

SUMMARY REPORT

OF

THE 11th MEETING OF ASEAN PLUS THREE EMERGENCY RICE RESERVE (APTERR) COUNCIL

25-26 April 2023, Seoul, Republic of Korea

INTRODUCTION

1. The 11th Meeting of ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR) Council was held on 25-26 April 2023 in Seoul, the Republic of Korea (ROK). The Meeting was organised by the APTERR Secretariat and hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) of the ROK.

2. The Meeting was attended by the members of the APTERR Council and the delegates from ASEAN Plus Three countries. Representatives from the ASEAN Food Security Reserve Board (AFSRB) Secretariat, the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) Secretariat and the APTERR Secretariat were also present at the Meeting. The list of delegates appears in **ANNEX 1.**

3. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Vinit Atisook, Deputy Secretary General of the Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), Thailand and Mr. Sang Moon Byun, Director of Food Grain Policy Division of MAFRA, the ROK.

OPENING SESSION

4. Mr. Han Young Jeon, Director General for Food Grain Policy Bureau of MAFRA, warmly welcomed all delegates to the 11th Meeting of APTERR Council held in Seoul. He stated the significance of the ROK to hold this meeting as it was the first face-to-face APTERR Council Meeting after the COVID-19 pandemic and the first meeting in the East Asia region among the ASEAN Plus Three member countries. He strongly believed that the Meeting would serve as an opportunity for the APTERR members to discuss important issues related to APTERR programmes and activities for sharing achievement of APTERR objectives and implementation. Since the ROK's participation in APTERR Tier 3 programme in 2017, the ROK has already contributed 19,000 MT of rice to five member countries affected by various types of disasters. The APTERR programme gave pride to the people of ROK which transformed themselves from an aid recipient country to an aid donor country. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is now over, the new challenges continue to emerge. In this regard, he underlined the importance of the gathering wisdom of ASEAN Plus Three through APTERR and the strengthening regional cooperation on food security. The ROK assured the commitment as a member of APTERR to provide a support in the ASEAN Plus Three member countries. It was expected the 11th Meeting of APTERR Council would serve as a forum for improving mutual understanding among APTERR members and facilitating in-depth reflection and discussion. The Opening Remarks appears in **Annex 2.**

CLOSED SESSION

Agenda Item 1: **OPENING STATEMENT BY THE OUTGOING CO-CHAIRS OF THE APTERR COUNCIL**

5. Ms. Li-Lian TAI, Deputy Director of International Relations Division, Singapore Food Agency, Singapore conveyed her gratitude to the ROK for hosting the 11th Meeting of APTERR Council and the warm hospitality extended. She then expressed her appreciation to incoming Co-chair from Thailand as well as the APTERR Secretariat for their hard work in organising the meeting. As the Co-chair of the APTERR Council in 2022, Singapore thanked the APTERR members, the APTERR Secretariat and Japan as another Co-chair for supporting in the past year. Over the years, APTERR has consistently played a key role in providing timely relief during the emergency. This role becomes more significant as the world is now facing a critical moment in global food security caused by the effects of climate change, natural disasters and animal disease outbreak amidst other challenges. In this regard, she urged all APTERR Council members in providing timely contributions and working closely to ensure the success of APTERR programmes. She hoped the spirit of collaboration would continue in the future. Before conclusion, she reiterated Singapore's commitment to work with all APTERR Council members and the APTERR Secretariat to strengthening APTERR's roles and works to ensure food security in the region. The Opening Statement appears in **ANNEX 3**.

6. Mr. Taira Matsumoto, Director General of Crop Production Policy Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan as an outgoing Co-chair, expressed his pleasure to participate in the 11th Meeting of APTERR Council held in the ROK. This was the first time in three years that the APTERR Council had a regular face-to-face meeting. He then showed his profound gratitude and appreciation to the ROK as the host country of the Meeting as well as the APTERR Secretariat for enormous efforts in preparing the meeting. As an important ASEAN Plus Three initiative, the success of APTERR comes from efforts and commitments of APTERR members. To prepare for unprecedented natural disasters which frequently occurs in the region, APTERR becomes an extremely essential activity for strengthening a regional food security, and therefore the continuity of APTERR is considered to be vital. Besides, APTERR is contributing to poverty alleviation which would add further weight to the activities in the future. In his conclusion, he reiterated Japan's commitment to continually work with the APTERR member countries for further development of APTERR. The Opening Statement appears in **ANNEX 4**.

Agenda Item 2: **REMARKS BY THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE APTERR COUNCIL**

7. The Co-chair from the ROK expressed his warm welcome to all members of APTERR Council, delegates from APTERR member countries, the APTERR Secretariat, the AFSIS Secretariat as well as the AFSRB Secretariat for their present in the 11th Meeting of APTERR Council in the ROK. He emphasised the APTERR's significant role in providing quick relief to people affected by disaster through cooperation among ASEAN Plus Three member countries for the past decade. The ROK has contributed a total of 19,000 MT of rice, accounting for 60 percent of the total donation amount of APTERR, to Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR, the Philippines and Viet Nam. The country has also contributed 25 percent of APTERR's total budget. He reaffirmed the ROK's commitment to continue participating in the APTERR programme with a contribution of 2,000 MT of rice to Tier 3 programme in 2023. In conclusion, he hoped all participants had a meaningful time during stay in the ROK. The Remarks appears in **ANNEX 5**.

8. The Co-chair from Thailand expressed his sincere appreciation to the ROK for a well-organised Council Meeting in the one of the most vibrant cities in Asia, like Seoul. He also extended his gratitude to the APTERR Secretariat for hard-working to conduct the first physical meeting after three years of COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2013, the APTERR mechanism has played an active role in safeguarding regional food security and addressing food shortages caused by natural disasters in time of emergencies. Particularly, in 2020, the APTERR was highlighted as one of significant mechanisms for combating food insecurity during the Covid-19 crisis, as well as strengthening the resilience and sustainability of food supply chains in the region. Since 2023, the COVID-19 pandemic has gradually declined. However, many challenges including the uncertainty for food security together with a number of natural disasters still remain. Thailand emphasised the importance of using APTERR mechanism to strengthen food security and reduce poverty in the region through enhancing agricultural cooperation under the ASEAN Plus Three implementation framework. He commended the APTERR to push forward in building cooperation with various organisations and dialogue partners in supporting APTERR's activities to become more fruitful. In addition, he underscored the importance of the effective utilisation and prudent management of APTERR Fund to implement activities under the Work Plan. He continued encouraging the APTERR Parties for more engagement in APTERR programmes, especially Tier 1 to ensure the availability and accessibility of food under the uncertain climate pattern and increasing natural disaster in the region. In the meantime, the APTERR needs to expedite the working process for acute and emergency food aid releases after a calamity. In his conclusion, he expected the meeting would be another platform to share valuable knowledge and useful experiences among APTERR member countries. The Remarks appears in **ANNEX 6**.

Agenda Item 3: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

9. The Meeting adopted the agenda of the meeting, which appears in **ANNEX 7**.

Agenda Item 4: BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT

10. The Meeting was held in plenary. The delegates were given a brief summary on the meeting programme and other arrangements for the meeting.

Agenda Item 5: UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE ENDOWMENT FUND AND THE CONTRIBUTION FOR THE OPERATIONAL COST

11. The APTERR Secretariat updated on the contribution for the Endowment Fund (EF) and the annual contribution to the Operational Cost (OC). The document and the presentation appear in **ANNEX 8** to **ANNEX 9**.

12. The Meeting noted the update on the status of EF and OC contributions and urged the remaining APTERR Parties to continue the OC contribution for FY 2023. In relation to this, the representative from Japan welcomed the third phase of annual contribution to the OC starting in 2023 with ensuring Japan's contribution to be made without delay. Meanwhile, the representative from Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines and the People's Republic of China updated the current status of their internal process of OC contribution and expected to transfer the fund soon.

Agenda Item 6: REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

13. The APTERR Secretariat reported on the implementation of work plan and budget plan for fiscal year 2022 (1 January - 31 December 2022). The document, presentation, and audited annual financial report appear in **ANNEX 10** to **ANNEX 12**.

14. The Meeting endorsed with satisfaction the implementation of work plan and budget plan for fiscal year 2022.

15. The Meeting noted Indonesia's appreciation toward the APTERR Secretariat in conducting the internal consultation with the APTERR member countries on Indonesia's initiative on 'Strengthening the Role of APTERR in Supporting Regional Food Security After 10 Years of Service'. The Meeting also took note of a recommendation from Indonesia on a significance of developing an early warning system related to food security condition as well as preparedness. The system will support the APTERR in enhancing the effectiveness and quick release of rice assistance.

16. The Meeting took Thailand's recommendation into account on creating the linkages with other international organisations and taking the opportunity to present the APTERR activities in enhancing food security. This helps disseminate the APTERR activities in the global community.

17. The Meeting acknowledged with appreciation Japan's new initiative 'School Distribution Programme' under Tier 3 programme commenced in 2022. Currently, the rice has been stockpiled in the Philippines. The Meeting also noted Japan's suggestion to the APTERR Secretariat in continuously strengthening its external communications. In the meantime, it is also important for the APTERR member countries to utilise various channels to disseminate the APTERR activities to the rest of the world.

Agenda Item 7: TERMINAL REPORT OF THE SECOND PHASE OF FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO APTERR FUND (2018-2022)

18. The APTERR Secretariat presented the terminal report of the second phase of financial contribution to APTERR Fund (2018-2022). The document and presentation appear in **ANNEX 13** to **ANNEX 14**.

19. The Meeting endorsed the terminal report of the second phase of OC contribution (2018-2022) and expressed sincere gratitude and appreciation to the APTERR Secretariat for their efforts in implementing the APTERR activities. The Meeting emphasised that the APTERR operation under the third phase contribution would be smooth with the cooperation of the APTERR member countries.

Agenda Item 8: WORK PLAN AND ANNUAL OPERATIONAL BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

20. The APTERR Secretariat presented the proposed work plan and annual operational budget proposal for fiscal year 2023. The document and presentation appear in **ANNEX 15** to **ANNEX 16**.

21. The Meeting endorsed the work plan and annual operational budget proposal for fiscal year 2023. The Meeting also encouraged the APTERR member countries to participate more in the APTERR activities, such as Tier 1 and Tier 3 programmes.

22. The Meeting welcomed P.R. China's intention to participate in various activities under APTERR with a commitment to provide a 4-million USD in cash contribution (800,000 USD per year) to APTERR from 2023 to 2027 in supporting the Tier 3 programme. To promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the contribution will include the 'Poverty Reduction and Nutrition Improvement Programme', which provides pre-made food including ready-to-eat rice, meat and vegetables, mainly for the poor and malnourished population. The Meeting also noted P.R. China's invitation to the APTERR Secretariat as well as the member countries to visit the country for discussing to support the APTERR development.

23. The APTERR appreciated Japan for continuing a contribution to the APTERR programmes by planning to donate 710, 000 USD for Tier 3 in FY 2023. The Meeting also noted that Japan requested the APTERR Secretariat to support for smooth implementation of APTERR programmes.

Agenda Item 9: REPORT ON APTERR PROGRAMMES

24. The representatives from Lao PDR, Myanmar and the Philippines presented the implementation of Tier 3 programme in their countries. The presentations appear in **ANNEX 17** to **ANNEX 19**.

25. The Meeting expressed a great satisfaction with the successful implementations of 300 MT of milled rice and 2-MT pre-cooked rice contributed by Japan for poverty alleviation in Myanmar, 300 MT of milled rice contributed by Japan and 700 MT contributed by the ROK to assist people affected by floods and landslides in Lao PDR and 300 MT contributed by Japan to enhance food security for people affected by Super Typhoon Rai, locally known as 'Odette' in the Philippines. The Meeting extended an appreciation to the Governments of Lao PDR, Myanmar and the Philippines for cooperation in carrying out the smooth and effective Tier 3 programme implementation.

26. Representatives from Lao PDR, Myanmar and the Philippines expressed grateful gratitude to the Governments of Japan and the ROK for generous contributions under Tier 3 programme in strengthening food security and alleviating poverty in their countries.

Agenda Item 10: UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF APTERR PROGRAMMES

27. The representatives from the APTERR Secretariat, Cambodia, Myanmar, and the Philippines updated the ongoing implementation of APTERR programmes. The documents and presentations appear in **ANNEX 20** to **ANNEX 25**.

28. The Meeting was informed that the call for new Tier 1 and 3 programmes for FY 2023 had been announced to the APTERR member countries since January 2023 in order to strengthen food security amid emergency and reduce the potential risk of food insecurity in the future. The APTERR Secretariat received positive feedbacks from the APTERR member countries to participate in the Tier 3 programme. For FY 2023, the received contributions for Tier 3 programme are as follows:

- i) P.R. China for 800,000 USD of in-cash contribution (milled rice and pre-made food)
- ii) Japan for 624 MT (620 MT of milled rice, including 20-MT for 'School Distribution Programme' and 4 MT of pre-cooked rice)
- iii) The ROK for 2,000 MT of milled rice; doubling from FY2022's contribution of 1,000 MT.

29. The Meeting acknowledged with appreciation the progress in implementing 300-MT milled rice and 2-MT pre-cooked rice contributed by Japan for pre-positioning in Cambodia, 2-MT pre-cooked rice contributed by Japan and 600-MT milled rice contributed by the ROK under the pre-positioned programme in Myanmar and 320-MT of milled rice (including 20 MT for the School Distribution Programme) contributed by Japan for stockpiling in the Philippines and 400-MT milled rice contributed by the ROK to assist people affected by floods and landslides in the Philippines.

30. The Meeting thanked the Governments of Cambodia, Myanmar and the Philippines as well as the APTERR Secretariat for tremendous efforts and cooperation to ensure a smooth operation of Tier 3 programme in providing humanitarian reliefs amid emergency situations and for poverty alleviation.

31. Representatives from Cambodia, Myanmar, and the Philippines expressed their profound gratitude and sincere appreciation to the Governments of Japan and the ROK for their continued and benevolent rice contributions under Tier 3 programme.

32. The Meeting took note that Japan would consider to introduce a more flexible rice support scheme under Tier 3 programme in the future. Japan intended to continue to support the enhancement of food security in the region through various activities including those new initiatives.

Agenda Item 11: CONSULTATION ON EXPANDING APTERR TO OTHER COMMODITIES

33. The ROK presented the proposal on the possibility of expanding more crop commodities namely, wheat for APTERR stock. The document appears in **ANNEX 26**.

34. The Meeting noted the comments from several member countries that further information is needed to discuss the issue, including a possibility to amend the APTERR Agreement.

35. The representative from Japan commented that APTERR was the scheme to stockpile regional rice in preparation for emergency and mutually transfer the rice when necessary, referring to the fact that rice was produced in broad area and regarded as staple food among the APTERR member countries, and wheat was in different situation. There would be little room for Japan to contribute if wheat is added to APTERR commodity, as Japan depends on import for more than 80 percent of domestic wheat consumption.

36. The Meeting noted that the ROK would take all comments and suggestion from the Meeting into account for developing the further study on this issue and update to the APTERR member countries accordingly.

Agenda Item 12: OTHER MATTERS

37. On behalf of the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), the APTERR Secretariat consulted the Meeting on the possibility of increasing the APTERR membership beyond ASEAN Plus Three. Due to an insufficient information, the Meeting requested for more detailed information and clarification before having further discussion and consideration. The APTERR Secretariat noted the Meeting's comments, and would share these with the ASEC.

38. The AFSIS Secretariat presented a proposal to subsume the AFSIS into the APTERR. The presentation appears in **ANNEX 27**.

39. The Meeting took note of the proposal to subsume the AFSIS into the APTERR and acknowledged the important role of AFSIS in providing food security-related data for the ASEAN Member States. The Meeting noted the comments from member countries that some activities of the AFSIS have similarities with the APTERR and to merge the two organisations can avoid part of overlapping efforts

40. As the APTERR and the AFSIS are two separate ASEAN bodies, the Meeting underscored the differences of both entities in term of operating and funding modalities. To merge the AFSIS into the APTERR, therefore, some concerned aspects, including legal process (e.g. possibility of renegotiating the APTERR Agreement and Protocol) and resources (both human and financial resources), are required careful consideration and clarification whether it is in line with APTERR's existing mandates, functions and roles.

41. Noting that it was agreed the APTERR and the AFSIS shall develop their capabilities individually and independently at the 4th APTERR Council Meeting in 2016, and the recommendation was noted to maintain APTERR and AFSIS as separate entities at the AMAF Plus Three Meeting in 2017, the representative from Japan reiterated that the APTERR and the AFSIS should not be subsumed, and hoped that the two organisations would further contribute to regional food security from different aspects with operating independently.

42. The representative from Japan informed the Meeting on a secondment of the new Japanese expert, Mr. Akinori Ando, from the MAFF Japan to the APTERR Secretariat following a termination of term of previous Japanese Expert, Mr. Toshiki Tojo, whose term was terminated at the end of March 2023. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed Mr. Ando and expressed an appreciation to Mr. Tojo for his support in the APTERR activities.

Agenda Item 13: DATE AND VENUE OF THE 12th MEETING OF APTERR COUNCIL

43. The Meeting noted that the 12th Meeting of APTERR Council would be hosted by the Government of P.R. China. The APTERR Secretariat in collaboration with P.R. China will announce the confirmed date and venue in due course.

Agenda Item 14: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

44. The Meeting took note that the summary report of the 11th Meeting of APTERR Council would be adopted ad-referendum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

45. The Co-chair from Thailand showed his profound gratitude to all participants from the APTERR member countries and the APTERR Secretariat for making the Meeting possible and successful. He believed the Meeting would not only achieve a great outcome of the implementation of APTERR activities but also enhance collaboration among the APTERR member countries. He reiterated the Meeting's commitment to cooperate and participate under the APTERR mechanism as well as to make greater contributions for food security improvement, poverty alleviation, agricultural development in rural and regional levels and to enhance further cooperation in achieving innovation and sustainable agricultural production and food system in the region. This would help APTERR in taking a swift action and efficient response to the humanitarian needs amid natural disasters and emergency situation. Before ending his remarks, he expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the ROK for a great hospitality and the APTERR Secretariat for excellent arrangement of 11th Meeting of APTERR Council and extended his thanks to the ASEAN Plus Three member countries, the AFSIS and the AFSRB for their participation. His closing remarks appears in **Annex 28**.

46. The Meeting was held in a spirit of the ASEAN Plus Three co-operation and cordiality.

26 April 2023, the Republic of Korea