

## 2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia (ARD2014)

12–13 November 2014 | Makati City, Philippines

### BACKGROUND

Agricultural and rural development (ARD) is among the primary engines for the realization of Southeast Asia’s huge potential for growth and development. The myriad of development challenges confronting it calls for a regular venue for knowledge and experience sharing within the region to help inform policymaking, research, education, and action as well as facilitate various forms of regional cooperation towards addressing these challenges. Knowledge sharing also helps foster wider dissemination and application of good practices by farmers, enterprises and civil society organisations toward improved productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness in their respective realms.

It is in this context that the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) held the 2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia (ARD2014) focusing on issues, imperatives, and initiatives contributing to the theme “Strengthening Resilience, Equity, and Integration in ASEAN Food and Agriculture Systems.” This conference built on the first International Conference on ARD in Asia: Ideas, Paradigms, and Policies Three Decades After, successfully held in November 2005, which aimed to draw policy lessons from the major ideas and paradigms that have influenced academic and policy thinking in ARD in the past 30 years. ARD2014 updated this stocktaking to cover new knowledge gained in the succeeding ten years, i.e., since 2005, while expanding the conference’s scope and participation to be both encompassing and inclusive.

In particular, the gathering was also an important instrument for facilitating various forms of regional cooperation in ARD, especially as the region gears up for closer economic integration via the ASEAN Economic Community to be realized in 2015.

The conference featured plenary sessions, thematic parallel sessions, side events, exhibits, field visits, and sponsored lunches and dinners. Studies and papers invited for presentation were organised under the following themes: (1) Productivity Improvement, (2) Inclusive Value Chains, (3) Sustainability and Poverty Reduction, (4) Food Security and Food Safety, (5) Regional Cooperation and Integration, (6) Institutions and Governance.



### WORKSHOP PARTNERS



## ABOUT SEARCA

The Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) is one of the 21 regional centers of excellence of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). Founded on 27 November 1966, SEARCA is mandated to strengthen institutional capacities in agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia through graduate scholarship, research and development, and knowledge management. It serves 11 SEAMEO member countries, namely: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam. SEARCA is hosted by the Government of the Philippines on the campus of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in Laguna, Philippines. It is supported by donations from SEAMEO member and associate member states, other governments, and various international donor agencies.

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## OBJECTIVES

ARD2014 aimed to provide a venue for sharing the wide and diverse knowledge pool on ARD that exists within and beyond the Southeast Asian region. Specific objectives include the following:

- Highlight creative and innovative technological and practical approaches in the various processes comprising the agricultural system, spanning the entire agricultural value chain from production through to post-harvest, processing, marketing, transport and logistics;
- Showcase and derive useful lessons from institutional successes (and failures) in the management of the agricultural system and rural communities, including governance and value chain relationships; and
- Draw evidence-based policy implications from the knowledge exchange, to guide regional, national and sub-national policies and initiatives for ARD in the context of intensified regional cooperation and integration.

## OUTCOMES

Over 400 participants from 20 countries joined ARD2014. This comprised ARD experts from academe and research institutions, government policy makers, local government executives and officials, private sector practitioners, representatives of civil society organisations, farmer leaders and practicing farmers, and other interested stakeholders.

With 22 partner-session conveners and more than 65 thought leaders and experts from Southeast Asia and outside of the region who gave presentations on topics that addressed implications of ARD on resilience, equity, and regional integration, ARD2014 produced useful information about the current situation and gaps on ARD in the region, which led to the identification of key policy recommendations for decision makers.

The Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN) co-sponsored the parallel session on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) under the theme of “Sustainability and Poverty Reduction,” where the APAN Regional Coordinator and the MOEJ Representative presented the role of networks in CCA efforts and the global adaptation network initiatives, respectively.

## CONCLUSION

ARD2014 emphasized the need for more advantaged players—whether countries, firms, private groups, or development partners—to take deliberate actions to reach out, link with, and assist the less advantaged; and to widen and strengthen knowledge sharing and exchange across the region, for a truly resilient, inclusive, competitive, and harmonious (RICH) ASEAN.

For more information, visit: <http://ard2014.searca.org/>.