

Leaders Commit to Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security in East Asia

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- Multistakeholder approach needed to tackle global food security
- Fourteen companies and Government of Indonesia launch new partnership with World Economic Forum 's New Vision for Agriculture Initiative
- More information about the meeting is available at: <http://wef.ch/EAES2011>

Jakarta, Indonesia, 12 June 2011 – A concerted effort is needed to develop sustainable solutions for global food security problems, government officials and business leaders said today at the 20th anniversary World Economic Forum on East Asia in Jakarta.

In a plenary session on global food security, Mahendra Siregar, Vice-Minister of Trade of Indonesia, said there is now recognition that a multistakeholder approach is preferable to governments tackling problems by themselves.

“ We can talk more openly, more frankly even, on tough issues like tariffs, subsidies, biofuels – those tough issues that sometimes would get bogged down by intergovernmental negotiations like [those at] the WTO, ” he added.

Farmers account for half of the 1 billion people who go without proper food and nutrition every day, a startling statistic given their central role in feeding the world. Panellists agreed that farming must be made economically viable in order to avoid an exodus of farmers to the cities.

Paul Polman, Chief Executive Officer of Unilever, United Kingdom, and a Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum on East Asia, asserted that food security is everybody 's responsibility and not just governments ' alone.

Frans W. H. Muller, Member of the Management Board of Metro Group, Germany, noted that public-private partnerships can be a source of solutions for food security, driving increased investment and innovation into the agriculture sector. The Public-Private Task Force on Sustainable Agricultural Growth in Vietnam, launched last year in collaboration with the Forum 's New Vision for Agriculture initiative, engages 13 global companies with the Government of Vietnam. The group focuses on five priority crops including coffee, tea, fisheries, fruit and vegetables, and commodities. In the past year, each group has piloted new technologies, farming practices and business models for engaging farmers, with the intention of substantially scaling these efforts.

Earlier today, Bayu Krisnamurthi, Vice-Minister of Agriculture of Indonesia, announced the formation of a new Partnership on Indonesian Sustainable Agriculture, formed with leaders of the Forum 's New Vision for Agriculture. The initiative will engage global and Indonesian companies in partnership with the government, civil society, international organizations and farmers ' groups to promote food security and economic growth through sustainable agriculture.

Fourteen companies have committed to join the Indonesia initiative including Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge, Cargill, Dupont, Indofood, Kraft Foods, Metro Group, McKinsey, Monsanto, Nestlé, Sinar Mas, Swiss Re, Syngenta and Unilever. Partners will form a high-level group to improve the productivity and quality of specific commodities, with special attention to environmental sustainability and the expansion of opportunities for smallholder farmers. The Vice-Minister noted that the partnership will help strengthen investment and technology innovation in Indonesia 's agriculture sector, improving production and contributing to food security both in Indonesia and globally.

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