

Committee: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Topic: Future of Food

Country: The United States of America

### Position Paper

Although many Asian countries have seen great economic growth and infrastructure transformation, many pockets in Asia continue to struggle for basic human needs such as food and nutrition security. The four main dimensions of food security are availability to food, access to food, utilization, and stability[1]. The four main dimensions of nutrition security are access to adequate food, care and feeding practices, and sanitation/health[1]. Achieving both food and nutrition security has been a struggle for many regions in Asia and the Pacific to accomplish. With more than 500 million people suffering in these regions, Asia and the Pacific account for 62% of the world's global hunger[2]. The problem of food and nutrition security continues to accelerate because of the growing population in Asia and the effects of climate change. The population in Asia today is five times what it was three centuries ago[3]. Since the 1950s, Asia's population has grown from 1.4 billion to 4.2 billion people by the year 2000[3]. Because of the high growth rates in population, many Asian countries have seen the increased difficulty to supply water and food for their people[4]. Along with the effects of such a growing population, many Asian countries' food and nutrition security have become vulnerable to climate change. For example, the changes in rainfall patterns and the warming of surface waters has affected fish migratory patterns creating a pressure on fisheries[5]. Also, the rising temperatures due to climate change has reduced crop productivity, especially with the main staple of rice, in tropical regions[5]. . In regards to nutrition, Asia and the Pacific are both iodine deficient areas. Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) exacerbates learning capacity and in some cases reverses human development[6]. Also, pregnant women with IDD will most likely have babies who are stillborn or have congenital abnormalities[6]. Because of the lack of essential vitamins and minerals in diets and the difficulty to provide access to food for people in Asia and the Pacific, a solution for better food and nutrition security in these regions is a must.

Early in his presidency, Barack Obama launched the Asia-Pacific Rebound Policy[7]. The main goal of this policy is to strengthen the relationship between the US and the Asia-Pacific region[7]. The US believes that in the coming decades this region in the world will play a more consequential role in state affairs[7]. Asia and the Pacific will affect the global economy, the air people breathe, and the world's food supply[7]. This is why the US feels that action must be taken to help develop these countries and give them sustainable solutions. One of the most important aspects of this policy is promoting health and strong health systems in the Asia-Pacific region. Clean water and nutritious food is of the utmost importance as well as creating a dynamic agriculture sector to help protect food security[7]. Along with the Asia-Pacific Rebound Policy, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has also taken action to develop food security in Asia and the Pacific. The USDA supports global food security through in-country capacity building, basic and applied research, and support for improved market information[8].

The United States recognizes the struggle for food and nutrition security that each country in the Asia and Pacific regions face. The US hopes to help achieve food and nutrition goals for these countries through the Twice the Rice initiative, innovative climate smart technologies, and an increase women's empowerment in the agriculture sector.

Almost half of the population in Asia lives in rural areas. Many people rely on the agricultural sector for food, a source of income, and employment[9]. However, due to limited land resources and the effects of climate change, crop yields are decreasing especially with the main food staple of rice. Rice is extremely vulnerable to weather and variations in rainfall[10]. In order to make sure that farmers know how to properly deal with the effects of climate change, the United States would like to implement the Twice the Rice Initiative which will help farmers grow rice more efficiently and cost effective. The three main aspects of the Twice the Rice Initiative is teaching, planting, and income. Firstly, many farmers need to learn how to make scientifically based decisions when it comes to climate change affecting their crops. The US would like to implement Climate Field Schools where farmers can attend classes about the effects of climate change and make proactive adjustments to their farming techniques. An example of this can be to encourage farmers to plant rice varieties that are climate resilient. Rice can now be developed to withstand drought, submergence, cold, salinity, and sodicity as well as increasing the nutrients found in the plant[10]. Next, many farmers are unaware of the proper techniques in farming to grow rice more efficiently. The US hopes that after Climate Field Schools farmers will be able to plant rice in a more effective way as well as using more efficient fertilizer such as Guti fertilizer[11]. With this fertilizer, rice paddy's can yield 18% more production with one third the cost of using conventional fertilizer[11]. Finally, with the new effective and innovative ways of yielding rice crops, farmers will be able to maximize their profits when selling at markets and now have more time and money to grow more nutritious crops such as vegetables.

Another solution the United States would like to suggest are forms of Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) such as rooftop farming and aquaponics. With new technologies, food can now be grown on rooftops. Rooftop farming provides a more efficient use of limited land resources as well as having added benefits including extra insulation for buildings as well as capturing rainwater reducing stormwater runoff[12]. Next, aquaponics involves the marriage between raising fish and hydroponics (the soilless growing of plants)[12]. Fish and plants are now able to grow in one integrated system. The fish waste rich in nitrates are a source of food for plants and the plants provide a natural filter system for the fish to live in[13]. Aquaponics highlights on the benefits of each food source and eliminates the drawbacks of each[13].

Regarding women's role in agriculture, many women in agriculture do not have equal rights and access to land, tools, technologies, education, credit, and markets[14]. Because of this, women in Asia are not reaching their full potential in agriculture. If more women had more rights and access to agricultural means, production of food can be 20-30% greater than it is today[14]. In order to create better food security in Asia and the Pacific, there must be better equality for women in agriculture. Legislation must be made to give women the right to purchase land and cultivate it. The only way to secure food security is to close the gap between genders in the agricultural sector.

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Committee: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Topic: The Role of Infrastructure in the Development of South East Asia

Country: The United States of America

### Position Paper

South East Asia today has an annual economic growth rate of more than five percent. This rising region is developing into a thriving trade and economic hub. Despite this, there are many challenges blocking Southeast Asia from reaching its full potential. For much of the early 1990s, South East Asia was the infrastructure capital of the world[1]. This sector dropped dramatically in 1998 when the Asian financial crisis hit causing a major infrastructure deficit[1]. Power, water, and transport systems have since lagged behind the industrial output and soaring GDP[1]. Also, the uneven level of infrastructure between states in the region has raised multiple issues. For example, in the Philippines and Indonesia about a quarter of their populations live without electricity[2]. In Myanmar, citizens do not have access to adequate roadways, electricity, transportation, and communication[3]. Also, in Timor-Leste, 41% of the population has no access to clean water and sanitation[4]. All these countries and many more in South East Asia have felt the devastating effects of this huge infrastructure deficit and now rely on foreign investment to help develop their infrastructure. In 2103, Foreign direct investment (FDI) increased rapidly into Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, known as ASEAN 5[5]. Currently, FDI trends have pointed to more investment flow in Southeast Asia and out of China[5]. Most of the shift into South East Asia is due to the fact that China now has such aging population due to their birth policies[5]. However, China is getting wealthier and in turn has become a large foreign investor in South East Asian countries[5].

Though it is unclear what the United State's stance on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) will be until after the new president is put into office, the US is currently a signatory to the TPP under President Obama[6]. The TPP removes 18,000 tariffs placed on U.S. exports to Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam who are all apart of this deal[6]. It is expected that this agreement adds \$223 billion a year to incomes of workers in all the countries as well as creating more jobs and prosperity for the 12 countries involved[6]. This trade deal benefits South East Asian countries, particularly Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam, because of the greater openness in trade[7]. The TPP aims to to open these countries' financial sectors to foreign institutions such as the entry of foreign banks into a region's financial sector[7]. By making it easier for foreign banks to expand within the region, the TPP could boost the financial services sector of Southeast Asian economies[7].

Though the United States has hosted many infrastructure projects in South East Asia, one example of the United States USAID projects is the support of Nepal after the 2015 earthquake[8]. The United States was able to help jumpstart the agriculture sector, rebuild livelihoods, get children back in school, and train homebuilders in earthquake resistant methods[8].

In order to get South East Asian countries on the same level of infrastructure and sustainability, the United States of America would like to propose the following solutions such as the Spark Program, Women's Income Initiative, and disaster relief and preparedness.

South East Asia has continued to experience robust economic growth, rapid technological change and increasing interconnectivity[9]. However, some countries in Southeast Asia are falling behind in these aspects. To ensure that all countries can reap the benefits of new sciences and technology the United States would like to implement the Spark Program. The Spark Program will encourage more people to take up an education and career in science-based studies through workshops, frontier learning services, and pilot programs. First, the workshops can be hosted in government building or private entities to give information on next generation technologies which have the potential to serve as a tool for stability as well as an accelerator for growth and empowerment. Through the use of emerging technologies, innovative thinking, new partnerships and creative solutions, the rights of individuals, families and target communities can be protected. Next, frontier learning services can help increase engagement between the development and science and technology communities that have been launched during the workshop series[9]. Finally, with partnership of ASEAN, the United States would like to implement pilot programs. Pilot programs involve placing emerging science leaders from ASEAN countries into their home country government ministries. There they can work on energy security and protecting biodiversity[9].

Along with the Spark Program, the US would also like to put into action the Women's Income Initiative. When more women are involved in the workplace economies grow[10]. In fact, in a recent study by UN Women, women's lack of equal employment cost South East Asian countries 18 percent of their GDPs [11]. With the Women's Income Initiative the US hopes to enable half a million Southeast Asian women to have access to credit. This initiative will provide women with opportunities to begin creating credit histories that can help them borrow larger amounts of capital to expand their businesses and earn higher incomes. It will also give women access to finance, mentorship, and job training.

Finally, another important part of infrastructure that needs improvement in South East Asia is disaster preparedness. The increased frequency of natural disasters such as typhoons because of climate change are disrupting Asia's economy. Rebuilding after a natural is expensive, but the United States believes that through better preparedness measures Southeast Asian countries' economies will not face such hits as before. One of the ways to do this is to train homebuilders in earthquake ready tactics through the United Nations Hyogo Framework on Disaster Preparedness.

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Committee: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Topic: Labor Migration and Illegal Trafficking in Asia-Pacific

Country: The United States of America

### Position Paper

In the early 21st century, about 6 million Asians were employed in other Asian countries besides their own[1]. Today, there are up to 59 million migrants in Asia[1]. The main reason for such a large migration population is because workers are searching for better economic opportunities[2]. Although most of this migration is voluntary, there have also been cases of human trafficking during this period of migration in Asia[3]. In fact, nearly two-thirds of human trafficking victims are from Asia[3]. Along with human trafficking, there are other negative effects of such a large labor migration in Asia. However, there also definite benefits and advantages for host and sending countries during this migration. As mentioned before, human trafficking is an obvious side effect of this labor migration. Other side effects include stigmatization, illegal recruitment, excessive placement fees, and unprotected laborers. The challenge of stigmatization laborers face comes from gender, ethnicity, and class intersections[4]. For example, some male laborers of unfavorable ethnicities have been deemed as “dangerous” and receive discrimination from citizens of their host countries[4]. Also host countries may charge excessive placement fees through confiscation of passports and forcing laborers to work off debts throughout their entire lives[5]. These migrant workers face these particular challenges and discrimination because their rights are unprotected by their labour policies and legislation[6]. 71 percent of migrant domestic workers experience exploitation during the recruitment process and, 42 percent suffered limited freedom of movement, 32 percent had identity and travel documents confiscated, and 63 per cent faced exploitive practices while working abroad[6]. Despite the number of international labor laws and conventions aimed at protecting migrant workers’ rights, the Philippines is the only Asia-Pacific country to ratify the International Labor Organization’s Domestic Workers Convention[6].

The United States of America’s USAID has taken direct actions to protect workers’ right in the world including Asia-Pacific. Thanks to interventions supported by USAID Burmese migrant workers in Thailand have been able to win back wages and better working conditions[7]. Also in rural Cambodia, USAID has helped by protecting the health of rural workers in unsanitary living conditions[8]. USAID was able to do this through giving seasonal workers on the rural farms of Burma an insecticide-treated net[8]. The results were very successful seeing that malaria cases on these farms dropped from 10 to 1 per month[8].

The United States believes that these migrant workers are beneficial for boosting the economies and infrastructure throughout all countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Though there are negative impacts from this migration, the United States would like to eliminate these drawbacks through the implementation of Supply Unchained to combat human trafficking as well as encouraging countries to take proper policies and procedures to protect workers’ rights

Supply Unchained was created by USAID, but had some flaws to it that needed to be addressed. In order to make this program better, the US would like to reinvent it to supply the first crowdfunding portal that enables the public to directly support the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of individual victims of human trafficking[9]. This program will highlight and encourage innovation that will lead to sustainable solutions to prevent human trafficking and rehabilitate victims of it. Also, many law enforcement officials do not have proper procedures on how to identify human trafficking and how to deal with it. The US would like encourage countries to have a section in their law enforcement training about human trafficking. Police need to know how to identify human trafficking so they do not accidentally prosecute a victim believing the victim to be a prostitute.

Next, the United States would like countries to screen employment contracts and host information sessions in government or private entities that will inform workers on their rights and what to do if they face difficulties in their host countries. Also, the US supports adding labour attaches to embassies in host countries. These labor attaches will provide migrant worker a place to go if they face challenges or difficulties while working or trying to find work in their host countries.



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