

Food Security in Crises

This public policy focuses on participatory management by all social sectors to ensure that in every crisis the right to food of every citizen in every part of Thailand will be protected, i.e. they can get access to adequate, safe and nutritious food in an equitable manner.

The Thirteenth National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on Food Security in Crises,¹

Having been informed of the situation and problems concerning food security in Thailand, covering the source, access and distribution of food during the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, food security problems have become more prominent, e.g. no food available for sale, many people having little or no purchasing power, and vulnerable population suffering from food shortage, while there has emerged a phenomenon that sees people, community, organizations and social networks adjusting and working together to tackle the problem, and having been informed of the status of the current public policy concerned as well as its adverse and positive aspects contributing to food security in crises, thus leading to the formulation of the public policy on the issue,

Therefore, having passed the following resolutions:

1. The members of the National Health Assembly share the view that the “right to food” or the right to get access to adequate, safe and nutritious food in every situation is a fundamental right of every citizen in Thailand to be defended, taken care of, and protected, and that it is the duty of the State and every social sector to work together to do so in a mutually supporting manner, taking into consideration human dignity, awareness of different food needs and cultures of each group of people and each individual, and in this regard propose to have “the right to food” included in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand;
2. The members of the National Health Assembly, having collectively set a goal that in five years (by the end of 2025) Thailand will be ready and able to manage food in crises, request the Cabinet to instruct the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board to develop a national policy and program of action on food security in crises, through participation of every sector, within two years, covering the following issues: (1) development of the food system capable of handling the crisis, ranging from food production, processing, reservation and distribution to food exchange and sharing, (2) development of the care system for vulnerable population and those without food security in times of crisis, and (3) development of a joint management system for food security in crises

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3. Development of the food system capable of handling the crisis:

Food production

3.1 At the time of crisis, requesting the Cabinet to enforce Section 12 of National Food Committee Act B.E. 2551 (2008) to declare any given area as a temporarily restricted area for food security purposes.

3.2 Requesting local government organizations, community organization networks, and partners concerned, e.g. local authority, home, monastery, school, and organization concerned with children and youth, to support and promote the creation of food security from the community base as well as harnessing local knowledge and wisdom to enable the community to have production sources, production factors, and food processing capacity to become self-reliant in times of crisis.

3.3 Requesting agencies concerned to promote concrete measures to use land considered “domain public of State” as set out in the Civil and Commercial Code for public food security purposes such as wasteland, land intended for public benefits, and water sources for common use.

3.4 Requesting the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Interior, agencies concerned with the private sector, and civil society to promote and support agriculture, farmers, households, and community to ensure food safety and security in line with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, attaching importance to access to the use of natural resources, land, water management, and such bio-diversity as plant and animal genetics, while taking into consideration sustainability, environment-friendliness, equity and justice, including quality control, safety and nutritional value.

Food reservation

3.5 Requesting the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Interior, local government organizations, agencies and partners concerned to support the creation of food production and reservation systems from national to community and household levels, in a variety of forms that are safe, sufficient and ready for distribution in line with the eco-landscape and local culture and community lifestyle, e.g. food bank, community seed bank, land used in common by the community, community central kitchen, and food fund (zakat).

3.6 Requesting the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Education, agencies and partners concerned to support the community, civil society, the private sector and education and research networks in the development of knowledge, innovation, and local wisdom regarding food production, processing, and preservation for the purpose of food reservation in times of crisis and for distribution of technology to the community.

Food distribution, exchange and sharing

3.7 Requesting provincial governors, local government organizations, community organization networks, civil society, the private sector, agencies and partners concerned to encourage the community to act as lead actor in the preparation of community plans in order to organize food distribution, exchange and sharing in the handling of crises both within the community and in nearby communities, and to link with other communities via the support of the Community Development Department, Department of Local Administration, and Office of the Permanent Secretary for Commerce, as well as Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperative Promotion Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives,

3.8 Requesting the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, agencies

and partners concerned, community organization networks, civil society, and the private sector to promote marketing that provides direct link between producers and consumers.

3.9 Requesting the Ministry of Commerce, Board of Trade of Thailand, Office of Trade Competition Commission, consumer organization network, agencies and partners concerned to promote the creation of fair trade between the traditional retail system and the modern trade system, including advocating the enforcement of Trade Competition Act B.E. 2560 (2017).

3.10 Requesting the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Transport, agencies and partners concerned, community organization networks, civil society, and the private sector to collectively help in the management, distribution and exchange of food from producers to consumers in a comprehensive and fair manner during crises,

4. Development of the care system for vulnerable population and those without food security in times of crisis

4.1 Requesting the Ministry of Interior, local government organizations, Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, agencies and partners concerned, together with community organization networks and civil society, to develop and update the database, prepare a search engine system, help system and communication system, as well as developing community mechanisms and supporting the volunteer system so that they can render help and care to vulnerable population and those without food security at the time of crisis in a speedy and comprehensive manner in a variety of forms according to the age group, community context and lifestyle, such as happiness-sharing cabinet, food bank, mobile kitchen, network management of house-monastery-school, community kitchen and food-sharing, life-sharing networks,

4.2 Requesting the Cabinet to instruct the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and other agencies concerned with the storing of food and other agricultural goods to organize the system and plans of action on the distribution of quality food in a comprehensive and fair manner in order to mitigate the suffering of the people.

5. Development of a joint management system for food security in crises

5.1 Requesting the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Interior, Royal Thai Police, and agencies concerned to issue additional price-controlling measures, take serious legal action against those stocking up food, and add more penalty provisions in the law against those stocking up food, while the community has other social measures against them.

5.2 Requesting the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth), agencies and partners concerned to promote the creation of community food security, model areas for community food reservation and community learning center for food security, as well as knowledge management through collecting lessons learned from actions taken in various areas.

5.3 Requesting the Ministry of Interior by way of the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning, local government organizations and agencies concerned, with participation from community organization networks and civil society, to promote and support the development of policy plans on land use at various levels as well as plans prescribing land use in their planning, together with conditions of such land use, in order to increase the benefits of land use in agricultural areas, public areas, waste land and vacant areas, including reserving abundant areas that can serve as food security areas during crises.

5.4 Requesting the Ministry of Finance, together with agencies concerned, to prescribe tax measures, compensations, or other measures designed to create opportunity and incentives for the private sector, community and government agencies with vacant areas to use or be

allowed to use unused areas for food security purposes at the time of crisis in a non-profit manner.

5.5 Requesting local government organizations, community organization networks and partners concerned to work together to prepare local development plans or community plans or community health charters to create food security from the community base so that the community is able to self-manage food in times of crisis with the support of Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior, provincial governors, Community Organizations Development Institute (public organization), and agencies concerned.

5.6 Requesting the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, King Prajadhipok's Institute, and Thailand Science Research and Innovation (TSRI), together with agencies and partners concerned:

(1) To study and recommend to the government the creation of mechanisms and system for food reservation in a participatory manner in preparation for national and local crises that may occur,

(2) To make feasibility studies about the issue of announcements or orders that will empower local government organizations to use the budget and resources to solve problems when food security problems arise in times of crisis,

(3) To make feasibility studies about the provision of funding sources that community organizations and the people sector can get access to and use to resolve and recover the situation that has arisen.

6. Requesting the Secretary-General of National Health Commission to report the progress to the 15th National Health Assembly.