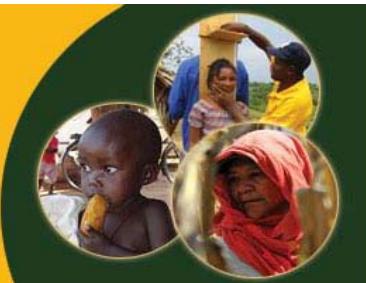




LEVERAGING AGRICULTURE FOR IMPROVING NUTRITION & HEALTH

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Speaker Summary Note

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Title: **The Farmers Dilemma:
To secure the food nutrition while meet the market demand**

Food plays an important role in the Indonesian economy where the largest parts of the population are food producers. Food also has a very big share in the cost of living as well as small farmer's income. More than half the country's 245 million people living on agriculture are small family farmers.

When the food prices fluctuated, it affects at large the income of small family farmers. The differentiation between food prices in the market also affects the production as well as the consumption patterns. From the food groups, rice is the most important food consumption and production patterns of the Indonesian small farmers.

The perception of agriculture role is broadly understood as an important state contributor such as for: (1) provider of food for food security at the aggregate level, (2) provider of employment, (3) provider of raw materials for industry, and (4) source of income. *On the path of the economic liberalisation, most of the food policies has been brought to the benefits of trade and market opportunities.* Policies to access capital, market, and input materials were designed as priority mostly for the commercial or market driven and food security purposes. While food for the health and the nutrition especially for the needs of local poor family farmers is most likely behind the priority or still not considered as important.

In the sense of commercial agriculture, farmers in everyday lives are still facing problems in accessing high-quality seeds, fertilizers, water, rural infrastructure and machineries to process and road to transport the yields into the market place and the quality requirement from the trade to meet the demand. The national and local government are busy in developing policies and programs such as financial support for agriculture production and marketing with an extending various credit schemes or grants and programs related to industrial sector development such as the challenges to produce various refined agricultural products of higher quality and high value commodities. Incentive policies to develop the industrial sector have been designed as well as the policies to linkage and integration among small farmers (producers), traders, industries and exporters; and also the design of supported programs to speed up the improvement of agricultural productivity.

Frankly, the attention to understand or to relate between agriculture and production for the nutrition security for the poor family farmers is still missing. Moreover, lack of farmers awareness that agriculture could benefit to provide food for their nutrition and health needs and the less knowledge about the relation between growing food practices, the yields and its nutrition to health a is such an circumstances of the farmers life.

Conclusions

As the conclusion, the causal factors that bring to these conditions among others because of:

- Market and trade dictation
- Poor socioeconomic circumstances (= poverty)
- Ignorance, indifference
- Lack of health education
- The persistence of culture
- Soil condition and climate patterns
- Lack of knowledge of food and its cultivating practices

These problems should be seen at a locality approaches:

- how the actual ability of rural communities in meeting the needs of foods for their nutrition and health in accordance with the preferences and capabilities of the availability of the resources,
- how a flexible approaches to every specific regions implemented,
- how participatory effective food planning and implementation in local level integrate between farmers and government, and
- how in planning, *the market and trade not to be put always at the first place but the needs of nutrition and health for the family farmers.*

Recommendations

1. In fulfilling the needs, it must be considered that the quantity and quality of food which focuses on the potential of local resources to match the availability and habits (culture) of the local community and to nutritional standards. It is necessary to dig a new thinking policy of local food empowerment with a multidimensional approach.
2. To start improving the food conditions of rural communities is only fitting if done with participatory manner and well attention to socio-cultural issues of local communities.
3. The national food policy should be directed to appreciate and support the local food culture (local culture) and utilize the biodiversity resources as the fundament in building the strong access of small family farmers to food that benefit to their health.
4. Promote a campaign program in the rural level, to raise awareness and to improve the knowledge of farmers about the relation between growing food with nutrition and health.