

ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2019

"Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality"

27-29 March 2019 | UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE CENTRE . BANGKOK, THAILAND

TITLE

"Quality Education for Sustainable Agriculture and Agri-food Systems (QE-SAFS) in Southeast Asian Colleges and Universities" – SDG 4 Reflections & SDG 2 Synergies

VENUE: UNCC Meeting Room Meeting Room H DATE: Friday 29 March 2019 TIME: 12:30 – 13:45

Organizers: Chulalongkorn University (CU)

Co-Sponsors: Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand, Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Scope: The global agri-food system is a major contributor to environmental damage, including agrochemical pollution, desertification, deforestation, drought, depleting aquifers, biodiversity loss, land degradation and climate change. In Southeast Asia almost 10 % of the population, over 60 million people, are also undernourished or food insecure, with poor rural farmers and communities among the most vulnerable. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have a unique role as intellectual and scientific leaders to facilitate research, academic programs and extension services to support a **sustainable global agri-food system** while improving the quality and relevance of research and learning especially for rural youth and small farm families with training for decent green jobs or business opportunities. With respect to **SD4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"** two most obvious SDG 4 targets implicating HEIs are:

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and **quality** technical, vocational and **tertiary education**, including university...

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed... including, among others... **education for sustainable development...**

Nonetheless, (and problematically) SDG 4 does not define **quality** tertiary education or how ESD implicates agricultural or agri-food systems education specifically. There are potential synergies with **SDG 2: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"** especially related to Target 2.a call to "Increase investment...in.. agricultural research and extension services..." Yet sustainable agriculture (SA) was also not defined in the SDGs. Meanwhile UNESCAP's *ASEAN SDG Baseline* study (at 2015) reported deterioration in progress toward reaching food security and zero hunger for SDG 2 while SDG 4 was ostensibly on track with significant progress.

To date no common platforms exist for policy dialogue, research or harmonized curricula for **quality agricultural or food systems education** in tertiary institutions or why it matters for SDG 4 (or for SDG 2 and cross-cutting with other SDGs). This side event will facilitate knowledge sharing and reflections on **"Quality Education for Sustainable Agriculture and Agri-food Systems (QE-SAFS) in Southeast Asian Colleges and Universities."** It will also discuss implications for Southeast Asian agriculture and food system studies in the context of the *ASEAN Work Plan on Education (AWPE)*, 2016-2020. This activity is part of a small CU-led policy studies research project with seed funding from OHEC, Thailand to explore policy priorities, curriculum ideas and action recommendations for a coherent ASEAN regional approach

to improve and strengthen the quality of tertiary agriculture and food systems education, research and university-based extension to help meet SDGs in Southeast Asia.

This side event discussion will invite ideas and recommendations on QE-SAFS to be considered for selected *Policy Briefs* currently being drafted by CU with partners for OHEC which will be presented to Senior Education Officials (SOM-ED) in 2019 while Thailand is Chair of ASEAN leading under the theme: “*Advancing Partnership for Sustainability*.” Panelists and participants will be encouraged to reflect on the above challenges guided by five main questions.

Key Discussion Questions:

1. What **principal policy, pedagogical and research challenges** face Agriculture and Agri-food Systems Education in Southeast Asian Colleges and Universities today?
2. What **examples of good quality curricula, programmes, best practices, research products or policies or academic tools and reform models** currently exist on “**Quality Education for Sustainable Agriculture and Agri-food Systems (QE-SAFS)**” in Southeast Asian Colleges and Universities with lessons that can be adapted, replicated or scaled-up?
3. What **academic reforms, innovations, or partnerships (research, teaching, or service) are needed** in Southeast Asian tertiary institutions to adequately support QE-SAFS for SDGs?
4. What **national guiding policies (of Member States) or new resource allocations** are **needed** to improve tertiary education or research for sustainable agriculture and agri-food systems to better serve youth and small farm families while supporting healthy rural communities?
5. **What should regional organizations, international agencies and donors do** to better support needed reforms to improve tertiary education for sustainable agriculture and agri-food systems with monitoring and evaluation of SDG 4 as well as relevance for SDG 2 or other SDGs?

About the Organizer: Chulalongkorn University (CU) founded in 1917 is Thailand’s oldest public research and teaching university. Its School of Agricultural Resources (CUSAR) emphasizes practical learning and entrepreneurial skills for rural students applied in their home communities. CU has a “Green Chula” policy committed to education for sustainable development (ESD) and sustainability reporting for SDGs collaborating with the Thai government, other academics and international agencies.

Panelists:

- Prof Dr. Surichai Wungaeo, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Chulalongkorn University
- Dr. Wayne Nelles, Visiting Scholar, CU School of Agricultural Resources (CUSAR)
- Secretary-General (or Representative). Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand
- Ms. Pattanotai Pattanotai, Programme Director, SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (RIHED)
- Dr. Poonpipope Kasemsap, Senior Fellow, SEAMEO Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), former VP, Kasetsart University (KU)
- Dr. Ravi Khetarpal, Executive Secretary, Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)
- Dr. Susan Vize, Regional Advisor, Social and Human Sciences, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Contact details: Wayne Nelles, CUSAR, Thailand. Email: waynenelles@gmail.com