

Unofficial Translation

**First National Health Assembly
Agenda 3.5**

**Resolution 1/5
12 December 2008**

Agriculture and Food in the Era of Crisis

The First National Health Assembly

Having considered the report on Agriculture and Food in the Era of Crisis,

Realizing the importance of the agricultural sector as a source of food production of the country and a source of employment for 40% of the population of working age,

Recognizing the problem of access to food faced by the poor arising from inflation and rice price increases while at the same time their income remains the same, resulting in the poor having to decrease their consumption both in quality and quantity,

Knowing that between 2537-2547, Thailand increased its imports of chemical substances by more than 4 times and the trend in importing pesticides is still increasing, and that such use in great quantity of agricultural chemicals have resulted in residues of agricultural chemicals and anti-biotics in the products often leading to rejection of Thai agricultural product exports by buyers. Furthermore, it is realized that the cost to the farmers' health and other costs borne by the state in order to control and monitor the use of chemical substances may be as high as 5.4 billion Baht per year, equal to the value of the imports of chemical fertilizers and pesticides,

Realizing the problem of deterioration of natural resources, especially of land and water sources which are basic factors for production in the agricultural sector, while at the same time knowing that there had arisen competition for resources between the agricultural and industrial sector and within the agricultural sector itself,

Anxious about the changes in climate conditions and the trend towards more frequent national disasters due to global warming which will greatly increase risks to production in the agricultural sector and which might result in small-scale farmers facing financial losses and falling into debts,

Anxious about the possibility of using land by foreigners for growing food crops and energy crops

The National Health Assembly hereby issues the following resolutions:

1. The Office of National Economic and Social Development Board, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and other agencies responsible for the Strategic Plan for the Development of National Organic Agriculture, Plan No. 1 (2008-2011) are urged to encourage the community and locality to participate in the preparation and implementation of the operational plan on complete-cycle organic agriculture at the community and local level, as well as manage the marketing of its products, the aim being to promote a system of complete-cycle organic agriculture or agriculture devoid of harmful substances. The rationale being to enable small scale farmers to be self-reliant and have food security. In addition, procedures shall be arranged to assess the strategic plan and the learning acquired, the assessment to be done with participation by all relevant sections of the society. Also, such plan is to be publicized to the public on a continuing basis every year.

2. The National Health Commission is urged to

2.1 Coordinate with the Food and Drug Administration, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Public Health, and agencies concerned with the policy and strategy for food security, including academia and the people sector, to take actions to build up food security for the general population regardless of age:

1) To develop food security indicators suitable to the Thai context and report the food security situation of the country every three years,

2) To organize a surveillance system to give early warning on food crises;

3) The Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to coordinate their efforts to prepare a system to support to adherence to accepted standards and also to ensure the safety of food and agricultural products.

4) Organize a surveillance system for farmers to monitor risk to them from the use of chemical substances in agriculture.

5) Develop a mechanism for at risk populations such as the urban poor, labour, and population in remote areas, border areas, hardship areas, highlands to access nutritious food .

2.2 Coordinate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Public Health, National Health Security Office, Social Security Office, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and other agencies concerned, including academia and the people sector, to support small farmers and facilitate a new generation of farmers. The social status of small farmers is to be upgraded, and a just welfare and economic security system are to be developed and organized, including health system and universal healthcare for small farmers, hired hands and farmers under the system of advanced business agreement in agriculture (contract farming). At the same time, efforts are to be made to promote potential groupings of farmers designed to provide welfare assistance to each other;

2.3 Take action to form networks for food and agriculture policy development through participation of all sectors including the people sector, exchange of learning between sectors concerned, surveillance and development of relevant public policy including policy on participatory management of resources in the locality;

2.4 Develop a tool to assess impacts of the use of chemical substances on health and the environment.

3. Requests the local governmental organizations and parties to the Health Assembly to:

3.1 Support the preservation, conservation, cultivation and development of strains and of local seeds in the community, so the community can depend on itself basing on its traditional knowledge and bio-diversity; also, so as to protect the knowledge base and Thai plant seeds from foreign possession. In addition, support should be given to the study and cultivation of microorganisms in the local biosystem in order to support local plant and animal production. Support also should be given to research on seeds in order to benefit the processing of agricultural produce.

3.2 Promote and support efforts reduce and stop the use of pesticides in agriculture by supporting organic agriculture, new theory agriculture--or blended agriculture--, support imparting technical knowledge on the way to solve problems that are congruent with local conditions. There should also be use of legal measures and local administrative organization provisions to promote the study of and assess the health and environmental impact from using chemical substances. Also, knowledge and information related to the harmful effects of using chemical substances should be imparted.

3.3 Support and strengthen the community and farmers' organization for the protection of small-scale farmers' rights. Help farmer groups and agricultural cooperatives in agricultural production so that it results in products and food that conforms to safety standards in accordance with related laws. Arrange for alternative markets in the localities so that sellers and buyers could meet to buy safe food products.

3.4 Support research and gathering of information. Arrange for centers of knowledge and advice on safe agriculture, organic agriculture or natural agriculture that is appropriate to the specifics of each area.

3.5 Coordinate and support the utilization of state owned land or privately owned vacant and unused land, the owners of which are asked to participate on a voluntary basis. Such lands are to be used for organic agriculture, for production for consumption and for distribution purposes. Priority is to be given to poor people in urban and rural areas, who do not possess land.

3.6 Support the practice of Self-Sufficiency Economy idea, and new-theory agriculture in the various areas.

3.7 Promote the production of community rice strains, or promotion of community centers to produce community rice strains.

4. State agencies and local administrative organizations shall arrange for and promote monetary and fiscal measures to support farmers, agricultural producers and enterprises engaged in organic agriculture, such efforts to cover the complete supply chain.

5. The National Health Commission is requested to follow up on the implementation of this resolution and report to the 3rd National Health assembly.
