

# Asia-Pacific Rural Development and Food Security Forum 2022

22-24 March (Virtual)

*Battling Climate Change and Transforming Agri-Food Systems*



## DAY 2 RECAP

**Sangjun Lee**

Natural Resources and Agriculture Specialist  
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Ladies and gentlemen, good morning and good afternoon. I'm Sangjun Lee from ADB. I help leverage Korea's agriculture and rural development experience in ADB projects. Before we start the third day today, I'd like to quickly recap the very rich discussion yesterday.

First, we explored the role of education in reducing rural-urban divide. With the China case, we recognize the importance of human capital for being able to move from middle income to higher income. Human capital can break the vicious cycle of polarization, low production, and stagnation. Therefore, we found that investment in education and early childhood development is very important. If so, how can you close the growing education gap between rural and urban areas? As you know, rural areas lack access to public services. We could confirm that connectivity by ICT could help solve this problem. We showed a Smart School Alliance Approach which gives access to education service for children in small and remote schools by Internet.

Second, we discussed urban farming as new window for fresh and nutritious food. We explored Philippine government regulations and multi-sectoral approach to promote urban agriculture. Philippines has an administrative order supporting National Urban and Peri-Urban Agricultural Program. The government has also been tapping government agencies, private sectors, and civil society organizations to work on rooftop gardens and vertical gardening. We also shared the cases from India and Nauru. This approach meets the demand for fresh and nutritious food in India, and also provides an opportunity for areas with limited land such as Nauru. We also highlighted the prerequisite for the success of urban farming. For example, it is important to develop light seed varieties for them, because current seeds are meant for soil.

Third, we discuss the pathways to sustainable and inclusive food assistance. We recognize that tackling climate change issue is critical to achieving sustainable and inclusive food systems. Agriculture is a victim as well as a contributor to climate change. We explored the systematic approach to serve these issues. In terms of partnership and advocacy, as the private-public sector partnership, we shared the case of IRRI-led Sustainable Rice Platform and Direct Seed Consortium, which address various problems collectively in the rice sector. Political will is also essential to improve investment in agriculture.



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In terms of gender equality, we discussed the ways to mainstream women's contribution to realizing sustainable food systems. Main suggestions are securing evidence and data for better policy and decision making, addressing gender inequalities in access to land tenure, and carrying out tailored investment in access to financing for human farmers. With regard to small-scale farmers, almost 85% of land is tilled by smallholders, but only 1.7% of climate finance is towards small scale agriculture. We found the need to expand the support for them. It was also suggested to create a business environment for private sector investment to transform food systems.

Finally, we explored the intersectoral approach to nutrition security. We saw Asia and Pacific face triple burden -- undernutrition, overnutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies. We found that we need cross-sectoral approaches based on data and reliable expert analysis to tackle the burden of malnutrition. We explored good examples with the intersectional approach to nutrition security. Farm-to-school initiatives aim to bring healthy food to children by creating schools with local farms. This initiative embraces food education. Thailand's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Interior trained to support this initiative.

Rice fortification program was also presented. Multiple sectors such as food, social protection, health, and education system are invaluable in this program to reduce micronutrient deficiencies in Asia. We also noted the importance of science and technology for nutrition security. For example, nuclear techniques can help find more evidence on nutrient absorption into the body and also generate diversity in underutilized crops for productivity enhancement. Finally, we explored approaches to nutrition security issues in rural and urban contexts. We agreed on the need for an in-depth discussion on this topic.

I'd like to request Mr. Takashi Yamano to moderate the next special session. He is the Principal Economist at Economic Research and Regional Development at ADB. Over to you, Mr. Yamano.

