

The SEARCA DIARY



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LEGACY KEEPERS

The officials, staff, and scholars of SEARCA who are with the Center in the year of its golden jubilee.



SEARCA celebrates its golden anniversary

About 150 research and development programs and projects that have contributed to agricultural and rural development (ARD) in Southeast Asia; A total of 1,366 Southeast Asians earned their doctoral and master's degrees in agriculture and related fields; Some 14,000 professionals from Southeast Asia who benefited from specialist training courses and study tours; Books, manuals, technical bulletins, monographs, a refereed journal, and other publications that have contributed to the body of knowledge on agriculture and rural development in Southeast Asia;

These and other significant endeavors are the touchstones of SEARCA's legacy over the first 50 years of its existence as the center of excellence in agriculture of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO).

Founded in 1966, SEARCA has been mandated to provide capacity-building interventions to promote agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia through graduate education (master's and doctoral degrees), non-degree specialist training, research and development, and knowledge management.

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SEARCA honors partners in ARD initiatives

MANILA, Philippines—One of the highlights of SEARCA's Golden Year celebration was a cocktail dinner reception tendered for its partners at Fairmont Makati on 6 December 2016.

Over the past five decades, SEARCA has implemented and supported numerous capacity building and research programs and projects in the 11 member countries of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), its mother organization.

With Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr. at the helm since 2009, SEARCA has been the leading SEAMEO center and has effectively worked with governments of Southeast Asian countries and other agencies that play a key role in ARD in Southeast Asia.

Moreover, under Dr. Saguiguit's watch, SEARCA has served as a window to Southeast Asia for

organizations outside the region that support agriculture and rural development in this part of the world. Currently, SEARCA is implementing multi-country projects supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), International Foundation for Science (IFS), International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), to name a few.

The reception was attended by representatives of SEARCA's partners among international development organizations, civil society organizations, research institutions, government agencies, the private sector, media, and other SEAMEO centers of excellence. Officials from members of the diplomatic community,

particularly from Southeast Asian countries, also graced the event. (LLDDomingo)



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, welcomes representatives of the Center's partners to the reception tendered in their honor.



Current SEARCA officers and staff together with Dr. Arsenio M. Balisacan (front row, ninth from left), former SEARCA Director; Dr. Geronimo M. Collado (back row, fifth from right), former Agribusiness Project Leader; and Dr. Majah-Leah V. Ravago (back row, seventh from right), former R&D Specialist.

THE SEARCA DIARY

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Dr. Saguiguit (center) with representatives from the SEAMEO family, namely (from left): Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., Chancellor, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and Country Representative of the Philippines to and Chair of the SEARCA Governing Board; Dr. Ramon C. Bacani, Director, SEAMEO Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH); Atty. Alberto T. Muyot, DepED Undersecretary for Legal Service; and (from right) USec Mateo of DepEd; Mr. Benito E. Benozo, INNOTECH Manager; and Prof. Romeo R. Quizon, Dean of the UP Manila-College of Public Health and Director of SEAMEO Regional Centre for Public Health, Hospital Administration, Environmental and Occupational Health (TROPMED) Philippines.

Book on 50 years of SEARCA's work launched

On the 50th year of its establishment, SEARCA is proud to tell its story—a story that highlights its evolution, major milestones and accomplishments through the years. A story of building capacities of Southeast Asians, of generating knowledge through cutting-edge research, of delivering research findings through knowledge resources and learning events, all the while adapting to the constantly changing agricultural landscape at the national, regional, and global levels to consistently reaffirm its position as SEAMEO's center of excellence in agriculture.

Titled “SEARCA's First Fifty Years: Pusing the Frontiers of Agricultural and Rural Development,” the coffee table book chronicles SEARCA's journey, starting with its birth and formation to its growth and expansion amid changing contexts to how it has soldiered on to become one of Southeast Asia's leading institutions and window to ARD and the Center's aspirations for the future.

“The book marks our golden year with swatches of defining moments in the Center's first five decades, and how we view its future,” said Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, at the book launch held on 6 December 2016 at Fairmont Hotel in Makati City, Philippines.

Though not a full detailed historical account, Dr. Saguiguit said the images in the book “honor and portray the collective efforts and contributions of a multitude of people and entities who have joined SEARCA in its noble objectives and mandate—a tribute to the Center's past and present leaders and staff, many of whom have silently and devotedly worked behind the scenes.”

“Although this book has already been printed, set, and bound, it marks the beginning of a new phase in the Center's continuing efforts in the service of our host country and the 10 other countries in the region,” Dr. Saguiguit said.

As it continues to push the frontiers of ARD, there is surely more to unfold in SEARCA's story of driving positive change in agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia. (LLDDomingo)



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (left), SEARCA Director, presents a copy of the coffee table book to Undersecretary Jesus Lorenzo Mateo of the Department of Education, Philippines.



SEARCA celebrates/ from page 1

Priming leaders in ARD

In commemorating its golden anniversary, SEARCA recognized its outstanding scholarship alumni who have personified the Center's values and philosophy and have distinguished themselves through their personal achievements, professional accomplishments, public service, and other meritorious endeavors.

This cadre of highly trained leaders in ARD—be it in academe, government, research, private sector or civil society—may just be a drop in the bucket of Southeast Asia's millions of people but the “multiplier effect” that stems from their work has made an impact on the development of their respective countries. (Related story on page 8-9)

Synergies for R&D

In R&D, the *Regional Forum on Farms, Food and Futures: Toward ISARD in Southeast Asia* was the main commemorative event mounted by SEARCA. The Southeast Asian scientific forum was a sequel to the *2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development* held in November 2014. (Related story on page 4)

R&D has been a core program of SEARCA all the way back to its social laboratory in the 1970s to

its pioneering regional agribusiness project in the 1980s to the niche it carved in community-based resource management and sustainable agriculture in the 1990s and its vigorous efforts to offer lessons from its R&D initiatives as inputs to policy and convene high-level policy dialogues at the national, sub-regional, and regional levels in the 2000s.

More than 150 research programs and projects conducted with various partners have shaped a perspective beyond traditional agriculture in Southeast Asia—one that gives equal emphasis to agricultural competitiveness and natural resource management, social inclusion and environmental sustainability, food and nutrition security and climate change adaptation and resiliency, and a focus on small-scale farmers while making its resources available to support the ASEAN economic integration and sub-regional cooperation in trade and investments.

Commemorative books

SEARCA launched two coffee table books during its golden anniversary celebration.

One traces the Center's beginnings and evolution and shifting priorities in keeping with the changing agricultural landscape of the region it calls home. It shines a light on SEARCA's landmark

achievements as well as its outlook for the future. The coffee table book was launched at a cocktail dinner reception that SEARCA tendered for its partners in Makati City on 6 December 2016.

Another coffee table book, titled *Golden Harvest: Leaders and Innovators of Agriculture and Rural Development in Southeast Asia*, features SEARCA's outstanding alumni. It was launched at a gathering of SEARCA alumni on 25 November 2016.

Southeast Asian AgriMuseum

Towards the tail end of its year-long celebration, which runs until June 2017, SEARCA will break ground for the Southeast Asian AgriMuseum. To be built in the SEARCA complex, the AgriMuseum will be the first of its kind in the region—a modern interactive facility featuring the history and future of agriculture in Southeast Asia.

The AgriMuseum will also “serve as a venue where the poor and the visionaries in ARD would come together in one exhibition,” said Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director.

He added that SEARCA sees the museum as a viable approach to address the declining interest in agriculture among young people needed by the sector to supplant ageing farmers. (LLDDomingo)

Pursue ISARD through a 'RICH' ASEAN Agricultural Community – Dr. Cielito Habito

Eminent economist and SEARCA Senior Fellow Cielito F. Habito called for “the pursuit of inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) through a RICH—resilient, inclusive, competitive, and harmonious—ASEAN Agricultural Community” at the *Regional Forum on Farms, Food and Futures: Toward ISARD in Southeast Asia* convened and hosted by SEARCA on 7 December 2016. A book of the same title was also launched during the forum.

The book carries the synthesis of the *Second International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development* held in 2014. Its editors are Dr. Habito; Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director; and Dr. Doris Capistrano, Senior Advisor, ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC).

Dr. Saguiguit welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of agricultural and rural development (ARD) in efforts of individual countries and the region to work for food security and poverty alleviation.

He also underscored the need to address current and emerging issues and gaps towards informing policy and investment options, as well as good practices that will redound to improved development outcomes and concrete reforms for food security and inclusive growth.

In tackling the contemporary issues in ISARD in Southeast Asia that affect food security and poverty alleviation efforts, the forum converged on the themes of social inclusion, sustainability, institutions and governance, and regional and sub-regional integration. It elicited recommendations that may guide further actions,

policies, and initiatives of various stakeholders in the agriculture and rural sectors in the region.

Stakeholders from government, civil society, the research community, and the private sector in Southeast Asia participated in the forum, which had four sessions: issues on regional integration as anchor of sustainable agricultural and rural development; institutions, governance, and transformation in Southeast Asian agriculture; the Southeast Asian experience on inclusive growth through ARD; and sustainability in agricultural and rural development.

Approach the agriculture sector from a systems viewpoint and adopt a broader perspective of food security while pursuing wider opportunities in synergistic cross-border business partnerships, Dr. Habito recommended.

He also pointed out the need to provide concerted assistance to small farms and firms; to expand the application of information and communication technology (ICT) and the use of the digital economy to link small farm producers with retail markets; to harmonize long-term ASEAN policies including addressing the shortcomings of contract farming; and to focus on and increase public investment in energy, transport, education, and health infrastructure and services, and in R&D as measures to move ARD forward in the ASEAN region.

Myanmar and SEARCA

In his keynote message, Dr. Tin Htut, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, pushed for an agricultural sector that aims for productive, prosperous, inclusive, dynamic,



Dr. Cielito F. Habito

Dr. Tin Htut



Dr. Larry Wong (rightmost) stresses a point during the discussions.

commercialized, resilient, and sustainable farming systems. He stressed the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 2, which aims to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030, and Goal 15, which focuses on preserving life on land.

He also mentioned the significance of fostering partnerships in achieving these goals, and cited SEARCA as having a pivotal role in moving forward policy and agricultural development strategy in the Southeast Asian region. He related experiences in agricultural development in Myanmar and acknowledged SEARCA's special role in its success.

SEARCA presented Dr. Tin Htut with a special citation for his unstinting support to the Center's capacity building program in Myanmar and for his efforts and contributions to ARD in his home country ([see related story on page 6](#)). (Reports from AMLecciones/MKRPunto and BMBurgos)



Participants, resource persons, and organizers of the regional forum.

Myanmar economist conferred 5th Umali Award

A distinguished agricultural economist from Myanmar whose initiatives contributed much to the liberalization of the country's agriculture sector was conferred the Dioscoro L. Umali Achievement Award in Agricultural Development on 24 November 2016 at ceremonies held at SEARCA.

Mr. Tin Htut Oo is the first Myanmar and only the fifth to receive the prestigious Umali Award, which recognizes lifetime achievements of exemplary individuals who have advanced agricultural development in Southeast Asia.

The award is bestowed biennially by SEARCA, the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) of the Philippines, and the Dioscoro L. Umali Foundation Inc.

Mr. Tin Htut Oo is credited for the establishment of Myanmar's in-service training in advanced technology and agribusiness for young agricultural professionals, and brokering the only technical-assistance projects implemented in Myanmar over the past 25 years.

Mr. Tin Htut Oo was cited for having established Myanmar's Agricultural Market Information Service and published the weekly journal Agribusiness News (ABN). He also initiated the "New Vision for Agricultural and Economic Policy" under the former authoritarian military regime. Under the current administration, Mr. Tin Htut Oo founded the Myanmar Agricultural Network to promote the "New Vision in Agriculture for the New Myanmar."

An alumnus of the University of Mandalay, Myanmar and Ohio State University, USA, Mr. Tin Htut Oo had served as Director General of the Department of Agricultural Planning under then Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (now Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation) for eight of the 37 years he spent in public service. For his work, he had won prestigious awards that include the Good Public Service Medal and Excellent Performance in Administrative Field. He has also worked with international and regional institutions and organizations.



Mr. Tin Htut Oo delivers his D.L. Umali Lecture.



Mr. Tin Htut Oo (right) receives the Umali Award from Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director as Dr. Eufemio T. Rasco of NAST looks on.

At present, Tin Htut Oo serves as chairman of the Center for Economic and Social Development in Myanmar. He is also the chairman of the Agriculture Group, Yoma Strategic Holdings Ltd., a private company in Myanmar listed in the Singapore Stock Exchange.

Conferment Ceremony

In attendance at the conferment rites were representatives from various institutions in the Philippines and abroad together with SEARCA former directors, fellows, scholars, outstanding scholarship alumni, as well as Philippine academicians.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, welcomed the guests and highlighted the importance of the Umali Award as an embodiment of the Center's advocacy on inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ARD) in Southeast Asia. The award honors exemplary individuals who have contributed their life's work in the promotion of ARD and influenced overall development efforts in their respective countries and throughout the region.

Mrs. Lei Lei Sein, Chargé d' Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in the Philippines, gave a message on behalf of the Embassy and in support of this year's Umali awardee.

D.L. Umali Lecture

Immediately after the awarding ceremony, Mr. Tin Htut Oo delivered his D.L. Umali Lecture titled "Disruptive Innovation for Transformational Agricultural Development in Myanmar: Empowering Smallholder Farmers to become Agribusiness Entrepreneurs."

In his lecture, Mr. Tin Htut Oo emphasized that the key to enhancing sustainable agricultural productivity and ensuring future food and nutrition security and safety in Myanmar is to transform agriculture by empowering farmers to be agribusiness entrepreneurs. This can be done through disruptive innovation, which is multi-dimensional in nature.

Mr. Tin Htut Oo identified five broad priority areas where disruptive innovation is mostly needed in Myanmar and these include: farming systems, agribusiness and global value chain linkages, agricultural finance and risk management, natural resource management and climate change adaptation, and agricultural and agribusiness training institutions.

He added that "Myanmar must change its strategy from government-driven focus on crop production to a disruptive agricultural transformation strategy hinged on market-oriented, innovative and private sector-driven investments centered on smallholder farmers throughout the country."

In closing, Dr. Eufemio T. Rasco of NAST reiterated some of the lecture's major points. He also pointed out that the Philippines experiences the same problems as Myanmar in relation to poverty, rural migration, uneven economic growth, and discrimination against agricultural labor. He encouraged people to heed Mr. Tin Htut Oo's call for rural development, which is not only measured by production growth but more importantly by improved farmer's conditions.

Four other Southeast Asians have received the Umali Award: Dr. Vo Tong-Xuan of Vietnam, Dr. Charan Chantalakhana of Thailand, Dr. Ramon C. Barba of the Philippines, and Dr. Sjarifudin Baharsjah of Indonesia. (LLDDomingo with report from BACDarvin)

Regional workshop takes stock of ecological monitoring initiatives

Ecosystems provide services that are key to human survival. The United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Assessment broadly classifies them into four categories: provisioning (e.g., food, clean water, safe atmospheric conditions), regulating (e.g., control of climate and spread of diseases), supporting (e.g., nutrient cycles and crop pollination), and cultural (e.g., spiritual and recreational benefits). Various ecosystems across the region are increasingly exposed to threats and stresses due to changes in the physical environment and human activities, and climate risks and variabilities.

To take stock of existing initiatives in ecological monitoring and relevant databases in Southeast Asia, SEARCA convened with its partners a *Regional Roundtable Discussion and Workshop on the Development of an Ecological Monitoring Network in Southeast Asia* on 24-25 October 2016 at its headquarters.

Organized in partnership with the Economy and Environment Program for Southeast Asia (EEPSEA) and the Food Security Center (FSC) of Hohenheim University, Germany, the activity

identified gaps and areas for improvement in ecological monitoring in the region. It and explore possibilities of linking existing initiatives and databases across the region.

SEARCA and its partners recognize the importance of understanding and tracking changes in ecosystems in the region, which could inform planning and policymaking towards food security, disaster preparedness, ecosystem management, and safer and resilient communities, and related purposes.

The regional meeting gathered distinguished experts in the field of ecological monitoring. Foremost among them was Dr. Henry William 'Hank' Loescher, Director for Strategic Development of Battelle-National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), USA, who talked about the societal and scientific importance of ecological monitoring and its applications to decision-making, management, and planning.



Dr. Hank Loescher (standing), Director of NEON, facilitates a small-group workshop.

Other paper presentations focused on the ecological monitoring initiatives at the national and regional levels. Dr. Rex Victor O. Cruz, Professor at the University of the Philippines Los Baños and the event's Technical Coordinator, delivered the background paper on establishing ecological observation network in Southeast Asia.

The activity initiated discussions on the establishment of an ecological monitoring network and a linked databases for Southeast Asia towards more responsive planning and policymaking considering the various environmental issues and challenges facing the region. (Report from CNGRogel/DRGSantiago)

SEARCA-led ASEAN project gets Swiss funding anew

A project benefiting Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States (AMS) implemented by SEARCA will continue to be funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for the next three years. SEARCA will continue to carry out the project under the auspices of the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC) Phase 3.

In April 2014, SEARCA has been tapped to administer the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) Strategic Response Fund (ASRF) grants intended to enable AMS focal points to quickly respond to emerging issues and challenges as well as articulate policy recommendations on social forestry as it relates to climate change, food security, and poverty alleviation.

The ASFN has since been transformed into the ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry (AWG-SF) under the ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF) to facilitate greater synergy with other AWGs under the umbrella of the ASEAN Multi-sectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food Security (AFCC). The ASRF covers eight AMS: Cambodia,

Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The three-year funding support was affirmed at the operational planning meeting of the AWG-SF held on 3-4 December 2016 in Bali, Indonesia.

SEARCA was represented at said meeting along with the four other ASFCC implementing partners: Center for International Forest Research (CIFOR), World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF), Non-Timber Forest Products-Exchange Program (NTFP-EP), and Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC). Others present at the meeting include representatives from the Swiss Embassy, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, World Resources Institute (WRI), and ASEAN-MAFI Japan.

The meeting charted the next three years of operation of the AWG-SF, specifically to support the AMS in achieving their targets based on the AWG-SF's Strategic Plan of Action in line with the Vision and Strategic Plan for ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry (ASEAN-FAF) (2016-2025), the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025, and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

In the next three years, the ASRF will continue to administer the small grants to AMS following a more strategic and streamlined process to make the funds more accessible to its intended beneficiaries.

Eligible types of project proposals for ASRF support include quick turn-around studies to aid decision-making through fast methods that generate answers to specific questions; exploratory reviews of emerging problems; meta-analysis or analytical studies and think pieces; dialogues and roundtable discussions; and study tours.

Each project should be completed in six months. The budget limit is \$15,000 for single country projects and \$30,000 for multi-country projects. The grants facility also offers scholarship training grants up to \$2,000.

The ASRF will also support the regional/ASEAN-level initiatives of developing policy frameworks and guidelines for cross-sectoral collaboration in support of the AFCC and FAF. Moreover, a sustainability scheme will be developed so that the ASRF can become the precursor or test-bed for the creation of an ASRF Trust Fund. (Report from AMLecciones)

Policy roundtable examines rice policies across SE Asia

Existing rice policies across the region were examined at the *14th SEARCA Policy Roundtable Discussion on Rice Policies across Southeast Asia* to come up with policy recommendations under current and future rice market scenario that could guide policymakers and other stakeholders in understanding knowledge gaps.

Held on 8 December 2016 at SEARCA, the roundtable also served as a venue for crafting possible policy inputs to be presented to governments across Southeast Asia, as well as identify activities that could be undertaken at the national and regional levels where appropriate.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr., SEARCA Director, emphasized the major role that rice plays in the agricultural and rural development of Southeast Asian countries in his welcome remarks. He also cited the importance of closing the knowledge and policy gaps at the national and regional levels as a key factor toward a resilient rice market.

Representatives from rice-importing and exporting countries in Southeast Asia presented papers to provide an overview of their respective rice industries as well as to share their country experiences and existing rice policies.

Moreover, stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, and research community participated in the roundtable discussion.

Mr. Henry Lim Bon Liong, Chief Executive Officer of SL Agritech Corporation, one of the



Mr. Henry Lim Bon Liong



Dr. Paul S. Teng



Dr. Roehlano M. Briones

largest private hybrid rice seeds producers in the Philippines, also shared his experiences in the rice industry and emphasized the need for constant innovation through research and development to complement the subsidies being provided by the governments to their farmers.

On the other hand, Dr. Paul S. Teng, Adjunct Senior Fellow of S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies and SEARCA Senior Fellow, represented the research community and shared his perspective on the issue of food security. Dr. Teng explained the difference between food self-sufficiency and food self-reliance. He also pointed out the increasing importance of the information and communications technology (ICT) to agriculture as well as urban farming. He underscored that sustainability in rice farming is influenced by three important factors: people, environment, and governance.

The meeting closed with a synthesis of the policy roundtable by Dr. Roehlano M. Briones, Research Fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) who served as the roundtable's Technical Coordinator. He recommended focusing on empowering the farmers and the private sector by re-orienting subsidies to provide

start-up support for farmers to become agri-entrepreneurs.

It is also recommended that governments focus their investments on public goods such as R&D, extension activities, development and adoption of new technologies, information systems, provision of business services, and capacity building for industry stakeholders in order to meet the challenges of global competition and climate change.

Dr. Briones also called for a single market and single production based on the spirit of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by continuing trade integration and competitiveness initiatives for rice, building confidence in regional trade, and engaging actively in regional cooperation initiatives in food security, particularly in the area of information and emergency reserves.

SEARCA has conducted a series of policy roundtables since 2004 as a venue for discussing policy instruments and identifying collaborative strategies in agricultural and rural development to address contemporary issues on poverty and food and nutrition insecurity in Southeast Asia. (Report from BACDarwin)

Myanmar Agri Permanent Secretary feted

SEARCA presented Dr. Tin Htut, Permanent Secretary of Myanmar's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI), with a special citation for being one of SEARCA's staunch partners in carrying out its capacity building mandate on agricultural and rural development in Myanmar. He was also recognized for his tireless efforts and contributions to agricultural and rural development in his country.

An outstanding rice plant breeder and agricultural research manager as well as champion and leader of ARD in Myanmar and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Dr. Tin Htut served as Rector of Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) and Director General of the Department of Agricultural Planning of MOALI from 2011 to 2015.

In his current capacity as Permanent Secretary, he is responsible for 13 departments under the MOALI and represents Myanmar in the Senior Officials Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (SOM-AMAF).



Dr. Tin Htut receives the plaque of special citation from SEARCA Director Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr.

SEARCA honors 13 champions of ARD

SEARCA honored 11 Southeast Asians with the Outstanding SEARCA Scholarship Alumni (OSSA) award and two others with the Emerging Leaders in Transition Economies (ELITE) award at ceremonies held on 25 November 2016 to mark its 50th anniversary.

This was the first time that SEARCA conferred such accolades on its alumni who have championed ARD and distinguished themselves in creating positive impact through their work.

OSSA Awardees

The OSSA awardees were feted for having personified SEARCA's values and philosophy, their professional achievements, and the impacts they have created in the fields of teaching, research, public policy and governance, and advocacy in agricultural and rural development (ARD) in Southeast Asia.

The OSSA awardees are as follows:

Teaching

- Dr. Naomi G. Tangonan, Philippines

Research

- Prof. Dr. Mahiran binti Basri, Malaysia
- Dr. Klanarong Sriroth, Thailand
- Dr. Phan Hieu Hien, Vietnam

Public Policy and Governance

- Prof. Dr. Musliar Kasim, Indonesia
- Dr. Delfin J. Ganapin Jr., Philippines
- Dr. Segfredo R. Serrano, Philippines
- Dr. Chya Suthiwanith, Thailand

Advocacy

- Prof. Dr. Ir. Mochammad Maksum, Indonesia
- Dr. Lucrecio L. Rebugio, Philippines
- Dr. Generoso G. Octavio, Philippines

The awardees were selected from among the 1,370 alumni of the SEARCA Graduate Scholarship Program in a rigorous search throughout the Southeast Asian region.

ELITE Awardees

The recipients of the ELITE award are Dr. Seng Mom of Cambodia and Agustinho Da Costa Ximenes of Timor-Leste.

With this special citation, SEARCA recognized its scholarship alumni who are actively contributing to the rebuilding of their nation through their transformative leadership.

Cream of the Crop

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said the remarkable achievements of the SEARCA scholarship alumni affirm that the Center has been successful in carrying out its mandate to assist Southeast Asian countries in producing highly trained human resources in agriculture and related fields to accelerate ARD in the region.

This was affirmed by Dr. Geronimo M. Collado in his keynote message: "The SEARCA scholarship



"One of the joys of any SEARCA Director is to welcome home our former scholars who are now all over the region serving the development needs of their respective countries in various capacities. Such opportunity comes far and in between but is always a happy moment worth celebrating. And so I say, a warm, warm welcome home to your Center and we are delighted to see you after all these years," Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. tells all the SEARCA alumni in attendance.



Dr. Percy E. Sajise, Chair of the OSSA and ELITE awards search committee, shared the rigorous process by which the awardees were selected.



"You don't grandstand like our politicians. You do your work quietly and you excel at it. There is one defining quality of our awardees, and that is passion. You inject passion in what you do. So you're heroes to me," Dr. Gerry M. Collado tells the laureates.



Dr. Alexander G. Flor, a SEARCA graduate alumnus, volunteered to serve as master of ceremonies at the awards conferment rites.



ELITE awardees Dr. Seng Mom (fourth from right) and Mr. Agustinho Ximenes (fourth from left) with Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (third from left) and the awards search committee members, namely (from right): Dr. Poonpipope Kasemsap, Dr. Vo-Tong Xuan, Dr. Percy E. Sajise, Dr. Ma. Concepcion C. Lizada (second from left), and Dr. Geronimo M. Collado (leftmost).

is a life-changing award for many scholars of SEARCA, and therefore SEARCA deserves congratulations. So I congratulate you. And these soldiers are only the cream of the people who are pushing the frontiers of ARD.”

He added that SEARCA has “given more than 1,500 scholarships through the years. You are 13. That’s less than one percent. You are truly the cream of the crop.”

A coffee table book titled *Golden Harvest: Leaders and Innovators of Agriculture and Rural Development in Southeast Asia*, which features the 13 awardees, was also launched during the conferment rites. (LLDDomingo)



DR. TANGONAN



Dr. Saguiguit and Dr. Collado unveil the coffee table book that features the 11 OSSA and two ELITE awardees.



DR. CHYA



DR. GANAPIN



DR. HANISAH REPRESENTING
DR. MAHIRAN



DR. HIEN



DR. KLANARONG



DR. MOCHAMMAD



DR. REBUGIO



DR. MUSLIAR



DR. OCTAVIO



DR. SERRANO



DR. MOM



DR. XIMENES



The OSSA awardees are (second from left to second from right): Dr. Phan Hieu Hien, Prof. Dr. Musliar Kasim, Dr. Generoso G. Octavio, Prof. Dr. Ir. Mochammad Maksum, Dr. Naomi G. Tangonan, Dr. Hanisah Hassan representing Dr. Mahiran binti Basri, Dr. Lucrecio L. Rebugio, Dr. Klanarong Sriroth, Dr. Chya Suthiwanith, Dr. Segfredo R. Serrano, and Dr. Delfin J. Ganapin, Jr. The ELITE awardees are Dr. Seng Mom (leftmost) and Mr. Agostinho Da Costa Ximenes (rightmost).

Snapshots



SEARCANS ON PARADE. SEARCA's officials and staff, led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (center, standing), SEARCA Director, showcase the Center's golden anniversary through their float and shirt, umbrella and tote bag colors at the 98th Loyalty Day Parade of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) held on 10 October 2016.



GIVING TO THE COMMUNITY. Ms. Adoracion T. Robles (leftmost), SEARCA Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director, gave a brief Christmas message on behalf of the Center to the patients at the Hospicio Madre de Amor who each received a Christmas food basket from SEARCA.



YULETIDE CELEBRATION. The 60s and 70s fashion were all the rage at the *SEARCA Christmas Party: In Retrospect* held on 16 December 2016 at Somerset Alabang in Muntinlupa City, Philippines.

Grand SEARCA Alumni Homecoming



5th Umal Award winner Tin Htut Oo (back row, center) pose for a souvenir photo with Myanmar SEARCA scholars.



Dr. Elpidio M. Agbisit, Jr. (Filipino, PhD Animal Science, UPLB), a SEARCA alumnus, and Ms. Sengsavang Sisouraj (Laotian, MS Rural Sociology, UPLB), an ongoing SEARCA scholar, served as the masters of ceremonies during the homecoming dinner.



Former and present SEARCA staff and scholars partake of the sumptuous dinner celebrating the Center's golden anniversary.



Incumbent SEARCA Director Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (standing) with (seated from right) his wife Josefa; Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi, SEAMES Deputy Director; Dr. Sue Liza C. Saguiguit; and UPLB Chancellor Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr.



Dr. Saguiguit (standing rightmost), Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma (standing, second from right), Mr. Lamberto Mariano (standing, rightmost), and Ms. Mina Talatala (seated, third from left) with former colleagues at SEARCA (seated, from left) Mr. Rudy Fernandez, Mr. Nick Imatong, Mr. Joey Agena, Dr. Percy E. Sajise, Mrs. Sonia Maristela, Ms. Nilda Pesquisa, and (standing, second from left) Ms. Lily Tallafer.



Dr. Phan Hieu Hien (third from left) together with two Vietnamese SEARCA alumni. Elderly Vietnamese alumni share a table with ongoing Vietnamese SEARCA scholars studying at UPLB, who have been living in the Philippines for decades since they completed their studies at UPLB along with Vietnamese SEARCA scholars who are currently studying at UPLB.

42 SE Asians get University Consortium grants

The SEARCA-initiated Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) has awarded 42 grants to UC graduate students and faculty members in 2016.

Launched in 1989, the UC is composed of the following regular members: Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Indonesia, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Kasetsart University in Thailand, and University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada and Georg-August University of Göttingen in Germany are affiliate members, while Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI) is an associate member.

SEARCA has served as the consortium secretariat since its establishment.

The grants awarded to graduate students were as follows: five student grants, 26 student travel grants for research, and eight student grants for credit.

The UC travel grant for conference was awarded to Dr. Willie Abasolo of UPLB for travel to IPB to participate in discussions among IPB, UPLB, and UPM toward establishing the International Collaborative Program on MS in Tropical Biodiversity Conservation.

On the other hand, the UC travel grant for teaching purposes was awarded to faculty members of UPM and KU to serve as visiting professors at Tokyo NODAI.



Dr. Daljit Singh A/L Karam Singh of UPM (right) receives a certificate of appreciation from Prof. Dr. Iwao Uehara who served as Dr. Daljit's supervisor at Tokyo NODAI.

Dr. Daljit Singh A/L Karam Singh of UPM delivered a lecture on "Land Development of Soil Management" in September 2016. (JNDe Guzman)

SEARCA joins AAACU conference

TOKYO, Japan—SEARCA joined the Asian Association of Agricultural Universities and Colleges (AAACU) in its *21st AAACU Biennial Conference and General Assembly* on 13-14 October 2016.

Established in 1972, AAACU is a network of agricultural colleges and universities in Asia that aims to improve human welfare through agriculture, education, research, and extension.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director and AAACU Board Member, attended the meeting on behalf of the Center, which serves as the Association's fund manager. He joined heads of AAACU member universities and colleges at the general assembly.

Hosted by the Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI), this year's conference gathered academics, researchers, and administrators to share their experiences as they relate to the theme *Towards Sustainable World: The Challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for AAACU in the Next Decade*.

The conference discussed how the SDGs as a global trend will shape the landscape of higher education in Asia in the next 10 years as well as the ways AAACU member universities have been responding to such global call.

At the general assembly, Visayas State University (VSU) in the Philippines assumed the AAACU presidency, taking over from Tokyo NODAI, from 2016 to 2018. Dr. Edgardo E. Tulin, VSU President, received the symbolic key during turnover rites. (EGPandanan)



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (seated, second from right), SEARCA Director, with heads of AAACU member universities and colleges in attendance, including Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr. (seated rightmost), Chancellor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and Country Representative of the Philippines to SEARCA's Governing Board.

15 DAAD-SEARCA scholars accept grants at handover rites

MANILA, Philippines—Fifteen Southeast Asians from six countries accepted their scholarship grants for academic year 2016/2017 from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), 14 of whom did so during a handover ceremony hosted by the German Embassy here on 21 November 2016.

All pursuing their graduate studies at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), the DAAD-SEARCA scholars are:

- Mr. Bounxou Xayxana, Lao PDR (PhD, community development)
- Ms. Deasy Fitriati Nasution, Indonesia (PhD, agricultural engineering)
- Ms. Thu Zar, Myanmar (PhD, agronomy)
- Mr. Win Htein, Myanmar (PhD, environmental science)
- Mr. Saw Hto Lwe Htoo, Myanmar (PhD, horticulture)
- Mr. Soe Khaing, Myanmar (PhD, agricultural economics)
- Mr. Arsenio D. Bulfa, Jr., Philippines (MS, soil science)
- Mr. Hector Bryan P. Grama, Philippines (MS, agricultural economics)
- Mr. Jan Lorenzo G. Alegado, Philippines (MS, agricultural economics)
- Ms. Alisa Sahahirun, Thailand (PhD, extension education)
- Ms. Vu Thi Hai, Vietnam (MS, agricultural economics)
- Ms. Do Thi Thanh Huyen, Vietnam (PhD, agricultural economics)

- Mr. Trinh Quang Thoai, Vietnam (PhD, agricultural economics)
- Mr. Ong Quoc Cuong, Vietnam (PhD, agricultural economics)

Dr. Gordon Kricke, Germany's Ambassador-designate to the Philippines, presided over the handover rites and presented the grants to each DAAD-SEARCA scholar.

He remarked that he was very pleased with the grantees' research plans and that these will contribute to their respective country's development.

Also present during the event were Mrs. Katharina McGrath, DAAD representative in Manila and

Lecturer at UP Diliman; Mr. Thorsten Werner Gottfried, First Secretary for Cultural Affairs at the German Embassy in Manila, and Ms. Zacyl R. Jalotjot of SEARCA's Graduate Education and Institutional Development Department (GEIDD).

Mr. Yar Zar Hein, a DAAD-SEARCA scholar from Myanmar who is pursuing PhD in Agricultural Economics at Kasetsart University in Thailand also accepted her scholarship at a similar handover ceremony.

DAAD has been SEARCA's partner in its human resource development program since 1975. To date, DAAD has supported more than 350 DAAD-SEARCA scholarships, 92 percent of which had been completed. (Report from ZRJalotjot)



Posing for posterity (from left) are Mr. Thorsten Werner Gottfried, First Secretary for Cultural Affairs; Ms. Thu Zar; Mr. Saw Hto Lwe Htoo; Mr. Jan Lorenzo G. Alegado; Mr. Hector Bryan P. Grama; Dr. Gordon Kricke, Ambassador-designate, Germany Embassy in Manila; and Mrs. Katharina McGrath, DAAD Representative; Ms. Zacyl R. Jalotjot of SEARCA; and Mr. Win Thein.

Agri-biotech boot camp draws high school students

Senior high school students and their science teachers who hail from schools across the Philippines participated in the *Agri-biotech Boot Camp* led and hosted by SEARCA and the University of the Philippines Los Baños-Institute of Plant Breeding (UPLB-IPB) on 16-18 November 2016.

The event was held as part of SEARCA's 50th Anniversary celebration and the 12th National Biotechnology Week. It was organized by SEARCA's Biotechnology Information Center (BIC) in partnership with UPLB-IPB, the Philippine Genome Center (PGC), UP Rural High School, UP League of Agricultural Biotechnology Students

(UP LABS), and UP Genetic Researchers and Agricultural Innovators society (UP GRAINS).

The participants came from UP Rural High School, Regional Science High School for Region 2, West Visayas State University-Integrated Laboratory School, and Mindanao State University-College of Education Training Department.

While at the boot camp, the students gained exposure to issues and trends in agricultural biotechnology. They listened to lectures on the agriculture landscape in Southeast Asia; agriculture offerings in UPLB; and biotechnology applications in crops, livestock, and fisheries.

The boot camp also featured hands-on exercises on DNA extraction and edible landscaping. They



Study visit at UPLB-BIOTECH

also participated in interactive games on biotech facilitated by the student organizations UP LABS and UP GRAINS.

The participants also visited the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and UPLB's National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology (BIOTECH) where they learned about Golden Rice in the Philippines and UPLB-BIOTECH's local research initiatives. (Report from SMMercado)

64th SEARCA Governing Board Meeting held

MANILA, Philippines—The 64th SEARCA Governing Board Meeting (GBM) was held on 26-28 October 2016 at Dusit Thani Manila in Makati City.

Composed of representatives from the 11 member countries of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), the GB is SEARCA's highest policymaking body. As such, the Board provides general directions and strategies to the Center along its current five-year plan, which is focused on promoting inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development (ISARD) in Southeast Asia.

In attendance were representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. The ex-officio members present were Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi, Deputy Director for Administration and Communication of the SEAMEO Secretariat (SEAMES), representing the SEAMES Director.

Guest of honor Atty. Alberto T. Muyot, Undersecretary for Legal Service of the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd), was represented by his Chief of Staff, Atty. Jemirose R. Luot.

In his message, USec Muyot noted the alignment of SEARCA's programs and activities with the SEAMEO Seven Priority Areas. In particular, he said SEARCA's initiatives are in sync with the

following SEAMEO priorities: addressing barriers to inclusion, promoting harmonization in higher education and research, developing curriculum that responds to the competency requirements of the 21st century, and promoting technical and vocational education and training as it relates to agriculture.

The Board commended SEARCA for its many accomplishments in the immediate past fiscal year, which were presented by Dr. Saguiguit. (Report from EGPandanang)



The SEARCA GB members pose in front of the respective flags (from left): Dr. Tran Van Dien, Rector, Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry, Vietnam; Mrs. Kaniitha Duangpattra representing Dr. Sathit Puttachaiyong, President, Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, Thailand; Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., Chancellor, University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and GB Chair; Dr. Somphong Chanthavong, Acting Dean of Agriculture and Environment, Savannakhet University, Lao PDR; Dr. Ocky Karna Radjasa, Director, Strengthening Research and Development, Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, Indonesia; Dr. Ngo Bunthan, Rector, Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), Cambodia; Dr. Haji Mohd Zamri Bin Haji Sabli, Assistant Director, Institute of Brunei Technical Education, Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam; Dr. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi, SEAMES Deputy Director for Administration and Communication.

SEARCA publishes 'Farms, Food and Futures' book

SEARCA launched its book titled *Farms, Food, and Futures: Toward Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia* on 7 December 2016 at a forum attended by representatives of partner institutions, donor agencies, the academe, research organizations, private and government institutions, and agriculture ministries in Southeast Asia.

Drawing on the studies and papers presented at the international conference on agricultural and rural development (ARD2014) organized and hosted by SEARCA in Manila in November 2014, the volume tackles the following themes: regional/sub-regional integration, institutions and governance, inclusive growth, and sustainability. These were further enriched by the knowledge, experience, and insights of the chapter authors, namely: Dr. Larry C.Y. Wong and Dr. Lourdes S. Adriano, Dr. Nipon Poapongsakorn and Dr. Tey

Yeong Sheng, Dr. Jonna P. Estudillo and Dr. Keijiro Otsuka, and Dr. Percy E. Sajise and Dr. Doris Capistrano. Dr. Cielito F. Habito wrote the book's overview and synthesis, and served as the book's editors along with Dr. Capistrano and Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director.

"Agricultural and rural development remains a vital cog in the efforts of individual countries and the region as a whole to work for food security and poverty alleviation. And the fact that it is against a backdrop of increasing population, dwindling natural resources, and climate change makes it most challenging," said Dr. Saguiguit.

A chapter discussed how public-private partnership arrangements at national and border trade levels are evolving in the context of the ASEAN Economic Community and are coping with the complexities of global trade environment.

New and emerging institutions in the transformation of ASEAN agriculture and why governments in ASEAN need to adopt new institutions in ARD policies were tackled in another chapter.

The book also explored the channels through which ARD has been instrumental in the pursuit of inclusive growth in Southeast Asia.

There is a chapter that addresses the imperative of sustainability at it relates to ARD in the region, with emphasis on the three interlocking pillars of sustainability: economic pillar, the ecological pillar, and the social pillar.

Policy recommendations drawn from the discussions are consolidated in the final chapter. (Report from MKRPunto)

Joint Master's in Food Security and Climate Change in the works

SEARCA hosted the first workshop to establish the Joint Master's Degree in Food Security and Climate Change (MS FSCC) on 7-8 November 2016.

The MS FSCC is a project initiated by the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC) and is jointly led by Kasetsart University (KU) and SEARCA. It is a three-year project, which was awarded funding under the ERASMUS+ Capacity Building for Higher Education Program. The first year of the project is meant to establish the curriculum; the pilot implementation is set to start in August 2017.

The two-day workshop, also supported by the Food Security Center of the University of Hohenheim, aims to identify the professional profiles of future graduates of this specialized master's degree, based on market demand. It is also a first step to recognize the various degree programs and courses existing in the partner universities that may be considered for the MS FSCC.

In his welcome remarks, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, emphasized that the MS FSCC program will not just enhance and broaden the specific areas of study in the field of ARD but will also promote internationalization of higher education in Southeast Asia.

Other speakers at the opening program were Dr. Poonpipope Kasemsap of KU, Co-Project Leader, and Dr. Didier Pillot of Montpellier SupAgro, Project Coordinator for the European Union (EU).

The partners in the MS FSCC project are KU, Chiang Mai University, and Prince of Songkla

University in Thailand; Universiti Putra Malaysia and Nilai University in Malaysia; Institut Pertanian Bogor and Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia; University of the Philippines Los Baños and Central Luzon State University in the Philippines; Royal University of Agriculture and University of Battambang in Cambodia; Montpellier SupAgro and Agreenium of France; Gottingen University in Germany; University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU) of Austria; AGRINATURA (European Alliance on Agricultural Knowledge for Development) based in the Czech Republic; and SEARCA. (JNDGuzman)



Participants of the first workshop to set up the MS FSCC.

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change, food waste, food safety, and diet imbalance into the food security perspective.

Moreover, Dr. Joshi said keeping pace with changes at the global level in the food sector entails a necessary discussion on value chain competitiveness, taking advantage of economies of scale, access to markets, and farm diversification.

The resource speakers included 17 luminaries in their fields who discussed global and regional perspectives on structural transformation, agriculture and food security; national perspective on agricultural transformation and market integration; recent and ongoing initiatives within ASEAN on food security and inclusiveness; and the role of private sector in agricultural trade and market integration.

The two-day workshop highlighted the importance of the agriculture sector in the ASEAN despite the declining share of agriculture in the gross domestic product (GDP), especially in light of the concern for inclusiveness and reducing poverty among smallholders.

It was also recognized that the AMS are in different stages of economic development—from Vietnam's phenomenal economic growth, Myanmar's new vision for agricultural development, to the Philippines' deviation from stylized facts of agriculture development—and that any trade-offs in the long term need to be balanced with equity, efficiency, and sustainability.

Emerging perspectives discussed were comprehensive food systems, agricultural value chains as a stepping stone for inclusiveness, nutrition-driven and sensitive agriculture in food systems that take into account structural transformations and diet preference, a landscape approach to holistic agricultural development, evidence-based policy making, and private sector involvement.

The important role of the three pillars of the ASEAN Vision was underscored as a guidepost together with other ASEAN-level initiatives.

The case was also made for empowering small and medium-scale enterprises, measuring the robustness of food system resilience metrics,

factoring other sources of productivity such as environmental services, managing genetic and indigenous resources through greening value chains, and the role of farmer cooperatives and family farms.

Other discussions by the experts included the importance of fostering the 'people component', trust and mutual benefit among partners; learning from informal institutions; and barriers to trade.

H.E. Dr. Ty So Khun, Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries of Cambodia, remarked that the launch workshop was the start of a process of dialogue—a first step in building trust among involved AMS. This was affirmed by Dr. Bresciani, who expressed high hopes for the future of the project.

Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development, laid out the next steps, which include the workshop output and proceedings review, national level actions, creation of regional and national project steering committees, and designating focal points at the ASEAN and the AMS levels for upcoming national level activities. (AJMLecciones)

New project to boost smallholders integration in agri and food markets

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and SEARCA jointly organized the launch workshop of the project *Agricultural Transformation and Market Integration in the ASEAN Region: Responding to Food Security and Inclusiveness Concerns* on 7-8 October 2016.

More than 50 experts from international organizations, government agencies, academic institutions, civil society, and the private sector from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Vietnam, China, India, Italy, and the United States took part in the discourse on global, regional, and national perspectives on agricultural transformation and market integration in the ASEAN region with smallholder farmers at the center of responding to food security and inclusiveness concerns.

In his welcome remarks, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, stressed that the effort to integrate smallholder farmers in food production is key to food security in Southeast Asia. He added that smallholder farms and small-scale entrepreneurs can be assisted to maximize opportunities of borderless trade and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth in the region through policies that ensure competitive advantage of the AMS.

Dr. Fabrizio Bresciani, Regional Economist, IFAD-Asia and the Pacific Region, emphasized that the AMS should start thinking about the implications of increase in and the dynamism of ASEAN trade on rural wages and the competitiveness of the smallholder sector. He also mentioned how the AMS can adjust and take advantage of current conditions with help from IFAD. He said he hopes

to see this project strengthen linkages among various partners and lead to better understanding of future entry points in country developments that track real solutions on the ground.

The workshop focused on strengthening the institutional capacities of ASEAN in general and Cambodia, Laos PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Vietnam in particular to develop and implement policies and sub-regional programs in support of the integration of smallholders in agriculture and food markets.

In particular, the workshop enabled the participants to gain a good understanding of structural transformation and market integration at the global, regional, and national levels relating to agricultural growth and food security in ASEAN region, and of the various initiatives in the region and in target ASEAN Member States (AMS) that address food security and inclusiveness

concerns.

It also leveled off on what the project hopes to achieve and on the roles of various stakeholders. The participants also developed draft work plans at regional and national levels towards enhancing the capacity of ASEAN and the AMS to identify and design policies and programs and agrifood value chain investments that benefit small-scale rural producers (SSRPs).

Dr. Pramod Kumar Joshi, Director of IFPRI-South Asia, shared additional insights on the project. He said some key points include responding to food security and inclusiveness concerns by connecting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the project; integrating families with tiny landholdings into the global/regional agricultural food systems; protecting the interest of smallholder farmers; and including climate

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Members of the regional-level breakout group discuss important points in developing regional/ASEAN level strategic plan of action to promote small-scale rural producers (SSRPs)' competitiveness and inclusion in regional agrifood markets.



Participants, resource persons, and organizers of the launch workshop