

# Grow Asia Forum at the World Economic Forum on East Asia

Jakarta, Indonesia 19-21 April 2015







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# Launching the Grow Asia Partnership



The Grow Asia partnership, catalysed by the World Economic Forum in partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat, facilitates multistakeholder collaboration to enable sustainable and inclusive agricultural development in South-East Asia. It focuses on the development of smallholder farmers and the environmental sustainability of agriculture. Country-led and locally driven, Grow Asia contributes to food and nutrition security by supporting scalable, market-based solutions across agricultural value chains. By 2020, the partnership aims to reach 10 million smallholder farmers, improving farm productivity, profitability and environmental sustainability by 20%.

Grow Asia draws from the experience of the World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture (NVA) initiative, which serves as a platform to build collaboration among stakeholders to achieve a vision of agriculture as a driver of food security, environmental sustainability and economic opportunity.

On 19 April 2015, 160 senior leaders from ASEAN governments, the private sector, international organizations and donors, civil society and farmers' associations jointly launched the Grow Asia partnership at the second annual Grow Asia Forum. Seven of the 10 ASEAN countries were represented by ministers, vice-ministers and senior officials from Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

Participants engaged in interactive workshops and high-level panel discussions, reviewed the progress of country partnerships, and advanced partnership and investment opportunities to scale their impact. They also exchanged good practices to address key challenges in the sector, and defined a leadership agenda for food security and agriculture in ASEAN.

Key highlights from the **Grow Asia Forum** included:

- The ASEAN ministers, together with the **over 100 organizations** present, committed to reaching 10 million smallholder farmers by 2020 in South-East Asia.
- **Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar** and the **Philippines** have launched national initiatives as part of Grow Asia, mobilizing **28 value-chain projects** and **reaching over 100,000 farmers to date**. Grow Asia will support the expansion of these efforts and engage additional countries in the region.
- **Cambodia** and **Thailand** committed to developing new partnerships as part of Grow Asia during 2015.
- Leaders exchanged solutions on **financing** for smallholder farmers, addressing **deforestation** linked to agriculture, empowering **smallholder farmers**, making value chains more efficient and **reducing food loss**, and investing in **infrastructure and trade**. Participants expressed a vision for the future in which people become “farmers by choice” because it is a profitable and sustainable livelihood.
- The governments of **Australia** and **Canada** announced their support as Founding Donors of Grow Asia, with a total of \$9.5 million in grant funding to support the partnership.

The World Economic Forum will incorporate the perspectives shared at this meeting in its ongoing public-private dialogues on agriculture and food security in priority regions, both globally and through the Grow Asia platform. The Forum is pleased to share these highlights of discussions at the Grow Asia Forum and looks forward to further opportunities for interaction and collaboration on these issues with relevant stakeholders.

**01:** Left to Right: Franky Oesman Widjaja, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Sinar Mas Agribusiness & Food; Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General, ASEAN (Association of Southeast

Asian Nations); Sun Chanthol, Senior Minister, Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Cambodia; Estrella Penunia, Secretary-General, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable

Rural Development (AFA); Apichart Pongsrihadulchai, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand; Proceso J. Alcalá, Secretary of Agriculture of the Philippines; Hasil Sembiring, Director of Cereal, Directorate General of Food Crops, Ministry of Agriculture of Indonesia; Cao Duc Phat, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam; Tin Htut Oo, Chairman, National Economic and Social Advisory Council of Myanmar, and Chairman, Agriculture Group, Yoma Strategic Holdings; Anna Chilczuk, Regional Director for East Asia, Mercy Corps; Rashid Aleem Qureshi, President Director, Nestlé Indonesia PT; Simon Merrifield, Ambassador of Australia to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Donald Bobiash, Ambassador of Canada to Indonesia, Timor-Leste and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN); Sarita Nayyar, Managing Director, World Economic Forum USA



# The Grow Asia Forum

Sunday 19 April 2015



**01:** Left to Right: Sean de Cleene, Senior Vice-President, Global Initiatives, Strategy and Business Development, Yara International, Belgium; Cao Duc Phat, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam; Tina Lawton, Regional Director, Syngenta Asia Pacific, Singapore; Proceso J. Alcala, Secretary of Agriculture of the Philippines; Samuel Bon, Chief Executive Officer, Swisscontact, Switzerland; Tin Htut Oo, Chairman, National Economic and Social Advisory Council of Myanmar, and Chairman, Agriculture Group, Yoma Strategic Holdings, Myanmar

## A New Model for Collaboration

Leaders from ASEAN governments, global and local companies, international organizations and donors, civil society and farmers' associations jointly launched the Grow Asia partnership at the 2015 Grow Asia Forum, marking the start of this unique multistakeholder partnership, which engages all 10 ASEAN member states and over 100 organizations. Leaders committed to reaching 10 million smallholder farmers in South-East Asia by 2020 and helping them improve their productivity, profitability and environmental sustainability by 20%.

In his welcoming remarks, **Amran Sulaiman**, Minister of Agriculture of Indonesia, stressed the importance of the agriculture sector in South-East Asia, highlighting that in Indonesia it is a crucial source of income, food and nutrition. Agriculture contributes to the country's growth and development through export earnings and the provision of raw materials for other sectors, and remains a driving force to achieve food security. "Improving the welfare of farmers is a national priority of this cabinet," the minister commented. "Sustainability can be achieved if all stakeholders work hand in hand." In ASEAN, he observed, the private sector, governments and farmers' associations need partnerships to achieve sustainable agricultural development and food security. "This is a high priority on our agendas."

During the opening high-level panel, Grow Asia champions shared their achievements, from country-level action partnerships to sustainable and inclusive agriculture-sector transformation, citing innovations, barriers and future priorities for ASEAN countries.



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**Agriculture can be an engine of growth in the ASEAN region and achieving this potential will depend on the support of all stakeholders.**  
”

Le Luong Minh  
Secretary-General, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Jakarta

**Cao Duc Phat**, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam, hailed Grow Asia as a “forum to develop new ideas, concepts and approaches for sustainable agricultural development in the region”. Recalling that five years ago Vietnam started its pilot national programme under the World Economic Forum’s New Vision for Agriculture initiative, he said that Grow Asia offers the opportunity not just to scale up efforts in any one country but to expand across the whole of South-East Asia. “But for successful implementation, we need to share experiences,” Cao said. “I admire that Indonesia is so active. We can learn from their experiences even though we started earlier.” He added: “We are capable of reaching 10 million farmers by 2020. I strongly believe in this goal. It is the right idea and the right thing for us in this region to do.”

**Tina Lawton**, Regional Director, Syngenta Asia Pacific, Singapore, shared insights from the private sector’s perspective. “As a global agri-business company, Syngenta is fully committed to the goals of Grow Asia.” The key is to get the right people involved and build trust among all the stakeholders. Lawton cited the successes of the Partnership for Indonesia’s Sustainable Agriculture (PISAgro) and the Public-Private Task Force for Sustainable Agriculture in Vietnam, in which Syngenta is working with value-chain companies, the government and other key stakeholders on farmer education. These programmes have helped smallholder farmers become profitable and sustainable. Grow Asia provides a platform for discussion and alignment, “but ultimately the action must be taken at the country level and must be an integral part of business models”.

In his remarks, **Proceso J. Alcala**, Secretary of Agriculture of the Philippines, said his country has been focusing on the challenge of food safety standards and enforcement. By transforming the lives of smallholder farmers, the agriculture sector will become more competitive. The Philippines, which has only recently started its national partnership programme, aims to take advantage of the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community at the end of 2015. The country could benefit from the development of the regional market in livestock and poultry. It could also find a niche in coconut oil and coconut water.

The Philippines wants to build on the successes it has had in rural development in the southern island of Mindanao and expand its efforts to integrate and modernize supply

chains across the country. Alcala said that private domestic and foreign enterprises should be involved in the Philippine Partnership programme under Grow Asia. “Agriculture can bring tremendous benefits and the transfer of resources to the rural areas,” he said.

**Samuel Bon**, Chief Executive Officer, Swisscontact, Switzerland, told participants that, while civil society may be seen by some to be disruptive and focused only on advocacy, its engagement is an important pillar of programmes such as Grow Asia, and civil society can play an important role in implementing programmes on the ground. Achieving the goals of increasing income and opportunities in the agriculture and other related sectors requires an exceptional level of stakeholder collaboration. “Civil society can help facilitate the alignment of all stakeholders,” he said. “We can play a strong role in that engagement.” The key is to create sustainable, market-based solutions, Bon added. “Solutions must be locally driven and locally supported.” He noted that Swisscontact is participating in the Indonesia partnership programme and emphasized that Grow Asia’s goals are achievable if there is true public-private partnership.

After hosting the World Economic Forum on East Asia in 2013, Myanmar launched the Myanmar Agriculture Network (MAN), which now has over 40 stakeholder partners and seven working groups, said **Tin Htut Oo**, Chairman, National Economic and Social Advisory Council of Myanmar, and Chairman, Agriculture Group, Yoma Strategic Holdings, Myanmar. An economic gap exists among ASEAN countries and within countries, he remarked. The problems are low labour and land productivity and low income for farmers. “The days for cheap food are gone. Now people are asking for safe food. We have to look at the whole chain, from inputs, seeds and tractors, to the food that we eat. It’s from plough to plate or from farm to fork. For that we need everyone to cooperate together.”

**Ty Sokhun**, Secretary of State for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Cambodia, underscored his country’s efforts “to make progress transforming Cambodia from being food insecure to food safe and food sufficient”. He invited participants to explore the opportunities offered by his country.

Giving the farmers’ perspective, **Winarno Tohir**, Chairman, National Outstanding Farmers and Fishermen Association



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**In ASEAN, the private sector, governments and farmer associations need partnerships to achieve sustainable agricultural development and food security. Coming together is beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success.**

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Amran Sulaiman  
Minister of Agriculture of Indonesia



(KTNA), Indonesia, said that collective responsibility is an important aspect of the agriculture agenda. The private sector's role is critical and the public-private partnership structure is "reliable". "With our 20 million smallholder members, we are prepared to be part of this public-private partnership and to scale it up." Farmers, he added, have to be empowered through capacity building, supported by government and the private sector. Farmers' economies of scale can be enhanced. They can gain access to financial services and to technology. What they need from the government is infrastructure, such as irrigation, storage facilities, roads and ports. "So if we want to achieve food security and increase the incomes of smallholders, we must increase productivity. But the government alone cannot do it. It needs a multistakeholder approach. We have to work together with the small farmers. That is why Grow Asia is very important."

Moderator **Sean de Cleene**, Senior Vice-President, Global Initiatives, Yara International, Belgium, summed up the panel discussion by supporting the multistakeholder approach and the Grow Asia target, saying, "This is business as unusual – it's a new way of working – if we can find a way forward from farmers to government and everywhere in-between, the targets will be achievable."



**01:** Winarno Tohir, Chairman, National Outstanding Farmers and Fishermen Association (KTNA), Indonesia addressing the participants of the Grow Asia Forum Opening Plenary  
**02:** Participants of the Grow Asia Forum Opening Plenary



**01:** Hasil Sembiring, Director of Cereal, Directorate General of Food Crops, Ministry of Agriculture of Indonesia, addressing the participants of the Indonesia breakout group



## Country Breakouts

Grow Asia is centred on the country partnerships that it supports from launch to scale-up. During the Grow Asia Forum, ministers of agriculture and other key country leaders lead interactive discussions on national agriculture-sector partnership opportunities, sharing their vision and priorities for food security, and sustainable and inclusive agricultural growth. Participants defined opportunities for collaborative action to scale impact.

### Cambodia

Cambodia has committed to developing its agriculture sector and has invited Grow Asia to help establish a new partnership and convene stakeholders, including farmers, companies, civil society and international organizations, to brainstorm opportunities for value-chain partnership and to address the key question of trust. Cambodia is highly dependent on agriculture for its development, with a specific focus on rice production and export. Other crops of interest include cassava, pepper, sugar cane, corn, rubber and cashew nuts. The main messages arising from the discussion include:

- Building trust among all stakeholders to enable much needed collaboration
- Supporting the development of farmer cooperatives to help build farmer capacity, enable the private sector to work with smallholders, and help farmers access finance and markets
- Developing mobile- and information-technology-based solutions to help farmers learn and adapt

- Increasing crop productivity, quality and marketability
- Investing in infrastructure, especially for irrigation and processing

### Indonesia

The Partnership for Indonesia's Sustainable Agriculture (PISAgro) is an established multistakeholder partnership with strong support from business, government, farmers, civil society and others. It currently reaches more than 85,000 farmers across 10 crop value chains and is poised for further growth and contribution to agriculture development in Indonesia. Coordinated by an independent Secretariat, it also has a strong governance and management structure. Participants expressed keen interest in learning more about how it functions and its future plans. The discussion highlighted the following points:

- The challenge is to expand in a sustainable manner, including in different regions and with different partners, using an integrated approach. Post-harvest and marketing linkages are critical for scaling up, as is the need to link with various government initiatives and ministries
- Capturing and disseminating knowledge, especially to farmers using all the different networks, is needed
- Institutionalizing the partnership and focusing on how to strengthen it, build trust and engage more stakeholders are key
- New ideas and innovations should be introduced to develop required solutions, especially from the telecommunications and information technology sectors



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**Civil society groups will engage as partners and advocates to ensure that Grow Asia projects are sustainable and inclusive.**

”

Anna Chilczuk  
Regional Director for East Asia, Mercy Corps, Indonesia



## Myanmar

The goal of the Myanmar Agriculture Network (MAN) is “30:30”, i.e. to help the country achieve \$30 billion in agricultural output by 2030, through a multistakeholder approach that puts smallholder farmers at the centre. The network has established a core committee and seven working groups focused on different commodities and services.

Myanmar has identified the need to integrate value-chain development – by engaging the entire chain of players and learning lessons from other countries. The MAN will serve to align all stakeholders towards this goal, including farmer groups. The group embraced a future vision of “farmers by choice” – where farming and livelihoods are attractive and retain farmers in the sector. The specific challenges and opportunities raised include:

- Helping farmers increase their productivity and profitability and secure their assets; this will also address the increasing concern of rural-urban migration
- Investing in better water management, especially in light of changing weather patterns
- Ensuring a better regulatory and policy environment to support the capacity building of farmers’ organizations and enable financial transactions and increased private sector investment
- Investing in food processing, food standards and developing markets

## Philippines

The Philippine Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture has been launched with strong government leadership and commitment from the private sector, the farmer community and local stakeholders. It is now defining its priority areas, which include coffee, corn, cassava, coconut and fisheries, and is setting ambitious targets for 2020. The partnership is planning to set up a Secretariat to coordinate activities, align with other initiatives in the country, develop working groups on key crops and organize quarterly meetings to evaluate accomplishments and address issues. The main discussion points include:

- Establishing a clear management structure and governance, and linking with ongoing activities
- Learning from experiences in different regions of the country, such as Mindanao
- Defining clear plans and targets for the working groups and ensuring that all stakeholders active in crop value chains are engaged
- Developing solutions to enable access to finance for farmers

## Vietnam

The Public-Private Task Force for Sustainable Agriculture in Vietnam has been active since 2010, reaching more than 15,000 farmers across six crop value chains. With strong leadership from the government and the private sector, the partnership has recently established a Secretariat to coordinate its activities and enable it to increase its efforts

to reach more farmers and have a stronger impact on agricultural development. Specific opportunities that were highlighted include:

- Focusing on scaling up efforts to reach millions of farmers in Vietnam
- Developing innovative financing mechanisms linked to farmers’ needs and leading to sustainable outcomes
- Collaborating with the government and private sector to develop a better crop protection framework and approach
- Increasing market demand for key commodities by forging stronger links with market players in Japan and Korea
- Activating the approved Secretariat



## Country Partnerships – Common Themes

Each country partnership reflects the unique construct of the country, bringing together locally relevant stakeholders and developing management structures that work best in the local context. However, several themes were common across all the country discussions:

- Developing and enhancing the capacity building of **farmers’ organizations** to enable the dissemination of knowledge, support access to finance and markets, and empower the smallholder farmers
- Better understanding the financial cycle of smallholder farmers and their needs to ensure that **financial products and services** are appropriate
- Leveraging new **mobile-phone technology** to expand the reach and scale of the initiatives on the ground
- Investing in **local infrastructure**, including irrigation, processing, transport and storage

## Accelerating Impact Sessions

During the Grow Asia Forum, leaders exchanged good practices and evidence-based models to increase the impact and scale of agriculture activities. The aim of the sessions was to deepen the impact created by Grow Asia partnerships through sharing concrete models, identifying opportunities to improve the enabling environment, and prioritizing and accelerating coordinated action. The following recommendations were made:

### Financing the Last Mile: Leveraging Innovative Models to Improve Access and Reduce Risk

Millions of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in South-East Asia lack access to basic financial services, particularly for those engaged in agriculture and retail value chains. This forces farmers and other entrepreneurs to rely on riskier and more expensive methods to transact, borrow and secure their assets, limiting their ability to grow and manage their businesses. Yet, it is possible to secure financing for agriculture and other activities by leveraging innovative models to improve access and reduce risk. This session convened Grow Asia participants alongside champions from the World Economic Forum's Promoting Global Financial Inclusion initiative to discuss models to increase access to financial services that collectively promote food security and financial inclusion. These communities expressed interest in working more closely in the future. For example, they agreed to include a financial institution on the board of PISAgro, the Indonesian partnership.

Key insights from the discussion include:

- Achieving food security and financial inclusion in a particular region are symbiotic goals.
- Two key enablers of smallholder financing models are the development of quality products based on a detailed understanding of the smallholders' financial needs, and trust-based relationships that leverage familiar community stakeholders, such as local “mom and pop” shops.
- Electronic payments serve as an on-ramp for other financial products like credit and insurance, given the potential role for electronic transaction history to be used for data-driven underwriting.
- Institutionalizing risk-sharing mechanisms can also help with access to credit. For example, an insurance policy can function as the collateral needed for a loan.

### A New Partnership for Palm Oil: Transforming Indonesia's Fuel, Farmer and Forest Futures

Among the environmental sustainability challenges most relevant to agricultural growth is deforestation, a key issue for smallholder farmers' livelihoods in parts of South-East Asia. This represents a particularly timely opportunity for cross-sector collaboration regarding palm oil production in Indonesia. The discussion highlighted Grow Asia's collaboration with the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, a global public-private partnership that aims to reduce tropical deforestation associated with key commodities, to explore how government and key stakeholders in Indonesia and across the region can work together to develop an ambitious partnership for sustainable and inclusive growth



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**Grow Asia will help scale up innovative business models that we have developed through the Partnership for Indonesia Sustainable Agriculture for crops such as rice, corn and palm oil.**

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Franky Widjaja  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Sinar  
Mas Agribusiness & Food

in the palm oil sector. There was broad consensus on opportunities for agricultural intensification in order to avoid “extensification” and its environmental implications. A significant session outcome was the announcement by the Government of Indonesia to extend the current deforestation moratorium. The potential to develop the biofuel market and to direct funds collected through a levy to support smallholder farmers' shift to sustainable cultivation also exists. Participants identified a strong potential link between the Indonesian Palm Oil Pledge platform and PISAgro. Across stakeholder groups, participants applauded the Government of Indonesia's call for a “middle way” of stopping deforestation while driving economic growth through agriculture. Participants put particular emphasis on approaches that are sensitive to indigenous peoples' priorities, including for land rights and use.





**01:** Apichart Pongsrihadulchai, Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand, speaking to the participants of the Value Chain Efficiency breakout group

## Increasing Efficiency in the Value Chain: Opportunities to Reduce Food Loss

This session focused on the middle of the value chain – from farm gate to retail – and the technologies, business models, transportation and storage approaches as well as unusual partnership coalitions that could reduce food loss and increase economic opportunity. Key themes included loss reduction strategies, including synergistic interventions and investments along the value chain, and the need for mobile-phone-based information systems to provide real-time market information and spur new innovation in information dissemination. Concrete ideas for action included:

- Socializing “islands of excellence” to share successful value-chain strategies in a pre-competitive environment, with support from the New Vision for Agriculture initiative
- Coordinating a “market information system”, including the potential for Grow Asia to work with existing commodity groups and other public organizations to synthesize pre-existing information, and encouraging global businesses to put up an initial investment for a mobile-phone-based information system
- Creating and tracking a public-private partnership (PPP) scorecard to understand which PPP models are good for farmers and to make real progress against goals of productivity, income generation and sustainability across the value chain

## Strengthening Infrastructure and Trade: Improving the Operating Environment

South-East Asia offers vast potential for increased trade within and beyond the region. It can be unlocked through strengthened physical and institutional infrastructure, enabling regulations, increased coordination between nations in light of respective comparative advantages, and the harmonization of quality standards. In this session, participants discussed good models and explored increased collaboration and commitment, for strategic infrastructure investments and trade-enabling policies and partnerships. The key constraints discussed included a lack of alignment on standards, including for food safety; trade barriers; value-chain inefficiencies; weak infrastructure and legal frameworks; and the lack of commodity traceability. Participants discussed the main success factors for public-private collaboration, including tailored models and approaches; strong trust among partners and leveraging respective strengths through

clear roles; profitability for all partners; the availability of financing; and strong commitment from all players. Concrete opportunities to advance progress under Grow Asia include:

- Being a facilitator and catalyst of infrastructure PPPs, including mapping the opportunities and developing a project pipeline
- Promoting knowledge and best practice through PPP “blueprints” of best practice examples, a PPP knowledge centre on how partnership works, and efficiency reviews to assess projects
- Engaging in advocacy and agenda setting, helping to identify and elevate priorities, serving as a neutral, “honest broker” on sensitive trade issues, and engaging with others who analyse the competitiveness benefits to specific countries of removing trade barriers
- Enabling soft infrastructure development by encouraging education and training, and promoting a holistic and strategic view of soft infrastructure, including regulation and policies



## Indonesia Commits to Deforestation Moratorium Extension

The Government of Indonesia announced an extension on its deforestation moratorium. Sofyan A. Djalil, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs of Indonesia, said, “Let’s find the middle way to stop deforestation and keep producing and improving the production of palm oil.”

## Engaging Farmers' Organizations in Decision-Making

Participating farmers and representatives of farmers' organizations sent the clear message that partnership priorities should be anchored in the priorities of farmers and should be based on principles of shared value and benefit, shared standards, and trust and transparency. Farmers' organizations committed to strong engagement with Grow Asia at all levels, from governance in terms of creating a Farmer Advisory Council to on-the-ground participation through identifying and engaging local farmers' organizations.



## Enabling Farming as a Sustainable Business: Empowering men and women smallholders

Smallholder farmers are central to agricultural transformation and are key partners in the Grow Asia platform. In this spirit, this session was designed and led by farmers. Participants discussed concrete approaches for businesses and governments to partner with farmers to increase agricultural productivity through sustainable models that create economic opportunity. All agreed that the farmer must remain at the centre of the agenda, and that partnership activities should be anchored on farmers' priorities and should be based on principles of shared value and benefit, shared standards, and trust and transparency. Major themes discussed included the ageing population, the threat of brain drain and the importance of building trust as a critical element for inclusive collaboration. Specific ideas for action include:

- Building farming models that enable the transfer of knowledge, working with farmers' networks and learning

centres, and identifying farmers' groups comprising farmers who can lead/train others

- Emphasizing the need for a change in mindset to achieve trust among a new set of actors and adapt to such new realities as climate change. Opportunities exist for farmers to transition towards greater self-reliance, for the private sector to change from corporate social responsibility to responsible business, and for government to become more transparent and inclusive. Grow Asia's proposed role is to organize multistakeholder brainstorming forums for these respective roles, responsibilities and benefits, seeking both consensus and compromise

## Setting the Leadership Agenda for Food Security in ASEAN

Leaders officially launched the Grow Asia agenda in a high-level panel at the close of the Grow Asia Forum. "Every collaboration starts with a conversation," said **Kavita Prakash-Mani**, Special Advisor, Grow Asia, World Economic Forum, Singapore, to introduce the closing plenary.

**Ann M. Florini**, Professor, School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University, Singapore, introduced a high-level panel of ASEAN leaders convened by Grow Asia to focus on the need for developing the capacity of all stakeholders to engage in partnerships. "What we have learned from successful partnerships is the importance of strong organization and governance that bring in relevant partners and stay focused on the primary goals."

"Grow Asia is crucial and timely," said **Franky Oesman Widjaja**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Sinar Mas Agribusiness & Food, Indonesia, noting that the initiative grew out of the World Economic Forum's pilot efforts in Africa. Partnerships in Vietnam, Indonesia and elsewhere have already yielded success. In the Partnership for Indonesia's Sustainable Agriculture (PISAgro), working groups on each commodity aim to find the right models and best practices, and to assess the financing needs across the whole value chain. The goal is to come up with solutions that can be scaled up. At a recent meeting with Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia, PISAgro was recognized as an essential public-private platform to achieve national food security and sustainable growth.



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**01:** Left to Right: Ann M. Florini, Professor, School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University, Singapore; Franky Oesman Widjaja, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Sinar Mas Agribusiness & Food, Indonesia; Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Jakarta; Sun Chanthol, Senior Minister; Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Cambodia; Estrella Penunia, Secretary-General, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), Philippines; Apichart Pongsrihadulchai, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand



**We can bring new opportunities to the grassroots level by organizing farmers and building their capacity.**

Estrella Penunia  
Secretary-General, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA),  
Philippines



Grow Asia expands this model across the region, intending to promote partnerships that focus on improving the productivity, profitability and sustainability of farmers through true cooperation. Widjaja emphasized the importance of providing farmers with good financing schemes, with the banking system's support of the agriculture sector.

**Le Luong Minh**, Secretary-General, ASEAN, Jakarta, noted that ASEAN economies are among the world's biggest exporters of key agricultural products such as rice. "In every ASEAN country, agriculture is an engine of growth and important for food security," he said. ASEAN has a food security framework and plan of action. Cooperation in food production and agriculture is focused on improving the livelihood of farmers. These objectives are in line with Grow Asia and with the World Economic Forum and ASEAN Secretariat's joint efforts.

The ASEAN Economic Community will be launched at the end of this year. In addition, the UN and the international community are drafting post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. ASEAN is developing a food strategy in line with these goals. Food security and the promotion of the agriculture sector should be achieved through public-private partnerships with the support and collaboration of all stakeholders, Le Luong Minh said.

**Sun Chanthol**, Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Cambodia, said his country needs all the elements that the Grow Asia initiative is meant to promote – from better productivity to easier access to capital. Cambodia, he remarked, has achieved a great deal, moving from being a food-deficient country after Khmer Rouge rule to being a food-surplus economy that exports high-quality rice. Cambodia is expanding its rice exports and is looking at how to use technology to improve yields. What the country needs are partners, Sun Chanthol said, welcoming Grow Asia to start a new partnership in his country.

**Estrella Penunia**, Secretary-General, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development, Philippines, said that her organization, which is involved in capacity building programmes for farmers' organizations, is optimistic about joining the Grow Asia partnership. "Grow Asia's vision and strategy aligns very well with our vision and aims," she said, committing to support Grow Asia through strategic engagement of the farmers' associations in the region. Small

farmers face many challenges. "We have to produce food and increase incomes without harming the environment but protecting it. And the food we produce has to be nutritious."

**Apichart Pongsrihadulchai**, Vice-Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand, said that his government is in the process of restructuring the economy and the agricultural sector. It is initiating numerous programmes to improve production and productivity across commodities as well as increase exports. This requires a hands-on approach with the participation of all stakeholders. Public-private partnership is essential, he added, recognizing the opportunity to work with Grow Asia to develop multistakeholder partnerships rather than focus on one-on-one collaboration.

Responding to the discussion, **Rashid Aleem Qureshi**, President Director, Nestlé Indonesia, said that strong government leadership is essential for success in driving the public-private partnership forward. The challenge for Grow Asia is to scale up what has already been achieved in the various national programmes. The role of the Grow Asia Secretariat needs to be expanded. What is important is to fully analyse the entire value chain in each country.

Grow Asia will provide a platform to coordinate all stakeholders in support of the ASEAN countries' goals, including members of the broader international community. The governments of Australia and Canada announced that they will provide financial support totalling \$9.5 million for three years to Grow Asia programmes and the partnership's Singapore-based Secretariat.

"As the ASEAN region's close neighbour, Australia believes this unique partnership will benefit local communities and contribute to broader regional food-security goals," said **Simon Merrifield**, Ambassador of Australia to the ASEAN.

**Donald Bobiash**, Ambassador of Canada to Indonesia, Timor-Leste and the ASEAN, said that Canada, too, is committed to enhancing its relationship with ASEAN. It has been a leading donor to ASEAN in disaster prevention and response training. "Canada understands the importance of supporting agriculture in the developing world," he said. "Simply put, the world has to get agriculture right. It is the key to sustainable economic growth."

# World Economic Forum on East Asia

Monday 20 April 2015

## Setting Asia's Agenda for a Food-Secure Future

How can Asia take advantage of new opportunities to build a unified regional approach for a food-secure future?

A high-level panel of leaders in the official programme of the World Economic Forum on East Asia discussed the complexity and challenges of meeting food security across ASEAN, agreeing that it is achievable, but a new approach and mindset will be needed. A central part of the discussion focused on smallholder productivity and profitability improvements, with over 100 million smallholder farmers in South-East Asia at the heart of the solutions needed.

**Samdech Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, said, "We need to increase the productivity of existing land and provide opportunities for farmers. The private sector has a role to play in bringing development to agriculture through market mechanisms."

"How do we feed the world while also protecting the environment for the long term and supporting the communities that depend on it?" asked **Peter Ter Kulve**, President, South-East Asia and Australasia, Unilever Asia, Singapore. He commented that Unilever has built sustainability and farmer focus into its business strategy but it can't do it alone.

Leaders agreed that a new approach and organizational innovation will drive success in the future. **Nguyen Xuan Phuc**, Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, noted the importance of partnership, saying, "It is critical to enhance cooperation for sustainable resource use in the region to help ensure a food-secure future."

The Grow Asia partnership, catalysed by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat and involving over 100 organizations, aims to reach 10 million farmers by 2020, increasing their productivity, profitability and environmental sustainability by 20%. The partnership brings not only government and the private sector to the table, it also engages active leadership from civil society, international organizations and farmer leaders.

## Selected Grow Asia Media Coverage

### Grow Asia press releases

[ASEAN Leaders Launch Grow Asia to Boost Food Security and Farmers](#)

[New partnership with World Economic Forum - agricultural development in ASEAN](#)

[Canada Announces Support to Improve Food Security and Nutrition in Southeast Asia Region](#)

### Videos

[Setting Asia's Agenda for a Food –Secure Future  
2015 Grow Asia Forum Closing Plenary](#)

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Peter Ter Kulve, Unilever: [How can we feed the world while protecting the environment?](#)

Estrella Penunia, Asian Farmers Association: [How can we create a sustainable future for Asia farmers?](#)

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01: Left to Right: Adam Schwarz, Founder and Chief Executive Officer Asia Group Advisors, Singapore; Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam; Peter Ter Kulve, President, South-

East Asia and Australasia Unilever Asia Private Limited, Singapore; Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia; Anna Chilczuk, Regional Director, East Asia Mercy

Corps, Indonesia; Arif P. Rachmat, Chief Executive Officer PT Tripura Agro Persada, Indonesia





# List of Participants

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