

International Seminar on Enhancing Export Competitiveness of Asian Fruits

18-19 May 2006, IMPACT Challenger, Muangthong Thani
Nonthaburi, Thailand

Closing Remarks by Joong-Wan Cho Economic Affairs Officer Trade and Investment Division, United Nations ESCAP

Distinguished Expert Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good afternoon to all of you. We have concluded full one and a half day of deliberations on the vital topics related to food chain management at this International Seminar on “Enhancing Export Competitiveness of Asian Fruits”.

In the course of your valuable presentation on the topic, we have learned the current status of fruit exports and market accessibility at the country, regional and global levels.

I wish to highlight the main points and key issues raised during the International Seminar being held in the midst of Thai Food Expo (THAIFEX) – Food of Asia 2006 here at the Impact Challenger facility in Munagthong Thani.

- Asian tropical fruits have high commercial potential for export to developed countries in the European Union, Japan and other advanced countries of the region and beyond.
- International trade in fruits and vegetables has expanded at a rapid rate over the past 25 years than trade in other agricultural commodities in the context of “global food system”. The consumer demand for sustainable production of agro-products and food and fair trade agro-products is an opportunity that could be fully tapped by the Asian exporting countries of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- However, inferior and inadequate post-harvest technology and management system is a major bottleneck to the expansion of trade of Asian fruits and other horticultural produce from the region. The current

situation calls for policy-makers' heightened attention to improving post-harvest technology and major issues related to storage and processing as well as marketing and distribution in the context of integrate supply chain management system.

- The Seminar shared the latest post-harvest technology among the UNESCAP member countries. Adoption and application of the most appropriate and efficient food (inter alia fruits and fresh vegetables) chain management would lead to increased food production both in terms of quantity and quality and potential for exports of these horticultural produce from the Asian region. As a result, higher income and generation of employment of the rural population will no doubt contribute to rural poverty reduction, one of the major goals of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

In the process of preparing and conducting this Seminar, we have already established an important network in food chain management. As a follow-up to this International Seminar, proceedings will be prepared and disseminated to all the participants and countries concerned. Furthermore, based on the outcomes of the Seminar and with your continuous support, APCAEM at Beijing will formulate a major project on this important topic for bilateral and multilateral donor funding.

In closing, I wish to convey our sincere gratitude to all the expert participants for their invaluable contributions to the Seminar. I also wish to commend our APCAEM staff, Dr. Choi and Ms. Li for their hard work in preparation of the Seminar in such a short time span. Last but certainly not least, our deep appreciation goes to the Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives for their kind cooperation and warm Thai hospitality extended to international participants. Please enjoy the rest of THAIFEX - Food of Asia 2006 and wish you all a safe journey back home.

Thank you very much.

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