

20 December 2012

**Developing Mechanisms and Processes Capable of Handling Health Impacts Resulting from ASEAN Integration, Especially for Food and Agricultural Food Products**

The Fifth National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on Developing Mechanisms and Processes Capable of Handling Health Impacts Resulting from ASEAN Community Integration, Especially for Food and Agricultural Food Products<sup>1</sup>,

*Informed* that ASEAN Community integration will bring about broader trade opportunities; increased employment and income for the people; increased economic growth for the country; diversity in product trade, including the trade of food and agricultural food products; and increased distribution of goods between countries,

*Concerned* that member countries' harmonization of ASEAN standards and technical regulation for food and agricultural food products may not be completed in time for the movement of such goods, causing discrepancies in product quality standard among the countries; and that increased trade volume heightens food safety risks,

*Concerned* that insufficient risk analysis may result in economic loss associated with product recall; create health impairment and lives of consumers; and effect health care and health service expenses,

*Aware* that food safety standards and quality is an important issue; that it is a component of Thailand's food management strategy and part of various relevant agencies' strategies; and that food safety and quality standards readiness is therefore a necessary and urgent component of ASEAN Community integration,

*Aware* that applying strength from the local community, which understands and is informed of problems, to protect oneself and one's family is a sustainable approach for preventing and addressing problems; while support from other participating players will contribute to efficiency of the food safety management and monitoring system, in which the community takes part by setting policies to prevent and address issues,

Has, therefore, passed the following resolutions:

1. Requesting the National Food Commission, food and agricultural food product quality and safety oversight agencies, and promotion and support agencies to set precise policies and plans in preparation for ASEAN integration as follows:

1.1 Intensify oversight by developing regulatory systems; increasing imported food and agricultural food product check points; and increasing the frequency and scope of inspection, in accordance with risk levels throughout the food chain;

1.2 Increase investment in expert personnel capacity building, including language skill; increase the competency of laboratories; and provide adequately efficient, modern, and well distributed instruments and equipments;

1.3 Take into consideration the equal balance of civil society representatives from consumer organizations, representatives of academia, and private sector representatives, when appointing committees, sub-committees and working groups, and the selection from all sectors must be transparent and fair;

1.4 Develop Thailand's food safety risk analysis, quality and safety systems to be on a par with those of the international community.

2. Agencies responsible for regulation production and import of food and agricultural food products; and producers of food and mentioned goods are requested to give priority on

<sup>1</sup> Document Health Assembly 5/Main 9

complying with quality control systems set according to appropriate standards; namely, the Good Agricultural Practice, the Good Manufacturing Practice, the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points??; in order to assure consumer safety, including inspection and certification of sources of production from countries of origin, and Halal food production.

3. Requesting the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to be the lead organization, in collaboration with other related agencies, to develop mechanisms which unify and update the easily accessed food safety information; link food safety information in ASEAN countries in response to the ASEAN Community; including effective information dissemination to the public; and educating consumers on such matters as food labeling knowledge for safe consumption.

4. Requesting the Ministry of Interior to assign provincial governors to appoint food safety committees at the local level or to revise or to provide systems for development mechanisms, and strategic plans on food and agricultural food products in order to respond health impacts resulting from ASEAN Community, taking into consideration local cultural and religious contexts such as Halal food, with participation from qualified persons, the people's sector, and relevant agencies, while the selection must be made in a transparent and fair manner, including continuous monitoring and evaluation.

In the case that inter-provincial efforts are required, provincial group mechanisms of provincial cluster may be set up as appropriate.

5. Requesting relevant education institutions, research agencies, and research funding agencies, in collaboration with local government agencies and local community organizations, to place emphasis on promoting and supporting research on impacts of ASEAN Community with respect to food and agricultural food product safety in terms of health, scientific, economic, social, environmental, religious and cultural aspects, including dissemination such research to other key agencies concerned for further use.

6. Requesting agencies concerned to develop and increase the capacity of farmers that produce food and agricultural food products for their self-inspection on quality standards and safety.

7. Requesting the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to report progress to the 6<sup>th</sup> National Health Assembly.