**REPORT OF THE 19th MEETING OF**

**THE ASEAN SECTORAL WORKING GROUP ON AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES**

**(19th ASWGAC)**

**18-19 May 2017, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

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**Roadmap for an ASEAN Community (2016-2025)**

The Meeting noted the outcomes of the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summit amongst other on the adoption of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan III and the Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity 2025 as an integral part of the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together. The ASEAN Leaders noted the necessity to make sure that the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be implemented in a mutually-reinforcing manner to build an inclusive and people- oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community for the benefit of our peoples.

**STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION OF THE ASWGAC, 2016-2020**

The Meeting discussed and added several sub activities on the SPA to support the implementation of action programmes. The Meeting identified priority activities for 2017-2018 which includes i) development of Roadmap for Agriculture Development in ASEAN, ii) exchange visit program (Malaysia), iii) 7thASEAN Consultative Business Forum (ACBF/Philippines) and iv) ASEAN Learning Route.

**ASEAN ROADMAP FOR AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The Meeting recalled the decision made at the 18th ASWGAC Meeting to develop ASEAN Roadmap for Agricultural Cooperative Development. The ASEAN Secretariat has been following up the guidance and discuss with AFOSP/ASEAN Foundation to develop a concept note. The Meeting noted that the roadmap consists of five chapter including i) Introduction, ii) State of Agricultural Cooperatives in ASEAN, iii) Trend in Global and ASEAN Agricultural Value Chain, iv) Strategy for the Agricultural Cooperatives Development toward 2025 and v) Resources mobilisation. The Meeting appreciated ASEAN Secretariat to follow up the development of ASEAN Roadmap in Agricultural Cooperatives and agreed to the concept note for further action. The Meeting also agreed to consider the development of Roadmap as Key Deliverables of ASWGAC cooperation in 2018. The Meeting requested AMS to support and facilitate the work of consultant on the development of the Roadmap in particular to collate data/information and interview from the AMS (focal point).

**ASEAN COOPERATION WITH DIALOGUE PARTNERS AND INTERNATIONAL**

**ORGANISATIONS**

**1.Project for Strengthening Capacity Building in Agriculture Sector in ASEAN Countries Phase 2 (CB Project Phase 2)**

The Project Coordinator, Mr. Hiroaki Kinoshita, informed various activities implemented since last meeting last year which includes Annual Coordination Meeting (ACM), Agricultural Policy Seminar, Training courses, dispatch of Japanese short-term experts and monitoring and evaluation of the activities. The Project Coordinator of the CB Project phase 2 appreciated the active participation of AMS in the implementation of the project. The Meeting noted that the CB phase 2 Project will end in September 2017. In regard with the project proposal for the CB Project phase 3, the Meeting noted that the project proposal has been discussed by the pre-apraisal meeting (PAM) and received approval from Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) of the ASEAN Secretariat. The Meeting noted the CB Project phase 3 is a continuation of the CB Project phase 2 and MAFF Japan has committed to provide funding resources. The Meeting approved the CB Project phase 3 for SOM-AMAF consideration and endorsement. Taking into account that funding arrangement will be made by MAFF Japan in end of June 2017, the Meeting agreed to submit the proposal to get ad referendum approval from SOM-AMAF and subsequently to get approval from the Committee of Permanent Representative (CPR). For better communication in the implementation, the Meeting requested project coordinator to copy the ASWGAC focal point in communication with the focal point of the CB Project phase 2.

**2.Project on Human Resource Development in Food-related Areas through**

**Partnership with Universities in ASEAN Region**

The Meeting noted the progress report on the project for Human Resources Development in Food-Related Areas through partnership program with universities in ASEAN countries. The Project aims to directly contribute to human resource development in ASEAN with enhanced knowledge and skills relevant and necessary for sound development of the broad arena of food-related industry.The Project Coordinator, Mr. Eiji Hatano, informed that the partnership program has been developed with universities in ASEAN countries (Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam). Currently the project is discussing with the Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia to organize intensive 2 weeks lecture and with National University of Lao PDR to implement program in current project phase.The Meeting suggested the project coordinator to link with the activities under the ASWGAC such as young generation programme for agriculture cooperatives and capacity building for agriculture cooperatives development in AMS. The meeting viewed that in organizing the training lecture in collaboration with the universities, the project could invite agriculture cooperatives/farmer organisations to the event. It may also possible to invite focal point of ASWGAC to share knowledge on agriculture development cooperatives at the training lecture event. The linkage is important to ensure the beneficiaries of the project and to support capacity building of agriculture cooperatives in food value chain.

The Project Coordinator also informed the HRD project phase 2 as a continuation of HRD project phase 1. The Meeting noted that MAFF Japan has committed to continue supporting the second phase of the HRD project. The second phase will continue the current activities in building partnership with universities in AMS. The Meeting was informed that the project is still in the Project Appraisal Committee (PAC) process in the ASEAN Secretariat. The Meeting agreed in principle to support the project upon the approval by the PAC members of the ASEAN Secretariat and improvement of the project proposal to link with agriculture cooperatives activities.

**OTHER MATTERS**

**1. Presentation from ASEAN Foundation on the Scoping Study of the Agricultural Cooperatives in AMS**

The Meeting noted the presentation from AFOSP/AF/AFA on the proposed scoping study of the agricultural cooperatives in AMS. The activity aims to consolidate various stakeholders towards common vision for agricultural cooperative; to examine the country’s policy environment relative to cooperative legislations and regulations confronting agricultural cooperatives; to recommend policy reforms that will provide agricultural cooperatives the capacity to deliver services to small scale farmers and open markets.

The Meeting requested the AFA to communicate not only with the AFA members but also with the focal point of ASWGAC to organize scoping visit in each AMS. The Meeting requested AFA to send the focal point of AFA Members to each AMS so AMS aware on the development. The AFA noted the request from AMS to send a formal letter to AMS on the scoping study activities in the respective AMS. The Meeting noted that the scoping visit can contribute to the development of ASEAN Roadmap in Agricultural Cooperatives Development. It is targeted that the scoping visit will be finished before October 2017.

**2. Outcomes of the ASEAN - EU Learning Visit in Belgium and France, 2 - 10 May 2017**

On behalf of Malaysia and Philippines, the AFA presented the outcomes from the ASEAN-EU Learning Visit in Belgium and France. The presentation highlighted the lesson learnt amongst other on motivation for cooperation, condition for success, the EU projects in AMS (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines and Viet Nam). Several potential regional cooperation with the EU includes an increasing youth participation in Agriculture cooperatives, women, sustainable agriculture, climate change and job creation.The Meeting requested AFA to share contact point of the EU delegation in each country and study report on the visit.

**DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Meeting noted that the 20th Meeting of the ASWGAC tentatively would be held back to back with the 25th ACEDAC Meeting in July 2018 (prior to SOM-AMAF Meeting) in Malaysia. The exact date and venue of the Meeting will be informed to AMS in due course through the ASEAN Secretariat.