- Relate – to those who do not have enough to eat. Support agrarian reform policies and other measures that promote food security.
- Re-educate people – make consumers aware of the benefits of sustainable production and consumption.

ISSUES RELATED TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN THE MALAYSIA PLANS

By Rachel Samuel

The production level in the agricultural sector was 4.8% during the First Malaysia Plan and this subsequently rose to 8% during the Second Malaysia Plan. However, production dropped to 4.3% during the Fourth Malaysia Plan, to 4% during the Sixth Malaysia Plan (and subsequently to 2.4% during the Seventh Malaysia Plan).

The Agricultural sector contributed 32.1% to the GDP during the Second Malaysia Plan. A slight drop was noted in the Third Malaysia Plan where the contribution was 29.8%. It dropped further to 22.2% during the Fourth Malaysia Plan, to 13.6% during the Sixth Malaysia Plan and then to 10.5% during the Seventh Malaysia Plan. The government, however, had introduced a number of new strategies during the Third to the Seventh Malaysia Plans to revive the agricultural sector. The strategies introduced were:

- New Economic Policy - Third Malaysia Plan
- National Agricultural Policy - Fourth Malaysia Plan
- Agro-Based Industry - Sixth Malaysia Plan
- Sustainable Agriculture - Seventh Malaysia Plan

The domestic self-sufficiency level for paddy was:

- First Malaysia Plan - 80%
- Third Malaysia Plan - 87%
- Fourth Malaysia Plan - 92%
- Fifth Malaysia Plan - 76.5%
- Seventh Malaysia Plan - 75% (1995)
- Forecasted - 65% (Year 2010)

During the First Malaysia Plan, the fisheries sector showed good results. An increase was noted during the Second Malaysia Plan, with a rise of 7.8%. MAJUIKAN was introduced during the Third Malaysia Plan and the fisheries sector continued to record good results. Aquaculture was introduced during the Fourth Malaysia Plan. Decline in this sector was seen during the Fifth Malaysia Plan. Despite the introduction of deepsea fishing during the Seventh Malaysia Plan, only 4.4% output was recorded in the fisheries sector.

The First Malaysia Plan recorded a 9.8% domestic production in the poultry/meat sector. During the Second Malaysia Plan, all domestic demand for chicken and pork was fulfilled.

However, RM68.9 million in dairy products were imported. During the Third Malaysia Plan, domestic demand for chicken, eggs and pork was fulfilled but 95% of dairy products were still imported. During the Fourth Malaysia Plan, local milk production increased and the price of imported animal food also increased. During the Fifth Malaysia Plan, milk production increased by three times. Ten percent of domestic demand for milk was fulfilled during the Sixth Malaysia Plan, however imports for dairy products still continued.

Contribution of Agriculture Sector towards the GDP

Year	GDP(%)
1980	22.9
1985	20.8
1990	18.7

Source: *The National Agriculture Policy (1992-2010)*

Contribution of the Agriculture and Industrial Sectors towards the GNP (1960-1994)

Year	Agriculture (%)	Industry(%)
1960	33.0	12.5
1970	29.0	13.9
1980	22.9	17.0
1991	18.7	19.6
1992	16.6	28.9
1993	15.8	30.1
1994	14.9	31.4

Source: *Malaysian Agriculture Directory & Index 1995/1996*



WORKSHOP

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Issues that were brought up included the following:

1. NGOs should have a positive attitude to help the government overcome the economic crisis. ERA was asked to help the farmers in various ways including financial help, technical help and advice.
2. The importance of agriculture without the use of pesticides was emphasised. This could reduce the overall cost of agricultural production.
3. Organic farming should be practised. A good example is the “shimomoto” system practised in Japan by creating a compost heap to fertilise the land and to trap pests using a ginger and vinegar concoction.
4. The vegetables produced through organic farming should be sold directly to consumers. The production cost will be higher as more manpower is needed. This system of production should receive strong support from consumer groups so that benefits of these vegetables can be highlighted to consumers.
5. The government should also encourage home gardening for vegetables and fruits.
6. As fish catches are declining, an alternative such as freshwater fish should be introduced. Fifteen freshwater fish centres are being set up by the government for marketing purposes. A campaign to encourage the consumption of frozen fish is also being introduced by the government.
7. The Veterinary Services Department is looking into new ways of increasing meat production in the country.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The questions for group discussion were:

1. What is your view on food security?
2. What objectives do you hope to achieve through food security?
3. What is the current food security situation? What has caused this situation?
4. What steps are needed to achieve food security?

WORKSHOP REPORT

A. TO ENSURE ENOUGH SUPPLY

- Re-prioritise the import of food
- Encourage small-scale farming that enhances soil fertility and biodiversity
- Change attitude towards food (decrease consumption of fast food and imported food)
- Emphasise local vegetables and fruits
- Encourage breast-feeding campaigns, Green Book campaigns, etc.
- Try producing vegetables that are currently imported (onions, ginger, etc)

B. TO ENSURE SAFE FOOD

- Safe methods of food production
- Alternative production, e.g. Integrated Pest Management, organic farming
- Community- based agriculture farming

C. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

- Government should provide subsidy to eligible farmers to eventually become self-reliant or independent
- Government and relevant bodies should provide technical assistance and know-how to upgrade skills of farmers in the agriculture sector
- The relevant authorities should also encourage career development in the co-curriculum field of agriculture, e.g. through school, the higher education institutions and training programmes for youth
- Emphasis should also be given to the agricultural sector in the Malaysia Plans and National Agriculture Policy
- Government should also plan to set up Food Banks and Seed Banks to develop domestic agriculture industries

D. JOINT ACTION

- All consumer groups should play a role in disseminating information and educating consumers on safe local food
- There should be no discrimination against local produce for domestic consumption

E. TO ENSURE FAIR PRICE

- Develop the local agricultural sector
- Produce own feed for poultry and cattle

- Reduce tax on local agricultural products
- Carry out consumer education

F. TO ENSURE EASY AND CONSTANT SUPPLY OF FOOD

- Direct marketing to the consumer, without a role for middlemen
- Local food production through urban farming and kitchen gardening

DISCUSSION ON MAJOR ISSUES

A number of agricultural issues were discussed. This included distribution networks, government policies, use of idle land, financial resources and trade agreements (WTO and AFTA).

Cooperatives and farmers' markets (pasar tani) should be considered when discussing distribution networks. Farmers' markets are efforts for consumers, where the products are sold directly without the intervention of middlemen. Farm products sold here are fresh and cheap. The government should also re-look at the role played by FAMA. The government should also play a role in promoting breast-feeding and local food consumption among the public. It would also be the government's role to change the attitude that Malays are poor because of their involvement in the agriculture sector.

FELDA should also conduct campaigns to attract the youth to join the FELDA land schemes. Youth generally are not interested in these projects, causing these lands to be left idle. There are 800,000 to one million hectares of idle agriculture land in Malaysia. The challenge would be to ensure that consumers continually obtain cheap farm products. This will not be the case if farm lands shrink, causing lesser yields. The farmers have to work together to overcome food shortages and price increases. The government should also ensure that prices of farm products are similar both in the urban and rural sectors. The government, the relevant authorities and the private sector should work hand in hand to provide financial help and technical know-how to the farmers, especially those who want to be involved in organic farming.

The risks faced by the farmers are plentiful. For the consumers, the only issue that matters is constant supply of cheap vegetables. To ensure this, the farmers have to face constant attacks by pests, natural disasters and so on.

DAY TWO

REPORTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

I. Vietnam

DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURE IN VIETNAM AND ITS SUSTAINABILITY WITH REFERENCE TO OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

Vo-Tong Xuan

Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan, and Mekong Delta Farming Systems R&D Institute, University of Cantho, Vietnam

Presented by Tran Hong Truong

VACVINA (Vietnam Gardeners Association), Vietnam

After a series of changes in government policy toward agriculture, Vietnam has since 1989 turned around its agricultural production to become one of the world's biggest rice exporting countries. Unfortunately, despite its annual export of 2 to 3 million metric tonnes of rice, the incomes of most rice farmers are lowest among the labour forces in Vietnam. Rice farmers are facing huge obstacles: declining rice yields and increasing production costs as a result of high cost of inputs while rice price is low. The declining rice yields are caused by monocultured-rice varietal utilisation by farmers, changes in soil physical and chemical properties due to mismanagement and changes in water qualities due to irresponsible water management. Fortunately, several advanced farmers, by their long time trial and-error experiences, have been practicing various farming systems to make better use of their resources.

These indigenous technologies were timely discovered by the scientific communities and scientific studies were initiated by the Vietnam Farming Systems Network to extrapolate the technologies to major agroecosystems in an effort to diversify agricultural production in Vietnam. The diversification is aimed at increasing farm household income by sustainable resource management while maintaining national food security. Our studies concentrate on: perennial crop of high biomass-producing capability for transformation into food, feed and fuel, which help to restore soil fertility and act as sinks for the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide and methane; multipurpose livestock which recycle crop residues and by-products, produce cash income and fertiliser (manure), contribute to food and economic security, and provide employment for women and children; and technologies for on-farm fuel production using low-cost biodigestors and gasifiers.

In the irrigated areas: The Red River Delta, where the climate is close to subtropical with a long winter period, high valued winter vegetables, hybrid corn, Rhizoctonia-resistant wheat, hybrid white potato (using latest true potato seed [TPS] technology) were made available to farmers to replace the winter rice crop. Small-seeded lychee and longan can also be grown widely on land that is less suitable to rice, particularly in hilly areas. Almost all farm households possess one or more pigs, a few chickens or ducks, possibly a small fish pond in the Mekong Delta, sustainable farming systems such as rice-shrimp, rice-fish, rice-cash crop farming systems, etc. were promoted. Fruit tree areas —with exotic tropical fruits such as fragrant mango, seedless pomelo Nam Roi, mandarin, star-apple, sapodilla, durian, etc — are being expanded into rice fields. But due to spontaneous development without major investment of the government, farmers often suffer from natural calamity (flood) damaging their fruit orchards. In other agro-ecological zones, namely the Central Highlands, the Central Coast and the Southeastern region, irrigated rice can appropriately be integrated with livestock and cash crop systems.

In the rainfed lowland areas, normally only one rice crop using medium or long duration traditional rice varieties is planted. With the invention of short duration modern rice, farmers can plant two crops of rice by their traditional cultural practices (soil puddling followed by transplanting or direct broadcasting of pregerminated rice). This is a risky practice not only in Vietnam but also in other Asian countries, particularly Cambodia and Laos, since the dry spell during the early part of the rainy season usually damages the rice crop. We designed the direct dry seeding (DDS) technique to help overcome this risk. The DDS technique can handle dryland crops such as mungbean, cowpea, maize instead of short duration modern rice, and followed by a normally transplanted traditional rice. Artificial ponds on the fields are good collectors of excess rainwater or flood water that can be used to irrigate a short duration dryland crop such as squash, water melon and cucumber before the fields are completely dried. This proven technology needs to be extended to Vietnam's neighbouring countries to help stabilise the rainfed lowland rice crop.

In rainfed upland areas, farmers practice of shifting cultivation is gradually replaced by a more sustainable sloping land agriculture technique which involves stratifying the slope into alleys separated by live contour rows. The upland rice is rotated with peanut, soybean, maize, or a leguminous forage alternately among the different alleys, while fruit trees could be planted on top of the hills. A small number of livestock may be maintained by each farm household. Soil erosion was minimised and soil fertility was improved, hence the cultivation is stabilised. However this sound technique is still limited, since government services such as agricultural extension and credits cannot reach the farmers in the interior, a similar situation found in the upland areas of neighbouring Asian countries.

In tidal flood prone areas, tides flood the land daily to a depth from 30cm to even 4m. Wetland rice usually is transplanted once during the rainy season. The rice-brackish water shrimp system is being practiced widely. Molting crab production on rice land during the

dry season is another genius farmer's invention. In these farming systems, the rice component is usually saline tolerant, short duration, tall stature MV rice varieties. With appropriate rice varieties, direct wet seeding could be experimented to reduce labour cost for production and management of seeding. This system is more preferred than the extremely unsustainable shrimp farming which totally displaces the rice crop, as practiced in the Philippines and Thailand.

While Vietnam is trying to increase the income of its farmers by diversification to more valued agricultural production, other Southeast Asian countries also move toward similar goals. Unfortunately, the general tendency of many countries is to move away from the low-value-but-most-essential rice crop. Malaysia was the first country which led the strong diversification programme since 1968 to oil palm production in marginal land and high valued vegetables in their uplands, thanks to the large Singapore market close by. Today, Malaysia aims to maintain a 65% self sufficiency with rice, the rest can be imported cheaper. Rice-deficit Indonesia also diversifies part of its rice land to grow fruit trees, and the Philippines is doing a similar programme. In Thailand, substantial areas of rice were turned into commercial shrimp farms and commercial fruit trees (longan, lychee, durian ...) orchards. The rice areas in these countries will be recovered only when rice price starts to increase as world rice supply shrinks.

2. India

INDIA'S EXPERIENCE IN THE ALTERNATIVE FOOD TECHNOLOGY

*Presented by: K Govindan, First Secretary
Indian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur*

India is largely an agricultural country. However, in 1951, the production of food grains was only 51 million tonnes, which was short of the requirement. India had to import a substantial quantity of food grains to meet the deficit, even though the population was only 361 million.

At present, the production of food grains has gone up by almost four times to nearly 200 million tonnes. India does not have to import. India exports long grain rice regularly and it also exports other rice and also wheat at times.

In the case of milk, vegetables and fruits, there has been substantial increase in production and the country is among the largest producers in the world of these items.

How has India been able to achieve the increase in production of food, grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, etc and achieve self-sufficiency or surplus in spite of the steep increase in population? This has been viewed as a "Green Revolution" in common parlance.

Firstly, India expanded the land under cultivation for cereals from 78 million hectares in 1951 to over 100 million hectares, i.e. by 28%. Secondly and mainly, yield increased from 542 kg per hectare in 1951 to over 1,730 kg, now, which is about 3.2 times that of the yield in 1951. The increase in yield has become possible because of the various measures undertaken by the government and the farmers. Some of them are as follows:

- (i) Production and supply of quality high-yielding seeds to the farmers. National Seeds Corporation, State Farms Corporation, 13 State Seed Cooperatives and over 100 major private sector companies produce and supply to the farmers quality seeds. Indian Council for Agricultural Research conducts research directly and also through a chain of 45 institutes, 30 national research centres, 86 All India Coordination Research Projects and 29 State agricultural universities which have over 200 Zonal Research Stations. The research is not only on high yielding varieties but also on short duration crops, so that in a year 3 crops can be raised on the land. Some of the varieties of paddy are harvested in less than 100 days from the date of planting. Research is also carried on drought resistant, disease and pest resistant varieties.
- (ii) Increased use of fertilisers: Government encouraged use of chemical fertilisers. The consumption reached nearly 15 million tonnes at present. While most of the fertilisers are produced locally, some quantity is still being imported. Of late, the government is popularising the use of organic sources of nutrients like compost, green manure and bio-fertilisers. Some bio-fertiliser companies have also started exporting their products.
- (iii) Thirdly, irrigation has been expanded with the construction of several large, medium and small dams and by extending loans to farmers for digging wells. With systematic development of irrigation, its potential has increased from 22 million hectares in 1951 to over 92 million hectares in 1997. Ground water resources have also been tapped extensively, mostly through the individual efforts of the farmers with the help of institutional finance at low interest rates.

While expansion of the area under cultivation, introduction of high yielding and short duration crops, increased use of fertilisers and expansion of irrigation facilities are the main contributing factors to the increase in food grain production. Other measures like soil and water conservation, flood control, farm mechanisation, and high procurement prices paid to farmers for food grains have also contributed their share to the increase in production.

India is now the largest producer of fruits in the world. The main fruits include mangoes, banana, apples, grapes and oranges. India is the second largest producer of vegetables with production of about 70 million tonnes.

India has the largest number of livestock in the world, with over 205 million cattle, 85 million buffaloes, 50 million sheep, 120 million goats and 350 million poultry birds. Notable developments in agriculture have been in dairy development. There are now about 75,000 dairy cooperative societies with a membership of about 10 million persons. The milk production has reached 70 million tonnes, placing India in the second position among large producers. India thus has achieved what is called white revolution. In the next 2 - 3 years, India is expected to become the largest producer of milk in the world. This has been achieved by supply of high milk yielding cows to the farmers on loan basis, artificial insemination, providing veterinary hospitals throughout the country and by offering fair prices for milk to the farmers.

Poultry development in India has also been very significant. The annual production of eggs at present is about 30 billion. Though it is not very high compared to other countries, for India, it is considered high, as the people generally eat eggs only occasionally and there is a growing section of the population who are vegetarians and who do not eat eggs. The non-vegetarians, even those who can afford, avoid eating eggs everyday.

Considering this, the egg production in the country is high and there is a fear among poultry farmers that they cannot sustain the fast rate of growth in production.

Among the agro-industries, the sugar industry is a large one. The number of sugar mills have increased from 138 in 1951 to about 500 now. India is one of the largest producers of sugar in the world. The Indian sugar industry has acquired expertise and experience and has now gone overseas to set up sugar factories and manage sugar plantations.

While at present India is self-sufficient in food grains, it has to constantly increase the yield has to meet the demand from the growing population.

India has agreements in cooperation in the field of agriculture with several countries. In addition, India also has agreement with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, under which it sends agricultural scientists to various countries for developing agriculture there and for working in agricultural research institutes. India also conducts various courses in the country in agriculture for the nationals of developing countries with a view to sharing its experience and knowledge with them. The entire expenditure on these courses, including the international airfare for the trainers, is borne by the Government of India under its Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme. India would be happy to have cooperation with Malaysia also.

3. Cuba

CUBA'S EXPERIENCE IN ALTERNATIVE FOOD TECHNOLOGY

Presented by: Sarojeni Rengam

Even though Cuba is a small and poor country, many of its people are academicians and intellectuals. Many of these intellectuals are involved in agriculture in order to support themselves. These people do intensive farming. As the United States government stopped the other countries from exporting food to Cuba, at one time it was very hard to get food in Cuba. So in order to survive, intellectuals did farming to help and meet the needs of the people of Cuba. Even the children helped in the farming activities.

In Cuba agrophonic agriculture was introduced, which is a new way of farming, where farming is done in a long, cement container filled with soil. Other than the modern farming, traditional farming also played an important role in Cuba.

Soil management is also equally important. For example, worms are used to fertilise the soil. The Cuban government has never given any subsidy to the farmers. The best part here is, most of the professionals such as teachers and doctors, do part time farming in their homes. Other than agriculture, health services are also a daily routine for the people of Cuba. After going through tough times, the Cuban people have managed to overcome all their problems.

DISCUSSION ON MAJOR ISSUES

1. Food imports can be reduced if the following 3 methods are practised:
 - a) encourage farming activities. Corporate bodies should be given incentives to invest in farming land.
 - b) banks should be directed to give loans to those interested in farming.
 - c) state governments should help farmers to farm and market their products.
2. Banks should give out loans equally for the industries and the agricultural sector. This is not the case currently as industries are given more encouragement.
3. The government should conduct an in-depth study into hydroponic farming, as the use of chemical fertilisers is very high in this type of farming.

WORKSHOP – PLAN OF ACTION

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The issues that were discussed were:

1. Strategies to ensure adequate food production
 2. Strategies for effective food distribution channels
 3. Strategies to overcome the idle land situation
 4. Strategies to ensure sufficient finance
 5. Strategies for trade mechanisms
1. **Adequate food production**
 - The government should increase efforts to produce food such as rice, vegetables and fruits
 - Government agencies should work together with the government and the private sector to ensure success in food production
 - Banks should give more importance to agricultural production and the animal husbandry industry
 - Farming in housing estates by the community should be encouraged
 - Environment-friendly farming should be encouraged.
 2. **Effective food distribution channels**
 - To reduce cost, direct distribution from farmers/producers to consumers should be encouraged
 - Government agencies need not be involved directly in the marketing of agriculture products
 - The role of the middlemen should be eliminated.
 3. **Idle land situation**
 - Idle land exists due to the ineffectiveness of the administrative system
 - Agriculture land that has been left idle for a certain period of time should be given to successful farmers to increase agricultural production
 4. **Government policies and subsidies**
 - The word ‘subsidy’ should be replaced by ‘government assistance’. This form of assistance should be made available to genuine individuals to help them become self-reliant.
 - The government should reduce food imports and increase tax on imported items.

5. Financial resources

- The government should not impose a high interest rate on the loans for the farmers
- The government and banks should also assist NGOs that are involved in agricultural activities.

6. Trade mechanisms

- The government should evaluate the impact of globalisation on the agricultural sector. The government should also protect the quality of the food production in the country. Price competition in agricultural products should also be given due attention.

SUMMARY

Each participant voiced out his and her hopes that the agriculture and animal husbandry sectors will be given due priority. It is time the government, relevant agencies and the NGOs took urgent action on the issue of food security in Malaysia. Good and effective networking is also useful for both the consumer and the producer to increase direct sales. The role of ‘pasar tani’ can be enhanced to assist the farmers in areas that still need improvement. All idle land should be used for agricultural production. The agricultural sector cannot succeed without support and assistance from the government. “Eat Local Food” campaigns should be introduced at the national level. Incentives and credit should be given to successful farmers. To protect the crop, insurance should be made available.

All participants unanimously voted to:

- Eat local food
- Practise organic farming
- Be environment-friendly
- Start farming; when possible one product per village

CONCLUSION

A conference on the issues of food security in the ASEAN region will be held next year. The participants will be made up of agricultural experts. ERA as the organising body will take charge of disseminating relevant information on agriculture to all participants and the relevant government agencies. ERA will also establish a network of all participants to enable exchange of information, technical know-how and advice.

ANNEX:

Important Issues Related to Food and Agricultural in The 1st - 7th Malaysia Plan

First Malaysia Plan (1966 - 1970)

Background

1. Development in agricultural sector is important for overall economic development.
2. Agricultural sector contributes 1/3 of GDP
3. Provides employment to the half of the workforce and 50% of the foreign exchange income comes from this sector.
4. Agricultural sector has a growth of 8% per annum.

Paddy

1. Paddy production has a growth of 11.9% per year (2 planting seasons).
2. Lembaga Padi Negara was formed to coordinate production, processing and marketing activities.

Fisheries

1. Production increased by 8% per year.
2. Pukat was introduced in Peninsular Malaysia.

Livestock

1. Production in this sector increased 5.4% per year, especially in the poultry and hog industries.
2. In West Malaysia, local demand for chicken & pork could be fulfilled.
3. Import dependence for dairy products (RM68.9 million in 1970)

Second Malaysia Plan (1971 - 1975)

Background

1. Agriculture remains an important sector in the Malaysian economy.
2. Agricultural sector provides 49.3% of the employment in 1975.
3. Agricultural sector has recorded highest percentage of poverty.
4. Contribution of agricultural sector towards GDP decreased from 32.1% (1970) to 29.8% (1975)

Paddy

1. Muda & Kemubu Irrigation programmes was implemented.
2. Self sufficiency of 87%.

Fisheries

1. MAJUIKAN was formed in 1971
2. Fish production increased 7.8% per year.

Livestock

1. MAJUTERNAK was formed in 1975
2. Self sufficiency achieved in chicken, egg & pork
3. 95% of dairy products were imported

Third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980)

Background

1. Priority is given to agricultural sector to achieve the objectives of the New Economic Policy.
2. Poverty among households involved in agriculture is 46.1% (1980).
3. Agricultural sector has a growth of 4.3% per annum
4. Contribution of agricultural sector towards GDP decreased from 29.8% (1975) to 22.2% (1980)

Paddy

1. Paddy production increased.
2. 92% self sufficiency (1980) compared to 78% self sufficiency in 1970.

Fisheries

1. Fish production increased by 9.8% per year.
2. Aquaculture for fish and prawns was expanded (1976-1980)

Livestock

1. Milk production increased with dairy development programme for small farmers.
2. Cost of import of animal feed increased.

Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981-1985)

Background

1. Agriculture declared an important sector in the Malaysian economy.
2. Contribution of agricultural sector towards GDP decreased to 20.3% (1985) and the sector has a growth of 3.1% per year.

Paddy

1. There was a reduction in production by 1.1% per year.
2. Only 76.5% self-sufficiency could be achieved (80%-85% target in NAP)

Fisheries

1. Fish production decreased because of depleting fish stocks, especially in the seas off Peninsular Malaysia.
2. Aquaculture production also decreased because of inefficiency in marketing the ikan air tawar (freshwater fish).

Livestock

1. Production of chicken, egg, beef and pork increased.
2. Milk production increased 3 times more as there were good quality dairy animals.

Fifth Malaysia Plan (1986-1990)

Background

1. The main development in agricultural sector was the launching of National Agricultural Policy in 1984. It provides strategy and long-term policy towards development in the sector until the year 2000.
2. Agricultural sector's growth is 4.6 % per annum.
3. Emphasis was given to local production due to high food import bill (RM 4-5 billion per year)
4. Employment in this sector decreased about 3.8%

Paddy

1. Insufficient labour, weak management and drought influenced paddy production.
2. Paddy production reduced to 1.6 million tonnes (1990) from 2 million tonnes (1985)
3. BERNAS was formed in 1994 to improve the paddy marketing system.

Fisheries

1. Fish production increased 7.6% and there was a 7.9% increase in aquaculture produce.

Livestock

1. For chicken, egg and pork, production was able to meet local demand and also there was surplus to be exported.
2. In milk, we were only 10% self sufficient.

Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995)

Background

1. Growth in the production, service and industrial sector (agro-based sector).
2. Increase of 3% in food import, from RM4.5 billion (1990) to RM6.7 billion (1995).
3. Agricultural sector has a growth of 2.4 %.
4. Contribution of agricultural sector decreased to 13.6% (1995) in the GDP.

Paddy

1. Paddy production increased by 1.4% per year
2. Self sufficiency of 75% in 1995 compared to 76.5% in 1990.

Fisheries

1. Deep sea fishing increased at 4.4% per year

Livestock

1. Local demand for chicken, egg and pork meat was fulfilled.

Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000)

1. An effective strategy is needed to achieve sustainable growth.

WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

13 - 17 November 1996, Rome, Italy

Rome Declaration on World Food Security

We, the Heads of State and Government,¹ or our representatives, gathered at the World Food Summit at the invitation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.

We pledge our political will and our common and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015.

We consider it intolerable that more than 800 million people throughout the world, and particularly in developing countries, do not have enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs. This situation is unacceptable. Food supplies have increased substantially, but constraints on access to food and continuing inadequacy of household and national incomes to purchase food, instability of supply and demand, as well as natural and man-made disasters, prevent basic food needs from being fulfilled. The problems of hunger and food insecurity have global dimensions and are likely to persist, and even increase dramatically in some regions, unless urgent, determined and concerted action is taken, given the anticipated increase in the world's population and the stress on natural resources.

We reaffirm that a peaceful, stable and enabling political, social and economic environment is the essential foundation which will enable States to give adequate priority to food security and poverty eradication. Democracy, promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, and the full and equal participation of men and women are essential for achieving sustainable food security for all.

Poverty is a major cause of food insecurity and sustainable progress in poverty eradication is critical to improve access to food. Conflict, terrorism, corruption and environmental degradation also contribute significantly to food insecurity. Increased food production, including staple food, must be undertaken. This should happen within the framework of sustainable management of natural resources, elimination of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, and early stabilization of the world population. We acknowledge the fundamental contribution to food security by

1 'When "Government" is used, it means as well the European Community within its areas of competence.

women, particularly in rural areas of developing countries, and the need to ensure equality between men and women. Revitalization of rural areas must also be a priority to enhance social stability and help redress the excessive rate of rural-urban migration confronting many countries.

We emphasize the urgency of taking action now to fulfill our responsibility to achieve food security for present and future generations. Attaining food security is a complex task for which the primary responsibility rests with individual governments. They have to develop an enabling environment and have policies that ensure peace, as well as social, political and economic stability and equity and gender equality. We express our deep concern over the persistence of hunger which, on such a scale, constitutes a threat both to national societies and, through a variety of ways, to the stability of the international community itself. Within the global framework, governments should also cooperate actively with one another and with United Nations organizations, financial institutions, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and public and private sectors, on programmes directed toward the achievement of food security for all.

Food should not be used as an instrument for political and economic pressure. We reaffirm the importance of international cooperation and solidarity as well as the necessity of refraining from unilateral measures not in accordance with the international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that endanger food security.

We recognize the need to adopt policies conducive to investment in human resource development, research and infrastructure for achieving food security. We must encourage generation of employment and incomes, and promote equitable access to productive and financial resources. We agree that trade is a key element in achieving food security. We agree to pursue food trade and overall trade policies that will encourage our producers and consumers to utilize available resources in an economically sound and sustainable manner. We recognize the importance for food security of sustainable agriculture, fisheries, forestry and rural development in low as well as high potential areas. We acknowledge the fundamental role of farmers, fishers, foresters, indigenous people and their communities, and all other people involved in the food sector, and of their organizations, supported by effective research and extension, in attaining food security. Our sustainable development policies will promote full participation and empowerment of people, especially women, an equitable distribution of income, access to health care and education, and opportunities for youth. Particular attention should be given to those who cannot produce or procure enough food for an adequate diet, including those affected by war, civil strife, natural disaster or climate related ecological changes. We are conscious of the need for urgent action to combat pests, drought, and natural resource degradation including desertification, overfishing and erosion of biological diversity.

We are determined to make efforts to mobilize, and optimize the allocation and utilization of, technical and financial resources from all sources, including external debt relief for developing countries, to reinforce national actions to implement sustainable food security policies.

Convinced that the multifaceted character of food security necessitates concerted national action, and effective international efforts to supplement and reinforce national action, we make the following commitments:

- we will ensure an enabling political, social, and economic environment designed to create the best conditions for the eradication of poverty and for durable peace, based on full and equal participation of women and men, which is most conducive to achieving sustainable food security for all;
- we will implement policies aimed at eradicating poverty and inequality and improving physical and economic access by all, at all times, to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food and its effective utilization;
we will pursue participatory and sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries forestry and rural development policies and practices in high and low potential areas, which are essential to adequate and reliable food supplies at the household, national, regional and global levels, and combat pests, drought and desertification, considering the multifunctional character of agriculture;
- we will strive to ensure that food, agricultural trade and overall trade policies are conducive to fostering food security for all through a fair and market-oriented world trade system;
- we will endeavour to prevent and be prepared for natural disasters and man-made emergencies and to meet transitory and emergency food requirements in ways that encourage recovery, rehabilitation, development and a capacity to satisfy future needs;
- we will promote optimal allocation and use of public and private investments to foster human resources, sustainable food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry systems, and rural development, in high and low potential areas;
- we will implement, monitor, and follow-up this Plan of Action at all levels in cooperation with the international community.

We pledge our actions and support to implement the World Food Summit Plan of Action.

Rome, 13 November 1996

World Food Summit Plan of Action

1. The Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action lay the foundations for diverse paths to a common objective — food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. In this regard, concerted action at all levels is required. Each nation must adopt a strategy consistent with its resources and capacities to achieve its individual goals and, at the same time, cooperate regionally and internationally in order to organize collective solutions to global issues of food security. In a world of increasingly interlinked institutions, societies and economies, coordinated efforts and shared responsibilities are essential.
2. Poverty eradication is essential to improve access to food. The vast majority of those who are undernourished, either cannot produce or cannot afford to buy enough food. They have inadequate access to means of production such as land, water, inputs, improved seeds and plants, appropriate technologies and farm credit. In addition, wars, civil strife, natural disasters, climate-related ecological changes and environmental degradation have adversely affected millions of people. Although food assistance may be provided to ease their plight, it is not a long-term solution to the underlying causes of food insecurity. It is important to maintain an adequate capacity in the international community to provide food aid, whenever it is required, in response to emergencies. Equitable access to stable food supplies should be ensured.
3. A peaceful and stable environment in every country is a fundamental condition for the attainment of sustainable food security. Governments are responsible for creating an enabling environment for private and group initiatives to devote their skills, efforts and resources, and in particular investment, towards the common goal of food for all. This should be undertaken with the cooperation and participation of all members of society. Farmers, fishers and foresters and other food producers and providers, have critical roles in achieving food security, and their full involvement and enablement are crucial for success.
4. Poverty, hunger and malnutrition are some of the principal causes of accelerated migration from rural to urban areas in developing countries. The largest population shift of all times is now under way. Unless these problems are addressed in an appropriate and timely fashion, the political, economic and social stability of many countries and regions may well be seriously affected, perhaps even compromising

world peace. It is necessary to target those people and areas suffering most from hunger and malnutrition and identify causes and take remedial action to improve the situation. A more complete, user-friendly source of information at all levels would enable this.

5. Availability of enough food for all can be attained. The 5.8 billion people in the world today have, on average, 15 percent more food per person than the global population of 4 billion people had 20 years ago. Yet, further large increases in world food production, through the sustainable management of natural resources, are required to feed a growing population, and achieve improved diets. Increased production, including traditional crops and their products, in efficient combination with food imports, reserves, and international trade can strengthen food security and address regional disparities. Food aid is one of the many instruments which can help to promote food security. Long term investment in research and in cataloguing and conserving genetic resources, particularly at the national level, is essential. The link between sufficient food supplies and household food security must be ensured.
6. Harmful seasonal and inter-annual instability of food supplies can be reduced. Progress should include targeting on minimizing the vulnerability to, and impact of, climate fluctuations and pests and diseases. To effect timely transfers of supplies to deficit areas and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, use should be made, in efficient combination, of climate early warning systems, transfer and utilization of appropriate agricultural, fishery and forestry technologies, production, and reliable trade, storage and financial mechanisms. Natural and man-made disasters can often be anticipated or even prevented, and response must be timely and effective and assist recovery.
7. Unless national governments and the international community address the multifaceted causes underlying food insecurity, the number of hungry and malnourished people will remain very high in developing countries, particularly in Africa south of the Sahara; and sustainable food security will not be achieved. This situation is unacceptable. This Plan of Action envisages an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015, and a mid-term review to ascertain whether it is possible to achieve this target by 2010.
8. The resources required for investment will be generated mostly from domestic, private and public sources. The international community has a key role to play in supporting the adoption of appropriate national policies and, where necessary and appropriate, in providing technical and financial assistance to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in fostering food security.

9. The multi-dimensional nature of the follow-up to the World Food Summit includes actions at the national, intergovernmental and inter-agency levels. The international community, and the UN system, including FAO, as well as other agencies and bodies according to their mandates, have important contributions to the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. The FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS) will have responsibility to monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action.
10. Reaching sustainable world food security is part and parcel of achieving the social, economic, environmental and human development objectives agreed upon in recent international conferences. The World Food Summit Plan of Action builds on consensus reached in these fora and is based on the conviction that although the world is faced with major food insecurity, solutions to these problems exist. If all parties at local, national, regional and international levels make determined and sustained efforts, then the overall goal of food for all, at all times, will be achieved.
11. The Plan of Action of the World Food Summit is in conformity with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and international law and strives to consolidate the results of other UN conferences since 1990 on subjects having a bearing on food security.
12. The implementation of the recommendations contained in this Plan of Action is the sovereign right and responsibility of each State through national laws and the formulation of strategies, policies, programmes, and development priorities, in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, and the significance of and the full respect for various religious and ethical values, cultural backgrounds and philosophical convictions of individuals and their communities should contribute to the full enjoyment by all of their human rights in order to achieve the objective of food security for all.

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