

Headline: Focus on food security, climate change, digitalization – Marcos to Asean-Plus Three

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MANILA, Philippines — The ASEAN-Plus Three (APT) should work together boost food security, climate change response, and digitalization, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said on Wednesday in his speech at the Jakarta Convention Center.

The ASEAN-Plus Three consists of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam — along with East Asian neighbors China, Japan, and South Korea.

“To move the APT (Asean-Plus Three) onwards and forward — in both the strategic and economic arenas — we must stay united, take adversity in stride, and work together to focus on strengthening food security, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and developing the digital domain to encompass all levels of society in our countries to ensure connectivity and other cross-cutting issues,” Marcos said.

“With the future in mind, we will tighten collaboration with each other and focus on the sustainable development of our region,” he added.

According to Marcos, to ensure food security, regional mechanisms must be strengthened, including the emergency rice supply of the APT through the Asean Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR).

He also urged the nations to consider diversifying APTERR by adding other commodities and staple foods.

Such policies, he said, would enable these countries to employ sustainable agriculture and fishery practices.

“We need to mainstream sustainable agricultural and food production systems that enable us to meet the demand for food without compromising the well-being of our natural environment,” Marcos said.

“Let us forge strong partnerships with key stakeholders in the private sector, strengthen food security and self-sufficiency by upgrading and expanding the agricultural sector through investments on infrastructures, and support farmers and fisherfolks.”

Other measures to meet regional challenges include closing the digital divide and unleashing the potential of the digital economy and encouraging the transition to a circular economy.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, were present in the Summit and each expressed their full support for and cooperation with Asean.

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